

# Petra tou Romiou – Aphrodite’s Birthplace Worksheet

## Guidelines for educators

- **Context and the area of cultural heritage:** tangible heritage in Cyprus
- **Description and justification:** Aphrodite’s mythical birthplace, Petra tou Romiou, is an interesting geological formation of huge rocks on one of the most beautiful coastlines in Cyprus. According to the legend, Aphrodite was born of the seafoam there and one of the rocks has been named Aphrodite’s Rock partly because of the foam that is being formed as its base, which brings to mind the story of the goddess’ birth. It is a very popular historical and leisure spot in Cyprus and attracts thousands of tourists and locals every year.
- **Duration:** 45 minutes
- **Language level:** B1
- **Prior knowledge:** basic vocabulary about mythology and traditions, ability to understand the main points of a story, can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or are of personal interest, can describe experiences/events and give brief explanations & reasons for opinions and plans.
- **Thematic area, grammatical and syntactical phenomena (learning objectives):**  
In this worksheet students will learn:
  - Mythology vocabulary
  - Important artistic works
  - Identify synonyms
  - Convert nouns to adjectives and/or verbs

○ **Skills developed (or benefits for students):**

At the end of this worksheet, students will:

- Gain increased ability to have small discussions about paintings and their meaning
- Have an overview of the most important tangible heritage sites in Cyprus
- Learn how to convert nouns to adjectives & verbs
- Finding first and then using synonyms to words related to mythology and wine-making
- Enrich their vocabulary on myths
- Practice their reading comprehension skills regarding urban legends/myths

○ **Material needed:** pens/pencils, copies of exercises, internet connection

○ **References and resources:**

- Merrillees Robert Stuart. The Mythology Around a Myth: Aphrodite and Petra tou Romiou. In: *Cahiers du Centre d'Etudes Chypriotes*. Volume 45, 2015. Hommage à Jacqueline Karageorghis. pp. 29-43.  
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3406/cchyp.2015.1620>
- Visit Cyprus (2021) "Birthplace of Aphrodite – Petra tou Romiou" <https://www.visitcyprus.com/index.php/en/discovercyprus/rural/sites-monuments/item/732-birthplace-of-aphrodite-petra-tou-romiou>
- Cyprus Island (2021) "Petra tou Romiou", <https://www.cyprusisland.net/cyprus-beaches/petra-tou-romiou>
- Image Source, Pixabay.com, <https://pixabay.com/photos/painting-la-nascita-di-venere-63186/>

# Worksheet for the student

## EXERCISE 1:

(Duration: 15 minutes)

Below, you can find **two short texts** about Petra tou Romiou (the Rock of Aphrodite). Both texts refer to a myth regarding this tangible heritage site. Complete the stories with the missing words.

### Task 1: The myths around Petra tou Romiou

Using the word bank below, fill in the blanks in the text below. Three words are used twice and there is one unused word (5 minutes).

Word Bank: Aphrodite's Birthplace, shell, mythology, blessed, tales, sea, guards, beautiful, love, Paphos, beauty, betrayal, Queen, foam, relative, waves, swims, ships, enemies, rock

Petra tou Romiou or the 'Rock of Aphrodite' is located in \_\_\_\_\_. It's also known as \_\_\_\_\_. Petra tou Romiou is a huge rock in the southwest \_\_\_\_\_ of Paphos. According to Greek \_\_\_\_\_, Aphrodite was born from the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the sea. Aphrodite is the Greek goddess of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. The urban legend says that once rising from the \_\_\_\_\_, she was escorted on a \_\_\_\_\_ at the rock in the middle – the Rock of Aphrodite. Today, the local story is that anyone who \_\_\_\_\_ around the rock will be blessed with eternal love and will remain \_\_\_\_\_ forever.

### Task 2: The legend of Digenis Akritas

Using the same word bank from Task 1, fill in the blanks in the text below. Remember, three words are used twice and there is one unused word (5 minutes).

