

KORNAROU SQUARE

Kornarou Square was named after **Vitsentzos** or **Vikentios Kornaros** or **Vincenzo Cornaro** (March 29, 1553 – 1613/1614), a poet from Crete, who wrote the romantic epic poem *Erotokritos*. He wrote in vernacular Cretan dialect (Cretan Greek), and was a leading figure of the Cretan Renaissance.

Vitsentzos Kornaros is considered to be the greatest of all the Cretan poets and one of the most significant and influential figures in the entire course of Greek poetry. The son of a Venetian-Cretan aristocrat and a scion of the noble Venetian family of Cornaro, he was born near Sitia, Crete in 1553. Later, when he married, he came to live in Candia (now Heraklion) where he joined the Accademia dei Stravaganti. Kornaros died in 1613 (or 1614), just before his contemporaries, William Shakespeare and Miguel de Cervantes.

Not many biographic sources exist about Kornaros apart from the last verses of *Erotokritos*. It is believed that he was born to a wealthy family in Trapezonda (Τραπεζόντα), a village near Sitia, Crete, in 1553, and lived there roughly up to 1590. He then moved to Candia (modern Iraklion), where his marriage to Marietta Zeno took place. Together they had two daughters named Helen and Katerina.

In 1591 Kornaros became an administrator, and during the outbreak of plague from 1591 to 1593 he worked as a sanitary supervisor.

He showed interest in literature and was a member of a literary group called *Accademia degli Stravaganti* (*Academy of the Strange Ones*), which was founded by his brother and fellow writer Andrea Cornaro, who wrote in Italian language.

He died in Candia, in 1613 (or 1614), and was buried at the church of San Francesco. The cause of his death remains unknown.

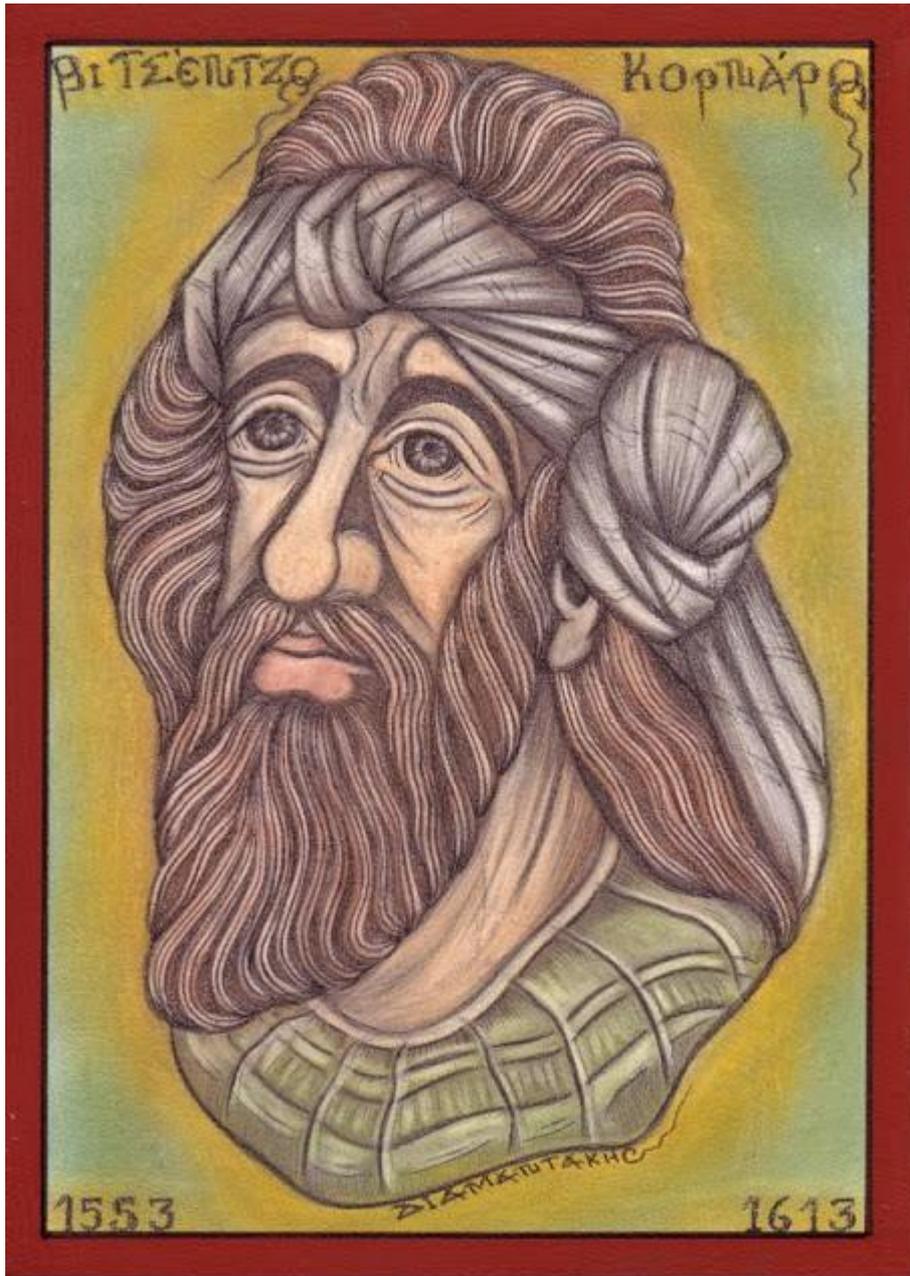
Kornaros' "Erotokritos" was a source of inspiration for Dionysios Solomos and influenced Greek poets such as Kostis Palamas, Krystallis and Seferis.

His best-known work, "**Erotokritos**", is a narrative poem or verse romance written in the Cretan idiom, the poet's mother-tongue, comprising thousands of verses on the love of Erotokritos and Aretousa.

The poem, which is comparable to the Western European "Romeo and Juliet", still remains alive in Cretan hearts today. Extracts are often recited in company, as every Cretan knows at least a few verses by heart.

Today, Kornarou Square is adorned with a fountain and a statue of Erotokritos on horseback, bidding farewell to his beloved Aretousa.

Don't be confused by the multiple forms of the hero and his horse; it is the artist's way of expressing the movement and drama of the moment.





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INFORMATION ABOUT IMPORTANT LOCAL PEOPLE OF CRETE WHOSE NAMES WERE GIVEN TO STREETS AND OTHER CENTRAL LOCATIONS OF HERAKLION CITY.