

**THE MUSLIMS OF THE DODECANESE ISLANDS:  
A NON-OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED MINORITY**

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Anahtar Kelimeler

- a) Muslim
- b) Minority
- c) Recognition
- d) Dodecanese

Keywords

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## **Abstract**

The present study aims to examine the status of the Muslim community living in the area of the Dodecanese islands, settled mainly in the islands of Rhodes and Kos. The historical retrospection begins in 1522 with the first appearance of the Muslims in the area after the islands became part of the Ottoman Empire and goes up to the present situation. Through the research conducted mostly by using secondary literature and the results of the survey carried out in the area, this study seeks to analyze the historical and legal aspects of the existence of the Muslim community in the Dodecanese islands and thus understand the way that these aspects have influenced the construction of identity within a minority group and the Greek community.

## **Kısa özet**

Günümüz arařtırmaları Oniki adalar bölgesinde, özellikle Rhodes ve Kos adalarında yasayan Müslüman azınlığın durumunu incelemek amacı taşıyor. Bu konuya tarihsel bakış, 1522 yılında, Müslümanların adaların Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun bir parçası olmasından sonra bölgede Müslümanların görülmesiyle başlıyor ve bugüne kadar uzanıyor. Bu konuda yazılmış ikincil ağızdan yayınların ve bölgede yapılmış arařtırmaların ışığındaki bu çalışma ise, Oniki adalarda Müslüman yasantısının tarihsel ve hukuksal taraflarını, bu bakış açısıyla Yunan toplumu ve bir azınlık grubun arasındaki kimlik oluşumunun nasıl şekil aldığını analiz etmek amacıyla yapılmıştır.

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## **Introduction**

“We do not know which one to choose. We support both teams...exactly as the situation in our life is”. This was an impulsive statement that a young man, member of the Muslim community in the island of Kos, gave in an interview when he was asked which team he would support in a basketball game between Efes Pilsen (Turkish team) and Olympiakos (Greek team)<sup>1</sup>.

In Greece there is only one officially recognized minority group which is protected by a bilateral agreement between Greece and Turkey. This is the Muslim/Turkish minority of Western Thrace and it is protected by the Lausanne Treaty (1923). However, there are also other ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. The Muslims of Dodecanese islands are Greek citizens of Turkish origin who are members of a national group and have been living mainly in Rhodes and Kos, the biggest islands of the complex of Dodecanese islands. They settled on the islands in 1522 after they were surrendered to the Suleyman the Magnificent. In 1912 the islands were occupied by the Italians who established their regime, followed by the Germans from 1943 until 1945. The English occupation was the last one before the islands were finally annexed by Greece in 1947.

During the period 1522-1912, Dodecanese were part of the Ottoman Empire and Ottomans were the dominant group. During the Italian occupation they were officially recognized as a religious community. More than 4000 were living in Rhodes island. After the annexation in Greece, the Italian Muslim citizens of Rhodes automatically

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<sup>1</sup> Newspaper «Το Βήμα της Τουριστικής Κω», 16 January 2010

became Greek citizens without being officially recognized as minority though (article 19, par. 1: “Italian citizens who were domiciled on 10 June 1940 in territory transferred by Italy to another State under the present Treaty, and their children born after that date, shall, except as provided in the following paragraph, become citizens with full civil and political rights of the State to which the territory is transferred..”). The minority protection system of that period was too weak and thus it was article 19 par. 4 of the Peace Treaty of 1947 that was protecting them in a general way: “The State to which the territory is transferred shall, in accordance with its fundamental laws, secure to all persons within the territory, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, the enjoyment of human rights and of the fundamental freedoms”. The attempts that were made through the Turkish Consul in Rhodes for the recognition of the community as a “Turkish” one, were repelled by the Greek side. Neither the Treaty of Lausanne was covering them. However, they were granted with a special status as far as the *Vakf* and schools are concerned. Nowadays the Muslims of the Dodecanese islands Rhodes and Kos are not more than 5,000 in total, 3,500 in Rhodes and 1,500 in Kos.

Since 1971-1972 there were no Muslim schools operating and thus the Turkish language was abolished. This was considered as a counter measure for the shut down of the schools in Imroz and Gokceada (Imvros and Tenedos respectively). Regarding the *Vakf* in Rhodes and Kos, still nowadays they are managed by a council whose members’ activities are subject to the government and the District of South Aegean. However, the relevant annual reports are not made public.

It is a common belief, that the existence of two officially recognized minorities meaning the Muslim-Turkish minority in Western Thrace and the Rums of Istanbul in both Greece and Turkey still play an important role in the bilateral political relations of these two countries. Much has been written regarding this issue but the case is considered differently when it concerns other communities, other than the two mentioned, living in these countries. This reason in conjunction with my general interest on minorities issue concerning both Greece and Turkey was what prompted me to deal with the particular issue of the Muslim community of the Dodecanese islands in Greece.

In many cases, governments misuse the minorities issue in order to fulfill their interests. There are many examples illustrating the decisive role of the relations between the kin and the home state regarding their communities. This in connection with the Turkish-Greek conflicts and situations that are used in retaliation to measures taken creates and reproduces a feeling of mutual mistrust, suspiciousness and cultivates the already existing stereotypes. The result is a reaction that reminds the picture of Escher “Horsemen” in which depending on which color we focus on, the other one seems as a background of the one we have chosen<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1: Escher “Horsemen”).

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<sup>2</sup> S. Chiotakis, “Εκπαίδευση και ενσωμάτωση των Μουσουλμάνων της Δωδεκανήσου”, (Education and integration of the Muslims of Dodecanese), *Modern subjects*, Vol. 63, 1997, p. 79

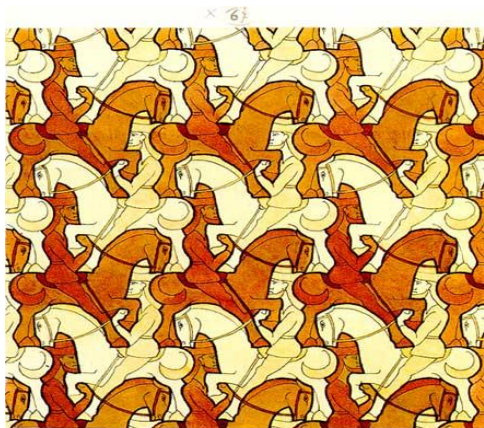


Figure 1: Escher's "Horsemen"

Muslims of Dodecanese islands are a community that very few people know about or have even heard its existence. This is the case for even the rest of the Muslims living in other areas of Greece. Tourists that visit the island of Rhodes, which is the most touristic among the Dodecanese group, as soon as they come across with members of the Muslim community are under the impression that they are just taking long vacation in the island. When someone looks at the mosques he thinks that they are just operating as museums for sightseeing purposes.

When it comes to the bibliography written on the issue, unfortunately we find out that not much has been written especially if we compare the Muslims of Dodecanese and the Muslim minority of Thrace or even other Muslim communities within the Greek territory. This is the reason why a field research was necessary. Visiting those places (just the islands of Kos and Rhodes in which the Muslim community is actively present), searching their local municipalities' archives and files, local newspapers and libraries, interviewing members of the local community (both the Muslims and the Christians who live together), visiting the University of Aegean and the specific department of Mediterranean Studies in the curriculum of which Turkish language

courses are also provided, gave me a more clear view on the situation and enabled to collect material that would not be easily to find elsewhere. However, I should also mention that finding the information was not always an easy task. From the local municipality, for example, it was not possible to acquire any statistical percentages or to see the archives on the number of the community's members. On the other side, some members of the Muslim community were hesitant to elaborate on this issue, fearing the possible consequences that they may face in everyday life or in interaction with the locals and in their relations with the Greek administration.

### **Methodology**

Through this research, I intend to examine the status of a Muslim community that is not officially recognized as a minority. In this manner and at the end of my research, I hope to be able to come to a conclusion about whether the status of not being an officially recognized minority creates problems or provides advantages.

Regarding the methodology that I followed in my research, I used mostly secondary literature such as books, articles, many of which were published in the area of Dodecanese by local institutions, and primary literature such as the results of my research conducted in the islands, material which I would not be able to find unless I had travelled in the area. Interviews with local people, members of both the Muslim and the local community were of great significance for my research since they helped to understand the general framework of the situation by meeting them, discussing with them, visiting their places and see some aspects of their every day lives.

## **Scope of the Study**

The object of this study concerns both the historical and the legal aspects of the existence of the Muslim community in the Dodecanese. Going through the history of the Dodecanese and the its population and coming up to the present situation, will enhance the understanding of the ways that history has affected the different aspects of everyday life regarding the construction of identity within the minority group and the Greek society. How do the Muslims of Dodecanese determine themselves? Do they feel Turks or Greek citizens as they are? Have they been totally adapted in the local community or there are kind of discriminations against them? These are some of the questions I am going to answer. Another issue to be examined is related to the socio-economic aspects of the community's life.

The first chapter is a review of the history of the Dodecanese throughout the years from the ancient times till the Italian occupation right before the annexation to the Greek state in 1947. Through this historical retrospective we can have an overview of the situation in the Dodecanese islands as well as to explain the presence of the Muslims in the area.

The second chapter deals in general with the Muslim community which is present in Greece as well as with its structure. In this section, I also included the Muslim/Turkish minority of Thrace. Although the status between the Muslim community of Dodecanese and the Muslim/Turkish minority of Thrace is different, I find it especially significant to mention some common aspects of their legal and social

status. The minority in Thrace, being the only one officially recognised minority in Greece could give me the general framework in order to come to a conclusion whether the status of being or not being a minority, being or not being officially and legally protected by laws, having or not having commitments can be an advantage or disadvantage for a harmonised action and interaction within the Greek state.

Chapter three covers the religious and social issues regarding the Muslims living in Greece. This includes the general legal framework concerning the Islam and freedom of religion, the religious leadership and problems faced with the citizenship and educational issue. Their socio-economical status together with the Muslim community associations' action, give us a sign of their societal inclusion or exclusion within the broader community. The local press should not be excluded from this research. Media has become an important part of our everyday lives. Apart from being the basic source of information, it can also be a way for someone to easily externalize and sensibilibize in public a situation that would not be known in any other way.

## Chapter I

### Historical background and Demographic Structure of the Island

In this Chapter I am going to deal with the Dodecanese islands in terms of geography, demography and history by going back to the ancient times, and through Middle Ages and the Ottoman period to arrive up to the Italian occupation. In that manner we will acquire a broader idea of the specific geographic area with which I am going to deal in the rest of my research. This historical throwback will further help us to explain and justify the today's presence of the Muslim community in the Dodecanese islands.

#### The Dodecanese islands

Starting with the demographic and geographic description of the Dodecanese islands and carrying on with the historical background will give us a general overview of the area (Map 1: The Dodecanese islands).



Map 1: Location of the Dodecanese islands in the world map

## Geography

The Dodecanese constitute a group of 14 larger (Patmos, Leros, Kalymnos, Kos, Astypalaia, Nisyros, Tilos, Symi, Rhodes, Karpathos, Kasos, Kastelorizo, Leipsoi) plus more than 150 smaller Greek islands in the southeastern part of the Aegean Sea (of which 26 are inhabited). They are lying along the northwestern coast of Turkey, connecting the major islands of Samos and Rhodes. The islands possess a total area of 1.022 square miles (2.681, 6 square kilometers) while Rhodes has more than the half of the total portion (564 square miles) (Map 2: Location of Dodecanese islands).



MAP 1

Map 2: Location of the Dodecanese islands between Turkey and Greece

The islands have a rich history, and many of even the smallest inhabited islands boast dozens of Byzantine churches and medieval castles. Diachronically, they have occupied an important position in geo-economic terms astride the major sea routes of the eastern Mediterranean, contributing to the ships trade between Egyptian ports and mainland Greece and Anatolia. The placement of the islands has obtained a geopolitical significance as far as military activity is concerned. It should be noted that their fortunes were embedded into the shifts of power within the Mediterranean<sup>3</sup>(see below, Map 3: Dodecanese in the Aegean Sea).



Map 3: The Dodecanese in the Aegean Sea

Where does the name Dodecanese emanate from? There are analysts assuming that it was Theophanes, a Byzantine chronicler who first introduced this term while referring

<sup>3</sup> R. Kasperson (1966), *The Dodecanese: Diversity and Unity in Island Politics*, Department of Geography Research Paper No. 108, Chicago Illinois, pp. 8-10

to the whole archipelago (including the Cyclades) and not exclusively the abovementioned group<sup>4</sup>. While searching for the components of this word it seems quite clear that the name refers to the Greek words “δώδεκα” and “νησιά” which mean twelve and islands respectively. During the Byzantine Empire this term was appealing for virtually all the islands of the southern Aegean engaging the southern Cyclades<sup>5</sup>.

Additionally, the term is supposed to have been used under the reign of Isaurian Emperor of Byzantium, Leo III, when one of his naval commands was planned and conducted as “the Dodecanese or Aigaion Pelagos”. Rhodes was labeled as the Metropolis of Cyclades while the Metropolitan of Rhodes would be known as “Exarches of Cyclades islands”.

