

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF KARYES LAKONIA**  
**1920-2020**

***PART II***  
***(1950-1990)***

A Special edition of the Karyates Association's News Bulletin

Athens, December 2019

Harris Konstantopoulos



## The Karyates' Brotherhoods overseas

As we mentioned in the early 1950s there was a great new wave of Greek immigration in America. However this time the compatriots decided to settle mainly to the Northern States in order to work in the field of industry and services. Therefore, it was decided to set up independent associations-brotherhoods in various cities. Indicatively, according to the Brotherhood census of **1950**, there were compatriots in the following **US** states: South Carolina 287, North Carolina 271, California 137, Illinois 135, Indiana 65, Wisconsin 43, Missouri 33, Utah 33, Virginia 24, Florida 20, Texas 13, Wyoming 12, Colorado 12, Michigan 11, Washington 10, New Mexico 8, Louisiana 6, Arizona 5, Idaho 3, Montana 2, Kentucky 2, Iowa 1 and Alaska 1 (**1.131** in total). Also, according to the same census in **Canada**, there were 124 compatriots in the province of Ontario, 8 in Quebec and 1 in British Columbia (**133** in total).

Thus on the **31st of October 1956** the "**CHICAGO BROTHERHOOD**" was created, while on the **30th of March 1958** it was decided to establish the "**BROTHERHOOD OF NEW YORK – NEW ENGLAND**". Finally, in **1963**, the Karyates living in Canada created the "**BROTHERHOOD OF TORONTO**".

At the same time the original Brotherhood in Gastonia establishes the "**FOUNDATION**" to finance the studies of young Karyatans in Greece and in America. Hundreds of young compatriots have since benefited from its services and become brilliant scientists. According to "KARYATIKA" (1972 ed.) the most important benefactor was **George Gr. Karygiannis** with his wife **Fotini** daughter of **J. Goudes**.

Furthermore on **April 4, 1965**, the "**KARYATES LADIES ASSOCIATION**" was founded in Charlotte, North Carolina.

In their effort to help the village of Karyes, the Brotherhoods have as their primary purpose the organization of events where the compatriots will meet and the bonds between them will remain strong. Thus the First Brotherhood had pre-war purchased land in Gastonia (North Carolina) which it named "**KARYAE PARK**" to host its events there. During this period, therefore, the park continues to improve its facilities. In **1946**, the "**Heron of fallen compatriots**" and in **1956** the "**Administration Building**" were erected, while in **1957** the grove was expanded with 3 additional acres and the **new entrance** was built. Furthermore the Brotherhood built in **1958** the **Barbeque stand**, in **1967** the **Ballroom** and in the **early 1970's** the **Assumption of Virgin Mary Chapel**.



Karyae Park in Gastonia, N.C.



Karyae Park in Toronto, ONT



Karyae Park Salem, WIS

The **Toronto Brotherhood** in **1980**, decided to follow the example of Gastonia-Charlotte thus acquired its own space, creating the "**KARYAE VILLAGE**" in an area of approximately 212 acres in Sunnyside, Ontario. Today it includes the **Heron of the Fallen Compatriots, Grill, Refreshment, Ballroom, Playground** as well as the **Aghia Paraskevi and Aghios Panteleymonas Chapel**.

Finally, the **Chicago Brotherhood** organized its own annual summer gathering. Originally at ZION National Park in Illinois and **since 1984** at the now owned "**KARYAE PARK**" in Salem, Wisconsin, which has a farm-style character.

At the same time, the Karyates who have immigrated (after 1960) to the far distant continent of **Australia** were organized by the founding of "**KARYATIS CLUB**" in Melbourne and the "**KARYATES ASSOCIATION**" in Sydney.

## The goal

As it has already been mentioned, but also from what we will describe at the following pages, this period is characterized by the strong organized effort to **transform the village into a modern settlement** so that the Karyates who decide not to immigrate to have a decent living, but also the immigrants (in Greece or overseas) to keep in touch with each other and to have the opportunity to visit and stay in the village, especially in the summer with their families enjoying modern amenities. For this reason, everyone's efforts will focus on creating modern infrastructure and amenities, as well as embellishing the Karyes village.

