

Article

## Economic Functions of Monasticism in Cyprus: The Case of the Kykkos Monastery

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**Abstract:** The article presents a comprehensive overview of the various economic activities performed by the Kykkos Monastery in Cyprus in its long history (11th–20th centuries). The article begins with a brief review of the early centuries of Cypriot monasticism and the foundation of the monastery in the 11th century. Then, the analysis focuses on the economic activities performed during the period of the Ottoman rule (1571–1878). Using primary sources from the monastery’s archives, this section offers an overview of the various types of monastic land holdings in the Ottoman era and the strategies used to purchase them. Using 19th century primary sources, it further presents a detailed account of the multifaceted involvement and illustrates the prominent role of the monastery in the island’s economic life (land ownership, stockbreeding activities, lending of money, *etc.*). Next, it examines the changes in monastic possessions caused by the legislation enacted by the post-1878 British colonial administration. The legislation caused the loss of extensive land holdings and was the subject of extensive controversy.

**Keywords:** Orthodox Christianity; Cyprus; Kykkos; economy

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## 1. Introduction

Monasticism occupies a privileged position in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Just as in Western Europe, the operation of monasteries in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine commonwealth entailed a broad range of functions—from spiritual to cultural to economic. The intertwining of economic functions and cultural relations in the post-Byzantine world has been duly noted; Nikolai Iorga's classic *Byzance après Byzance: Continuation de l' Histoire de la Vie Byzantine* [1] highlights the connections between the monastic communities of Mt. Athos and the Danubian principalities. However, the analysis of the economic functions of Orthodox monasteries lags considerably behind in relation to the state of scholarly knowledge about their Western counterparts.

In this article, we examine mostly the economic functions of monastic communities in Cyprus through a historical overview of the case of the Kykkos Monastery. This monastery is arguably the wealthiest among Cyprus's monasteries and is an important reference point for the Orthodox world [2]. The monastery also has a long history of socioeconomic activities.

Unlike other monasteries, this monastery's archives offer privileged access to these activities. The *Archive of the Holy Monastery of Kykkos* [3] is one of the richest archives concerning the Ottoman period of the island. Due to its very good condition, various important works relating to the history of the monastery during the Ottoman period already have been published. The archive includes thousands of Ottoman and Greek documents that relate to the activities of the monastery since the Ottoman conquest of the island. The *Kykkos Monastery Ottoman Archive*, containing 1,465 Ottoman documents that chronologically cover the entire Ottoman period of the island's history (1571–1878) and also the first three decades of the British period, has already been published in a seven volume series [4,5]. The *Kykkos Monastery Greek Archive* is separated into two sections: The first includes 665 documents and covers the period between 1619 and 1839; the second includes 559 documents and covers the period between 1789 and 1930. Currently, two volumes of the Greek documents from the monastery's archive have been published [6,7]. Also, many codices of the Ottoman period of the monastery [8–12], several collections of other archives concerning the activities of the monastery [13,14], and references to the monastery of Kykkos in the Greek Cypriot press [15–17] have also been published. Nearly all this material has been published in Greek and hence it is inaccessible to non-specialist or international readership.

Drawing upon the aforementioned sources, in this article we aim to present an overview of the socioeconomic activities of the Kykkos monastery throughout its long history. In the article's opening section, we briefly provide an overview of the origins of monastic life in Cyprus and of the Kykkos Monastery in particular. In the next section, we turn to the situation during the Ottoman era (1571–1878), and then we focus on the 19th century, a period from which there are well-kept records and detailed accounts of various economic activities. In the following sections, we consider developments with regard to monastic property under the British rule (1878–1960), and then conclude with a brief presentation of the contemporary state of affairs.

## 2. The Spread of Christianity and the Origins of Monastic Life in Cyprus

Christianity was preached in Cyprus by Apostles Paul and Varnavas around the middle of the first century AD. Specific reasons made the island a suitable missionary target: Varnavas was of Cypriot origin, there was a large population of Jews living on the island at the time the apostles targeted it ([18], p. 3), and the island was in close proximity to Antioch [19]. Varnavas is believed to have been the founder of the Church of Cyprus, which is considered one of the most ancient churches of the Christian world. Information about the Church of Cyprus during the first Christian centuries is scarce. By the end of the 4th century AD, Christianity seems to have been the dominant religion on the island, thanks to the work of Epiphanius, the Bishop of Salamis (368–403 AD) [20]. However during the Council of Nicaea (325 AD), there were three Episcopal thrones in Cyprus: those of Paphos, Salamis and Trimithountos ([21], volume 1, p. 250). In 341 AD, the Church of Cyprus was declared autocephalous and the efforts of the Patriarchate of Antioch to control the island's bishops came to an end. The Ecumenical Synod of 691 AD confirmed the canon regarding the autocephaly of the Church of Cyprus [22].

The foundation of monasteries in Cyprus dates to the first centuries of Christianity. After the Christianization of the population and the founding of the Church of Cyprus, the monasteries seem to have begun their operation. Up until the ninth century, when a great movement of monastic reform and reorganization spread throughout the Byzantine world [23], the operation of the monasteries on the island was inchoate. Only two monasteries are believed to have been founded on the island during the fourth century: the Monastery of Timios Stavros in the Stavrovouni area, the founding of which is attributed to St. Elena ([18], p. 9; [24]), and St. Nicolas of the Cats Monastery in the area of Aliko (in the Larnaca area). It appears that the founding of important monasteries in Cyprus took place in the 11th and 12th centuries, a period during which successive waves of monastic reform and reorganization took place both in Roman Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity.

In the Byzantine world, this movement also represented a reaction to the spread of Islam in the Eastern Mediterranean. With the Arabs' march into Syria, Palestine and Egypt in the seventh century AD, the Byzantine Empire lost a considerable part of its holdings and was put on the defensive. Moreover, the strong presence of non-Chalcedonian Christians in these areas was further strengthened as a result of them being outside the control of the empire and, hence, free of persecution. Still, the Orthodox maintained a presence in the Islamic regions of the Middle East for many centuries. Faced with the new situation, however, many Orthodox monks moved to Cyprus, which turned into a convenient shelter for the Orthodox from the Middle East [25].