During the Ottoman period, Suleiman the Magnificent labeled them as “Privileged Islands” a concept based on their privileged civil and tax status. This was the case till 1909 when the Young Turks came up with the decision to revoke it. The late medieval period constituted the time framework where the Dodecanese were identified with the twelve major islands of Astypalaia, Kalymnos, Karpathos, Chalki, Kasos, Kos, Leros, Nisyros, Patmos, Rhodes, Symi and Telos. Later, as Leipsos and Kastelorizo (Megisti) obtained some significance in terms of population and economy were included in the same group as well increasing the list to fourteen. Additionally,

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<sup>4</sup> Ibis & J. N. Casavis (1935), *Italy and the Unredeemed Isles of Greece*, New York: Dodecanesian League of America, p. 3

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

smaller islets are located within this group. The majority of them are either unoccupied or seasonally inhabited.

The Italians which conquered the islands in 1912 avoid initially the usage of the term Dodecanese and opt for other names. *Isole Italiane dell' Egeo* (Italian Islands of the Aegean), *Sporadi Meridionali* (Southern Sporades), *Le Tredici Sporadi* (The Thirteen Sporades) and *Rodi e le Sporadi* (Rhodes and the Sporades) were some of the names that had been employed by the Italians. The term Dodecanese was embraced by the islanders during the Italian occupation. It was officially established after their liberation and unification with Greece in 1947.

### **The first appearance of the Muslims in the Dodecanese islands**

In order to examine the presence of the Muslims living in the Dodecanese islands as well the role they played in the local community, we will have to first go some years back to history.

### **Ancient History**

The origins of the Dodecanese population formulate a question subject to further investigation. Accurate statistics are not available until 1926 when the statistical office of Greece was established. The earliest traces of settlement are found in scattered evidence of a Stone Age population at the western side of Kos. According to one legend, two races, the Telchines and the Heliadi, originally inhabited Rhodes<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Sot. Agapitidis (1948) *The Population of the Dodecanese*, Athens, p. 288-309

During the Neopalatial period on Crete, the islands were heavily influenced by the Minoan civilization. In the aftermath of the Minoans' downfall, the islands were reined by the Mycenaean Greeks from circa 1400 BC, until the arrival of the Dorians circa 1100 BC. Under the reign of the Dorians the Dodecanesians started to obtain prosperity as an independent entity, establishing a thriving economy and culture through the following centuries<sup>7</sup>.

This development was interrupted around 499 BC due to the Persian Wars, during which the islands were occupied by the Persians for a short period of time. After Persians were defeated by the Athenians in 478 BC, the cities joined the Athenian-dominated Delian League. When the Peloponnesian War broke out in 431 BC, they managed to remain neutral to an important extent although they were still members of the League. By the time the Peloponnesian War ended in 404 BC, the Dodecanese were mostly removed from the larger Aegean conflicts, and had begun a period of relative quiet and prosperity. Kos constitutes a significant example since it served as the site of the school of medicine founded by Hippocrates<sup>8</sup>.

It is historically approved that the Peloponnesian War had a negative impact on the Greek military strength making it vulnerable to invasions. The islands would not constitute any exception. Indeed, in 357 BC Dodecanese were occupied by the King Mausolus of Caria and 340 BC by the Persians whose reign did not get longer

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<sup>7</sup> R. Kasperson (1966), p. 10-12

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

compared to the previous one as described before<sup>9</sup>. In the aftermath of their rule the islands were integrated into the Macedonian Empire.

After the demise of the Macedonian Empire the islands formed strong commercial ties with the Ptolemies in Egypt, and together they formed the Rhodo-Egyptian alliance which controlled trade throughout the Aegean in the 3rd century BC. The Colossus of Rhodes, built in 304 BC, could be associated in symbolic terms with this wealth and power.

In 164 BC, Rhodes signed an agreement with Rome, and the islands became aligned with the Roman Empire while being able to remain autonomous. Rhodes quickly became a major schooling center for Roman noble families, and, as the islands (and particularly Rhodes) were important allies of Rome, they enjoyed numerous privileges and generally friendly relations<sup>10</sup>.

### **Middle Ages and Ottoman Period**

In 470 AD, the Issaurians made an attack against Rhodes and looted the city before being forced off by reorganized defenses. In 620, Persians sacked the city again. The Dodecanese, Cyprus and Crete were exposed to attacks during the Arab War against the Byzantine Empire.

The Byzantine era came to the end for the islands when Rhodes was conquered by the Knights in 1309, and the rest of the islands fell gradually over the next few decades.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 13

The Knights made Rhodes their stronghold, transforming its capital into a grandiose medieval city dominated by an impressive fortress, and scattered fortresses and citadels through the rest of the islands as well. The Knights were in possession of the islands for a short period of time<sup>11</sup>.

These massive fortifications were not adequate to repel invasions by the Sultan of Egypt in 1444 and Mehmed II in 1480. Finally, however, the citadel at Rhodes fell to the large army of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1522, and the rest of the islands confronted a similar faith.

One of the conditions set for the islanders' surrender to Suleiman was the respect for ancient privileges. Embedded to this rationale, the islanders were provided with virtual autonomy under the supervision of the Ottoman Empire. It should be noted that except a small annual tribute they were exempted from all taxation and enjoyed a guaranteed complete freedom of trade. Additionally, the Turkish officials were not supposed to interfere with Greek language, religion and education<sup>12</sup>.

On the other hand some aspects of the Turkish governance could not be considered positive. Visits by Turkish collectors often caused the fleeing of the islanders, as did periodic visits by the Turkish fleet. Furthermore, the authorities did not manage to take actions to stem the spread of disease which took a heavy toll among islanders<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 14

<sup>12</sup> P. Vouras (1963) "The Development of the Resources of the Island of Rhodes under Turkish Rule 1522-1911", *Balkan Studies*, Vol. IV, p. 45-46

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

After the Greek revolution, the Dodecanese were initially included in the new Greek state but in 1830 they were exchanged for Turkish Euboea. During that period they were enjoying the advantages emanating from their participation in the carrying trade between Ottoman Empire and ports in the Middle East and the Black Sea. These new activities aligned with the traditional exports of citrus fruits, wine, vegetables and olive oils resulted to a significant economic and demographic growth of the islands<sup>14</sup>. The only obstacle towards this evolution rested upon the uprising in Crete in 1867 which in its turn caused the blockade of Symi from the Ottoman fleets while troops seized the public buildings. In 1908, when the Young Turks came into power, the inhabitants were hoping for more liberal concessions institutionalized and reinforced by a constitutional treaty. The hopes raised resulted to a disappointment since the newly emerged regime cancelled the existing privileges, initiated and imposed heavy taxes, decreed Turkish the official languages and abrogated religious liberties<sup>15</sup>.

### **The Italian occupation**

In 1912 the first Balkan war broke out and the Greek fleet quickly captured the northern Sporades. Italy meanwhile assembled a fleet at Astypalaia and occupied the Dodecanese Islands except Castelorizo which is getting occupied by France. This action functioned initially as a distraction towards the Ottoman Empire in the framework of the continuing Italian-Turkish war in 1911. The Dodecanesians acted positively towards this evolution, identifying the Italian army with the liberators and rendered valuable assistance in the capture of Turkish officials and military garrisons.

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<sup>14</sup> R. Kasperson (1966), p. 19

<sup>15</sup> R. Kasperson (1966), p. 20

After Rhodes was captured as well, the Italian military leaders declared that they would assure the formulation of an autonomous government for the Dodecanese<sup>16</sup>.

A wind of optimism was blowing among the habitants in the islands. Some of their representatives gathered at the holy island of Patmos in 1912 in order to establish a plan for their future. The delegates unanimously came up with the decision to name the islands “Aegean State”, to employ the laws of the Greek state and to clarify their wish to be united with it<sup>17</sup>.

The treaty of Ouchy (a suburb of Lausanne) signed in 18 October 1912 and which was terminating the Ottoman-Italian war compelled the Ottoman Empire to recognize de jure the Italian occupation of the islands. According to Article 2 Italy promised explicitly to withdraw its military and political officials from the Dodecanese after Tripoli and Cyrenaica would be evacuated by the Ottoman army and delegates. The resistance which the Italians confronted in Libya, with special reference to Tripoli and the pending Ottoman presence in the region (as the Italians claimed) provided the Italian authorities with the proper excuses to postpone the evacuation of the islands *sina die*<sup>18</sup>. In 26 April 1915, however, one clause of the secret Treaty of London assured Italy full possession of the islands exchanging it with its participation in the First World War on the Entente side.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> Sk. Zervos & P. Roussas (1920) *The Dodecanese: Resolutions and Documents Concerning the Dodecanese 1912-1919*, The Library of the University of California, Los Angeles, p. 9-12

<sup>18</sup> I. Korantis (1981) *Diplomatic History of Europe 1919-1955* [in Greek], Vol. 1, Estia Athens, p. 76

In the aftermath of the War, an Italian-Greek treaty signed by Venizelos and Titoni in 26 July 1919 promised to cede the Dodecanese islands to Greece, with the exception of Rhodes which would remain under the Italian authorities but it would be provided with a broad degree administrative autonomy. Titoni and Venizelos signed the same day a special agreement according to which Italy would enable the organization of a referendum in Rhodes, when the British would assign Cyprus to Greeks. It was clear that the referendum would not be held in the five following years. This agreement was denounced by Sforza, the successor of Titoni who utilized every possible advantage emanating from Article 7 of the same treaty which was stating that in case the Italian vindications in the region were not fulfilled by the Treaty Conference, Italy would be able to regain full field of action. Sforza stated that it was not proper for a Big Power like Italy to beg for the support of a power like Greece. This brought up the Greek reaction as well. Venizelos made clear that in case Italy would not sign this abovementioned treaty concerning the Dodecanese, Greece would not sign the Sevres Treaty (10/8/1920) with Turkey. This stance obliged the British to compel Italy to yield. Indeed, the last article of the Italo-Greek treaty was depicting that the ratification should be simultaneously submitted to Paris with the respective one of the Sevres. Additionally, the Dodecanese Treaty would come into force at the same time with the Sevres Treaty. Since the latter was not implemented, the former took the same road and got denounced in 8 October 1922<sup>19</sup>.

The early years of Italian administration in the Dodecanese seemed to be beneficial for the islanders. In 1923 the Italian governor pursued a program of intensive

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

commercial and touristic development of Rhodes. In this framework, fine roads and hotels were built, antiquities restored and attractive gardens and parks established. The inhabitants were also supposed to enjoy great autonomy as far as their language, education and religion are concerned<sup>20</sup>.

Mario Lago, the Italian Governor, begun this big reconstruction project of public works in the belief that the Italians would never leave from the islands. However we should also mention that the 85% of the total budget needed for the implementation of these reconstruction works, was the result of a heavy taxation that had to be put upon the Greek people, whereas only the 15% was coming from state funds<sup>21</sup>.

The Peace Conference held in Paris from 29 July until 15 October 1946, with the participation of the delegates emanating from twenty-one nations in order to decide on peace terms for Germany's five allies in World War II: Bulgaria, Hungary, Finland, Romania and Italy. Italy was urged to cede most of the Istrian peninsula, including Fiume (Rijeka), and some Adriatic islands to Yugoslavia and the Dodecanese to Greece.<sup>22</sup>

Head of the Greek delegation was the Prime Minister, K. Tsaldaris. It should be noted that there were members from the opposition included, aiming to underline the common ground and the integrated position among all aspects of the Greek political

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<sup>20</sup> R. Kasperson (1966), p. 21

<sup>21</sup> RN. Nikolaou & A. Aggelis, (2009) *Η Ρόδος του εικοστού αιώνα*, (Rhodes of twentieth century), Rhodes, Dentrdo, pp. 141-142

<sup>22</sup> J. Palmowski (2008) *Dictionary of Contemporary World History*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 532-533

world and the public opinion as far as the Dodecanese question was concerned. The response of the Conference towards the clarified Greek claims concerning the annexation of the Dodecanese was positive. In 25 September of the same year, the Commission of Political and Territorial Issues, responsible for examining the terms of the Peace Treaty with Italy, had unanimously adopted Greeks' request for Dodecanese's incorporation. Article 14 of the Paris Treaty, signed in 10 February 1947 illustrates that "Italy hereby cedes to Greece in full sovereignty the Dodecanese Islands indicated hereafter, namely Stampalia (Astropalia), Rhodes (Rhodos), Calki (Kharki), Scarpanto, Casos (Casso), Piscopis (Tilos), Misiros (Nisyros), Calimnos (Kalymnos), Leros, Patmos, Lipsos (Lipso), Simi (Symi), Cos (Kos) and Castellorizo, a well as the adjacent islets"<sup>23</sup>. Under the term "adjacent islets" the Greek side clarified that it depicts the islets which had been under the Italian sovereignty during Italy's entrance into the World War.

