

located beside a lagoon providing access to the Ionian Sea, became a major resistance centre during the War of Independence (1821-1830), being besieged three times by the forces of the Ottoman Turkish Empire.

Aikaterine survived the first two sieges, meeting a number of heroes of the independence movement during her time there. The most famous one was Gordon Lord Byron, a regular visitor to her uncle's home. As recorded in her obituary in the Sydney Morning Herald and on her tomb, Aikaterine was probably the last living person to have met Lord Byron.

Between the second and third sieges, Aikaterine escaped from Mesolonghi; it is not recorded how. She is next identified on the off-shore island of Kalamos. As part of the Ionian Islands, Kalamos was British territory, having been seized from the French during the Napoleonic Wars. Sitting within sight of the mainland, Kalamos was a key point for refugees fleeing the destruction on the mainland being wrought by the War of Independence.

By now about 16 years old and reportedly a striking figure, Aikaterine caught the eye of the Irish-born Captain James Henry Crummer, 'Commandant of the Island of Calamos and Protector of the Greek Refugees during the War of Independence against the Turks' between 1822 and 1827, according to the Sydney Morning Herald.

A veteran of the Battle of Waterloo (18 June 1815)<sup>5</sup> and many other battles of the Napoleonic and other wars, Crummer was a compassionate man, about twenty years Aikaterine's senior. How the courtship unfolded – did Aikaterine have a knowledge of English from her contacts with Lord Byron and other philhellene fighters in Mesolonghi – remains the realm of speculation. According to the surviving copy of their Marriage Cer-

tificate, they were married in late-March 1827. It is a truly remarkable document for many reasons, completely bilingual, with alternating lines of Hellenic and English:

**Ημες οι υποφαινομενοι Ιερομόναχοι**

We the recognized holy priests

**του Κατόλικου δόγματος πιστοκονούμεν**

of the Catholic religion bear faithful witness

**ότι συνεζευξαμεν ης γάμου κοινωνίαν**

that we have joined in the sacrament of marriage

**τελετή εκκλησιαστική**

according to the ecclesiastical celebration

**τον βρετανόν τόν της νήσου Καλάμου**

the Englishman in the island of Calamos

**διοικητήν Ιάκωβων Ένρικον Κρουμμερ**

residing (illegible) James Henry Crummer

**τη Ελληνίδι Κατερίνη Γεωργία Πλαισιού ενδεχομένοι αυτών**

the Greek Catherine Georgia Plessos anticipating to them

**ερανικήν και αμίαντην ζωήν.**

a loving and pure life.

**ένεκα δε υποφαινόμεδα δικαστικ..**

With a view to setting forth our lawful

**ή ασφαλής υπονόιας η εν τον**

and correct meaning and of the

**δυσίεν εγγράφισι μετά των εντίμων**

two signatures of the honourable

**παρταυχόντων.**

persons present.

**α ω κ ζ ελαφβολιωνος 5**

1827 (illegible) 5th day [between 24 and 30 March]

Καλαμος

Calamos

5. Crummer's Waterloo medal is now in the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney.