Another turning point that influenced the development of monasticism on the island was the 1071 defeat of the Byzantine army by the army of the Seldjuk ruler Alp Arslan in the battle of Malazgirt [26], which decided the course of events in Asia Minor and opened the pathway for the expansion of the tribes of the Turcomans into formerly Byzantine Anatolia. With that defeat, the Byzantine administration began falling apart and the influx of the Turcoman tribes caused a commotion that the Byzantines were never able to stop [27]. In 1176, the Byzantine army was defeated once more in Myriocephalum, which terminated the hopes of the Orthodox population to drive off the Turkic tribes [28].

These factors contributed to a search for safe areas for the foundation of monastic complexes and communes. Therefore, during the 11th and 12th centuries several important monasteries were established on the island [29], including the monasteries of Kykkos, Machairas, Koutzoventis, St Neophytos Egklistras, Chrisorogiatissas, Acheropioitou, Panagia Arakou in Lagoudera and that of Panagia of Asinou. The monasteries of Kykkos, Machairas, St Neophytos, Apostle Varnavas and Panagias Katharon are the five *stavropegic* monasteries of Cyprus. That is, they are not under the control of the local metropolitan but directly under the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (see Hekimoglou [30]).

Kykkos Monastery is located in the western part of the Troodos mountains, 18 kilometers below Mount Olympus at an altitude of 1,200 meters. The story of its foundation lies between tradition and history. The most important source available is the history of the monastery from a 1421 original manuscript. That original version was destroyed in a fire in 1541, but other copies have been found, mainly from the 17th century [31], and a final form was published by Ephraim the Athenian in 1751 [32].

According to the traditional legend, the event that provided the occasion for the foundation of the monastery was a confrontation between ascetic Isaiah and the Byzantine governor of Cyprus, Manuel Voutomitis somewhere in the mountains of Troodos. This ascetic refused to serve the Byzantine governor because he was avoiding social activities, and so they had an affray. Voutomitis returned to Nicosia where he fell ill, and he believed that his sudden illness was a result of his behavior against Isaiah. Isaiah prayed and his faith cured the Byzantine governor, who felt deeply obliged and wanted to repay him. After having a divine vision, Isaiah asked for transport to the island of one of the three icons of the Madonna painted by evangelist Luke. The two men visited the Byzantine Emperor Alexios Comnenus (1081–1118) and asked him to allow the transport of the icon in Cyprus. After the Emperor himself was cured, thanks to the prayers of Isaiah, they presumed that the transport of the icon to the island was a divine commandment.

In the legend, the historical personalities play the roles prescribed by religious tradition. Still, it is certain that the Monastery of Kykkos was founded by the Byzantine Emperor Alexios Comnenus at the end of the 11th century, and that from the moment of its founding it was clothed with the luster of the miraculous icon of Madonna (*Panagia* or *Theotokos*). Alexios Comnenus issued an edict (*chrisovoullo*) for the founding of “the Holy, Royal, Stavropegiac Monastery of Kykko,” the monastery’s full title. It is called “royal” because it was founded at the expense of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus; it is called “*stavropegiac*” (founded with a cross) because a cross was driven into its foundation stone ([33], p. 3) [34]. The Emperor sent the first money for the construction of the temple and the cells. For its maintenance, the villages of Peristerona, Milon and Milikourion were bestowed to the newly founded monastery.

Only a century after its founding, however, the Kykkos Monastery had to adjust to a new prevalent political and religious order. After Richard the Lionheart conquered Cyprus in 1191 and a brief period of rule by the Knights of the Temple, the island became a kingdom under the Lusignans (1192) ([10], p. 38), which meant the arrival of the Roman Catholic Church on the island. During the Frankish and Venetian presence on the island (1191–1489 and 1489–1571, respectively), the Roman Catholic hierarchs attempted to convert the Orthodox population to Roman Catholicism. It is important to note that the imperative for

the subordination and control of the Orthodox Church was not just a religious matter derived from the Vatican's wishes for proselytism; it was mainly a political issue [35].

From the end of the 12th century until the Ottoman conquest of 1571, the Orthodox Church of Cyprus was in danger of losing its internal structure. The abolition of the archiepiscopal throne and the subordination of the orthodox bishops to the Roman Catholic archbishop who resided in Nicosia brought the Church of Cyprus to the brink of extermination. With the general rule of Pope Alexander IV, named *Constitutio Cypria* or *Bulla* or *Summa Alexandrina* ([35], pp. 543-665) [36], which was issued in July 1260, the position of the Archbishop of the Church of Cyprus was banned and the powers of its bishops restricted ([18], p. 114). Among other clauses, the General Rule of 1260 anticipated the reduction of Episcopal thrones to four and the obligation of the new bishops to acknowledge the Pope as their leader. At the same time the Roman Catholic bishops became the seniors of the Orthodox bishops ([37], volume 1, pp. 703-704).

In spite of the problems caused by the above rules and policies, however, the monasteries managed to maintain their contact with the Orthodox flock. The persistence of tradition, the insistence on the Orthodox service and the use of all religious symbols connected with Orthodox Christianity allowed for its survival amidst persecution. Regarding the Kykkos monastery, besides financial problems, in June 1365 a big part of the monastery complex and the church—which were made of wood—were destroyed by a fire that broke out near the monastery. In this fire, all the books and the manuscripts of the Kykkos monastery were burned, which led the monk Gregarious to write a new description of the Kykkos monastery ([33, p. A]. The monastery was rebuilt by December of the same year thanks not only to the assistance of the faithful, but mainly to the donation by Eleanor, the wife of the King of Cyprus, Peter I (1359–1369), who insisted that the rebuilding of the monastery be done at her own expense ([38], p. 100).

From the 15th century onward, it seems that some of the Orthodox monasteries on the island began to increase their property holdings. With regard to the Kykkos Monastery, an indication of this is the request of Simeon, the hegumen of the monastery, in 1522 to the Venetian Council, to bestow an annual quantity of wheat. After consideration of the request, the council decided, in 1554, to bestow a certain quantity of wheat to the Kykkos monastery annually ([39], p. 77). According to the description of the monastery, made in order to examine the demand of the hegumen, in that year there were 30 monks and a few employees—a shepherd, two vineyards guards and six other employees in the monastery—and the Venetian administration referred to it as the *Monastery of St Maria of the Rain* ([39], p. 85), a name that probably came from the belief that the invocation during the periods of drought and the procession of the icon of the Madonna of Kykkos finally led to rainfall.