The decision to incorporate Dodecanese into Greece had been already prescribed in the context of the Summits held by the Council of the Four (USSR, USA, UK, France) the famous Peace Pre-conferences. Although the whole question had been raised in the first meeting in London (September 1945), the abovementioned outcome did not seem feasible since there was no consensus among the four Foreign Ministers. The Soviet Foreign Minister, Molotov, without opposing this integration, expressed his cautiousness during the meeting, expecting the submission of annexation to be formulated by a "democratic" Greek government. The British delegation, favoring from the very beginning the Dodecanese's unification with Greece, seemed to have

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<sup>23</sup> "Treaty of Peace with Italy Paris 10 February 1947" in [http://www.istrianet.org/istria/history/1800-present/ww2/1947\\_treaty-italy.htm](http://www.istrianet.org/istria/history/1800-present/ww2/1947_treaty-italy.htm) [Visited 25/5/2011]

expressed a more decisive position concerning the same issue, a stance which was the case for US as well<sup>24</sup>.

In 21 September, Ernest Bevin<sup>25</sup>, British Foreign Minister during that period, was conducting a confidential memorandum for the British government claiming that: “In case the islands would not become assigned to Greece, despite the fact that they are under our rule, it would constitute an unfavorable contradiction to Russia’s ability to distribute territories to satellite-countries which were hostile. It would undermine our authority in Greece and weaken the Greek government which confronts at the time being serious domestic criticism resting upon its incapacity and failure to obtain any advantage from the peace settlement. The Greek government could not be sustainable if her irrefutable claims would be rejected”<sup>26</sup>.

Foreign Office sought to guarantee the general consensus among all the contributing parts as far as the Dodecanese’s integration was concerned. Under the condition that the coincidence of the opinions between the Foreign Ministers referring to the assignment of Dodecanese to Greece- including Kastelorizo as well- would not be realized, the British had already decided to cede de facto and without any delays this act. After Soviets hesitation that were asking for a naval basis in the southeastern Aegean (without any positive outcome) as an exchange for their positive response towards the Dodecanese issue the consensus became true. It should be noted that

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<sup>24</sup> K. Svolopoulos (2004) *Greek Foreign Policy 1945-1981* (in Greek), Estia I. D Kollarou & Sia, p. 63-69

<sup>25</sup> The British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (27 July 1945- 9 March 1951), member of the Labor government.

<sup>26</sup> K. Svolopoulos (2004), p. 63-69

during the World War II Joseph Stalin had proposed to cede the islands to Turkey as an exchange for the latter's participation-alliance but the tension in their bilateral relations along with the fact that Turkey was not eager to assert them did not make this happen<sup>27</sup>.

While Molotov was consenting to the assignment of the Dodecanese to Greece he highlighted as self-evident the need for their disarmament. This request seemed to be accepted by the other members of the Peace Conference. The tense favoring the implementation of demilitarization regimes along with every "combustible" border zone was imposed by the intention to reduce all possible causes that could bring ex competitive powers into the brink of a conflict. Furthermore, in this occasion, all Ankara's worries should be dispelled due to the fact that many Dodecanese islands were really close to the Minor Asia coasts: the request for a conventional guarantee concerning these specific security concerns was assumed as absolutely legal in the context of rearranging the international balance system. The Greek delegation, not being eager to raise any additional diplomatic obstacles to the accomplishment of the targets it had set, was obliged to accept this binding condition since no turbulence within its relations with Turkey seem to be visible<sup>28</sup>.

The reference regarding the disarmament of the Dodecanese is reflected by the second paragraph of article 14 in Paris Treaty between Greece's allies and Italy: "These islands shall be and shall remain demilitarised". The content of the word "demilitarization" became subject to further definition in the annex 13 of the Treaty:

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

“For the purpose of the present Treaty the terms "demilitarisation" and "demilitarised" shall be deemed to prohibit, in the territory and territorial waters concerned, all naval, military and military air installations, fortifications and their armaments; artificial military, naval and air obstacles; the basing or the permanent or temporary stationing of military, naval and military air units; military training in any form; and the production of war material. This does not prohibit internal security personnel restricted in number to meeting tasks of an internal character and equipped with weapons which can be carried and operated by one person, and the necessary military training of such personnel”<sup>29</sup>.

Greeks took over the administration of the islands in 31 March 1947 since the British signed over the Dodecanese to the Greek Military Administrator Chief Naval Officer P. Ioannidis, 90 days after signing the Peace Treaty. The period of the Greek Military Administration was the last and preparatory stage before the official incorporation of the islands into Greece which was put into action after the ratification of the Treaty. After the withdraw of the Greek army a General Administration of Dodecanese was composed having as a Head the doctor from Kasos Nikos Mavris who had struggled for this unification<sup>30</sup>.

Through the Decree 53/1930, the Italian Governorate recognized three religious communities: Christian Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish who were able to manage their

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<sup>29</sup> “Treaty of Peace with Italy Paris 10 February 1947” in [http://www.istrianet.org/istria/history/1800-present/ww2/1947\\_treaty-italy.htm](http://www.istrianet.org/istria/history/1800-present/ww2/1947_treaty-italy.htm) [Visited 25/4/2011]

<sup>30</sup> L. Divani & F. Konstantopoulou (1997) (2<sup>nd</sup> ed) *Dodecanese The Long Path to the Integration Diplomatic Documents from the Historical Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Kastaniotis, p. 36-37

own affairs and act as legal entities. With a local Decree<sup>31</sup> the Italians appointed the Muslim Council of Rhodes and Kos. Right after the annexation, the Military administration put forward the abolishment of the Muslim community arguing that there was not an official legal instrument to impose commitments towards them. According to them neither the Peace Treaty with Italy, nor the Lausanne Treaty established such obligations. The Greek administration decided to maintain the Muslim Community of Dodecanese islands. The Muslim administration encouraged by the Turkish Consulate, claimed that they should be called “Turkish communities” and not “Muslim communities” as the Greek administration finally imposed. In the meantime there was an argument between the two groups constituting the Muslim Councils, namely the Old-Muslims (under the conservative Mufti) and the nationalists (supported by the Turkish Consul). The Greek administration in order to put an end to this conflict, decided to move on with elections for appointing new members equally for both groups<sup>32</sup>.

To reiterate, this first chapter gave us the basic idea about the geographical area which is under examination, the “privileged islands” as Suleiman the Magnificent had labeled them due to their advanced status, and its historical route throughout the years up to the Italian occupation and right before their incorporation to Greece in 1947. Going back to these years, we can clearly see the multicultural character that the area acquired through the various civilizations that passed and settled there. The Minoan civilization, the Mycenaean Greeks, Dorians, Persians, the Rhodo-Egyptian and

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<sup>31</sup> 260/18-10-36, 75/29-3-1934 amended by Decree 155/31-7-1935, see Th. Chrysanthopoulos, 1983, p.33.

<sup>32</sup> Th. Chrysanthopoulos, 1983, pp. 33-35.

Rhodo-Roman alliances, the Knights, Ottomans, Italians were some of them. In the following chapter we will focus on the Muslim element in Greece and specifically in the area of interest.

## Chapter II

### The Muslim Community structure

In this chapter I start by trying to identify the term “minority”. This will help us understand how the minority system works in general and specifically within the Greek legal and social framework and reality. In Greece the issues regarding the protection of the Muslim minority starts with the establishment of the Greek state in 1830. Specific rights were granted to them usually in accordance to the general political and sociological situation between Greece and its neighbors. In the aftermath of the Balkan Wars and the enlargement of Greece with New Lands, More than 560,000 Muslims became Greek citizens. We will see what was the reaction and the policy that the Greek state followed in order to organize this new situation.

Muslims of Crete is an important case to be mentioned since it was one of the first international initiatives to settle institutionally the ethnotic otherness in terms of minority. As for the Muslims of Thrace, as I previously mentioned, although they should not be comparable to the Muslim community of Dodecanese since they have a different status (the Muslims of Thrace are the officially recognized minority in Greece), however, I found it important to mention some aspects of the legal and social structure of both groups to clearly understand these differences between them. The *vakf* issue is also an important aspect of the Muslim structure and should not be excluded from the analysis.

### **Definition of the term “minority”**

I find it important to begin the research to the Muslim minority of Greece by first defining the term “minority” as this is widely accepted. Despite the fact that there is not a common definition regarding the concept of “minority”, there are some definitions that are generally used. One of them comes from Francesco Capotorti’s:

*“A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a nondominant position, whose members -being nationals of the State- possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language”.*<sup>33</sup>

A second one belongs to Jules Deschènes:

*“A group of citizens of a State, constituting a numerical minority and in a non-dominant position in that State, endowed with ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which differ from those of the majority of the population, having a sense of solidarity with one another, motivated, if only implicitly, by a collective will to survive and whose aim is to achieve equality with the majority in fact and in law”.*<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Francesco Capotorti, Study on the Rights of Persons Belonging to Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (Geneva, United Nations Center for Human Rights, 1991), UN Doc E/CN.4/Sub.2/384/Add.1–7 quoted in Tim Potier, “Regionally non-dominant titular peoples: the next phase in minority rights?”, European Centre For Minority Issues (ECMI): Germany, July, 2001, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> J. Deschenes, Proposal Concerning a Definition of the Term ‘Minority’, UN Soc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1985 found in Kristin Henrard, *Devising An Adequate System of Minority Protection* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2000) p.22.

Another definition coming from the Council Europe Parliamentary Assembly stipulates that:

*“A group of persons in a state who: (a) reside on the territory of that state and are citizens thereof: (b) maintain longstanding, firm and lasting ties with that state: (c) display distinctive ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic characteristics: (d) are sufficiently representative, although smaller in number than the rest of the population of that state or of a region of the state: (e) are motivated by a concern to preserve together that which constitutes their common identity, including their culture, their tradition, their religion or their language”.*<sup>35</sup>

Taking into consideration the above mentioned definitions about minorities, some functions can be derived; first of all, they are smaller in number than the rest of the population. They are citizens of the country that they live in. They have common distinctive ethnic, religious and linguistic characteristics. They have to be determined to preserve their ethnic, religious and linguistic characteristics. By doing so, they should exhibit a sense of solidarity within the community.

Although the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe underlines the *“negotiation with the relevant home-state of multilateral or bilateral agreements”* as

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<sup>35</sup> Council of Europe Parliamentary Recommendation 1201 (1993) on an additional protocol to be adopted by the Assembly on February 1, 1993.  
<http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta93/EREC1201.htm>  
Visited on May 2009

the legal instrument which kin-states can apply to protect their kin minority, the minority is assumed to have become the agent or traitor of kin-states.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, when the minority which the home-state includes has ethnic, religious and linguistic characteristics with the neighbor states, home-state's perception of the minority can bring the concept of "*Trojan horse*" to mind.<sup>37</sup> In the light of this fact, it should be noted that by assuming the minority as the Trojan horse, the home-state would have come to securitize its own 'citizens'. For the kin-state, the presence of a kin minority generally reveals an ability to interfere in internal affairs of the home-state on behalf of protecting the kin minority. By acting with this perception, the home-state securitizes its bilateral relations with the kin-state.<sup>38</sup>

Building upon these assumptions, we should figure out how this kinship is gradually established between the kin-state and the kin-minority. As a reply to this question, Konstantinos Tsitselikis underlines the "*national ideology of the kin-state*" and ensuring the "*development of this ideology*" within the minority.<sup>39</sup> In the case of Turkish-Greek relations, especially with the concept of reciprocity, the Turkish Muslim minority of Western Thrace indicates that the ethnic identity of a minority (Turkish national ideology) through a kin-state (Turkey) can be assumed to be a threat

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<sup>36</sup> Konstantinos Tsitselikis, "Reciprocity as a regulatory pattern for the treatment of the Turkish/Muslim minority of Greece", p. 69.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 70–71.

to national security by the nation-state (Greece). It makes clear that the ethnic identity has played a crucial role through constructing the identity of minority.<sup>40</sup>

The Muslim minority of Western Thrace of course is not the only minority group in Greece. There are also other ethnic, religious and linguistic minority groups. However, the Turkish Muslim minority is the only recognized minority by the Greek state. Moreover, it was the only minority group which is protected by a bilateral agreement between Greece and another state.<sup>41</sup> Now, we can move on discussing on a more general framework regarding the status of the Muslim minority in Greece.

### **Muslim Minority in Greece**

The whole issue related to the protection of the Muslim minority in Greece is rooted in the beginning of the Greek state's foundation. In legal terms it was a special clause of the Protocol of London (1830) and a decree of Otto (1833) that recognized to the few Muslims who chose to stay in Greece (with special reference to the Euboean community) the right to maintain their property and personal security<sup>42</sup>.

The annexation of Arta and Thessaly by Greece in 1881 brought up a minority of 40.000 Muslims who accepted the Greek citizenship. It was the first time that a special status concerning the protection of the minorities was established under the conditions of the Greek-Ottoman Treaty in Constantinople (1881). The same issue

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>41</sup> R. Clogg, "Introduction" in Richard Clogg (ed.) *Minorities in Greece: Aspects of a Plural Society*, London: Hurst & Company, 2002, pp. 12–13.

