

## Chapter 6

### LOCATING PLACES IN GREECE

Since the main reason for emigration during the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was financial reason, immigrants came from small villages. When they were asked to declare their birth place, feeling that the small village would not be recognized they gave the name of the large city near that village.



Street of Athens, 1995

However, at that period of time those who lived in large cities had no reason of going through the dangerous adventure of emigrating. Therefore if your immigrant ancestor has declared a large city as his/her birth place, more research in the U.S.A. needs to be done. (See chapter 1, p.6).

#### NAMES OF PLACES

Once you have discovered the name of the town your ancestor was from, you must still determine its location; to which district [eparhia], and to which county [nomos] it belongs. You won't be able to write to relatives or start genealogical research in original records unless you identify the place exactly.

Why is this step **so important**? Many places have the same or similar names that may be easily confused. Greek place names are often misspelled in American sources. The spelling may be badly changed in transliteration. Difficult names may be shortened. It is crucial that these problems be resolved before you can start looking for the town on a gazetteer or on a map or looking for records of the place.

#### GAZETTEERS

A gazetteer is a dictionary of geographical names. It lists places in Greece, and gives sufficient information to uniquely identify a specific place. One must remember that several villages may have the same name but other factors, such as the *nomos* [νομός, county] or *eparhia* [επαρχία, district] can be used to distinguish one place from another. A gazetteer also gives information which will enable you to locate the **records** of that place.

Greece is divided geographically into ten main regions. Each region is divided into counties called in Greek *nomos*. The term *nomos* is sometimes translated as prefecture. Each *nomos* is divided into *eparhias* [districts]. Each *eparhia* is divided into municipalities [δήμος, dimos]. Before the year 1999 the cities and large towns were governed by a municipality [dimos], but the small towns and villages were governed by a community [κοινότητα, *koinotis*]. The head of a municipality is a Mayor; the head of a community was a Community President. For a list of regions and counties in Greece, see the Administrative Map of Greece, which can be found on chapter 4, p.60.

The following is a list of various gazetteers, and a description of how they can be helpful to you:

**1. “Greek Gazetteer”** A Geographical Dictionary, vol. 1 and vol. 2, by Lica H. Catsakis (Bywater), Salt Lake City, Utah 2000. This publication consists of 745 pages, written in English. The names of towns are given both in English and Greek.

**Volume 1** includes:

*Introduction* with a map of Greece showing the borders of counties, the

system used to transliterate the names of localities from Greek to English, and lists of all districts, counties, and dioceses with the towns in which their offices are located.

*Part I:* gives the Administrative Structure of Greece, it lists all the Regions and shows all the counties, districts, and municipalities that belong to each Region. (See sample below.) This part is particularly helpful when you know approximately where a town is but you do not have the exact spelling of it.

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Sample of the *Greek Gazetteer*, vol. 1, part I

**B. PELOPONNISOS**

**9. NOMOS AHAIAS**

**Eparhia:**

**Aigialeias**

**Dimos:**

Aigiou.

**Koinotis:**

Agiou Konstantinou, Aigon, Aigeiras, Akratas, Ampelokipon, Ampelou, Ano Diakoptou, Dafnon, Diakoptou, Digeliotikon, Dimitopoulou, Elaionos, Elikis, Exohis, Graika, Grigori, Hatzis, Hrysanthiou, Katholikou, Kato Potamias, Keryneias, Koulouras, Koumari, Kouninas, Krinis, Loggou, Mamousias, Maurikiou, Melission, Monastiriou, Nerantzion, Nikolaiikon, Oaseos, Paralias Akratas, Paralias Platanou, Paraskeuis, Perithoriou,

*Part II:* provides, in columns, information about municipalities.

**Volume 2:**

*Part Ia:* includes all towns/villages in alphabetical order in Greek, and their name in English.

*Part Ib:* includes all towns/villages in

alphabetical order in English, and their name in Greek.

*Part II:* includes all towns/villages with the municipality and district to which each belongs.

*Part III:* lists in columns **all** municipalities with the district, county, and diocese to which each belongs.