Other Cypriot folk \_\_\_\_\_ relate Petra tou Romiou with the legend of Digenis Akritas. Digenis, according to the Cypriot tradition, was one of the strongest border \_\_\_\_\_ of the Eastern Byzantine Empire. His job was to protect Cyprus from various attacks and the legend says he was so strong that when he saw \_\_\_\_\_ coming towards the island, he threw rocks on their \_\_\_\_\_,

destroying them. Another story around him says that Digenis Akritas fell in \_\_\_\_\_ with the mythical \_\_\_\_\_ of Medieval Ages, Righena, who was herself a \_\_\_\_\_ of Aphrodite. This story is therefore linked to ancient Greek \_\_\_\_\_ and the Goddess Aphrodite. Cypriot myths say that Digenis was so angered by the \_\_\_\_\_ of Righena that he threw a huge rock in the sea to prevent her from leaving the island. That's why Petra tou Romiou is also referred to as "Petra tou Digeni" in some traditional \_\_\_\_\_.

### Task 3: Group discussion

Get into pairs and **discuss the two myths**. Can you identify any **similarities** and any **differences** between the two legends? Which myth do you like more and why? (5 minutes)

## EXERCISE 2:

(Duration: 15 minutes)

### Task 1: Complete the sentences

Convert the nouns in the box below into adjectives, and use them to fill in the sentences (5 minutes).

Beauty, Myth, Imagination, Difference, History, Encouragement, Perfection

A) Aphrodite's Birthplace is located in one of the most \_\_\_\_\_ coastlines in Cyprus.

B) Petra tou Romiou is the \_\_\_\_\_ birthplace of the Greek Goddess Aphrodite.

C) During the rule of the Lusignans in Cyprus, people were very \_\_\_\_\_ and thought of many urban legends.

D) Summer is the \_\_\_\_\_ season to visit Cyprus and swim at Petra tou Romiou.

E) Visitors can see \_\_\_\_\_ types of vegetation while walking around Petra tou Romiou Forest Park.

F) The rise of tourism in Cyprus following the COVID-19 pandemic has been an \_\_\_\_\_ sign for the local economy.

G) The legends of Digenis and Righena, although myths, both have some \_\_\_\_\_ roots.

### Task 2: Synonyms

Choose the correct synonym from the word bank for the words below (5 minutes)

Start, Motherland, Myths, Seafront, Current, Humans, Significant, At last, Origins, Need

A) Coast =

B) Birthplace =

C) People =

D) Legends =

E) Roots =

F) Modern =

G) Begin =

H) Require =

I) Important =

J) Eventually =

### Task 3: Converting nouns

Take a look at the nouns in the box below. Convert the nouns in the brackets to verbs or adjectives to complete the sentences (5 minutes).

Creativity, disappointment, effectiveness, beauty, thought, reason, fear,

Myths are \_\_\_\_\_ (creativity) stories that people \_\_\_\_\_ (thought) of to give them hope during \_\_\_\_\_ (disappointment) situations and they tend to be very \_\_\_\_\_ (effectiveness) in doing so. Myths are also stories about \_\_\_\_\_ (beauty) things or even explanations about \_\_\_\_\_ (fear)

phenomena that people just cannot explain. They used to be an effective way for people in the past to feel better about the unknown. It is therefore \_\_\_\_\_ (reason) that most myths have some historical roots. Today, we use them as \_\_\_\_\_ (amusement) stories about different civilizations and we share them when meeting people and travelling.

### EXERCISE 3:

(Duration: 15 minutes)

#### Task 1: The Birth of Venus

Look at the painting for 2 minutes. Do you know the painter? Conduct small-scale research (online or using books) for 4-5 minutes to find out a) what the painting represents, b) the name of the painter, c) the date it was painted and, d) where it can be found today. (Total = 5-6 minutes).