<sup>42</sup> K. Tsitselikis, "Muslim Communities in Greece before and after 1923: Law continuities and ideological inconsistencies" in Greek, in *Greek-Turkish Population Exchange. Aspects of a national dispute*, p. 369

was in 1913 after the annexation of the New Territories (Macedonia, Epirus, islands of Eastern Aegean and Crete). In this way the Ottoman Empire was taking over through institutional channels the role of the “motherland” for the Muslims in Greece, keeping its right to supervise the extent to which the terms of the treaty were implemented. In political terms, the compliance with the agreements could be interpreted as a lever in the bilateral relations making the minority seem vulnerable and exposed to the danger emanating from a possible worsening of Greek-Ottoman relations<sup>43</sup>.

According to the provisions of the Treaty the Muslims were supposed to fully enjoy religious freedom: the religious courts (sharia) headed by the mufti-paid by the Greek state- would remain along with the hierarchical structures of the Muslim communities and their properties, mainly the *vakfs*, whose incomes could maintain the mosques, the schools, the orphanages and other foundations. Besides these special rights, the Muslims should enjoy every other right stemming out from the identity of a Greek citizen. Consequently, the Muslims as a minority in Greece were determined by a dual status: on the one hand, the identity of the citizen implied rights and duties towards the Greek state which was going through a construction process in the spirit of the modernization project, while on the other hand the maintenance of Ottoman Muslim minority’s structures is concentrated on the idea of the community which in its turn was mentally and (to some extent) administratively associated with the millet system<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid p. 371

The geography of this Muslim presence is reflected on the distribution of the muftis having under their auspices, offices in the urban centers where Muslim schools were functioning as well. The function of these schools was supervised by the Ministry of Education. They were also perceived as communitarian-private schools obliged to teach the Greek language as well. The muftis functioning in Thessaly until the populations' exchange were located in Larisa, Volos, Farsala, Trikala and Karditsa.

### **New Lands**

The enlargement of Greece with the New Lands in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars resulted to the collective assignment of the Greek citizenship to the residents of these regions. More than 560.000 Muslims became Greek citizens: 472.000 in Macedonia, 28.000 in Crete, 8.000 in Epirus, 9.000 in the islands of the Eastern Aegean, 6.000 in Palaia Ellada<sup>45</sup> and Ellassona<sup>46</sup>.

The coherence among the Muslim minorities rested upon solidarity bonds while religion was a special point of reference. The existing linguistic differentiation did not undermine the significance of the religious bonds, although it contributed to a certain point, to the discrimination of national identities and in specific occasions it was the substrate for the establishment of national consciousness taking into account the example of the Turcophones. It should be noted that the Turkish language was the mother tongue of the Muslims living mainly in Macedonia and the islands of the

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<sup>45</sup> Palaia Ellada is a geographical term used for Greece before its territorial expansion in the aftermath of the Balkan Wars and in contrast the New Lands which constituted the territorial successful outcome of the military operations during that period.

<sup>46</sup> Tsitselikis, p. 373

Eastern Aegean while Greek was the mother tongue for the Cretans Muslims and Greek and Albanian the respective one for the Muslims of Epirus<sup>47</sup>.

Therefore the Greek administration had to cope with a newly formulated situation where 39% of the population living in Northern Greece was Muslims. The first reaction of the Greek authorities was not associated with assimilation policies but it was favoring the regulation of some terms towards the coexistence among different religious groups under the condition that these would prove conformity to the new status quo. On the other side the raise of the Greeks in the New Lands raised a question for the Muslims whether they should stay in the Greek territories or emigrate to the Ottoman regions. This problem became more intensive when many Greeks from Minor Asia, Eastern Thrace and Bulgaria decided to settle in the New Lands.

In the New Lands the Muslims were recognized as a minority. Consequently, this means that the status of interpersonal law concerning family and hereditary differences could remain viable. The local mufti would be recognized as the religious leader and the judge while the Muslims could keep their property, their schools, the orphanages along with other foundations whose management would be inscribed into the responsibilities of boards composed by members directly elected by people<sup>48</sup>.

The legal status of protection and of religious-economic-educational autonomy of the Muslim minorities is based on the bilateral convention of Athens signed in 1913. These documents rest upon the abovementioned agreements of 1881 for the Muslims

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. p. 374

living in Thessaly. In this case the Muslim minorities are treated as quasi millet while Muslims obtain the Greek citizenship. The differentiation between the 1881 and 1913 agreements relies on that fact that national consciousnesses were gradually formulated in the twilight of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Turkish nationalism seeks to penetrate the Muslim communities, mainly the Turcophone ones which seem to respond positively to its possible embracement. In this framework it should be noticed that the treatment of the Muslims on behalf of the Greek authorities is widely associated with an explicit or non explicit reference to their possible Turkish identity, even in cases where the latter had not been manifested or formulated<sup>49</sup>.

### **The Muslims in Crete**

The institutional organization of the Muslims in the Cretan State which was established in 1898 and lasted until 1912 constitutes one of the first international initiatives to settle institutionally the ethnotic otherness in terms of minority. With the contribution of the Great Powers the rights of the Cretan Muslims could be ensured through the constitutional guarantee of the political representation and special rights regarding the educational and religious autonomy of the Muslim communities<sup>50</sup>.

However, as the Autonomy was gradually in the progress of a political union with the independent Greek State, which finally occurred in 1913, political tensions occurred against Muslims. The last years before the Ottomans leave the islands and right after the Italian occupation started, the local Muslim communities of Rhodes and Kos, and

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p. 375

<sup>50</sup> Ibid p. 372

specifically the village of Niohori, accepted immigrants coming from the Cretan Autonomous State and Smyrni<sup>51</sup>.

### **The Muslim Minority in Thrace**

Thrace, unlike Crete that can be considered to represent the pre-history of the millet-like internal institutions of the Greek political and legal system, demonstrates the present and the future of the legal status of Islam in Greece<sup>52</sup>. Due to its strategic location the Muslim Minority in Thrace marks a particular kind of geographical, historical and cultural boundary between the East and the West. It should not be ignored that Western Thrace consists the eastern border of European Union<sup>53</sup>.

The minority of Thrace is protected by the Lausanne Treaty which was signed in 24.7.1923. In the articles 37-44 of the Lausanne Treaty some minority guarantees were given to citizens of both countries which were differentiated in terms of nationality, language, tribe and religion. This protection question was focusing on the case of the Hellenic-Orthodox residents of Istanbul. Article 45 was providing the Greek Muslims with similar guarantees, mainly the group of people living in Western Thrace and which was exempted from the compulsory populations' exchange. The

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<sup>51</sup> N. Nikolaou & A. Aggelis, "Rhodes of 20<sup>th</sup> Century", in Greek, Dentro, 2009, p. 91

<sup>52</sup> K. Tsitselikis, "The pending Modernisation of Islam in Greece: From Millet to Minority status", *Sudosteuroopa*, 55 (2007) 4, pp. 354-372

<sup>53</sup> D. Anagnostou & A. Triantafyllidou (2007) "Region, Minorities and European Policies. A Policy Report on the Muslim Minority in Western Thrace in Greece" in D. Anagnostou & A. Triantafyllidou (ed.) *Changing Interests and Identities in European Border Regions. EU Policies, Ethnic Minorities, and Sociopolitical Transformation in Member States and Accession Countries*  
<http://www.eliamep.gr/main.asp?cat=3> (Access 31/7/2011 12:46)

League of Nations decided to supervise the degree to which the conventional duties on behalf of both countries towards the minorities would be “operationalized”<sup>54</sup>.

Despite the common religion, the Muslim minority that was not exchanged continues to be inhomogeneous in tribal and linguistic terms. It is composed by Turcophone Muslims, Pomacs, Roma, Athigans, and Cerkez<sup>55</sup>. Due to this ethnological and linguistic specificity, the officials who were preparing the Lausanne Treaty preferred to characterize the Muslim minority as religious (not national). Besides, the Mixed Commission for the Populations’ Exchange stated in 31.5.1927 that within the interpretation of the term “Muslim religion” of article 1 of the Lausanne Treaty concerning the Populations’ Exchange the “tribe is not taken into account”<sup>56</sup>.

The official Greek position on the minority of Western Thrace, despite the variations in its interpretation and application over time, has been that it constitutes a de jure-Muslim-minority. What emerges however, from the past experience is that the minority has been consistently treated for specific purposes as a Turkish one. During the Cold War, the Greek officials found a close field of cooperation on the issue of minority’s education accepting the conflation of the legal definition they sought to uphold with a more “profane” understanding of the Minority as Turkish<sup>57</sup>. Greek authorities had embraced a policy of literal adherence to the Treaty of Exchange provision.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid. p. 174

<sup>55</sup> Al. Alexandris (1991) p. 63-68

<sup>56</sup> Ibid & St. Ladas (1932) *The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*, New York, p. 381-82

<sup>57</sup> U. Özkırmılı & Sp. Sofos (2008) *Tormented by History Nationalism in Greece and Turkey*, Hurst & Company, London, 154-155

The logic beyond the adoption of this rationale rests upon the fear over the possibilities of Pomaks of the region siding with their Bulgarian neighbors. To some extent it could be claimed that a policy of Turkification of the Pomaks was accepted by providing schooling in Turkish and linking the Pomak population with the Turkish community into a variety of ways<sup>58</sup>. Since 50s this lead into the transformation of a religious minority into a minority with ethnic consciousness and its members in the past 20 years has mobilized to claim a common Turkish identity. This evolution has caused an ongoing rift with Greek authorities who recognize a Muslim (in strictly religious terms) minority in reference to the Lausanne Treaty of 1923.

It became quite clear that in the aftermath of Western Thrace's integration into the Greek state, the minority issue intended to be seen by Greece and Turkey as an element of their relationship, with Athens considering it as a possible thorn and Ankara progressively seeing in its existence an important and potential asset incorporated into its bilateral relations with Greece. It could be concluded that to some extent the protected by international treaties autonomy was gradually losing its significance since the two countries were seeking to impose their opinions while pursuing their interests in the region<sup>59</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

### **Socio-economic profile of the minority**

It is often argued that the minority status can become an obstacle in the adjustment and integration of the community into the broader society and thus the isolation and stagnancy in conservative and traditional models without any progress. The societal inclusion or exclusion can be an outcome of the economic interaction or not within the broader community. The roots of this marginality feeling can be found in the policy of the Greek state may push them into isolation or even to the self-isolation and denial of any contact and relation with the majority members.

The minority's character appears to be strongly agricultural and of low educational level. The main occupations for the Muslims are field workers, peasants and farmers, merchants, owner of shops and employees in the private sector. According to Th. Dragonas & A. Frangoudaki (2006), the agricultural sector appears to be in the first place with 47.2% of the whole minority population compared with 19% of the national mean. Unemployment also appears to be to a high level. Some minority members do not even finish primary school while the percentage of those holding a university degree is even less. Especially the parents and women seem to be illiterate.

According to Mavrommatis (2007), when it goes for the Muslim minority of Thrace, the minority of Rodopi and Xanthi represents the 55% and 40% of the total local population respectively. A respectable number of manufacturers, merchants and entrepreneurs are Muslims whereas many others are tobacco farmers. Since 1992, many funds were provided for the development of Western Thrace. Moreover, most of the basic individual human rights violations of the pre-1990 period have been

abolished. Violation of property rights as well as expropriation of lands also came to an end. On the whole it appears that the abolishment of such restrictive economic measures, contributed to the general improvement of the economic conditions in the region of Western Thrace. Muslims started to build new houses or repair their old houses. Even, bank loans started to be given.

However, in spite economic developments, Western Thrace still remains the least developed region of Greece and the living standards of the Muslims are still lower than the rest of the Greek population. There is no doubt that the construction of large public works, such as the Egnatia highway, as well as other smaller ones, improved the region's road and rail network and thus benefited the entire population. However the minority's socioeconomic position, still remains weak. A reason to that is the decline of agricultural subsidies and their slow exclusion in tobacco production. Furthermore, subnational authorities have not been able to rectify this issue and thus create alternative forms of occupation that can replace tobacco.<sup>60</sup>

The developments in the economic sector had an impact to the demography of the Western Thracian minority. In the period before 1990, the restrictive policies of the Greek state had as a result the migration to other countries like Turkey and Germany. Today, however, it seems that most of the Muslims prefer to stay, work, spend and invest in Western Thrace.

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<sup>60</sup> Dia Anagnostou, Anna Triantafyllidou, *ibid.*, p. 15.

On the contrary, it seems that unlike the Muslims of Thrace, Muslims of Dodecanese islands have been well integrated into the economic life especially after the tourism boom of the 1980's. The majority of them deal with agriculture and farming since they are own land. For those whose main occupation is not agriculture, they work in technical facilities, garages, cafeterias, touristic shops or in the food and clothing sector. Comparing to older times, many of them study in the university either in Greece or in Turkey. Those with university knowledge work in the trade sector or run their own businesses. In general terms one could argue that the Muslim community is participating in an active and successful way within the economical and social life of the area<sup>61</sup>.