# A. BASIC INFRASTRUCTURES

## I. Irrigation: The «Desi» Reservoir and the grooves



The construction of the reservoir

The first initiative was about the eternal problem of the settlement: **the water**. In particular, after the war, the necessity for the irrigation of the farms was raised again. Initially, it was proposed to construct a dam (an artificial lake). However, the plan did not go ahead and it was eventually decided to build a large tank at “**Desi**”. Indeed, during the period **1954-56** the tank was built with the donations of the Brotherhood of America and of the Association in Athens, but also with the personal work of the local residents. Almost **13 kilometers of concrete grooves** were also constructed, in order to transport the valuable water to all the gardens of the village and to farms around it. The water was provided both from the new tank-reservoir and from the fountain of Panaghia.

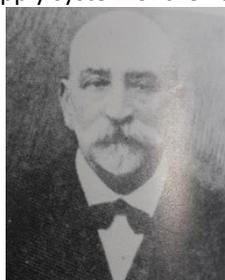
The construction of these grooves gave also an opportunity to construct **new roads** and widen the existing ones, so the village acquired an **internal road network** by then.

At the same time, an \$ 15,000 interest-free loan was given to the Karyates in order to build water tanks in remote areas of the Community (eg. Fotinou and Xagdaria).



## II. Electricity, Water Supply and Road Network

A lot of initiatives had been underway throughout the 1950s in order to bring **electricity** to the village. After taking under consideration all the plans, even for an autonomous grid, finally at the end of the 1950's decade the electricity network reached Karyes via the national electricity grid, at the expense of the Brotherhood's departments. In particular, the **Brotherhood of Carolina** paid \$ 20,000, the **Chicago Brotherhood** \$ 4,000 to cover the original amount necessary, while the **Brotherhood of Toronto** funded the Central Square electric lighting and the **Matalion Institution** funded the lighting of the Rachi Square. Finally, the **Greek State** grace at the initiative of the Laconian Prefect Spilios Vanikiotis, ordered the construction of the secondary water supply system of the Karyes Community (1960s) and thus there were **water pipelines** in every house.



Konstantinos El. Iliopoulos



Athanasios K. Iliopoulos



Georgios K. Iliopoulos



Nikolaos D. Kaperonis



Nikolaos Mermighas



The “steno” road before the works

Thanks to the contribution of **Theodoros Charakas**, who was a high-ranking executive of HALKIDA CEMENTS CORPORATION, ample raw material was provided and the cementing work of the village's roads began. With the financial contribution of **Konstantinos Iliopoulos** and his children **Athanasios** and **Georgios**, the main street and the “steno” street were cemented. Grace at the initiative of **Nikolaos Mermighas** (who organized a fundraiser) the road to Panagia was also cemented. At the same time, thanks to the systematic efforts of **Nicholaos D. Kaperonis** and **Konstantinos N. Charakas**, the cementing of the streets of Rachi was also completed.



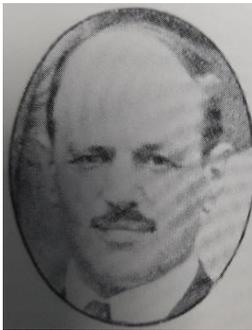
Theodoros K. Charakas

Subsequently, many others were motivated offering money and personal work and within three (3) years the village had finally acquired a **complete network of cemented roads**.

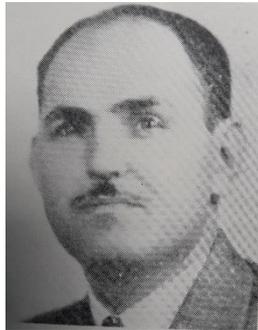
At the same period the asphaltting and widening of the road that connects Karyes with the Sparti-Tripolis highway was finally achieved. Firstly, the south junction (Kokkinoloutsas) in **1970** was completed and secondary the north junction (chani Bakourou) with the construction of the Katevasia Bridge in **1980**.

