Story Three
Socrates Stratis, Chrysante Constantinou, Emre Akbil

Counter Mapped Isometric Drawing:
A Process for a Territorial Concern to Become Common
We are standing in three spaces, during three different time periods. We are looking at the same large-size paper-printed image, 250cm wide and 130cm high. It is a colorful isometric representation of the Famagustian territory, on a black background (fig. 1). In fact, it seems to be the outcome of a counter mapping practice. It portrays the contested subject, that of the city territory in its entirety, but broken down into many parts, enclaves, which are floating on the black background. There are many rocklike parts which have a flat top surface and a heavy rocky base. The volumetric depiction of the city sits on the top surface made of different patterns that emphasize the richness of the non-built areas. It is as if Famagusta were part of planet Pandora's landscape in the Avatar film. When we take a closer look, we can sense the processes, both war- and urban-driven, that generated such enclaves (see in this Guide: Stratis “Architecture as Urban Practice in Contested Spaces”, pp. 12-45), translated in the image by contrasting the by default homogeneity of architectural isometric drawings with the profound gaps between the hovering rocklike parts. We are standing in the Goethe institute in the buffer zone of Nicosia (November, 2014). We are also in the meeting room of the Greek Cypriot Famagustian Municipality displaced in Limassol since 1974 (January, 2015). Lastly, we find ourselves in Saints Peter and Paul church in the old city of Famagusta, used as a cultural center by the Turkish Cypriot municipality (February 2015).

Notes
1. For an analysis of counter mapping notion see: Todd Presner, David Shepard, Yoh Kawano, Hypertopic: thick mapping in the digital humanities (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014).

Fig. 1 The counter mapped isometric drawing
Fig. 2 The survey bus route across the divide.

Fig. 3 The bus with the volunteers and the survey equipment.
In some cases the paper-printed image is the protagonist of the event, in other cases it is the background of a consultation meeting. In all three cases, its agency supports the “Hands-on Famagusta” project team goal to make visible the invisible, to shift from normalization practices, such as the dominant representation of the divided territory of the city as product of ethnic conflict, to problematization practices, part of which is counter mapping. Actually, the colorful isometric representation of the Famagustian territory, on a black background, is the representation of a process of mapping, that of a multi-enclaved Famagustian territory, offering to the viewers a concern-to-become-common.

In one of Jorge Borges’ most famous parables, the College of Cartographers had managed to attain such perfection by evolving a “…map of the Empire that was at the same Scale as the Empire and that coincided from point to point”. In one of the maps of Famagusta, produced by the UK military forces, we can recognize the same exactitude of the science of cartography; a detailed representation of the Famagustian territory as subject of control, in the hands of the military.

A fool’s triumph, according to Rebecca Solnit who sees the representation taking over its subject, is a confusion of the thing with its representation. Cartographic practices in contested spaces, such as Cyprus, fall into both conditions: that of the representation taking over its territory as subject, and that of the dominating military surveillance through mapping. Even more so, the representation and military claims are multiple and conflictual since they come from the parties in conflict. They are all dividing practices of normalization, since they are consolidating the established conflictual power-knowledge structures.

Notes
Fig. 5 Departure from Nicosia with the GC Volunteers, Costanza Bastion, Nicosia
Fig. 6 Meeting with the TC Volunteers at Magem Center, Famagusta
Use these maps to navigate and to see the area your team needs to cover. Each box in the axis that is covering your region is printed separately in A3s. Use the legend to help you with the codes that you need to write down for each building.

Write down a 3-digit code for each building.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number of floors</th>
<th>dominant use of ground floor</th>
<th>dominant use of upper floors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig. 7* Survey equipment
WHAT TO WEAR
Hats, sports shoes, T-shirts and sunblock creams are necessary. Plus swim-suits and towels for the last day.

When taking a careful look at the Famagusta maps produced by the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, we can sense the opposing representations dominating over the subject of the city. In the maps of the Republic of Cyprus, Famagusta falls into the occupied part of the island, written on the map as “inaccessible since 1974 because of the Turkish invasion”. Famagusta in the Turkish Cypriots’ map of Cyprus falls into the “Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus” recognized only by Turkey on an international level. In the city map on the website of the Turkish Cypriot Municipality of Famagusta, the fenced-off area is covered with an opaque grey layer. The street names are after Turkish names, having effaced the former Greek ones which are visible on the Republic of Cyprus maps.4

What if the College of the Cartographers is replaced by a temporal community, a collective of forty young volunteers coming from areas across the Cypriot divide? What if the military cartographic practice, as well as those producing the dominating narratives, are confronted with a political practice of problematization through mapping? Then, through the practice of mapping, we could imagine other cartographies that encourage people to pay attention to issues that were not problematic for them up to that point. This means that we may be facing a double process of counter-mapping. We have described already the second one about the agencies of the large printed floating rocks isometric drawing. In fact, the first process has to do with that of collecting the data by visiting the grounds of the city and creating new knowledge about the city.

