

## What is the future of the Historical Museum of Mane?

Ismini Patta (2006)

The Historic Museum of Mane is the last intellectual lighthouse left in Gythion. It lies just a few meters away from the Navy's one. It flashes out not only the breeze of a past era – since it is settled in a renovated, 18<sup>th</sup> century tower- but also the glow of the meticulous care offered by those who have worked out its maintenance and the exhibitions it houses.

It opens to the public from 8 a.m. – 14.30 p.m. Although one might believe he will soon discern a peeress behind the windows, as he approaches the tower- house, it is on the contrary Mr. Kolokythakos, the cash- clerk, who looms smiling and holding heavy keys. He immediately placed himself at our disposal as a guide to the museum. To begin with, he pointed out the economic problems: “The personnel, which consist of only four individuals (including the two guardians), is far from being sufficient despite their additional volunteer work.”

“However, the Museum's main problems are the following:” told me later Mr. Saetas, architect, urbanist, ethnologist, who has been researching for many years- in Athens and abroad- on Mane's issues. Today he is the specialist in charge of Mane's cultural development, in the National Institute of Researches (N.I.R.) “First of all, authorities should decide with which institution they will contract the management.”

The museum is settled on the islet Kranae at the Gythion bay, in a local landmark: the tower that belong to the Tzannetos Grigorakis family – third local ruler of Mane (18<sup>th</sup>

century) during Turkish occupation and fomenter of a plan to make Napoleon assist the Greek's resurrection against the occupants. In 1829, an offspring of his first son added a house to the tower. The whole construction devolved to the Greek Tourist Organisation (G.T.O.), in 1978.

The restoration has been carried out by G.T.O., within the limits of the Program for Traditional Settlements (1975). Then GTO inaugurated the museum as Historical Ethnological one in 1989. Today the GTO's company "Touristic Real Estates" benefits from the museum's financial resources. Nevertheless, the requests of Ministry- of -Culture and Benaki Museum for succeeding its exploitation are still in suspense.

During 1993-94, the Centre of Modern Greek Researches - department of the N.I.R - presented the exhibition "Sightseers in Mane through 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century", into the Mane museum. Mr. Saetas, responsible for the preparation, explains: "Manuscripts, pictures, old printed works, historical heirlooms, old maps and the mapping of almost 75 foreigner-sightseers itineraries, made evident the bidirectional relations between Europe and Mane at that time. A particularly eminent place has been reserved to the research of the French Scientific Mission (1829-1832) and to the presentation of the social-military mechanism of the region.

This exhibition, though temporary at the beginning, turned into a permanent one, but incomplete. The weapons of P. Mavromichalis, hero of the Greek revolution, and the ethnic male-costume are now exhibits in Benaki Museum, on the third floor, in the "Historical" section. Precisely, a "yatagan" is exposed under the number 12, a long

knife has the number 13, and a “pala” the 14, a pair of pistols the 15, a pair of “palaskes” the 16, a fire gun the 17. Besides another fire, gun and “pala” are kept aside for maintenance.

Additionally, from the second-floor showcase, two fire guns are lost; also, the tower-houses photo-collection of Mr. Vourlitis is missing.

Consequently “the second important problem of the museum concerns its exhibits and the permanent collections,” added Mr. Saetas. Moreover, the N.I.R. proposed the constitution of “The Open Museum of Mane” i.e. organizing a network of traveling exhibitions and cultural events among few selected cities of Mane, which may afford the necessary infrastructure and reception spaces.

Therefore, in the past, many efforts have been done to the blooming of the Historical-Ethnological museum of Mane and the preservation of the architectural patrimony. However, in the future who will support them?