### III. The Sports Center

Another major work of the 1950s was the construction of the Karyes Sports Center. As we have already mentioned in our previous tribute, a small stadium was created in Pinigoura. Thus, in **1951**, under the Presidency of **Paraskevas G. Koutsogeorgas** and **Konstantinos Mich. Pitsios** and grace at an US \$ 518 grant from the Brotherhood of America and the company "**LEVENTIS**", the "Karyatis" Sports Club purchased a piece of land adjacent to complete the site.



Andreas S. Trakas



Demetrios P. Leventis



Paraskevas P. Leventis



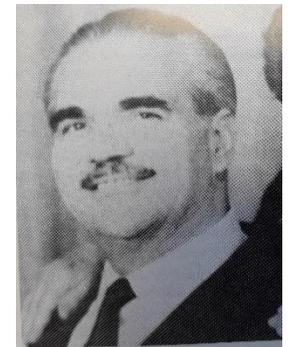
Christos P. Leventis



G.S. Skiouris

The final expansion, shaping and fencing with a wall was made in **1954** at the expense of the great benefactors of the club: **Paraskevas P. Leventis**, **Christos P. Leventis**, **Andreas S. Trakas** and **Konstantinos Sp. Pitsios**. Subsequently, with the expense of **G.S. Skiouris**, the Club's locker rooms were constructed in **1958**, while in **1981**, with the donation of **D.Th. Kakkaris**, the construction of the Host team's locker rooms took place.

With the completion of these projects, the **Karyes Sports Center** could now accommodate up to **600 spectators** in a contemporary sports facility.



D. Th, Kakkaris

### IV. The Medical dispensary and the Post Office

Another request of the local residents and the visitors was the creation of a **modern dispensary**. Since 1950 the placement of a Community Medical Practitioner had been established in Karyes, but until the mid-1980s the Practitioner was temporarily housed in rented houses. Finally, the solution came once again through a will, and in particular through the will of **Konstantinos Ath. Vrinios**. The compatriot was born in 1913 in Karyes and was married to **Marika Chrysikos**. For many years he was the Director of the Alexandra Hospital's Dental Department in Athens, while at the same time maintaining his private clinic. He was a kind man, offering his services free to all of his fellow compatriots who were admitted to Athens hospitals provided to them the necessary care during the difficult years after the Nazi occupation until his death (1980). Having no children, his wife -with whom he shared his love for the village-, decided to fulfill his desire to donate their house to the Karyes Community in order to house the "Karyes local medical clinic". Therefore, with a moving ceremony on **August 18, 1987**, the donation was accepted by the village authorities and the house has become since then the "**Karyes Medical Dispensary**".



Karyes Medical Dispensary

Meanwhile the clinic was equipped with the necessary medical equipment with the money from the will of the sons of **George Ath. Darnos**, **Ioannis**, **Elias** and **Athanasios** and a new building was built in another part of the village to house the **Karyes' Post Office**.



The Former Karyes' Post Office  
(today pharmacy)

## B. EMBELLISHMENT

### I. The Karyes' new Central Square and the new St. Andrew Church

The compatriots were concerned not only for the creation of the necessary infrastructures but for the embellishment of the village. Therefore they decided the creation of a modern new central square. As we have noted in the previous tribute, the small square of Vigla was consisted of a small space with a ridge, the small old church of St. Andrew and a small community building (built in **1845**) that could not serve the needs of the Community.

Thus it was decided to make a radical renovation. **Panagiotis Paraskevas Matalas**, a Karyatis civil engineer living in Athens, made a topographical note and a full study for a new square, grace at the initiative of **Athanasios K. Iliopoulos**, President of the **Karyates Association**.



The old square

The project was **grandiose**, as it foresaw the expropriation and demolition of four houses, the old St. Andrew's Church and the old Community building. At the same time, it foresaw the construction of a **large square**, a **Heroon**, a new **Community Building**, as well as a **magnificent new Church**.