### **The *Vakf* in Rhodes and Kos**

The Muslim *vakf* estates of the Dodecanese islands were inherited to the Italian occupation administration by the Ottoman structures in the frame of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1912. At first, the legal status was governed by Decree 85/1915 issued by the Italian Governor. A new legal framework was set again by Decree 12/1925<sup>62</sup> establishing a sophisticated organization for the *vakf* run by a five-member Council. Soon later on, the Council was substituted by one Muslim trustee and by Decree 197/1940 the management of the *vakf* was set under the Communes of Rhodes and Kos. Under British administration, the Municipality of Rhodes by its decision of 17.09.1945 returned back the *vakf* real estates to the Muslim community, whereas the

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<sup>61</sup> S. Chiotakis, 1997

<sup>62</sup> P. Theodoropoulos, 1954, p.202

*vakf* of Kos was de facto restituted to the Muslim community of Kos<sup>63</sup>. This legal status was remained in force according to Declaration 19/1947 of the Greek Military Governor of the islands. Thus, the Italian Decree of 1925 was reactivated by the Greek government as more adequate and accepted by the Muslim communities. However, the law on the *vakf* of the Dodecanese was disconnected from what was applicable on Greece's mainland *vakf*<sup>64</sup>.

According to paragraph 9 of the annex No. 14 of the Treaty of Paris of 1947, Greece undertook the obligation to respect the status of all property of the inhabitants of the islands legally acquired. The Italian law on the Land Registry provided the division between private, namely family, and public, namely community, *vakf*, original and non-original *vakf*, creating particular legal effects especially for the *vakf* of the Dodecanese. This status was retained in force by act 510/1947<sup>65</sup>. Nevertheless, the respect of the legal source of the establishment of the *vakf* under the Ottoman law does not imply the governance of the *vakf* by this law, which is not in force since the introduction of the Greek Civil Code, extended to the Dodecanese islands by the Act 510/1947. Consequently, Greece had to respect the already existing *vakfs* in the Dodecanese islands but no new *vakf* could be established since the Civil Code does not recognize such a legal entity.

Just after the undertaking of the administration of the Dodecanese, the Greek Governor appointed the members of the "Organisation for the management of the

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<sup>63</sup> Th. Chrysanthopoulos, 1983, p. 35

<sup>64</sup> K. Tsitselikis, *Old and New Islam in Greece*, unpublished source

<sup>65</sup> Ach. Konstantinidis, 1971, pp. 12-14, P. Theodoropoulos, 1954, p. 101

*vakf*’ retaining the structures as set by the Italians after a comprise with the Moufti of Rhodes<sup>66</sup>. Regarding the law governing the estates of “*vakf* origin” after the introduction of the Greek civil law, the tassaruf right of usage became of full ownership for their holders and the Greek state withdrew from sharing ownership.

Still, nowadays, the *vakfs* in Rhodes and Kos are managed by one five-member “Organization” in each island. The Organizations constitute legal entity of private law, alike the Committees for the management of the *Vakf* in Thrace, and they are considered as the *moutiveli*, so the legal representative of the totality of the *vakf* of the island<sup>67</sup>. on the issue, the AP ruler that the “organization” does not constitute a legal entity of public law, which is correct, but a foundation of pious character and of “peculiar and limited nature”<sup>68</sup>, an assertion that could be misleading as it merges the legal character of the managing body with the *vakf* itself<sup>69</sup>.

The members of the Organisation are appointed by the Secretary General of the Region and in practice they stay in office as long as they enjoy the government’s confidence. In each Organization sits a representative of the administration, appointed by the Secretary General of the Region too. In theory, they should be appointed every two years (according to the Italian Decree 12/1929 kept in force) and paid by their own *vakf* funds. They are subject to annual financial control by the Secretary General of the Region. However, the annual budget is not made public<sup>70</sup>. In spite the control

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<sup>66</sup> The *Dodecanese*, Kastaniotis, Athens, 1997, p. 111

<sup>67</sup> K. Tsitselikis, Old and New Islam in Greece, unpublished source

<sup>68</sup> decisions of the Dioikitiko Protodikeio Rodou in K. Papageorgiou, 2005, p.85

<sup>69</sup> K. Tsitselikis, Old and New Islam in Greece, unpublished source

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

mechanism, part of the *vakf* real property was gradually sold out without fulfilling the relevant requirements or pious purposes, neither controlled by the Muslim community itself. It seems that especially after the 1970s the *vakf* property was being excessively sold out.<sup>71</sup> The alleged abuse and malfunction of the Organization engendered a series of reactions among the Turks/Muslims of Rhodes. Moreover, the members of the *vakf* committees are appointed by the Perfect through a process, which is neither transparent nor in compliance with the requirements set by law. Adelfosyni, a cultural association of the Muslim community of Rhodes, appealed to the Attorney General of the island in order to achieve the renewal of the members of the *vakf* management committee of Rhodes after of 25 years of inaction. Actually, no further investigatory action was taken by the judiciary.<sup>72</sup> In Kos the minority of the municipality council denounced publicly the non-accountability of the *vakf* organization of the island and recalled for transparency of the 600,000 euros that the Organization spent for the restoration of the two mosques of the island (Lonca Gazi Hasan Pasa cami and Defterdar Ibrahim Pasa cami).<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> See daily newspaper I Rodiaki, 13.02.2002

<sup>73</sup> Dimotiki Kinisi , “On the problems of the Muslim community of Kos”, <http://www.s-elpidas.org/>



Politicians of the Dodecanese also denounced publicly the non-opening process of appointment of the *vakf* Committee of Kos in early 2005. Furthermore, lack of transparency and proper financial administration was obvious, as the *vakf* committee had to spend 0.6 million euros for the restoration of the 2 mosques of Kos, while it earns very little from low rents of selling real estate without justified reason. In addition, clientelism between the members of the committee and the locally ruling politicians, or authorities of the island, has been clearly addressed<sup>74</sup> as well as complaints are vivid against the Organization for not supporting financially the poor members of the community.

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<sup>74</sup> <http://www.s-elpidas.org/>

Apart from the community *vakf* in Rhodes, there are two family *vakf* the legal status of which stems from the Italian decree 132/1929. They constitute a sui generis category of *vakf*, as they are not related to a respective Muslim community but to the family of the genuine founders.<sup>75</sup> Both are the only *vakf* based in Greece and managed from Turkey. The first is the “*Fethi vakfi*”, comprising the famous 200 years old Islamic library and important urban estates in the city of Rhodes. The library and the auxiliary premises had been restored by funds of the *vakf* in 2005 and the library is open to researchers. The second, “*Melek Mehmet Pasa vakfi*” comprises fields of orange and olive trees scattered in several villages of the island (in Lindos, Malona, Masar etc). Each *vakf* is managed by its own *moutiveli*, member of the family. What makes the case of these two *vakf* even more interesting, is that both are being part of a broader *vakf* having spread real estates in Turkey and thus put under the authority of the General Directorate of the *Vakf* (*Vakiflar Genel Mudurlugu*, VGM), the state Turkish supervisor institution of the *vakf*. As both *vakfs* are deemed to belong to the special category of *mustesna*, the VGM appoints the respective managers. In a relevant case, the Court of Appeals of Rhodes reckoned that “*Fethi vakfi*” was a *mustesna vakf* for which the rights of management are reserved to the founder and his decedents and recognized the legal effects of the appointment of the *moutiveli* from Turkey. Furthermore, the court recognized to these *vakf* their legal personality that permits them to be litigant before the court<sup>76</sup>.

To summarize, in this chapter we analyzed the issues regarding the protection of Muslims in Greece starting from 1830 when the Greek state was established, through

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<sup>75</sup> From personal interviews, Rhodes, 2010

<sup>76</sup> K. Tsitselikis, *Old and New Islam in Greece*, unpublished source

the Lausanne Treaty, when the Muslims of Thrace was the only community in Greece characterized as a religious (and not national) minority, as well as the aftermath of the treaty. We also examined the position of the Greek government over the Muslims issue and the minority's role in the Turkish-Greek relations. We also saw the socio-economic profile of both the Muslims in Thrace and Dodecanese as part of their adjustment and adaptation to the Greek system and the everyday lives of the local community. Last but not least, I examined the *vakf* system mainly in the islands of Rhodes and Kos. The *vakfs* were inherited by the Ottomans in the frame of the Treaty of Lausanne. We saw the legal framework for the protection of the *vakf*, the obligations that Greece had this property and the problematic areas that the Muslim community faces nowadays mostly regarding the *vakf* management committee.

## **Chapter III**

### **Legal and social issues**

I will start this chapter by dealing with the Islam under the Greek law. The Lausanne Treaty is the basic instrument as far as the protection of minorities is concerned. There are some other mechanisms that are not ratified yet or have limited applicability. I am going to examine in general the applicability of the laws regarding the freedom of religion in the minority in Greece, the places of worship, possible exceptions from the army as well as the possible impact (positive or negative) that can the Turkish-Greek relations have on the Muslims of Greece. Furthermore, I am planning to search on the Moufti and the religious leaderships, together with the issue of citizenship and cases of deprivation of citizenship, if any. Last, I will delve into the educational system regarding the Muslims in Thrace and Dodecanese and their interaction within the local community through their cultural associations. In order to have a wider picture, the role of media and specifically the local press is going to be examined through specific cases.

#### **Islam under the Greek law**

In the Greek case, as far as the Muslims are concerned, apart from the Treaty of Lausanne that constitutes a keystone, there is just the article 27 of the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) that refers to minority rights. Other International Instruments that refer to the minority protection with some applicability regarding the Muslims of Greece are the ECHR (European Court of

Human Rights), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages<sup>77</sup>. Since Greece has not yet ratified these conventions, she put herself out of the general supervised control system regarding the commitments she has towards minorities<sup>78</sup>.

### **Freedom of Religion of Muslims**

According to the article 3 of the Greek Constitution of 1864 “the hierarchy of any acknowledged religion is set under the supervision of the State as for the Greek Orthodox religion”. Similarly, article 3 of the Constitution of 1975 refers as: “Prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Christian Eastern Orthodox Church...”. It is apparent that in the Greek legal system, the parameters that regulate the freedom of religion in Greece are strongly connected to the position of the Greek Orthodox Church. Thus this is affecting the content of article 13 of the Greek Constitution on the freedom of religion: “1. Freedom of religious conscience is inviolable. The enjoyment of civil rights and liberties does not depend on the individual's religious beliefs. 2. All known religions shall be free and their rites of worship shall be performed unhindered and under the protection of the law. The practice of rites of worship is not allowed to offend public order or the good usages. Proselytism is prohibited. 3. The ministers of all known religions shall be subject to the same supervision by the State and to the same obligations toward it as those of the prevailing religion. 4. No person shall be exempt from discharging his obligations to the State or may refuse to comply with the laws by reason of his religious convictions.

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<sup>77</sup> Tsitselikis, K., “The legal status of Islam in Greece”, *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. 44, no. 3, (2004)

<sup>78</sup> Tsitselikis, K., “From historical minorities to immigrant newcomers: Old and New Islam in Greece”, *unpublished source*

5. No oath shall be imposed or administered except as specified by law and in the form determined by law”.

However, it seems that article 33 par. 2: “Before assuming the exercise of his duties, the President of the Republic shall take the following oath before Parliament: “I do swear in the name of the Holy and consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity to safeguard the Constitution and the laws, to care for the faithful observance thereof, to defend the national independence and territorial integrity of the Country, to protect the rights and liberties of the Greeks and to serve the general interest and the progress of the Greek People”, cancels out what article 13 par. 1 points up. On the other hand, the case is not the same for the Islamic rules<sup>79</sup>.

The first and secondary education course system has a Greek-Orthodox orientation offering however education about other religions of the world not excluding Islam. Students of a dogma other than Greek-Orthodox religion are not obliged to attend the religious courses<sup>80</sup>. However, those students have to attend but not to participate in the every morning Greek Orthodox pray.

### **Mosques and cemeteries**

Regarding the founding and opening of places of worship of a dogma or religion other than the Greek Orthodox, according to the previous strict legal regime, the consensus had to be given by the local religious authorities to the government. In that manner,

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<sup>79</sup> Minaidis, S., “The religious freedom of Muslims within the Greek legal order”, Athens, Komotini, Sakkoulas, 1990, (in Greek), pp. 229-235

<sup>80</sup> Tsitselikis, K., “Greece” in *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, Vol. 1, Netherlands, 2009, p. 155

the Greek Orthodox Church had the control with accepting or rejecting the applications<sup>81</sup>. In Greece still mosques and cemeteries are not found outside of the areas of Thrace, Rhodes and Kos islands so that Muslims can pray properly. After the donation however of an area at the suburbs of Athens, a cemetery is said that will be built<sup>82</sup>.

### **Family Law**

Family law issues such as weddings, divorces, alimony and custody, need the authorization and the safeguard of legality of the Muftis. He acts as a guarantor for the fulfillment of the legal procedures which have to be ratified by the Greek courts though. Muslims are free to choose whether to go to a Greek Civil court or an Islamic one. Yet important cases are being regulated by Greek courts<sup>83</sup>.