### **3. The Orthodox Church and Kykkos' Holdings in the Ottoman Era**

In 1571, the troops of Ottoman Sultan Selim II (1566–1574) conquered Cyprus. The new status quo deeply influenced the status of the Orthodox Church on the island. First, in contrast with the Roman Catholic policy of attempting to convert the Orthodox, the new regime was far more tolerant. After a region was conquered and, hence, it officially entered into the world of Islam, the people of the

Bible (*ahl al-kitab*; e.g., Jews and Christians) were included into the *zimmi* group: the unfaithful who were mentioned in the Quran and hence were entitled to their faith living in the empire under the particular regime that was established by the Ottoman ruler (for the history of the term, see Cahen [40]). The Muslim ruler undertook the obligation to protect them and granted them the right to fulfill their religious duties in exchange for the capitation tax (*cizye*). The capitation tax was paid by all the non-Muslim males in the Ottoman Empire and is classified as a tax imposed by the Quran. For more details about this tax, see Halil [41]. The amount for this tax was in many cases different in various areas of the empire [42].

More specifically for the Church of Cyprus, the new status quo led to the re-establishment of relations with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the filling of the archbishop's post and the formal reconstitution of the hierarchical structure of the Orthodox Church (e.g., the bishoprics of Pafos, Citium and Kyrenia). In addition to the religious reorganization of the Church, the Ottoman administration itself also duplicated in Cyprus the same pattern of administrative relations it performed *vis-à-vis* the Ecumenical Patriarchate after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 [43], which involved tax collection, administration of civil matters and, eventually, formal representation of the people by their respective religious hierarchy [44].

Second, the Ottomans used their religious tolerance as a means of gaining the support of the Orthodox population and, hence, achieving political and military goals—in particular preventing an alliance between the Orthodox and the main Ottoman adversary, the Catholic West [45]. The Ottoman policy after the conquest of Cyprus [46] is an application of a strategy that owed much to the Ottomans' fear that the Western forces might attempt to recapture the island. Although the Orthodox were allowed to continue operating their churches and received preferential treatment as to their religious duties, the followers of the Catholic Church were banned from running their churches ([18], p. 195). The Roman Catholic Archbishop, in Venice during the war, never returned to Cyprus.

The issue of ecclesiastical property during the Ottoman period is a very complex and difficult issue. The prevalent perception is that, after 1571, all ecclesiastical property was considered as religious endowments or *wakfs* [47]. According to Islamic law, *wakfs* were charitable institutions and their property holdings were protected against taxation. In the Ottoman Empire, any adult Muslim or non-Muslim could create such endowments. The Ottomans had a highly favorable view of these endowments and considered that individuals who could afford them should do so (for a detailed categorization of all the types of *wakfs* in the Ottoman period, see Öztürk [48]). The rationale is that the Ottoman administration recognized all Orthodox ecclesiastical institutions—archbishoprics, bishoprics, monasteries and temples—as religious charitable organizations whose property was protected by the Sacred Law. As such, all ecclesiastical property holdings were thus included in the Ottoman administrative framework as *wakfs*. But it is not certain that such assets were recognized as *wakfs* by the Ottomans right after the conquest of the island. On the contrary, the 19th century overview of these assets, which we will present in the course of this article, suggests that variable land and property regimes applied to ecclesiastical property.

Still, the Orthodox monasteries that were assumed by the Ottoman administration to be charitable institutions with a social and financial character were allowed to continue running under the condition that they would be included in the Ottoman rationale about land property and usage, while they gradually turned a great part of their land into *wakfs*. A *wakf* was an eternal acquisition, the purpose of which was

charity and charitable activity; all *wakfs* were protected by various tax obligations and enjoyed privileges [49]. Therefore, the original assets of the bishoprics and the Orthodox monasteries, especially the land, must have been recognized or sold as properties with absolute proprietary titles or *mülk*. A similar practice applied in the case of the Orthodox monasteries of Mount Athos, where the Ottoman Empire granted right to full ownership of the land with a specific document (*mülkname*). In a later stage this was followed by the gradual integration of these assets into a *wakf* framework ([50], p. 45).

The belief that all the assets of the churches and the Orthodox monasteries were included in a *wakf* framework from the very beginning of the Ottoman rule is quite mistaken and probably was taken for granted because the term *wakf* predominated in the ecclesiastical land holdings [51].

The gradual integration of the church's assets into a *wakf* framework was therefore done gradually with the knowledge of the Ottoman administration. It meant that the Ottoman state left the collection of incomes from the management of *wakf* property and of land assets up to the local bishoprics and monasteries—precisely as was done for the Muslim mosques, *medreses* and other religious establishments. The general explanation for this state of affairs is that the Ottoman state allowed Muslim charity institutions to collect money through the framework of the *wakf* in an effort to gain the collaboration of the religious elite who controlled these institutions [52]. This explanation should be expanded to cover the Ottomans' stance *vis-à-vis* the Orthodox Christian ecclesiastical institutions as well. By granting the patriarch, the archbishops, the bishoprics and the monasteries considerable income through the integration of their assets into the *wakf* framework, it seems that the Ottoman administration secured the broader cooperation of the high clergy and all those who were involved in these assets' management. During the Ottoman period, the high clergy was not just the head of its flock but part of the officials of the Ottoman state. As officials, the high priests were accountable only to the authority which granted them their powers, that is the Ottoman Sultan [53].

Certainly, all ecclesiastical assets were protected by the Ottoman administration, and nobody could interfere with their management, at least in theory, as the abuse of power on behalf of Ottoman officials was common, especially in the empire's periphery ([54], p. 266). The high clergy were responsible for the management and exploitation of these assets, which were established in their own names through the issue of a special document, the *berat* [55], on behalf of the Ottoman Sultan, whereas a bishop was considered the administrator of the *wakf* assets of his bishopric ([50], p. 45). Accordingly, the hegumens of Orthodox monasteries with assets under in the *wakf* framework were noted as their administrators (*müteveli*). The public recognition of ecclesiastical assets in the name of their administrator (that is, either a bishop or a hegumen) began early on in the Ottoman period, quite often assuming the status of a sale. A copy of an imperial document (*firman*) dated February 14, 1583 [4] from the Ottoman documents of the Kykkos Monastery reveals that the assets of the monasteries and the churches were written in the name of their pre-1571 owner. Therefore, whatever a monastery possessed before 1571 remained in its dominion, this of course after the decision of the Ottoman administration for the sale of the conquered land—which in Ottoman legal theory belonged to the Sultan—back to its former owners.