Many people thought that it was a task impossible for a village. However, they did not take under consideration the strong will of a specific compatriot: **John G. Darnos** and the rest of the Karyates.



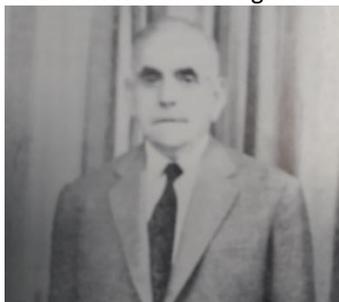
Festivities and celebrations at the old square



The old Church (at the left) and the new one (at the right).

Our compatriot was the "soul" of this great work. He founded the "**Karyatic Church Club**" with the purpose of erecting the new Church. Meanwhile many Karyates donated vast amounts of money for the completion of the new square and the new Church.

**Panagiotis G. Karygiannis** and his wife **Panagiota Dim. Charakas**, with their will, donated a two-store house in Athens. The money from its exploitation (rent and sale) contributed to the construction of the new Church of St. Andrew. At the same time, there was the will of **Demetrios Voukidis** (or Koutsouris), who had left all his property for the same reason. Furthermore the **bell tower** of the church was erected grace at the donation of **George K. Kostalas** and his wife **Chrysoula**.



John G. Darnos



Panagiotis G. Karygiannis and his wife Panagiota Dim. Charakas



George K. Kostalas and his wife Chrysoula

As it is written at the “Karyatika”, a compatriot named **Vassilios P. Tourogiannis**, although he had not visited his village for decades and lived in a remote US location, he paid all his contributions to the Brotherhood. As soon as he learned the news of the creation of the new square without hesitation he immediately decided to donate the money for the construction of the **Heroon** and the **statue of Nike**.



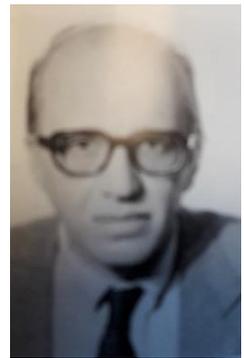
Andreas S. Papastavrides



Vassilios P. Tourogiannis



The mold of the statue



Panagiotis Par. Matalas

So with the money of the senior benefactors and by the mobilization the **U.S.** and **Canada** Brotherhoods (Charlotte-Gastonia, Chicago, New England-Boston and Toronto) the necessary amount was raised and the project (new square, Church, Community Building and electric lighting) was completed in **just two years**, a record time.

Finally, with the donations of the first President and Leader of the Brotherhood **Andreas S. Papastavridis** and his wife **Alexandra**, a Library was created in the new Community Building.

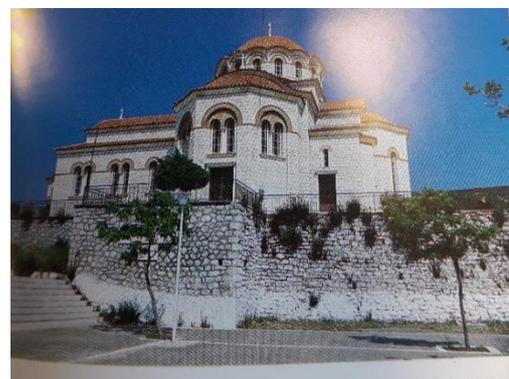
It was a fascinating initiative considering the fact that the designing, financing and execution of this project were done **exclusively by a private initiative without any substantial state involvement**.



The new square



The new Community Hall and the Heroon with the statue of Liberty



The new church above the square

## II. The other landscaping works

Almost twenty years after the destruction of Karyes, the damages in the inhabitants' homes had then been repaired to a great extent, and the effort for the village's embellishment began.



Elias G. Iliopoulos

At the same time along with the works at the central square, another great construction project took place on the hill of Aghios Ioannis (St. John), where the **old Community Clock** of Karyes had been blown up by the Nazis: The construction of the new Clock which was sponsored by **Elias G. Iliopoulos**, the son of the initial donor.