### **Exceptions from military Service**

Regarding the military service, the Greek State followed different policies depending on the general situations and conditions of each period. By Law ΑΠΖ/1882 and Law 4213/1913, article 14, the Muslims were excluded from military service. This was during the period that Muslims had the option to choose between the Greek or the Ottoman citizenship. Later on and until the late 1990's, by Decree 1550/1917, the Muslims had to join army without bearing guns<sup>84</sup>. The period from 1946 till 1961 was again a period of exclusion for the Muslims from their military obligations. This

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<sup>81</sup> Minaidis, S., 1990, pp. 290-295

<sup>82</sup> Tsitselikis, K., "Greece" in *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, Vol. 1, Netherlands, 2009, p. 156-157

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, pp. 158-9

<sup>84</sup> Tsitselikis, "The pending modernisation of Islam in Greece: From Millet to minority status", *Sudosteuropa*, 55 (2007) 4, p. 365.

situation was caused by the denial of Muslim soldiers to fight during the Civil War against the communist revolts since some Muslims were fighting with them as well<sup>85</sup>. After 1961 and according to a speech of Evripidis Zannis before the Greek Parliament: “We don’t call the Turks of Dodecanese to conscript to the army, albeit they are Greek citizens”<sup>86</sup>, it was just the Muslims of Dodecanese that were exempted from the military service. The situation was slightly changed after the Cyprus events of 1974 and the Muslim soldiers would serve unarmed<sup>87</sup>.

Nowadays no one is excluded from the army because of being Muslim. The case however of a Muslim joining the Greek army, constitutes a controversial status which is some times dealt with prejudice and awkwardness. Muslims as being Greek citizens have to defend the Greek borders from the possible sympathetic “enemy”.

### **Religion and citizenship**

The territorial implementation of the minority protection in the case of Greece has to be considered for four cases:

- First, for the Muslims of Albanian origin, who have been extra-conventionally exempted from the exchange of population of 1923, mostly living in Epirus until their forced massive exodus in late 1944 or being scattered in Macedonia (Treaty of Sevres).

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<sup>85</sup> Minaidis, S., “The religious freedom of Muslims within the Greek legal order”, Athens, Komotini, Sakkoulas, 1990, (in Greek), p. 341.

<sup>86</sup> *Praktika tis Voulis ton Ellinon*, Session 65 of 10 March 1963, vol. 1963, p. 700, found in Tsitselikis, “The pending modernisation of Islam in Greece: From Millet to minority status”, *Sudosteuropa*, 55 (2007) 4, p. 366.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibis*, p. 366

- Second, after the annexation of Dodecanese in 1947 and the incorporation of a new Muslim population. (No minority status is applicable)
- Third, the internal migration of Thrace's Muslims for economical reasons to other areas (such as Thessaloniki and mainly Athens). (No minority status is applicable)
- Last, the Muslims of Thrace, the incontestable minority governed by the Treaty of Lausanne up to date<sup>88</sup>.

After the end of the Civil War (1949), yet suffering from political instability, Greece speeded her efforts for economic reconstruction. Minority presence was not in the agenda of public discourse neither was customized by mainstream ideological positions. In this context, the last time that a question on religion adherence was asked for the purposes of a population census was in 1951. According to these data there were 111,990 Muslim Greek citizens all over Greece<sup>89</sup>.

Due to the annexation of the Dodecanese islands in the aftermath of World War II in terms of article 19 of the Treaty of Paris (1947) less than 9,000 Muslims became Greek citizens as long as a few hundred Muslims retained the Turkish citizenship, which had acquired during the Italian administration. Others lost the right to acquire the Greek citizenship. The Muslims of Greek citizenship were not reckoned as a minority covered by the Treaty of Lausanne, whereas a special status was acknowledged for the *vakf* and until 1971 for the public schools attended by Muslims.

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<sup>88</sup> K. Tsitselikis, *Old and New Islam in Greece*, unpublished source

<sup>89</sup> National Statistical Service of Greece. According to the General Directorate on Aliens, Report on Muslims living in Greece, there were 114,080 Muslims all over Greece, 5,400 of whom in the Dodecanese, 247 in Macedonia, 214 in Epirus and 106,147 in Thrace.

Furthermore, a short-lived Commissioner was appointed by the Greek administration<sup>90</sup> for the Muslim community of Rhodes. An immigration flow towards Turkey was diminishing the Muslim population of Rhodes and Kos, in the first years after the annexation of the Dodecanese, as late as in 1954, in 1964-65 and in 1972-74, especially when Greek-Turkish relations had a negative impact on their respective minorities. More than 10,000 fled in total during these periods of tension, although the Turkish authorities were not promoting migration, aiming at keeping as many in the islands fostering a “Turkish National consciousness”.<sup>91</sup>

According to the dominant opinion, the Greek civil code was applied on all minority Muslims of the new territory without exception. On the other hand the special status regarding Muslims of Thrace would not extend to the Dodecanese. Consequently, the law on jurisdiction of the Moufti did not regulate the personal status of the Muslims. Although the Muslims of the islands had not the right to open minority schools, the Turkish language was taught in four schools in Kos and Rhodes until early 1970's. The non-extension of minority protection regime into the Dodecanese islands ignores public international law principles regarding implementation of already international undertaken obligations in annexed territories. Furthermore, the attribution of minority rights in a limited geographical area ignores the right of the members of the minority of Thrace to move out of this area. Under the condition that they constitute “a considerable proportion” (according to article 41 of the Treaty, regarding minority schools) of the residents of a region, they could enjoy religious and linguistic rights anywhere in the country.

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<sup>90</sup> Divani, E., *Dodecanese, The long road until the incorporation*, Athens, 1997, p. 37

<sup>91</sup> According to Turkish diplomatic documents of 1947.

## **The religious leadership**

The religious leadership of the Muslim community was kept in office by the Italian administration of the Dodecanese islands since 1912 and was based in Rhodes. A kadi was at first kept as judge for family and inheritance matters and a Moufti as his legal adviser<sup>92</sup>. It seems that the Moufti assumed the kadi's jurisdiction in mid 1920s. According to the local decree 53/1930, the Moufti was elected by the Muslim community: In effect the latter indicated three persons among whom one was appointed by the administration. "*Selam*", a weekly newspaper edited by the Muslims of Rhodes refers to Haviz Ibrahim Etem as Moufti who called the Muslim community to refrain from migrating. In 1936, the Italian administration renewed his term in office without consulting the Muslim community<sup>93</sup>.

In 1947, when Greece annexed the Dodecanese, the Moufti of Rhodes was remained in office as religious leader. He was still representing the old-fashion conservative Muslims whereas the Turkish Consulate of Rhodes was influencing the majority among the Muslims of the Dodecanese for a pro-Turkish national ideology. A clash between the Moufti and the Consulate was taking place and the latter claimed that a new Moufti should be appointed according to the law<sup>94</sup>. The Greek government did not reply to this and expressed its support to the Moufti. As the *vakf* property became not efficient for a salary to the Moufti<sup>95</sup>, the Greek government granted a financial

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<sup>92</sup> G. Vergotis, 1997, p.103

<sup>93</sup> Th. Chrysanthopoulos, 1983, p.37

<sup>94</sup> The Turkish counselor was not attending the religious ceremonies in purpose and was threatening the Muslims who had good relations with the Moufti that they would not been granted any visa for travelling to Turkey, Th. Chrysanthopoulos, 1983, p.37

<sup>95</sup> The Greek government granted an ad hoc allowance of 2,000,000 to the Moufti office in 1947, Th. Chrysanthopoulos, 1983, p.39.

support to the Moufti as he guaranteed pro-Greek position and guidance to the Muslims of Rhodes.

In Kos, Sabri Mustafa Beyzade was the Moufti during the Italian administration. He retained unofficially his office until when he died in 1962. Often he was issuing *fetwa* on personal status issues upon request. The Moufti Office of Kos was not renewed. A proposal to set up officially the Moufti Office of Kos was rejected by the Greek authorities, as a second religious authority in the Dodecanese “would harm the position of the Moufti of Rhodes who shows national loyalty and is under attack from the Turkish press (from the Turkish side)”<sup>96</sup>. It seems that until early 1960s the Moufti of Rhodes, even not institutionally recognized, was politically recognized as an authority for the local Muslims while the Moufti of Kos was completely neglected by the Greek authorities.

Hafiz Ibrahim Ethem effendi remained as Moufti of Rhodes until the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1961 when he died. Seih Suleyman Kaslioglu, the *sheikh* of the *kadiri tekke* of Murad Reis<sup>97</sup> succeeded him until his death in 19 July 1974. His deputy (topotiritis) Ihsan Kaiserli undertook his duties until 1992. The official status of the Moufti of Rhodes was under question for the Greek state especially since 1984. By 1990, Ismail Cakir Salimoglu has been sent by the Moufti of Komotini as an imam to cover the religious needs of the local Muslims seeking to render the Moufti office of Rhodes again operational. The issue became quite complicated since the Greek state did not appoint any Moufti officially, although the Prime Minister, the President of the Republic and

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<sup>96</sup> Report by A. Papaevgeniou on the Muslim pupils of the schools of the Dodecanese, 1955.

<sup>97</sup> Tsitselikis, K., *Old and New Islam in Greece*, unpublished source

the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Ecumenical Patriarch recognizes occasionally him in ceremonial purposes. At the same time the Ministry of Education and Cults denied him any official recognition as a Moufti since “the number of the Moufti office all over Greece is determined by the PD of 1928 which does not mention a respective office in Rhodes.”<sup>98</sup> Despite any unofficial promise to regulate the status of the acting Moufti, the latter receives a meager salary by the Organization of the *Vakf* of Rhodes (about 450 euros) with no health insurance. As for the latter, a legal dispute between the Organization, the IKA (State Insurance Organization) and the Moufti ended up to the high administrative court, which said that Cakir Salimoglu was hired as “hoca” by the *Vakf* Organization and not appointed by the competent Moufti. Consequently does not fall within the special law on religious ministers’ insurance and does not have the right to insurance. The StE remanded the case back to the Administrative Court of Appeals of Pireus that had adjudicated that there was a right to insurance. The unfortunate decision of the StE ignored the fact that there is no competent Moufti of Rhodes so that he could appoint an imam. Moreover it ignored the fact that there is an operational mosque for a Muslim community and an active *imam/hoca* hired by a legal body. Quite interestingly, a motion submitted before the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the “Turkish Minority in Rhodes and Kos” does a reference to the vacancy of the Moufti office of Rhodes.<sup>99</sup>

After the War, under the Italian administration, the Moufti exerted jurisdiction on family matters until 1938. By Governmental Decree 324 of 15.11.1938 the Italian Governorate abolished the Orthodox, Jewish and Muslim courts in Kos and Rhodes

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<sup>98</sup> In any case in 1928 Rhodes was under Italian administration in K. Tsitselikis, unpublished source

<sup>99</sup> Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe, Doc 11904

and submitted personal status disputes to the civil courts, which applied though the relevant religious law by the chairman of the First Instance Court two assessors.<sup>100</sup> It is not known to which extent this measure was applied, but by Decree 170/1942 the Italian civil code was applicable to all citizens regardless religion. Nonetheless, the Italian courts had to adjudicate relevant cases by applying the religious law of the communities. During the British administration of the Dodecanese, the Moufti had the right to render not legally binding opinions (*fetwa*) on family and inheritance matters but with not jurisdiction. In the aftermath of the annexation of the Dodecanese annexation by the Greek State, the Moufti of Rhodes remained a religious leader with no jurisdiction. According to the mainstream legal theory and jurisprudence<sup>101</sup>, act 510 of 1947 which introduced the Greek civil law into the Dodecanese, did not extent the application of the special regime, which governed the personal status of the Muslim inhabitants in the rest of Greece. This opinion attempted to shrink the field of the legal application of the special minority regime without convincing legal arguments. Nevertheless, international obligations according to general international law are extended to any new territorial acquisition by the state. Therefore, the extension of the personal status for the Muslims of Dodecanese should be considered under the continuity of the relative legal framework that since 1914 stems from the conventional obligations of Greece.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> P. Theodoropoulos, 1964, p.249.

<sup>101</sup> P. Theodoropoulos, 1964, p 52., S. Minaidis, 1990, p.123-124

<sup>102</sup> N. Kolokotronis, 1953, p.628

## **The Greek-Turkish relations and their impact on the Muslim community**

One of the first examples illustrating the decisive role of the relations between the kin and the home state concerns the expulsion of the former Ottoman religious clergy who found refuge in Greece after 1922 due to the Greek-Turkish rapprochement and the Friendship Pact of 1930<sup>103</sup>. Greece dislodged minority people from strategic areas, Turks-Muslims from Evros, just after the conclusion of the Treaty of Lausanne and Greek Orthodox from the islands of Imvros and Tenedos when minority education was abolished at first in 1927, and 1964 when expropriations started in 1965<sup>104</sup>. To the massive expulsion of ten thousands Romioi of Greek citizenship in 1964 Greece applied direct counter measures to the detriment of Turkish citizens of Rhodes and Kos<sup>105</sup> and considered measures to apply against the minority of Thrace. In 1966 both governments agreed to stop expulsions. However, the expulsion of the Romioi in 1964 offered the ground to Greece to establish a long-lived policy of harassment (decreasing their rate of land ownership being one of the most important measures) against the minority of Thrace until the early 1990s. Citizenship deprivation targeting the Muslims/Turks of Thrace after 1964 was used as a measure to counterbalance this power game between the two countries to the detriment of their own minority citizens.