Notes
Such new knowledge has nourished additional counter maps. The colorful isometric drawing depicting Famagusta floating enclaves on black background is one of them. The landing page of the web-platform (www.handsonfamagusta.org) is the second one, supported by the “Atlas of Designerly Visual Knowledge”. The physical model is the third one (see the story in the Guide by Stratis and Constantinou entitled “The Overwhelming Presence of a City Model”, pp. 132-145). The last one is “Supplements to the City’s Commons”, about quantifiable information of the Famagusta urban environment, published under the Creative Commons, and offered to the Cypriot civil society. Thanks to the content of each supplement, new questions are formulated by the “Hands-on Famagusta” project team, facing off the actual practices of normalization of the dominant narratives. Actually, all counter mapping practices unveil the subject, the Famagusta territory, covered entirely by its conflictual normalizing representations.

The Greek-speaking Cypriot members of the collective of young volunteers, which substitutes for the College of the Cartographers, were the passengers of a bus to Famagusta departing from the south part of divided Nicosia, in the summer of 2014 (fig. 2-10). Most of them had not been to the northern part of Cyprus before. Excitement, wonder, and anxiety formed a thick atmosphere of uncanny emotions. The bus started its journey with such emotional cargo, as well as technical equipment and bags full of drawings, and maps, finally reaching its destination in Famagusta where a group of Turkish-speaking Cypriots waited for their counterparts.

---

**Notes**

The Greek-speaking Cypriots made the trip for three consecutive days, since they felt uncomfortable staying overnight in the north part of the island. They crossed the border each and every time. Throughout the trips, the territory of the other was demystified, as well as the narratives of division.

The paradox of such counter mapping practice is that the collective of the young volunteers, which substitutes for the College of Cartographers of Borges's parable, used the tools that are usually part of the exact science of cartography but this time to create an alternative depiction of Famagusta to the dominant conflictual ones (fig. 11-17). The volunteers high-jacked the tools they had found in the College of Cartographers in order to generate knowledge that supports the transformation of a survey into a language. They contributed to the production of art rather than a cadastral data document, as Dana Cuff mentioned back in 2013 in a conference on Mapping and its discontents at UC Berklcy.

Mixed ethnic groups of two to four people, from the collective of the young volunteers, were given such tools, part of the exact science of cartography, by the “Hands-on Famagusta” project team, such as A3 size pads with printed enlarged plans of the city parts. Each group had to literally cover on foot one of the ten sectors, artificially dividing the city into walking distance areas. They were asked to map building heights, use, vacancies, streetscapes, and landscapes. They were not asked to deal with property limits, or to write down street names. Both of these issues are in the heart of the unresolved conflict, and any attempt to address them could easily backfire and cancel out the project. The survey became a pretext to facilitate the emergence of such collective of young people across the divide.
Fig. 14 The pending survey work of the fenced-off area of Famagusta
Wandering the city under the strong summer sun, sharing experiences from exposure to random urban events, such as facing the actual and physical borders of Famagusta, brought together an unlikely group of young people forming a network of allied individuals; a collective of Famagusta wanderers.

Going back to the large-size paper-printed colourful isometric drawing part of the public events in the three spaces we mentioned originally, we can witness its physical contact with the participants. We can sense their multiple reactions, when they point their finger to a specific area of the drawing while their gaze runs along its length and height. In fact, they struggle to fit their visual experience into their well-formed mental maps. After recovering from an initial alienation from their familiar city views, they seek to reconnect with the new depiction of their severely fragmented city. Some Greek Cypriot Famagustians admit that the drawing helps them to take their attention away from the images depicting the notorious nineteen-seventies high-rise waterfront skyline, symbol of their loss, and to look into the rocklike depicted city parts. One of them points out that the drawing will shift the public debate for future of Famagusta. A Turkish Cypriot city inhabitant takes a closer look at those areas of her city, impossible to access during her everyday life.

The isometric drawing, a counter mapping outcome, has become a political agent, opening up a new space of possibilities, transcending the dominant dividing narratives based on the ethnic conflict. This new space of possibilities depends on the ability of the communities, across the divide, to assemble around common concerns. The counter mapped isometric drawing supports such processes of concerns to become common: the conflict between the individuality of the enclaved urban fragments and the need for their integration into a unified city.

Fig. 15 Storing the completed A3 survey sheets