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Sample of the *Greek Gazetteer*, vol. 2, part III

<i>Dimos/Koinotis</i> (Municipality)	<i>Eparhia</i> (District)	<i>Nomos</i> (County)	<i>Mitropolis</i> (Diocese)
Adelfikou.....	Serron.....	Serron.....	Serron & Nigritis
Adendrou.....	Thessalonikis.....	Thessalonikis.....	Veroias & Naousis
Adrianis.....	Dramas.....	Dramas.....	Dramas

*Part IV:* lists the changes that took place in municipalities/communities of Greece in January 1999. It provides in columns the old names of the municipalities, the

county to which each belongs (for identification), the corresponding new name of each municipality, and the town in which its offices are located.

<i>Former Municipality</i>	<i>Nomos (County)</i>	<i>New Municipality</i>	<i>Stationed in Town</i>
Adelfikou.....	Serron.....	Skoutareos.....	Skoutari
Adendrou.....	Thessalonikis.....	Halkidonos.....	Halkidona
Adrianis.....	Dramas.....	Nikiforou.....	Nikiforos
Adrianis.....	Messinias.....	Aipeias.....	Logga

This information cannot be found in other publications. This part of the gazetteer is of great value because when you do research by correspondence you need to know the new name of the municipality so you can properly address the mayor, you need to know the town in which the mayor's office is located, and you need to know the name of the old municipality because the old records were kept under that name.

This gazetteer can be ordered through the author Lica Catsakis, 10142 W. Lariat Ln, Peoria, AZ 85383. A free brochure with detail description and information about cost can be sent upon request. Copies of the *Greek Gazetteer* can be found, for use, at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, and libraries of genealogical societies in the U.S.A. and other countries such as Australia.

**2. Lexicon of the Municipalities, Communities and Settlements of Greece** [*Λεξικόν των Δήμων, Κοινοτήτων και Οικισμών της Ελλάδος*, Lexikon ton Dimon, Koinotiton kai Oikismon tis Ellados]. This gazetteer is written in the *Katharevousa* form of the Greek language, it is published by the Greek government, Department of Statistics [Εθνική Στατιστική Υπηρεσία της Ελλάδος]. A new updated version is usually published every ten years, and each issue is based on the most recent census. A copy of the 1974 version is available at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah,

(FHL books 949, 5E5e; also on film no. 1,184,078 item 3).

**3. Complete Geographical Dictionary of Greece**, by Grigorios Stefanos [*Πλήρες Γεωγραφικόν Λεξικόν της Ελλάδος*, υπό Γρηγορίου Στεφάνου, Plires Geografikon Lexikon tis Ellados. This also is written in the *Katharevousa* form of the Greek language. When first published (1937) it was highly praised by the Greek government, and the Greek press.



A café at the island of Samos, 1996

It is a very valuable publication because it lists towns, municipalities/communities, districts, counties, rivers, mountains etc. and information about each of them. It also gives both the old and new name of places. Most changes of names of towns and villages took place in the 1920's and early 1930's, although some more changes of names still take place today. The immigrants who left Greece during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they only knew the old name of the town they came from. Their descendents who do family

history research in Greece need to know the new name of the town. Note that lands added to Greece after 1937 (such as the Dodecanese) are not included in that book.

#### Sample of the 1937 gazetteer

ρίσκεται σήμερα, κατά τούς νικηφόρους Βαλκανικούς πολέμους (1912-13).  
 ΕΛΛΕΒΗ. Βλ. Λακκιά.  
 ΕΛΛΗ. Χωρίον κοιν. Νέας Χαλκηδόνας, έπαρ. Θεσσαλονίκης, νομού Θεσσαλονίκης. Κάτ. 279.  
 ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ (Συβίστα). Κοιν. έπαρ. Μεσολογγίου, νομού Αιτωλίας και Ακαρνανίας, με έδραν τὸ ὁμών. χωρίον. Κάτ. 410. Έχει δημ. σχ. τηλεφ. και απέχει τοῦ Αιτωλικοῦ 3 ὥρας.

The names of places are in capital letters. The letters “Βλ.,” which follow the names of some towns, mean “See” and are followed by the new name of the town. The words in parenthesis show the old name of the town. The first pages of the book include explanation of abbreviations.