Land was the most important ecclesiastical asset during the Ottoman period. Its exploitation brought in profit, which was invested in lucrative areas such as commerce. Land was accumulated as important

capital within the various ecclesiastical funds set in each bishopric or monastery. The Ottoman administration's protective policy in relation to the Church's assets—tax exclusions, protection from the interference of third parties and the fact that the administrators had absolute jurisdiction over their disposal—allowed the production and distribution of products to take place in the best possible manner. The administrator could also rent or sell his property rights to third parties [56].

Hence, the ecclesiastical institutions' assets begin to gradually increase in size from the 16th century onward. The most prominent examples of such expansion are offered by the Orthodox monasteries that owned annexes in several areas—near and farther away from the main monastery complexes. An annex, or *metochi*, is usually land property which belongs to the monastery but is not located at the monastery. In a *metochi* there is a church and monks. The existence of the annexes allowed for the permanent settling of monks from the monastery's fraternity. At the same time, a network of people who had access to institutions of power, such as the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Ottoman administration, was developed around each annex.

A full list of the Kykkos Monastery's annexes is presented in Table 1. The existence of so many annexes outside of Cyprus shows the financial potential of the monastery's funds.

**Table 1.** Annexes (*metochia*) of the Kykkos Monastery during the Ottoman period (1571–1878).

<b>Within Cyprus</b>	<b>Out of Cyprus</b>
Archangelos	Constantinople
Agios Prokopios	Smyrna (İzmir)
Avlona	Prousa (Bursa)
Xiropotamos	Georgia
Agia Moni	Tripoli (Syria)
Varakis	Beirut
Tsakistra	Antalya
Kapileio	Adrianoupoli (Edirne)
Piano	Peristasi
Polemi	Kos
Pentalia	Serres
Kato Panagia	Filipoupoli
Sintis	
Karavas	
Sirianohori	
Agios Sergios	
Prasteio	
Kalopsida	
Trahoni	
Korakou	

How did the Kykkos monastery manage to acquire so many large estates in various locations of the island and also beyond the island's shores? The answer is just as complicated as the legal right to possess

and use land in the Ottoman Empire. The monastery did not simply manage land that was within the *wakf* framework. It also used land for which it had only the right of usufruct (*tassaruf*). Additionally, for a large number of lands located nearby or far away from its main complex, it had the right of complete ownership (*mülk*).

The ways the monastery managed to accumulate such vast estates include the following:

1. *Purchase from timar owners (sipahi) who sold public (miri) land.* In the Ottoman Empire, the term *sipahi* had the meaning of cavalryman in the feudal forces of the empire. They were granted a *timar*, that is, the tax revenue from a public land holding to use as income, which would enable them to maintain their military skills and perform their military duties. The *timar* holders had to extract their revenues from the peasants who cultivated the land (for more on *timar*, see Inalcık [57]; for more on the term *sipahi*, see Bosworth [58]). Within this system, the monastery purchased public land from various *timar* owners. Legally speaking, however, these owners had the right only to collect taxes, not full legal ownership of the land, which remained, at least in theory, public property. In time, these sales created an irreversible course that was dealt with as *de facto* situations.
2. *Land acquisition for which the members of the Kykkos fraternity had the right to usufruct.* Because of the decay of the *timar* system these lands were considered monastic property.
3. *Purchase from land owners with complete ownership (mülk).* This was one of the main ways that the monastery became one of the most important land owners in the island. The Kykkos Monastery purchased cultivable land and other real estate properties for which its owners had complete full legal ownership. The majority of these purchases consisted of cultivable land, although there were also many cases in which the monastery, either directly, through its hegumen or the monks, or indirectly, through a representative, bought houses with yards, shops, building plots in the cities, vineyards and gardens. (see Theoharides [4] for documents of land buying on behalf of the monastery during the 19th century [volume IV, pp. 1731, 1737, 1959], documents of house buying on behalf of the monastery [volume IV, pp. 1655, 1737, 1959] and vineyards buying agreements [volume IV, pp. 1677, 1737, 1765]; see Michael [8] for house buying agreements [p. 67B]; see Theoharides [5] for wine shop buying agreement [volume I, p. 225] and building plots in the city [volume I, pp. 147, 225]).
4. *Donation from the faithful to the Orthodox monasteries.* A donation entailed an individual's *unconditional* offer of property to a monastery and an individual could decide to do at any given point in his or her life. This mode of acquisition included the donation of complete ownership assets, such as cultivable land, houses and other estates, to big and powerful monasteries. Donations were, in essence, a way to express one's religious faith. This practice was probably applicable to personal assets, given that the records of donating land or house are scarce. In a document from the *Ottoman Archive* of the Kykkos monastery ([4], volume IV, p. 1885) there is a reference to a donation of 30 sheep.
5. *Dedication from the faithful to the Orthodox monasteries.* Dedication involved a person dedicating property to a monastery by entering into an agreement with the monastery. For example, one could dedicate a house and in return the monastery would offer money or food or pay a tax on his or her

behalf for the duration of this person's lifetime. Once the individual passed away, his or her property would be formally acquired by the monastery. This mode of ownership transfer typically involved the dedication of estates to churches in exchange for the protection of their owners by the monasteries to which the particular estate or other asset would pass. This was often the case with elderly who did not have offspring to inherit them. During the Ottoman period, many people bestowed or dedicated their estates to monasteries of Mount Athos in exchange for an annual lifetime income from the funds of the monastery [59]. A property could be dedicated for the purpose of paying up debts or for regular ecclesiastical taxes [60] or in memoriam of a dead relative. For an example of such in 1768 in a codex from the Kykkos Archive, see Papadopoulos ([12], p. 102). The dedication of such property assets in effect transformed these assets into inalienable property, that is, property that, unlike personal property, could not be confiscated by the Sultan. It thus offered a means for purchasing a degree of financial stability for wealthy individuals and their families.

6. *Integration of public land into a wakf framework.* This process was another way of increasing the monastic institutions' real estate during the post-1600 Ottoman period. During that period, cultivable land passed to a *wakf* regime and was included in the sum of ecclesiastical real estate. In addition to clear purchase there were several other indirect strategies—such as a mortgage on behalf of the owners to the fund of a monastery or a bishopric—that allowed ecclesiastical institutions to acquire land or other assets. One such example is recorded in *Codex 54* of the Kykkos monastery ([8], p. 1B), according to which in 1815 a resident of the Strovolos area in Nicosia agreed with the hegumen on a loan and the mortgaging of his estate.
7. *Personal property (usually land) inherited to the monastery.* This case involved mainly deceased monks who were members of monastic fraternity and who possessed land under the *mülk* regime. After their death, the possession of their assets passed to the monastery to which they had belonged. An Ottoman document of the Kykkos monastery ([5], p. 77) mentions that after a relevant report of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Kykkos Monastery's hegumen could inherit the real estate property of a deceased monk but not his cash.