The project was completed in **1959** and afterwards, the brothers **Andreas** and **Konstantinos N. Charakas** proceeded to the formation of the space around the new clock and the St. John's / Aghios Ioannis Chapel. For this reason, they offered a part of their property.



The new Clock

During the **1960s** and **1970s**, many other embellishment works took place at the village.

As previously mentioned, the **Rachi Square** had been electrified by a donation from the **Matalion Institute** and by then it was restored and took its present form.



The school's library

With many small donations, the **Aghia Paraskevi Chapel** was renovated and the courtyard was cemented. With the donation provided by **Athanasios K. Iliopoulos**, a surrounding wall was constructed and fences were placed around it.

Finally in **1970**, a new building for the **Elementary School's Library** was being constructed with money from the will of **Panagiotis Chr. Pitsios** and the initiative of **Konstantinos Th. Dandzikis**.



Panagiotis Chr. Pitsios

In **1968**, two marble statues of the Goddesses of **Hestia** and **Demetra** were transported and placed on the main street at the entrance of the settlement, thanks to "*the love of a simple wage earner Karyatis*" (as it is mentioned in Volume II of the "Karyatika").

Specifically, at the initiative of the compatriot **Andreas P. Kastanas**, the two statues were donated by the Municipality of Athens "*in return for the offer of the statues of the Caryatids at the Temple of Erechtheion on the Acropolis*". These were two of the statues that were commissioned to adorn the Omonia Square in Athens during the interwar period. The mayor of Athens, Constantine Kotzias, eventually placed nine statues of muses there, while ordering five more: three Graces and two Goddesses. Eventually, in the late 1930s, after many complaints, the site was refurbished and the Muses' statues were removed from the site and the rest statues were never placed.



As we have said many times, the Karyates distinguished for their faith in the Orthodox Christian tradition.

For that reason and during the same period, a considerable number of donations concerning the renovation of old chapels and the construction of new ones took place.

Starting in the 1960s, with the donation of **Andreas G. Lambrakis** and money from the will of **Panagiotis G. Karygiannis**, the exterior enclosure of the **Church of the Assumption of Virgin Mary (Panagia)** was decorated with the construction of concrete corridors.



The Aghios Nikolaos chapel with the cemetery

At the same time, thanks to the donations of **George K. Mentavlos** and **Panagiotis Nick. Charakas**, the road to the **cemetery of Aghios Nikolaos**, as well as the cemetery itself, was entirely cemented.



Panagiotis Nick. Charakas



George Nick. Charakas

Also, during the same period the **Aghioi Anargyri Chapel** was completely repaired thanks to a donation of **George Nick. Charakas**, as a memorial of his uncles Paraskevas and John.



The Aghioi Anargyri Chapel



The Aghios Dememtrius Chapel

In the late **1970s**, the **Chapel of Aghia Kyriaki** was built at the Karyes-Sparti Road.

In **1980**, the **Aghios Dememtrius Chapel** was built at the "Vergatsoula" neighborhood at the expense of **George Th. Skiouris**.

Finally, in **1988**, the old chapel of the **Nativity of Virgin Mary** in the settlement of **Fotinou** which was destroyed by the Nazis was rebuilt among with its cemetery with the donation of the **Ardamis brothers**.



The Chapel of Aghia Kyriaki



The Chapel of Nativity of Virgin Mary

### III. The Karyatides Monument: The Dream becomes a Reality

Since the 19th century, it was known that the village of **Arachova** was situated at the same place with the **ancient Karyes**.

It is noteworthy that the first collective effort of the inhabitants of the village of Arachova Lakedaimon was entitled "**KARYATIC ASSOCIATION**", as it was officially published in the Gazette of the Kingdom of Greece's Government on **January 23, 1897**.

In the 1970s, the replacement with copies of the original statues at the Acropolis of Athens in order to protect them from the atmospheric pollution gave rise to the Karyates' dreams and enabled the **Karyates Association** to proceed at the construction of the **Karyates Monument** in their birthplace.