Trikala, in the Region of Thessaly

**4. Record About the Construction and Development of the Municipalities and Communities, and the Administrative Structure of Greece, 1836-1939**, vol.1 and vol.2, [*Αρχεία περί της Συστάσεως και Εξελίξεως των Δήμων και Κοινοτήτων και της Διοικητικής Διαιρέσεως του Κράτους*, υπό Αλεξ. Θ. Δρακάκη και Στυλ. Ι. Κουνδούρου, *Archeia peri tes Systaseos kai*

*Exelixeos ton Demon kai Koinoteton 1836-1939 kai tes Dioketikes Diareseos tou Kratous*, by Alex. T. Drakake and Styl. I. Koundouros]. This is another valuable book. It lists all the towns/villages that existed since the establishment of the Greek modern nation, with the municipalities, districts, and counties to which each town/village belonged at various periods during the years 1836-1939. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century till the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century major changes took place on names and borders of the municipalities, districts and counties of Greece. These changes are recorded in this two volume book which is out of print. A copy of it is included in the collection of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, call number: Europe 949,5 N2d. Another copy is included in the collection of the National Library in Athens Greece. The fact that it is written in Greek is a problem that you can overcome because the book includes tables where the names of towns and municipalities can easily be found.

**5. GREECE: Official Standard Names Approved by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names.** Washington, D.C.: U.S. Printing Office, 1960. This gazetteer may be helpful in some cases, but it cannot be used for genealogical research for the following reasons:

- The names of localities have been transliterated phonetically; therefore they may not be recognizable in Greece.
- It does not give information about the *nomos* [county], *eparhia* [district], the *Iera Mitropolis* [diocese], nor other essential information for research in Greece.

**6. Geography of Asia Minor**, by Pant. M. Kontogiannis. (See chapter 2, p.25).

## VARIATIONS OF NAMES OF PLACES

NOTE: When corresponding, make sure you use the Greek name of places. If you choose to write it with English letters make sure you use the Greek spelling (see Transliteration Chart, p.130). Do **not** use the foreign names, for it may be offensive to some.

<i>Foreign names</i>	<i>Greek name</i>	<i>Greek spelling</i>	<i>Also known as</i>
Aegean Islands	Νήσοι Αιγαίου	Nisoi Aigaiou	
Aegean Sea	Αιγαίο Πέλαγος	Aigaio Pelagos	Mer-Égée
Central Greece	Στερεά Ελλάδα	Stereia Ellas	Ρούμελη [Roumeli]
Corcyre	Κέρκυρα	Kerkyra	Corfu
Corfu	Κέρκυρα	Kerkyra	Corcyre
Crete	Κρήτη	Kriti	
Epirus	Ήπειρος	Ipeiros	
	Θήρα	Thira	Σαντορίνη [Santorini] <sup>1</sup>
Fioro di Levante	Ζάκυνθος	Zakynthos	Zante
	Ιωάννινα	Ioannina	Γιάννενα [Giannena]
Ionian Islands	Ιόνιοι Νήσοι	Ionioi Nisoi	Επτάνησα [Eptanisa]
Ithaca	Ιθάκη	Ithaki	Ithaque
Ithaque	Ιθάκη	Ithaki	Ithaca
	Κύθηρα	Kythira	Τσιρίγο [Tsirigo]
	Λέσβος	Lesvos	Μυτιλίνη [Mytilini] <sup>2</sup>
(Greek) Macedonia	Μακεδονία	Makedonia	Greek Macedonia
	Μάνη	Mani	(South part of Peloponnese)
Mediterranean Sea	Μεσόγειος Θάλασσα	Mesogeios Thalassa	
Peloponnesus	Πελοπόννησος	Peloponnisos	Μωριάς [Morias]
Salonika	Θεσσαλονίκη	Thessaloniki	
Thrace	Θράκη	Thraki	
Zante	Ζάκυνθος	Zakynthos	Fioro di Levante



Glyfa, Ftiotidos, 1997

<sup>1</sup> Thira is the name of a large town of an island named Thira or Santorini

<sup>2</sup> Mytilini is the name of a large town of an island named Lesvos. Some people when they say Mytilini they mean the island Lesvos.