#### 4. Kykkos Monastery's Land Holdings and Economic Activities in the 19th Century

During the 19th century, Cyprus had a small economy based on production and commercialization of agricultural products. Characteristically, the census of the British administration of 1881 [61] recorded the Cypriot population as an agrarian population. Among a total of 186,064 habitants, only one-sixth lived in cities; the remaining 154,768 lived in villages and were involved mainly in farming and agriculture. In the second half of the 19th century the British consul on the island, speaking about the Cypriot population, said that what the island had to offer to the European population is the products of its farmers ([62], p. 19, 316). After 1850, the ecclesiastical institutions' economic activities became a significant factor in Ottoman Cyprus's economy. They were the first ones to employ permanent personnel for their agricultural and stockbreeding activities as they accumulated capital to invest in acquiring

additional agricultural lands, operating markets in the island's cities and expanding their commercial activities beyond the island's shores.

Information about the Kykkos Monastery's assets during the 19th century reveals that the monastery was one of the richest Orthodox monasteries in the Ottoman Empire. The monastery's land property consisted of different types of holdings. First, there were various land holdings throughout the island. Second, there was a variety of annexes (see Table 1), many of which functioned as agricultural and stock farming units (*çiftliks*). The *çiftliks* began to appear in the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century when, in a long-term process, public lands (*miri*) were replaced by private ones [63]. According to Codices 49 (1813–1841) and 51 (1818–1881), the monastery owed five such farming units: Korakou, Tsakkistra, Polemi, Kato Panagia and Amargeti. According to Codex 49 (1813–1841), Codex 51 (1818–1881), Codex 53 (1843–1897), Codex 54 (1813–1819), Codex 56 (1844–1890) and also the Ottoman documents in the monastery's archive, the *çiftliks*, annexes (*metochia*) and cultivable land that were either owned or managed by the monastery were spread throughout Cyprus. Third, there were estate holdings (mainly shops and local markets) in the island's urban areas. Fourth, there were pasture areas for numerous herds. Fifth, the monastery owned mills – perhaps the most important enterprise of the 19th century local economy—set in various areas of Cyprus.

Around the 1820s, the monastery possessed great areas of cultivable land in 10 districts (*kazâs*) of Cyprus—a total of 3,872 acres (*skales*) of land ([64], p. 124). In the Ottoman Empire, *kaza* meant the district which *kadi's* (judge) administrative authority covered. The extent of the *kazâs* varied for local circumstances [65]. According to the Ottoman census of 1831, Cyprus was divided in 17 *kazâs* [66]. We should note that several pages are missing from Codex 51; these pages probably contained registrations of Kykkos monastery assets in other districts. Based on the available data, though, it seems that the largest shares were located in the Morfou district (1,497 acres (*skala*) of land), followed by the Pafos district (1,290 acres and 46 acres of vineyards) and the Oreini district (933 acres). We should also note here that we use the term *acre* in the rest of the article instead of *skala*. Usually one *skala* is equal to one acre but the Cyprus *skala* is bigger than one acre, equal to 1,300 m<sup>2</sup> [67] (for the Ottoman metrology, see İnalçık [68]).

The most important annexes were located in these areas, too. The annex of Xiropotamos (1,115 acres of cultivable land) and the annex of Avlona (340 acres) were in the district of Morfou, and the annex of Polemi (409 acres), the annex of Agia Moni (131 acres and 23 acres of vineyard) and the annex of Kato Panagia (259 acres) were in the Pafos district. Finally, in the district of Oreini was the annex of Archangelos with 526 acres and in the district of Agios Dometios was the annex of Agios Prokopios with 407 acres. While the exact property regime cannot be determined by Codex 51, the fact that these assets were recorded as Kykkos Monastery's property suggests that the monastic fraternity counted all that was recorded at the time as monastic property.

The fraternity members could not possibly have cultivated these land holdings by themselves. There were three main methods the monastery used for cultivation and production: (a) *direct cultivation* by the members of the fraternity who resided in the monastery or its annexes in various locations in Cyprus; (b) *renting land* to villagers who had the right to cultivate and enjoy the product, but the ownership of the

land remained to the monastery; and finally (c) using the *system of tenant farmer*, whereby landowner and cultivator would combine labor and capital for cultivation.

During the 19th century and according to references in the monastery's codexes, there were three variants of the system of tenant farming. In the first variant, the expenses and the exploitation of the produced product were shared equally by the owner of the land, that is the monastery, and by the cultivator (*misariko system*). In the second variant, the expenses and the various taxes on the production are paid by the cultivator who took six out of nine parts of the final product, thus leaving three parts for the land owner (*tritariko system*). In the third variant, there was a special deal in which all the expenses and the required capital were the responsibility of the cultivator who in the end gave part of the product to the land owner (*epimortos agrolipsia*).

A similar method of managing the monastery's cultivable land, which had to do more specifically with vineyards and was widely practiced during the 19th century, was the method of implantation (*emfiteysi*). According to this method the cultivator had to cultivate the vineyard that belonged to the monastery—he had to plant, fence it and take care of it; at the same time he could exploit the trees and water that were destined for that specific cultivation. The cultivator had the right to fully exploit the product for a time of 10 years. After this time he had to return the vineyard to the monastery in a good and fruitful condition (*prasinon and kinimenon*) without any other claim.

In addition to owning land, the monastery also owned trees. According to Ottoman law, the tree was a separate asset of absolute ownership (*mülk*) and could be sold or inherited accordingly. Possession of the tree was independent of the ownership of the land on which the tree stood. Although a tree was connected to the land, it was not considered a part of it, but instead as an independent asset. Based on the data from Codex 51 (1818–1881) and Codex 49 (1813–1841), the monastery owned 4,695 olive trees, 261 mulberry trees, 193 carob trees and 76 other various trees ([66], p. 69). The olive tree was the most important possession because olive oil was an exportable product. Codex 54 makes a reference to an oil vending property of the Kykkos Monastery situated in Nicosia's market ([8], p. 69).

