

Historical Vignette

Evangelismos: A glimpse in the history of one of the oldest clinics in Heraklion

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Abstract

Healthcare evolved gradually in Crete and was characterized by the development of numerous clinics in Heraklion before the establishment of a general hospital in the late 20th century. A notable milestone in this evolution is the General Clinic of Evangelismos, which was originally functioning as the French School of Nuns, which was founded in 1906 and operated for 35 years, before being repurposed as a German Military Hospital during World War II. After the war, physicians Konstantinos Markatatis, Evangelos Chatzakis, and Konstantinos Karyotakis acquired the building, which later became the General Clinic “Evangelismos”. It operated until 1985 and in 2002 was occupied by anarchists. The building remains a symbol of Heraklion’s evolving healthcare landscape up until this day.

Keywords: State of Crete (Romanized: Kritiki Politeia), Municipality of Heraklion, French School of Nuns.

Introduction

The history of healthcare in Crete is interesting, since it did not evolve rapidly, but gradually in the span of numerous years. During this period of time, a great number of clinics operated in Heraklion, since there wasn’t a general hospital to be of medical assistance for the people of the city until the late decades of the 20th century. Even though at the end of the Ottoman period some laws concerning public health were passed, but there was still significant work that needed to be done. The main

concern of the autonomous government was the management of epidemics and sexually transmitted infections, as well as the safety of food and beverage, while at the same time trying to transition towards a modern health system [1]. A significant milestone in the history of medical care in Heraklion is undoubtedly the operation of the General Clinic of Evangelismos, which first operated as a French School of Nuns. Evangelismos clinic existed in an era when a series of private clinics have tried to ameliorate health care in the island of Crete [Table 1] [2]. This historical vignette presents its history.

A/A	Clinic and Specialty	Leading physicians and specialty	Address in Heraklion
1	Pananeio Municipal Hospital: Pathology and Surgery Department, as well as 2 branches for syphilitic women and infectious diseases	The Hospital’s Brotherhood in the time of its inauguration included notable figures of the time, specifically: a) Rifaat Afentakis, the Ottoman Mayor of the city of Heraklion, b) Aristidis Zafeiridis, a physician, c) Ioannis Hatzidakis, a physician and Curator of antiquities, d) Aristidis Stergianidis, a lawyer, and e) Fazil Bey Hatzifazilazade, the Ottoman official of the city	
2	Saint Minas Clinic, Pathology and Surgery Department	Litinas (owner), Tzevas (coroner), John Athitakis	Milatou street
3	Saint Marina Clinic	Papageorgiou Konstantinos (pathologist)	Merambellou street

		and Manolopoulos (urologist)	
4	Saint Panteleimon Surgical Clinic	Baltzakis (surgeon) and Stelios Androulakis (pathologist)	Trifitsou Street
5	Saint John Neurology Clinic		Saint John region
6	Saint Eleftherios Maternity Clinic	Paterakis (obstetrician)	Arkadiou Square
7	Apostolos Pavlos Clinic	Vangelis Stamatakis (pathologist), Sifis Michelakis (surgeon) and Michalis Nikoloudis (cardiologist)	Karterou street
8	Saint Titus Clinic	Fakiolakis and Dagantas	Minotaur street
9	Saint Paraskevi Clinic	Kouvidis	Kourmoulidon street
10	Saint George Clinic	Procheraris and Kritsotakis (surgeons), Foundoulakis (pathologist), Marangakis (otolaryngologist) and Stavros Makrydakias (urologist)	Chatzidakis Street
11	Obstetrics-Gynecology clinic of Ieronimakias		Delimarkou street
12	Blue Cross		Taxiarchou Markopoulou street
13	Neurology clinic of Konios		
14	Obstetrics clinic of Lignos		Kantonoleon street
15	Obstetrics clinic of Makaronas-Tzanis		Monis Kardiotissis street
16	Surgical clinic Megalochari	Manolis Manouras and Zouridakis (surgeons), Manousos Panagiotakis (urologist) and Tamiolakis (pathologist)	Stratigou Pezanou street
17	"Megalochari" maternity clinic of Aslanidis		Next to IKA
18	Clinic of obstetrician Baltzakis		Marogiorgi street
19	Ophthalmology Clinic	First of Papamatthaiakis, later taken over by ophthalmologist Georgios Markakis	Monis Kardiotissis street
20	Neurology clinic	Christoforos Papaioannou	Pateles region
21	Otolaryngology clinic	Yiannis Syngelakis	Sfakion street
22	Timios Stavros clinic	Pigakis and Poulinakis	Thalita and Lachana streets
23	Gynecology clinic	Fanourakis	Miliaras street
24	Otolaryngology clinic	Flourakis	Smyrnis street
25	Clinic	Chavakis	Alikarnassos region
26	Polyclinic	Stelios Yamalakis (surgeon) and Polioudakis and Souriadakis (pathologists)	Dentidakidon street
27	Clinic	Mavroforos	1821 street
28	Clinic	Kostas Voyiatzakis	Psaromiligon street
29	Ippokratio clinic	Xekardakis (pathologist) and Poulinakias, Varouchakis, and Malliarakis	
30	Evangelismos clinic	Chatzakias, Kargiotakis, Ioannis Datseris, and Kostas Markatatos	Theotokopoulou street

Table 1. Private clinics in Heraklion city in the early 20th century. Dimitris Savvas, Clinics in old Heraklion, 16/5/2023. Retrieved from: <https://maleviziotis.gr/2023/05/16/οι-κλινικές-στο-παλιό-ηράκλειο/>

The French Schools of Nuns of Heraklion. It was back in 1906 when the French School of Nuns was built in Heraklion, based on designs of Konstantinos Tsantirakis [Figures 1-2] [3]. This school was a model educational institution, which

operated under the direction of Mother Superior Gabrielle Rio of the Monastery of St. Joseph of the Apparition, and included a kindergarten, an elementary school and a high school [4].

ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ	ΕΓΓΡΑΦΩ	ΠΑΡΑΡΤΗΤΕΣ	ΤΑΜΕΙΕΣ	ΣΤΟΙΧΕΙΑ	ΣΥΓΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΟΣ
ΚΠ1-111	11-10-1905	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-112	04-11-1905	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-113	10-11-1905	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-114	09-03-1905	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-115	17-12-1905	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-116	11-07-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-117	06-02-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-118	09-03-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-119	20-02-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-120	20-02-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-121	05-08-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-122	12-03-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-123	13-02-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-124	13-02-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-125	01-06-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-126	16-06-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-127	20-06-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-128	06-03-1906	...	...	...	...
ΚΠ1-129	12-03-1906	...	...	...	...

Figure 1. Architectural Designs 1900-1910. Evangelismos can be found at ΚΠ1-124 (red arrow). Document type: Permit Application, Date: 28/4/1906, Owner: St. Markatatos, Location: Soultan Ibrahim, Consulting Engineer: E. Basias, Inspecting Engineer: Kyriakos?, Date of Preparation: 05/05/1903, Remarks: E2, S1. The document was found at: Archive Department, Vikelaia Municipal Library of Heraklion.

Before the start of World War II in 1941, the young ladies of Heraklion received a high-level classical education, and thousands of them attended the French School of Nuns, where they were also taught foreign languages, music, home economics, handicrafts and dance.

and turn into a German Military Hospital [5]. Sisters from the same monastery established the first French school in Chania in 1985, which engaged in significant philanthropic activities, especially in the first years of its' operation, and functioned until 1983, for 131 years, as well as a French language school in Rethymno [Figure 3 & Figure 4] [6].

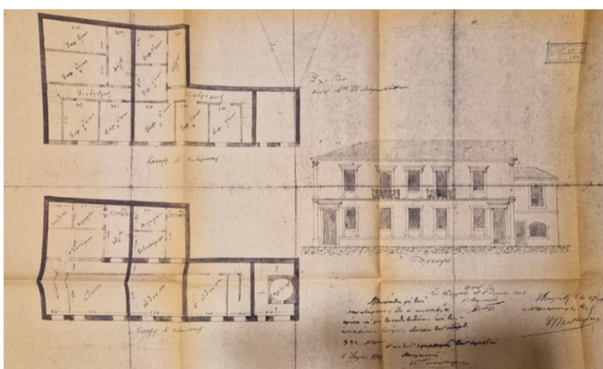


Figure 2. Constructional diagram found at: Archive Department, Vikelaia Municipal Library of Heraklion.

The building of the school, which had a rather impressive architecture for its time, would house the French Schools of Nuns for 35 years, until June of 1941, when it was forced to cease its operations

General Clinic Evangelismos and its' neglect. Following the liberation in 1945, the property was initially rented and then bought in 1949 by physicians Konstantinos Markatatis, Evangelos Chatzakis, and Konstantinos Karyotakis. They converted it into a medical facility named General Clinic "Evangelismos" [Figure 5], which operated until June of 1985, when physician Iordanis Datsaris announced the suspension of its operations [7].



Figure 3. Sister Placide with students of the French Convent School "Saint Joseph de l'Apparition", 1930, Archive of Konstantinos E. Mamalakis, Heraklion, Museum of History of Crete



Figure 4. Nuns and students outside the building of The French Schools of Nuns, Evangelismos building, Newspaper Patris, June the 9th, 1985.

A few years before the closure of the clinic, the one-third share of Konstantinos Markatatis was bequeathed to the planned Medical School of the University of Crete, "...From the Evangelismos Clinic, I own one-third, which I donate to the University of Crete, which is expected to be established soon, as an initial contribution for future benefactors". After the closure of the clinic, the heirs of the remaining two-thirds offered to sell their shares to the Municipality of Heraklion, but their offer was rejected at the time by the municipal authorities. It was a decade later that the University of Crete acquired the remaining shares, taking full ownership of the building, which remained for approximately 18 years unused. In May 2002 Evangelismos became occupied by anarchists and in 2015 some maintenance and restoration efforts were made, funded by the occupants and supported by sympathizers of the occupation [Figure 6] [4].



Figure 5. Private Clinic Evangelismos, Newspaper Patris, June the 9th, 1985.

Epilogue

The changes and challenges faced by Heraklion's healthcare system can be reflected at the transformation of the building housing the French School of Nuns into the General Clinic "Evangelismos" and its subsequent period of neglect and occupation by anarchists. From a center of education, to a medical facility and finally an occupied space, Evangelismos depicts the complexities of historical preservation and adaptation, since it didn't manage to become a place that would house the advancing medical education and research. Evangelismos serves as a key point for the community of Heraklion, as well as a testament of the many hardships that Heraklion's healthcare infrastructure went through, while trying to adapt to the rapidly changing times.



Figure 6. Evangelismos Clinic nowadays, retrieved from: https://www.kritipoliskaixoria.gr/2023/09/blog-post_233.html.

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