By 1964, the Greek policy adopted more radical ideas, in order to make minority population leave Greece and replace them by ethnic Greeks: “We have to imitate the Turks, when they expelled the Greeks from Imvros and Tenedos, by expropriating

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<sup>103</sup> K. Tsioumis, 1994, p.214

<sup>104</sup> B. Oran, 2008, p.102

<sup>105</sup> “Makedonia”, 5.8.1966. In total 400 Turks had been expelled from the Dodecanese, with no right to bring their property away, as it happened for the Greeks of Istanbul. The Greek authorities de facto abrogated Decision 12730 of the Military Government of the Dodecanese, Gazete of the Military Governorate 96/1948, which was regulating the stay and work permit for aliens in the islands

huge land for even as response for preventive counter measures taken by Turkey to the detriment of the Rum minority<sup>106</sup>.

### **Citizenship**

Muslims of non-Greek citizenship were subjects to the law on aliens. However, Turkish citizens were under a special political status well connected to the broader Greek-Turkish fluctuating relations. Turkish citizens were vulnerable to the political choices of the host state as well of the state of their citizenship. In 1930, a general prohibition of settlement of Turkish citizens in Greece was decided in the frame of the Greek-Turkish rapprochement, targeting those who were unwanted by Turkey. In 1937 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey agreed with a Greek proposition that the two governments would deport mutually, upon consent and “applying the principle of reciprocity”, unwanted individuals holders of each other citizenship. Later (1964) the measure was applied in a more prevent fashion, without the “mutual consent” of the governments.

Worth noting that a specific category of Muslims have been excluded de jure of the right to acquire Greek citizenship because they were *allogeneis*. Act 517/1948 (FEK A 7), regulating the extension of Greek law to the then annexed Dodecanese islands stipulated that only Italian citizens of Greek origin who lived out of the soil of the islands could acquire Greek citizenship. Consequently the Muslims-Turks and the Jews of the islands who took refuge abroad during the Second World War were

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<sup>106</sup> Greek MFA files

obliged to return in condition that they had got a stay permit.<sup>107</sup> Those who were residents of the islands became automatically Greek citizens. De jure they have not been recognized as part of the Muslim minority. Even today there are about 100 Muslims in Rhodes and Kos that have no access to Greek citizenship, as they are descendents of holders of Turkish citizenship. They are obliged to acquire and regularly renew the special stay permit alike the immigrants.

### **Deprivation of citizenship**

If minorisation renders Muslim subject to a special minority law, international and domestic deprivation of the Greek citizenship diminishes the phenomenon itself and punishes those who were not “qualified” for bearing the Greek citizenship. The loss of citizenship became one of the most important measures exercising pressure against the members of the minority. In the course of the evolution of the citizenship law and its application in the historical context, the term *genos* (*phyle*, descent) became the key element of Greekness and an actual legal category distinguishing between those who are of Greek descent and those who are not. The first group, *homogeneis* are deemed Greek regardless of their actual citizenship status. The latter group, *allogeneis* are non-Greek, even if they possess Greek citizenship. The classification of Greek

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<sup>107</sup> Th. Chrysanthopoulos (1950, pp. 224, 232-33, and 1983, p.30) says that there were 1,289 Muslims of Turkish citizenship in 1939 (census by the Italian occupation) and 500 in 1947 (Greek administration). “Makedonia”, 4 & 5 August 1966 reports to 700 Turkish nationals. The remaining of Turkish citizenship in the Dodecanese is due to the fact that Muslims did not opt for the Italian citizenship nor for the Turkish one (in terms of the art. 30 of the Treaty of Lausanne) during the Italian occupation and in 1932 they had been granted provisional identity cards as of “Turkish nationality”. Thus after the succession of the Italian administration (succeeded by German and English) by Greece those of Turkish citizenship remained in the islands as aliens, despite art. 19 of the Treaty of Paris and the Greek law recognizing the right to opt other than Greek citizenship only to Italian-speaking people. A relevant discussion took place at the GREEK Parliament regarding the alleged official recognition by the Greek government of the Turkish citizenship to 300-500 Muslims of Rhodes and Kos. This would be a measure taken after agreement with Turkey for the safety of the 17,500 Greek citizens of Istanbul. See Proceedings of the Greek Parliament, Session 65, 10.03.1963, p. 659 and 701.

citizens between allogeneis and homogeneis reflects the national ideology regarding the position of the nation into the state. Muslims being “by nature” considered as allogeneis Greek citizens, and therefore of deficient quality as citizens or of suspicious loyalty towards the Greek state. Practices of citizenship deprivation regarding Muslims – among other minority groups- are revealing.

By Mandatory Act 2280/1940 (FEK A 117) citizenship deprivation was permitted against those who had been naturalized and had committed acts against the national interests or national security of Greece. Article 6, dealt with the possibility to deprive citizenship from any naturalized Greek who would be found guilty of army desertion, of “actions favoring a foreign state and incompatible with Greek citizenship and the interests of Greece” or for any “action against public order, the internal or external state security, and/or the social status quo”<sup>108</sup>.

In 1955 the Code of Greek Nationality contained the infamous article 19 720 on the citizenship deprivation concerning the *allogeneis*. The administration abused this provision affecting more than 46,000 Muslims Greek citizens. The first victims of article 19 were Muslims who, just after the Second World War fled to Turkey. Nonetheless for seasons of national interests linked to the cold was bipolarism, and despite the pogrom of Istanbul (1955) the deprivation of the Greek citizenship “should be avoided in the case of people of Turkish origin travelling to Turkey. An exception should be made only for those who are acquiring the Turkish citizenship”.<sup>109</sup> About 7,000 Turks and Pomaks of Thrace retained their Greek citizenship although they had

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<sup>108</sup> K. Tsitselikis, unpublished source

<sup>109</sup> Efimeris tis Ellinikis kai Allodapis Nomologias, 1957

migrated to Turkey. They retained their real estates even if they could be considered as abandoned in terms of Act 2536/1953 and distributed in Greeks of “healthy national loyalty”<sup>110</sup>. The first crisis of Cyprus of 1963/1964 and the deportation of Greek citizens of Istanbul will change the *ratione personae* application of article 19 and the Turks/Muslims of Thrace and the Dodecanese became a target par excellence.

The dictatorship of 1967-1974 and the governments of the 1980s and mid 1990s abused regularly the article 19 (as well art. 20), which contradicted fundamental human rights standards. Especially during the period of junta the deprivation of citizenship of those who were “abandoning illegally the country” entailed loss of property too<sup>111</sup>. The Turkish invasion in Cyprus (1974) put the minority of Thrace in a fragile position and article 19 was used as a counter measure, or a measure of political intimidation as it was the case of 544 withdrawals of citizenship in early 1991. 60% of the cases of citizenship deprivation concerned Muslims of Thrace who had settled in Turkey. Another category regarding change or loss of citizenship consist of the Turks. Muslims of Thrace who already have settled in Turkey or Germany and denounced their Greek citizenship before the helpful consular authorities in order to obtain the Turkish<sup>112</sup> or German citizenship. In many cases the Turkish authorities did not grant the promised citizenship creating a massive phenomenon of stateless aggravating the effects of article 19. According to T. Kostopoulos, 20,000 Muslims have been deprived of the Greek citizenship without their will and very often by an arbitrary

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<sup>110</sup> T. Kostopoulos, 2003, p.60

<sup>111</sup> Bureau of Political Affairs Session, 1973

<sup>112</sup> The military administration (1980-1982) granted massively the Turkish citizenship to 3,000 Muslim-Turks from Thrace. Often they acquired the Turkish citizenship in condition to settle in far Anatolia. See S. Akgonul, 2008

interpretation and implementation –even collectively- of article 19<sup>113</sup>. The Greek courts have examined several cases, often unsuccessfully for the applicants. It was only in 2005 that the Greek government announced the number of this article 19 of the Code of Nationality had been applied upon. After a question submitted to the Parliament by the deputy minority Ilhan Ahmet of Nea Dimokratia, the government stated that there were 46,638 Muslims from Thrace and Dodecanese who lost their citizenship until 1998. Especially, the loss of citizenship was more visible in the Dodecanese as the majority of the Rhodes and Kos communities fled in 1974 to Turkey. The measure was excessively applied even to those who were going for studies in Turkey as late as mid 1990s<sup>114</sup>.

### **The Muslim properties**

The property rights of the inhabitants of the Dodecanese islands after their annexation in 1947 were safeguarded. However, the Greek-Turkish conflict over the Cyprus issue together with the property confiscations that the Turkish Government applied for the Greeks of Istanbul<sup>115</sup> had a negative effect not just for the Muslims of Thrace but also for those living in the Dodecanese. Expropriations of property owned by Muslims occurred that period both in Thrace and in the old town of Rhodes (which is the most central and beautiful part of the town) or in strategic positions of the island<sup>116</sup>.

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<sup>113</sup> Kostopoulos, 2003, p. 61

<sup>114</sup> K. Tsitselikis, unpublished source

<sup>115</sup> Christakoudis, 1992, p. 210

<sup>116</sup> Personal interviews in Rhodes, February 2010

### **The minority educational system**

Education in the Greek system is an institutional right and compulsory for all children including minority members. According to Article 26 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit”. The Greek Constitution of 1975 also, by its article 16 par. 2-3, secures the compliance of elementary education for all Greek citizens. In law 1566/85 article 2 par. 3 it is mentioned that attendance to the six-class elementary and three-class high school is compulsory for everyone that has not exceeded the sixteenth year of his age. Violation of the law may bring penalty for the person having the custody.

The Minority education has always been one of the highly controversial issues in the minority policy of Greece. Education is the basis for the economic, political and social development of a community. Minority education refers to a special educational system, mostly bilingual, responsible for which is the Greek state in order to preserve linguistic and sometimes national identity of the minority.

What lie beneath the bilingual minority education are the articles 40 and 41 of the Treaty of Lausanne. The curriculum comprises of two parts, the Greek and Turkish language. While Muslim teachers have to teach the Turkish part of the curriculum, on the other hand Christian teachers have to teach the Greek part of that.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Tsitselikis, 2004, p. 424–425.

There is a special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki for the training of the Muslim teachers. Those who graduated from this Pedagogical Academy are employed in the Muslim minority schools in Thrace. Muslim teachers attending this academy are given a three-year programme, while other educational programmes of universities in Greece request a four-year programme. The difference regarding the duration of studies makes clear that the one who terminated the educational programme in this academy would be less qualified than those who terminated the educational programmes of the other universities.<sup>118</sup>

The curriculum granted to the Muslim teachers in this academy is taught in Greek with the only exception of the Turkish language and literature despite the fact that these teachers are going to teach in Turkish to Turkish-speaking students.<sup>119</sup> In addition to this, because of the fact that graduates from the minority schools have lower qualifications, minority students tend to attend the Greek schools. On the contrary, for students of the Greek descent it is not possible to attend the minority schools.<sup>120</sup>

Minority students, have the right to attend both minority and the mainstream Greek schools. In 2006, at the curriculum of some Greek public gymnasia in Thrace, Turkish was included as foreign language. However, the measure turned to be a failure. It is often argued that those who graduate of minority schools have low qualifications. In

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<sup>118</sup> Baltsiotis, *ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 126-127.

<sup>120</sup> Tsitselikis, 2007, *ibid.*, p. 14.

1996, a special quota (0,5%) in higher education in favour of graduates from minority schools was introduced. In this manner the Greek authorities tried to facilitate the entrance of minority students at Greek universities. In particular, the reason that this quota has been set is in order to compensate for the language difficulties issue that the minority students have to deal with. It is also important to mention at this point that this benefit refers just to students born in Western Thrace.

Another benefit provided to the members of the Muslim minority of Thrace by a new draft law (2007), is a special quota (0,5%) on appointments into the public sector. This measure is of great significance since third education graduates coming from the minority are given the opportunity to get hired into the public sector in which for the past 50 years no Muslim was working.<sup>121</sup>

### **Schools for the Muslims of Dodecanese islands**

When it comes to the case of the Muslim's educational rights in Dodecanese the situation becomes more complicated since the Treaty of Lausanne is not applicable. Political complications in the Greek-Turkish relations worsen the situation. Nonetheless a special schooling for the Muslims were provided by the Italian and British administration of the islands until 1947 and later by the Greek government until 1971.

After the islands were occupied by Italy since 1912, the community education had been respected in terms of the millet system, so each community was responsible of

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<sup>121</sup> Tsitselikis, 2007, *ibid.*, pp. 13-15.

its own schools (for Greek Orthodox, Muslims and Jews). Community schools were operating until 1937<sup>122</sup> time that they were assimilated into the Italian educational system (which was Italian-speaking system).

The British administration (1945-1946) gave the permission for reopening seven community schools implementing the principle of non-discrimination in terms of race or religion (article 6, Declaration No 1 of the British Occupation Governorate)<sup>123</sup>.