Most of the olive trees were located in the districts of Kerynia (1,332 olive trees), Oreini (894 olive trees) and Larnaca (784 olive trees). In the Kerynia district, where the monastery had most of its trees (1,332 out of 4,695), there was no annex or important *çiftlik*. This was also the case in Larnaca, where again the monastery had a great number of olive trees without an annex or an important *çiftlik*. This proves that land ownership and land management was something completely different from the ownership and management of trees. In the area between the villages Vasilia and Trimithi and the Kerynia district the monastery owned 1,008 olive-trees without a record showing possession of land in that area. In the case of Oreini, 710 olive trees were located in the Archangelos annex. Similarly, the nearby annex of Agios Prokopios in Agios Dometios owned 160 olive trees. Russian monk Vasilios Varski, who visited the annex in 1735, noted their existence, writing that the Archangelos annex “has many fruit-trees (especially olive-trees and mulberry-trees, since it produces much silk)” ([69], p. 109).

Another important island product was silk, the production of which required mulberry trees as their leaves were the food of the silkworm that produced the silk. As foreigner travelers have noted, since the 19th century the island's Orthodox inhabitants dominated the production and commerce of silk, which

was one of the island's main exports during the 18th and 19th centuries ([62], p. 19). The most important areas of silk production in Cyprus were the Pafos and Marathasa areas. After 1820, for a period of four decades, the silk commerce toward Western Europe increased significantly [70].

According to registrations in Codex 51 of Kykkos monastery, at a particular moment of record, the monastery owned 518 mulberries in various areas: in the district of Pafos (235 mulberries), in the annex of Agia Moni (40 mulberries), in the annex of Pianio (40 mulberries) and in the areas of the villages Choulou (30 mulberries), Pentalia (40 mulberries) and Vretsia (60 mulberries). The rest of the mulberries were in the village of Kolossi, in the district of Kilani (20 mulberries) and in Karavas area in the district of Kyrenia (53 mulberries).

The monastery appears to have also owned carob trees. From the 237 carob trees recorded in Codex 51, 105 were situated in the district of Pafos, 86 in Kilani and 46 in Larnaca. The same codex also reports a sum total of 108 houses located in its annexes or *çiftliks*. In the case of the *çiftliks*, houses are considered those buildings located within the annex or the *çiftlik* and used by monks or workers. In the case of the annexes the houses were either within the annex or in neighboring villages. In its two greatest annexes near Nicosia the monastery owned separate residences, which suggests a trend toward the development of urban property.

According to Codex 51 alone, in 1818 Kykkos Monastery had 16 mills of various types (for a collection of all the notes for mills connected with the Kykkos monastery, see Perdakis ([71] pp. 105-135)). If the records from all the codices and from the Greek and Ottoman documents from the monastery's archives are combined, this figure should be higher. Unfortunately, due to disjointed references and the complexity as to the complete or partial ownership of mills, the exact number ([71], p. 126) remains unknown. The construction and operation of a mill required considerable capital because of the construction cost, the value of the land, the purchase and installation of special equipment for grinding, the expenses for buying tools and the cost for maintenance and operation [72]. The monasteries, the bishoprics, the parish churches and the archbishopric ([54], p. 277) owned a large number of mills. In cases where mills were owned by monasteries, they were operated exclusively by the monks and their workers. In other instances, the mills were rented to third parties. For monasteries, possession and operation of mills was a necessity because agricultural activities required processing large amounts of products such as grain and olives.

The relationship between Kykkos Monastery and the function of its mills during the Ottoman era shows two important aspects of its history. First, thanks to its participation in the production and commerce of agricultural products, the monastery was probably one of the most important producers on the island. The large number of mills owned is indicative of a high volume of production. Second, the complete ownership of a mill by the monastery required large sums of capital for the purchase of, equipment for and operation of the mill. The importance of the mills and their unhampered operation seems to have caused the dispatch of a certain letter from the Ecumenical Patriarchate to the Archbishop of Cyprus in December in 1852. In the letter the Ecumenical Patriarch encourages the protection of the Kykkos Monastery's mills with an edict (*firman*) of the Sublime Porte [73].

In relation to the herds of animals, in June 1819, 220 goats and 14 sheep were recorded in the annex of Avlona, and in September of the same year in the *çiftlik* of Korakou 118 goats and sheep were recorded, according to Codex 49 ([10], pp. 127-128). According to Codex 56, where the animals of the various annexes are recorded, in the annex of Archangelos 369 sheep were recorded in June 1865, in the annex of Agios Prokopios 480 sheep were recorded in October 1886, in the annex of Xiropotamos 556 sheep were recorded in November 1874, in the annex of Avlona 149 sheep were recorded in 1875 and in the annex of Varaki 97 sheep were recorded in December in 1866 ([9], pp. 100-105). In an Ottoman document from the monastery's archive that records the animals belonging to the annexes of the monastery in the district of Pafos, it is referenced that in 1876 these animals amounted to 900 sheep ([5], volume II, p. 695). The ownership of pastures established for herding the numerous flocks attests to the monastery's annexes' involvement in stock farming and agricultural production. For such an example related to the Archangelos *metochi*, see Theoharides ([5], volume II, p. 775).

Finally, according to the codices, the monastery kept shops and markets in the cities of Cyprus, especially in Larnaca and in Nicosia. During the first half of the 19th century, an oil vending shop, a leather vending shop and three others are recorded, and during the second half of the 19th century, according to the Ottoman archive of the monastery, title deeds for 59 shops and laboratories of the monastery were published, many of which were rented to the laity. Among the shops, there was one wine shop, a grocery store and a coffee house. By the end of the Ottoman era, according to the letter of the Hegumen Sofronios to the first British Governor of the island in 1879, the monastery owned 72 shops in Nicosia and Larnaca ([33], p. 108). The monastery had its own goldsmiths who were its permanent associates ([8], pp. 79-80), a feat of great importance as the keeping of gold showed its wealth and its ability to hold capital. In relation to exportation commerce, the monastery had commissioners who took care of the sale and exportation of its products and, according to evidence in the codices, it is characteristic that the monastery also owned part of a ship ([12], pp. 189-92).

The relationship between the ecclesiastical institutions and land ownership was a catalytic factor in the involvement of these institutions in the economy, especially during the 19th century when agricultural products were exported to European countries. As the owner of vast areas of cultivable land, owner of the large agricultural stockbreeding units of the characteristic *çiftliks* and producer of large amounts of agricultural products, the Kykkos Monastery was an active participant in commerce for both local consumption and export. The main products produced by the monastery in its numerous annexes and *çiftliks* that were then utilized for domestic commerce and exports, according to records from the codices, were: silk, grain, wine, cotton, oil, sesame and various other products of stockbreeding, like wool and leather.