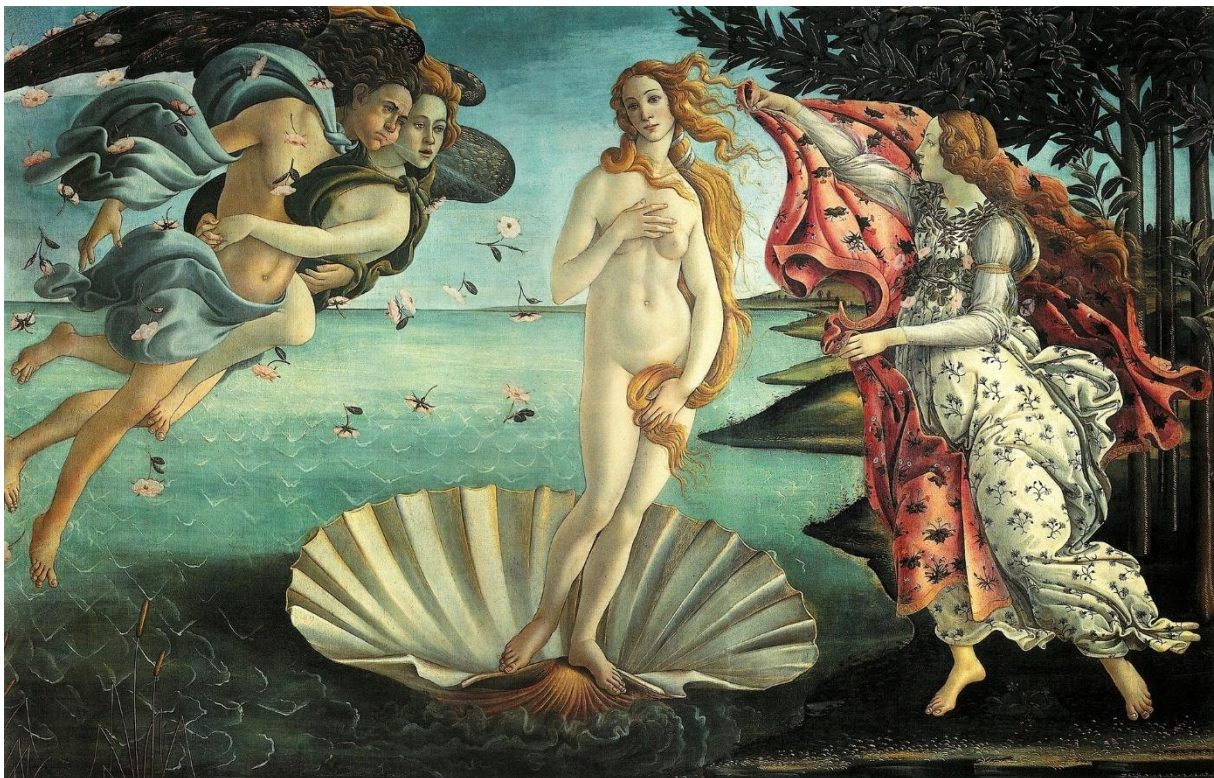


Image Source: [Pixabay.com](https://pixabay.com)

#### Task 2: Recreate the famous painting

Look at the painting closely again – this can take up to 5 minutes. Now turn around and try to remember key information about it. Get in pairs and take turns to describe

the painting based on what you remember about it. Write down as many things as you remember (10 minutes).

## ANSWER KEY

### Exercise 1 Task 1:

Petra tou Romiou or the 'Rock of Aphrodite' is located in **Paphos** It's also known as **Aphrodite's Birthplace**. Petra tou Romiou is a huge rock in the southwest **coast** of Paphos. According to Greek **mythology**, Aphrodite was born from the **waves** and **foam** of the sea. Aphrodite is the Greek goddess of **love** and **beauty**. The urban legend says that once rising from the **sea**, she was escorted on a **shell** at the rock in the middle – the Rock of Aphrodite. Today, the local story is that anyone who **swims** around the rock will be blessed with eternal love and will remain **beautiful** forever.