Thus in the **spring of 1981**, the erection of the Monument begun. A work that was identical to that of the Erechtheion of Athens on the ancient acropolis of Karyes.



Photo taken from an post war visit of the villages' residents to the Erechtheion Temple at the Athens Acropolis.

Everyone knew that the statues were from their place and they hurried to take pictures in front of them.



The committee that designated the site for the erection of the monument

*The project was carried out solely with the willing, enthusiastic support of notable citizens and the financial support of the Karyates, without any other financial assistance. The Karyates Association planned, searched for and found the appropriate institutions and executors of the project".*



The members of the Karyates Association Board



**Paraskevas Meidanis**

The creator of the Monument, spiritual leader of the Brotherhood in America



**Panagiotis St. Maheras**

President of the Association and of the Executive Committee



**Ioannis Ar. Kakaris**  
Vice President of the Association and of the Monument's Erection Committee



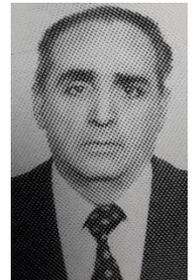
**Efstratios D. Charakas**

General Secretary of the Association and of the Erection Committee



**Demetrios N. Karygiannis**

Supervisor of the Project Executive Committee



**Elias Papageorgiou**  
Second Financial Manager



**Panagiotis and Fotini Koutsogiorgas**  
Great Benefactors

With the systematic support of the Gastonia's Brotherhood "AI KARYAI" and the other Brotherhoods and Clubs of Chicago, Boston, Toronto (Canada) and Australia (Sydney, Melbourne) the project was completed in **just two years (1981-1983)**.

On **July 24, 1983**, in a brilliant ceremony, the inauguration of the Pentelic Marble Monument took place and all the Karyates proudly reached at the hill to admire the Monument.

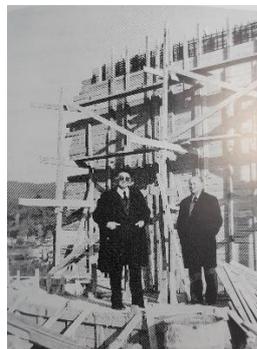


**George And. Trakas**

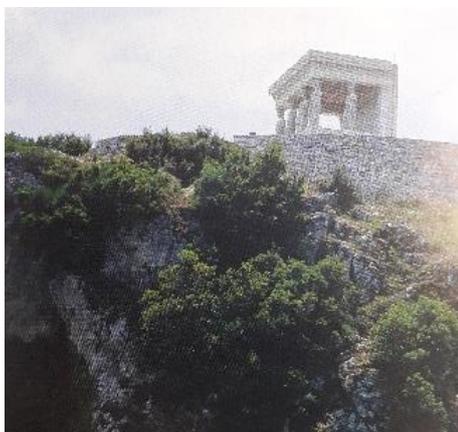
He organized a fundraiser to raise enough money for almost 50% of the project's total cost.



The craftsmen in front of their work



Photos taken during the works



The monument dominates the hill



The inauguration

Since then the Monument has achieved its goal: to be an element of pride for all the Karyates, wherever they live, but also to become a point of reference for the visitors of the beautiful town of Karyes.

# CONCLUSION

## A modern and beautiful settlement

All these initiatives and projects took place during a **40years period (1950-1990)** laying the foundations for the modern shape of the Karyes Laconia.

It is generally accepted that Karyes, has completely transformed itself into a small town with modern infrastructure (community building, school, squares, streets) and impressive monuments (Karyatides, Clock), thanks to the love of its children, who were forced to emigrate to the major Greek Cities Greece and overseas.