Given that there were no banks in Ottoman Cyprus, the monastery lent money to cultivators with a specific interest. At the same time the monastery borrowed money when needed, which confirms that lending was a usual practice during the Ottoman era and that certainly everyone would be, at least for once during their lifetime, a creditor and a lender [74]. Kykkos Monastery, as one of the most important financial factors on the island during the 19th century, offered loans to cultivators, who had to repay their loan with interest. The loans were given only after an order by the hegumen; the various loans and their

interest are thoroughly recorded in the codices of the monastery. The loan agreement was finalized through the use of confessions that were stated in front of witnesses, and the time limit for pay off was determined during these confessions ([8], volume 4, p. 60).

### 5. Colonial Modernity vs. Ottoman Framework: The Ecclesiastical Question

Immediately after the transfer of the administration of Cyprus from the Sublime Porte to Britain in 1878 and the settlement of the British officers on the island, the Cypriot administrative framework changed dramatically and new institutions were introduced. The British brought with them a more modern understanding of the notion of administration, and they made it clear from the beginning that, especially regarding the Church, they were not willing to discuss any privileges [75]. The first high commissioner, Garnet Wolseley, basically tried to undo the prominent role of the ecclesiastical institutions, refusing to exempt them from government taxation ([76], p. 60). Under the British, the legitimacy of the Church of Cyprus as a political institution was also questioned and subsequent relations between the Church and the colonial administration became antagonistic [77,78].

In order to reorganize the tax system, the British government made an effort to record the ecclesiastical property. In his 1879 letter to the British High Commissioner, who asked to be informed about the monastery's assets, Sofronios, the monastery's hegumen, offered a complete listing of the monastery's assets, presented in Table 2. In this letter the numerous herds of the monastery, thanks to the annexes that produced large quantities of livestock, are not mentioned. According to this letter, the monastery's reported land holdings exceed the ones recorded in Codex 51 (1818–1881). However, because many pages from Codex 51 are missing, it is likely that the difference between the two sources is due to these missing pages.

**Table 2.** Property of the Kykkos Monastery in 1879.

Holdings	Quantity
Annexes (Metochia)	13
Temples (Churches)	10
Land (in acres [ <i>skalas</i> ])	15,148
Olive trees	8,797
Other trees	1,402
Vineyards (in acres [ <i>skalas</i> ])	429
Water mills	11
Olive mills	11
Shops	72

Source: Letter from the Hegumen of Kykkos Monastery to the High Commissioner of Cyprus, 1879 ([33], p. 108).

The British administration refused to accept the privileged position of the ecclesiastical institutions—in assets, taxes and mainly ownership. They made it clear from the first days of their arrival in Cyprus that ecclesiastical property would be included in the relevant state laws without any privileged exceptions or

treatment, thus annulling the privileged position of the ecclesiastical institutions during the Ottoman period. From 1878, the British administration insisted that the monastery assets should be taxed and any Sultan edict (*firman*) for exceptions would be ignored ([79], p. 73).

These intentions gave birth to the *Ecclesiastical Question*. This controversy was part of the general framework of the contested relationship between the British administration and the Orthodox ecclesiastical institutions of Cyprus [77], but it concerned the matter of ecclesiastical property, its taxation and its management ([79], p. 126; [80], p. 594; [81], pp. 390-393; [37], p. 379). In February 1879, the prelates of the Church of Cyprus addressed a memorandum to the British administration in which they described the changes the British caused in the landowning regime and requested a continuation of past privileges with regard to church property ([80], p. 594). In the following years, discussions persisted as the prelates unsuccessfully attempted to prepare their own regulations about ecclesiastical property ([80], p. 594).

In 1885 the British administration passed a law that would regulate the ecclesiastical institutions' property assets, especially land holdings. According to the Titles and Registration Law, an ecclesiastical institution petitioning for *ab antiquo* possession of land should present to the British administration proof—like the record or the ownership title—from the *Defterhane* of Istanbul ([80], p. 595). This differed from the Ottoman administration, which accepted the ownership of land by the ecclesiastical institutions without the need to present documents from the *Defterhane*. During the Ottoman period many ecclesiastical institutions owned important areas of land that were not recorded in Istanbul as part of their assets, as many times the dedication of one's fortune to them was accomplished simply in front of witnesses or the local Ottoman authorities.

The chaotic condition of the *Defterhane* of Istanbul and the difficulty in finding evidence of land ownership further compounded the situation. So the British administration, based on the Titles and Registration Law of 1885, managed to obtain great areas of land from the ecclesiastical institutions—even whole forests in the case of monasteries—because the courts would dismiss any claim that was not based on sufficient property evidence. Forests and land became state property according to the provision of the *Forest Delimitation Ordinance* of 1881 and the decisions of the Delimitation Commission ([81], p. 385).

The reaction of the high clergy to the application of the British administration law was immediate. In April 1885 the *Regulation of the Church of Cyprus*, which was about its internal administration and organization, was published ([80], p. 595). In the fourth part of this regulation, which was related to the property assets of the ecclesiastical institutions, it was mentioned that they were managed by committees in which laymen participated and the appropriate control was also exercised. A year later, in April 1886, and while the situation was still in abeyance, the Holy Synod of the Church of Cyprus, in one of its memos to the high commissioner [82], insisted that the ecclesiastical property should not be included in the rationale of the laws about other properties and that it must be considered as a special case, as it was during the Ottoman period. In January 1894, the chief secretary informed the chairman of the Ecclesiastical Property Committee that the high commissioner had communicated with the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Istanbul in an effort to find in the Ottoman archives a record of the ecclesiastical

property in Cyprus [83]. In the end such a record was never found, and this allowed the British administration to put into practice the laws about land ownership.

Immediately after the settlement of the British government on the island, as the thousands of documents from the Cyprus State Archive show, there was constant correspondence between the Kykkos Monastery's hegumen and the British officers in relation to the refusal of the monastery to accept the new regulations that were enacted regarding the establishment of property rights for land and forests and also the payment of taxes for the production of products and the sale of land. Two years after the transfer of the administration to the British, Kykkos Monastery was informed by British officers that it owed taxes for the production of great quantities of wine. In spite of letters from the Kykkos Monastery's hegumen asking for a tax exception, the chief secretary of the British administration informed the commander of Nicosia that the monastery's hegumen must be informed that the law offered him no exception and that he should pay the duty on wine or answer to a summons before the proper courts [84], whereas a year previously the acting chief collector had informed the chief secretary that exemption from duty was "under the Turkish regime, accorded to all Religious Establishments . . . but was withdrawn by ordinance no xxii of 1879" [85].