### Exercise 1 Task 2:

Other Cypriot folk **tales** relate Petra tou Romiou with the legend of Digenis Akritas. Digenis, according to the Cypriot tradition, was one of the strongest border **guards** of the Eastern Byzantine Empire. His job was to protect Cyprus from various attacks and the legend says he was so strong that when he saw **enemies** coming towards the island, he threw rocks on their **ships**, destroying them. Another story around him says that Digenis Akritas fell in **love** with the mythical **Queen** of Medieval Ages, Righena, who was herself a **relative** of Aphrodite. This story is therefore linked to ancient Greek **mythology** and the Goddess Aphrodite. Cypriot myths say that Digenis was so angered by the **betrayal** of Righena that he threw a huge rock in the sea to prevent her from leaving the island. That's why Petra tou Romiou is also referred to as "Petra tou Digeni" in some traditional **tales**.

Note for both exercises: the words 'tales', 'mythology' and 'love' are used twice. The word 'rock' is never used.

### Exercise 1 Task 3:

Key similarities:

- Both stories are myths/urban legends
- Just like Aphrodite never existed, Digenis is also a mythical creature

Key differences:

- Digenis represents all the Akrites, a group that did exist in the Medieval Ages (border security guards / soldiers during the Medieval Ages that protected Cyprus from attacks)
- Aphrodite is referred to as a Goddess whereas Digenis only as a security guard

Students can also talk about which myth they like most and why using at least 2 arguments for their choices.

### Exercise 2 Task 1:

A) Aphrodite's Birthplace is located in one of the most **beautiful** coastlines in Cyprus.

B) Petra tou Romiou is the **mythical** birthplace of the Greek Goddess Aphrodite.

C) During the rule of the Lusignans in Cyprus, people were very **imaginative** and thought of many urban legends.

D) Summer is the **perfect** season to visit Cyprus and swim at Petra tou Romiou.

E) Visitors can see **different** types of vegetation while walking around Petra tou Romiou Forest Park.

F) The rise of tourism in Cyprus following the COVID-19 pandemic has been an **encouraging** sign for the local economy.

G) The legends of Digenis and Righena, although myths, both have some **historical** roots.

### Exercise 2 Task 2:

A) Coast = **beach, seafront, coastline, shore**

B) Birthplace = **fatherland, motherland, place of birth**

C) People = **humans, folks**

D) Legends = **myths, traditions, tales**

E) Roots = **origins, ancestry, birthplace, descent, heritage**

F) Modern = **new, contemporary, current, up-to-date**



G) Begin = **start, commence, initiate**

H) Require = **need, want**

I) Important = **significant, valuable, substantial**

J) Eventually = **finally, at last, someday, ultimately**

### Exercise 2 Task 3:

Myths are **creative** (creativity) stories that people **think** (thought) of to give them hope during **disappointing** (disappointment) situations and they tend to be very **effective** (effectiveness) in doing so. Myths are also stories about **beautiful** (beauty) things or even explanations about **scary** (fear) phenomena that people just cannot explain. They used to be an effective way for people in the past to feel better about the unknown. It is therefore **reasonable** (reason) that most myths have some historical roots. Today, we use them as **amusing** (amusement) stories about different civilizations and we share them when meeting people and travelling.

### Exercise 3 Task 1:

Tips: You can provide them with a book, online source or short article to read that contains this information. Make sure that they mention that it's one of the most famous paintings (if not the most famous) of the Goddess Aphrodite/Venus. It's also important that they mention Sandro Botticelli who created it in 1485. The painting shows the birth of Venus from a shell. According to analysis of the painting, the land represents Cyprus or Cythera (the two islands that according to Greek mythology are closely related to Venus/Aphrodite). The painting can be found in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence.

### Exercise 3 Task 2:

For this exercise, you can make it like a competition as well, where the quickest pair to name as many details as possible wins. Make sure that you monitor their conversations and have them write down their observations without looking at the picture.