



The 'Tsiattista' are found all over Cyprus but today the main activities relating to 'Tsiattista' and their development are located in the coastal town of Larnaka and the nearby villages of the district as well as, in the villages of the neighboring Famagusta District (Kokkinochoria Area).



Larnaka is the third largest town of Cyprus and it hosts every year, since the 19th century the Kataklysmos Fair. This folk festival has been instrumental in safeguarding the 'Tsiattista', as 'tsiattista' performers meet, create and compete.

'Tsiattista'





The 'Tsiattista' are impromptu poetic improvisations in rhyming couplets mostly performed during contests in the Cypriot dialect. The most common form used at 'Tsiattista' is the iambic fifteen-syllable verse in the rhyming couplet.



The 'Tsiattista' is one of the most long-lasting elements of the Cyprus popular poetry. They are theme-related jousts in the form of rhyming couplets, in the Cypriot dialect, in a competition amongst two 'tsiattistaes' (tsiattista performers) attesting to their prowess in defeating their opponents in front of an audience which officially or unofficially acts as a judge and applaud to the contestants.



The first references to poetic contests are found in Homer (The Iliad) and Hesiod (Work and Days). References to poetic contests held in Cyprus are attested since the 8th century BC. They are a vestige of ancient festivities, such as the Aphrodisia, held in honor of Adonis and/or Aphrodite according to ancient sources.