With the abolition of the practices of the Ottoman period, Kykkos Monastery, often after legal contests, was forced to surrender areas of land for which it had asserted property rights and forests for which it had asserted the right to herd its animals and pay taxes for its productive activities. The *Ecclesiastical Question* remained in abeyance for some decades after the settlement of the British on the island. Debates erupted between the British administration and the monastery every time a sale of land that belonged to or was considered to belong to the monastery was under consideration. Up to the conclusion of the General Survey Properties in 1929, Kykkos Monastery and the Orthodox Church of Cyprus in general had lost important farming areas, which had passed to the control of the colonial administration ([79], p. 74).

## **6. Conclusion: The Kykkos Monastery Today**

In this article, we presented a general overview of the various economic activities of the Kykkos Monastery. We have concentrated on the Ottoman era and focused more intensely on the 19th century, a period for which the available archival evidence offers the opportunity to form a clear picture of these activities. The economic wealth of the monastery has been clearly established through the evidence presented. We regret that we cannot at this point offer an analysis of the various activities in the non-Cypriot annexes, seeing as the discussion has made it clear that the Kykkos monastery's activities were indeed international in nature. However, even within the confines of Cyprus, it is clear that the monastery occupied a privileged position in a broad range of economic activities—not only in terms of the various types of extensive land holdings but also in terms of its ability to use agricultural products to produce commercial products (silk, wine, oil). Oil, wine and silk are characteristic Mediterranean products and traditional sources for income in the Mediterranean economies [86]. From early on, these were highly marketable and formed the backbone of the island's exports.

The picture offered in this article helps shed light on the economic activities of ecclesiastical institutions during the Ottoman period. Far from being a solely spiritual or other-worldly enterprise, monasticism had an extensive involvement in the local economic life and provided a primary means for the concentration of capital and a host of economic activities. In turn, this means that the monastery was an active economic agent that participated in numerous this-worldly activities. This is typical of Cypriot ecclesiastical institutions at large. In addition, Cyprus is one of the very few regions throughout the Orthodox world where these type of activities have been maintained up until today. Unlike Cyprus, in most states in Eastern Europe, state authorities (both communist and non-communist) have been successful in expropriating ecclesiastical property from the churches and the monasteries. But in Cyprus, the economic prosperity of the monastery was only partially disrupted by the application of the new taxation laws and the new land regime imposed by the British after 1878. As a result, the monastery lost some of its extensive land holdings and, in particular, possession of pasture lands.

While this issue does not fall within this article's topic, we should add a few remarks here about the Monastery's political affiliations during the period of the colonial rule. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Kykkos' hegumen Gerasimos was among the moderate or conservative leaders of the ecclesiastical establishment (for an overview, see Roudometof [87]). Between 1900 and 1910 the Church of Cyprus was sharply divided over the issue of Archbishopric succession. There was a conservative and traditional group of high clergy who opposed more radical and nationalistic group of high clergy and each of the two supported its own candidate for the vacant archiepiscopal throne. Eventually, the radicals emerged victorious and in due course of time, the leadership of Kykkos monastery adjusted to the tenor of the times. By the time of the EOKA anti-colonial struggle of the 1950s the monastery was fully in line with the more nationalist orientation prevalent among both the clergy and the laity. In fact, it offered to the guerrillas both financial assistance as well as practical support—such as shelter in the monastery and its holdings.

Lastly, let us conclude with a brief overview of the more recent developments in the monastery's financial status. In the course of the 20th century, the monastery has found new ways of boosting its financial resources. Since 1950, the monastery has divided up the thousands of acres of agricultural land it controlled outside Nicosia and began selling it in the booming real estate market. After 1970 and especially after 1974, this region of Nicosia's broader metropolitan area became the site of extensive urban expansion. According to Hegumen Nikiforos' own statements [88], the monastery's annual income increased ten-fold, from 450,000 CYP in 1983 to 4,500,000 CYP in 2003 (1 CYP = 1.71 Euros). This income has been used to fund several actions: a host of charitable activities; the restoration of the original monastery (located on top of Mt. Troodos); the creation of the Byzantine Ecclesiastical Museum; and the creation of the Archangel Cultural Foundation of the Kykkos Monastery, inclusive of the Foundation's Research Centre as well as other divisions dealing with the preservation and restoration of manuscripts and other religious artifacts.

Today, Kykkos Monastery has two annexes in Nicosia, the annex of Archangelos and the annex of Agios Prokopios; two in Pafos, the annex of Panagia of Sinti and the annex of Agia Moni; and three other annexes, Xiropotamos, Baratzi and Avlona, located in the occupied part of Cyprus. The annex of Agios

Prokopios in Nicosia is the administrative centre of the monastery and the seat of the hegumen. The annex of Archangelos houses various departments of the Archangel Cultural Foundation, which was founded by the current Hegumen Nikiforos; it consists of the Research Centre of the Kykkos Monastery, the Centre of Treasure of Cypriot Greek, and Museum of the Holy Monastery of Kykkos, as well as the laboratory for the restoration of manuscripts, pictures and monastery heirlooms. The Archangel Cultural Foundation intervenes extensively in the island's cultural life [89]. The Byzantine Ecclesiastical Museum of the Kykkos Monastery is located on the grounds of the monastery and is one of the richest museums in Cyprus. It is also one of the main tourist destinations for tourists engaged in religious pilgrimages.

Kykkos Monastery is, today, one of the most financially powerful monasteries in Cyprus. Since the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960, the legal status of all ecclesiastical institutions has been that of private corporate units—the churches and monasteries are not incorporated under public law (as in many other European states) but under private law. In essence, this means that there is no public oversight over ecclesiastical financial and economic activities other than the oversight regarding the compliance with the legislation about sound financial management (similar to private corporations). In turn, this means that there are no publicly known official records that testify to the specifics of the financial activities of the ecclesiastical institutions. Still, it is known that the monastery owns a factory producing wine and a factory for bottling water and is the owner of many buildings rented to third parties, mainly in Nicosia. At the same time it remains the owner of extensive real estate property holdings. The monastery is also one of the main stakeholders in the Hellenic Bank of Cyprus.

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