## The failure to create organized farming

However, the unprecedented mass immigration of the 1950s and 1960s had a decisive blow to the settlement's economy. As already mentioned in the second volume of "The Karyatika" (1972) *"Crops throughout the region have been abandoned as unprofitable, with the exception of some irrigated gardens around the village. The vineyards, which were about 1,450 acres, are being abandoned due to lack of hands due to migration and frost."*

We should also mention **the failure to create an organized and modern cooperative movement** in Karyes that would lead to a **reliable and certified agricultural and livestock production**. The Agricultural Cooperative from 325 members in 1951 was limited to 142 members in 1971 and as we have already mentioned in 1970 there was no serious potato cultivation. Although a new modern warehouse was being built in Pinigoura, only in the "Kamos" plain a mechanical and fertilizer agricultural production took place. However, even there the project for the land redistribution failed.

The Village's residents were turning to the **livestock farming**, which was a more profitable solution due to the need for less labor and less water, but this move was also not organized. Although the Dairy Cooperative had 43 members in 1971, the cheese-making effort through the new creamery donated by Kerhoulas in 1971 failed, and the establishment was abandoned in the early 1980s. Even a new Community slaughterhouse which was built in 1980 was finally abandoned as it could not cope with the new regulations of the European Union.



Το κτίριο του Τυροκομείου



Η αποθήκη του γεωργικού συνεταιρισμού

## The return from America and Australia

Since the 1970s and 1980s, there has been a tendency a lot of compatriots who had been forced to immigrate in US, Canada and Australia to return back to the Homeland.

Unfortunately, the situation mentioned above had as result the vast majority to decide not to live in Karyes but in other urban centers of Greece and especially Athens region, where there were modern amenities and prospects for themselves and their children.

Thus they decided to use their houses in the village as a place for summer holidays.

In the next issue:

**THE MODERN ERA**

***From the Golden Twenty years (1990-2010) to the crisis (2010-2020)***

***The new great project "CULTURE AND MEMORY CENTER"***

The Information of that Special Edition was provided by the books:

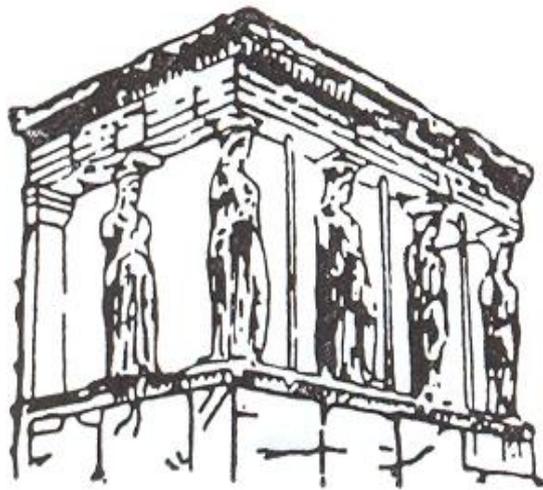
- **"BYBLOS"** (BOOK), Brotherhood of the Arachovites "AI KARYAI", Gastonia N.C. U.S.A. (1929), editorial Paraskevas John Meidanis,
- **"KARYAI"**, writer Constantine Michael Pitsius (1948),
- **"KARYATIKA"**, Paraskevas John Meidanis and his son Dr. John Paraskevas Meidanis, Washington D.C.. A work consisting of two volumes (1950 and 1972), edited by the Brotherhood of the Arachovites "AI KARYAI" Gastonia, N.C. U.S.A. which has been awarded by the Athens Academy
- **"THE CONTEMPORARY KARYES LAKONIA"** Panagiotis Stylianos Machera (1987),

and from the newspapers:

- **"AI KARYAI"**, Karyates Association of Athens and Suburbs "ARACHOVA LAKEDEMONOS" (1950s)
- **"KARYES, ARACHOVA LAKEDEMONOS AND VILLAGES OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF OINOUDOS"**, Annita Gleka-Prekezes president of the "KARYATES ASSOCIATION" (1986-2010).

**The Karyates Association**

**Athens, December 2019**



## ΣΥΝΔΕΣΜΟΣ ΤΩΝ ΑΠΑΝΤΑΧΟΥ ΚΑΡΥΑΤΩΝ