In 1947 after the annexation of the islands and the establishment of the Greek educational system, common education was provided to all. At that time there were 9 schools operating in the islands for Muslim students, 6 in Rhodes and 3 in Kos. It has to be stressed that kindergarten schools were also established in the two islands. The Muslim teachers working in them were appointed as public servants of the Greek state. The courses were in both Greek (the courses of Modern Greek language, history and geography) and Turkish (the rest of the courses). Since no minority status was recognized in the Dodecanese, these schools were considered as public schools with a special curriculum for Muslim pupils and not as minority schools. This system where the community schools were controlled by the state and the Greek language was introduced brought the reaction of the Muslims which soon started fading out<sup>124</sup>.

As the Muslim community was gradually declined or emigrated, the Muslim students started attending more and more the mainstream schools. There was also the

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<sup>122</sup> F. Kladaki-Menemenli & A. T. Freris, 2002, pp. 109-117

<sup>123</sup> Th. Chrysanthopoulos, 1983, p. 36

<sup>124</sup> Ibid & M. Georgalidou, "The case of the Muslims in Dodecanese", University of Aegean, (in Greek), p. 2

phenomenon of some students, coming from agricultural families and areas, not attending the school during specific months of the year because of helping in the plots.

In 1972, and most probably as a counter-measure to the shut-down of the Greek schools by the Turkish government in the islands of Imvros and Tenedos (Imroz and Bozcaada respectively), the strict administration of junta decided to shut-down these schools. This was also followed by the abolishment of the Turkish language in schools<sup>125</sup>.

Since then, the Muslim students were attending the whole analytical curriculum in the Greek mainstream schools with the exception of the religion course in the place of which they were leaving from the school one hour earlier every Friday in order to attend the pray. Nowadays, approximately 300 Muslim students in the island of Rhodes (the whole Muslim community of Rhodes is estimated to be around 2500-300 people) are attending the mainstream schools that are located closer to their area of residence<sup>126</sup>.

### **The Muslim community associations**

In the Dodecanese, the limited number and the economical development of the Muslims in the islands during the 1980s and 1990s created a favorable environment for their social and economical integration in the local society. The association *Halk Kulubu* (People's Club) established in Rhodes in 1945 during the British

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid. p. 2

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

administration of the Dodecanese. Its statute aimed at the promotion of the Turkish people of Rhodes. The Greek authorities asked to replace this term by “Greco-Turkish Club” or “Muslim Club”<sup>127</sup>, but the association insisted and the Court of Rhodes adjudicated the dissolution of the association.

The *Cultural Association of Muslims of Rhodes “Adelfosyni”* (Fraternity) was set up in 2000 in view to encompass all members of the community. It became active in 2002 by requesting the renewal of the members of the *Vakf* management committee of Rhodes after a long period and the introduction of religion and language (Turkish) education for Muslim students and the appointment of a qualified religious servant<sup>128</sup>. In 2001 the *Cultural association of Muslims of Kos “Adelfosini”* was set up in Kos.

### **Local press**

The following extracts refer to the problematic issue over the *Vakf* property in the islands. They were published in three local newspapers in 2002. The first one was composed by the Muslim cultural union of Rhodes “Brotherhood” and refers to the main problems that the Muslim community of Rhodes face. They demand that the council of the *Vakf* property management be changed, they stress up the need of a qualified Hoca with university knowledge on the religion issue and ask for a second one to be appointed and they point out the lack of teaching the Turkish language. The other two extracts are in fact replies to the first one and by referring to legal aspects of

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<sup>127</sup> Th. Chrysanthopoulos, 1983, p.39

<sup>128</sup> See newspapers of Rhodes, I Drasis, 18.02.2002 and I Rodiaki, 13.02.2002. Personal interview with the president of the association, Rhodes 2010.

the issues, they indirectly imply on the relations between the Muslim and the local community<sup>129</sup> (Figure 2: “The Rodiaki” local daily newspaper).

### The extracts<sup>130</sup>

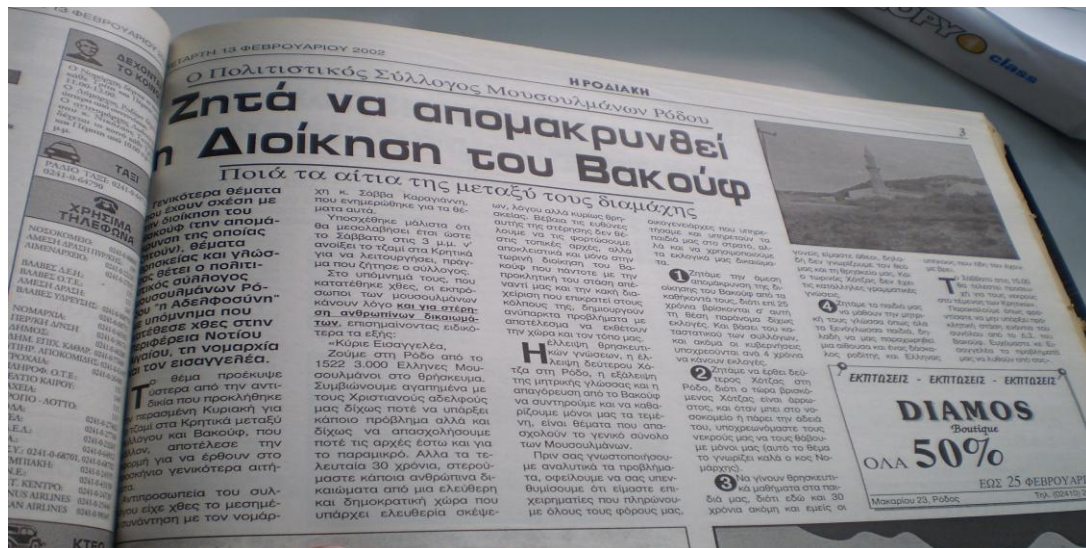


Figure 2: “The Muslim Cultural Association of Rhodes ask the *Vakf* Management to be changed”, *The Rodiaki* Newspaper, 13/02/2002

### Text 1

“We have lived in Rhodes since 1522, 3000 Greek Muslims. We live together with our Christian brothers without ever having problems and without ever having troubled the authorities even for the slightest (cause)<sup>131</sup>. But during the last 30 years we are deprived of some human rights by a free and democratic country where freedom of thought, speech and mainly religion exists. Of course we don’t want to blame the local authorities but to exclusively blame the contemporary administration of *Vakf*,

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, pp. 534-539

<sup>130</sup> The extracts are almost word for word translations of the Greek originals made by Marianthi Georgalidou. Found in M. Georgalidou, “Living with the “Other””, *International Journal of the Humanities*, Vol. 1, 2003

<sup>131</sup> the word in the parenthesis does not appear in the Greek original

that has always, with its provocative attitude against us and the bad management that prevails within it, created non-existent problems that result in exposing our country and our topos<sup>132</sup>. The lack of religious education, the lack of a second hodja in Rhodes, the obliteration of our mother language and the prohibition by the *Vakf* to maintain and clean the temples on our own, are issues that trouble all the Muslims.”

(Journal *Rodiaki*, 13/2/2002)

### **Text 2<sup>133</sup>**

“The Muslims of Rhodes are our friends, our neighbors, our fellow-students, our colleagues...” “Let us concentrate though on the practical significance (which is also human) of some timely issues.

The cultural Union “Brotherhood” that has been founded by Muslims of Rhodes seems to have been questioning over the past few days the *Vakf* administration that was appointed by the government and is a legal entity of public law. Control and supervision is exercised by the governmental representative and the District of South Aegean.

Such an attitude of our Muslim fellow-citizens could be easily misunderstood by some people of bad intentions who would see an on purpose rupture not just with the *Vakf* administration, but actually with the District, and as a consequence with the government itself. It is for sure though that the people of bad intentions will be

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<sup>132</sup> *topos* is a Greek word referring to the place one considers his home country, in this case Greece

<sup>133</sup> the punctuation, the bold and capital letters of extracts 2 and 3 appear in the Greek originals

removed and isolated and that the Muslims of Rhodes will take all necessary measures so that their intentions will not be misunderstood.”

(Journal *Drasis*, 18/2/2002)

### **Text 3**

“**UNTIL** when shall we pour water in the mill of those (if they exist) warm-headed who dream of stupid and dangerous “minority” (are we completely mad?) scenarios on the island of Rhodes? One solution would be for us, the media of the area, to stop looking pour a magnifying glass at various incidents, serious or... non-serious, within the **GREEK** Muslims of our area.

The other solution, more applicable, would be for the Rodian Muslims themselves, no matter how they express themselves, to make sure that they will not be feeding the tension by accusations against each other that help preserve a climate that is possible to lead to uncontrollable situations.

The friend Mustafa is a clever guy, he understands...

**WHAT** can theoretically be (an extreme scenario indeed) an uncontrollable situation?

For the foxes of the opposite side to become informed that “something is going on in Rhodes” and decide to intervene!!! Are you scared? Why? Haven’t you seen the play before or don’t you have in mind specific examples of “interventions” of the neighbor?”

(Journal *Drasis*, 18/2/2002)

To sum up, in the third chapter it is obvious that the Greek Orthodox Church is quite powerful within the Greek system regarding the implementation of the right of freedom of religion on the minorities. For instance it has the authority to accept or not the applications on establishment of places of worship. When it comes for the military service, the situation seems to be controversial since the situation of a Muslim serving the Greek army could be dealt by mistrust, intolerance or discrimination feelings. However, throughout the years there were not so many cases of exclusion and yet nowadays everyone (apart from those having health or other serious problems) is obliged to serve in the army regardless of being Muslim.

After the incorporation of the Dodecanese in Greece, less than 9,000 Muslims acquired the Greek citizenship whereas there were some others that lost this right and thus during the first years after the annexation, there was a big immigration flow towards Turkey. Even today there are some Muslims in Rhodes and Kos that keep renewing their permit like immigrants. In Thrace we see that Muslims may be protected by the minority status but they are restricted to act it just in the specific geographic area. On the other hand, the fact that minority status has not been granted to the Muslims of Dodecanese ignores public international law principles regarding obligations in annexed territories.

I also examined the Muslims' social representation through the cultural associations, the educational and schooling system regarding the Muslims both in Thrace and Dodecanese and the local press. In general it appears that the Turkish-Greek relations affect the existence of the Muslim community in Greece in many ways

## Conclusions

In the overall in this study I tried to give a clear picture of the presence of the Muslim community in the Dodecanese area since the beginning of its existence in the area. The legal framework regarding their presence and commitments to the Greek state as well as what the Government provides them were examined.

Throughout the years, the relations between the kin and the home state, meaning Greece and Turkey, have come across different types of conflicts. Within the wider Greek-Turkish relations framework and according to the political situation that dominates each time, we can observe that in most cases counter-measures, exercising pressure against the members of the Muslim minority or community, are being taken.

The main arguments that the Muslim community still faces, concentrate mainly on the issues of the *Vakf* management that is asked to be changed, the request for a second more educated and qualified *Hoca* that will teach them and preserve their religion's elements and the teaching of their mother tongue which people practice only on the occasion of a trip to the opposite side of the Aegean. In my visit there last year, I saw the two, out of the three, almost being implemented (by personal and not official initiative). A new *Hoca* with university education on religion issues, coming from the Muslim minority of Thrace was appointed, on his own will, in Rhodes to offer and contribute with his knowledge and fondness to the local Muslim community that as he confessed to me he recently learned about its existence. As for the language issue, it has been 30 years (1972 was the year that the last Muslim schools were shut-down)

since they have not been taught their mother tongue, the Turkish language. By a voluntary assignment of a Turkish speaking teacher to give them the basic knowledge of the Turkish language, the situation has not really changed.

Their general actions and interaction, social and economical relations with the broader community can be a proof of adjustment and harmonized life within the community whereas we can not overlook the fact that serious problems still exist. An overall conclusion of the way the majority of the members of the Muslim community feel can be summarized in the sayings of the President of the Muslim Association of Kos “Brotherhood” Maslum Paizanoglu: “We are not a minority, we are equal citizens...but the Turkish language learning is still unsettled...”<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Newspaper, “Το Βήμα της Τουριστικής Κω”, (The step of the touristic Kos), 15 January 2010

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## **Interviews**

During my visit in the islands of Rhodes and Kos on February 2010, personal interviews were conducted with:

1. The Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Rhodes/ Greece
2. The president and other members of the Cultural Association of Muslims of Rhodes “Adelfosyni”
3. The president and other members of the Cultural Association of Muslims of Kos “Adelfosyni”
4. Professors in the University of Aegean and the specific department of Mediterranean Studies
5. The Moufti of Rhodes
6. The person in charge for the Islamic Library in Rhodes
7. Members of the Christian local community

The names of the above mentioned persons are not specified for reasons of personal privacy

## **Newspapers**

1. Daily newspaper: *I Rodiaki*, 13.02.2002
2. *I Drasis*, 18.02.2002
3. “*To Bήμα της Τουριστικής Κω*”, (The step of the touristic Kos), 15.01.2010

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2. Council of Europe Parliamentary Recommendation 1201 (1993) on an additional protocol to be adopted by the Assembly on February 1, 1993. <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta93/EREC1201.htm> [Visited on 05/2009]
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