

HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF
THE MUSLIM CRETANS IN TURKEY

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THE MUSLIM CRETANS IN TURKEY

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ GİRİTLİ MÜSÜLMANLARIN
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Abstract

The main aim of this study is to take a closer look to the community of the Muslim Cretans, their past and their present in Turkey. Nearly 100 years after their forced resettlement due to the Population Exchange how can we still talk about “Cretans” who live in Turkey? In order to fully comprehend the community of Cretan Muslims, one can argue that it is important to look at their history, and examine it in three distinct periods. This study attempts to analyze the status of the Muslim community in Crete, beginning from the time that the community formed during the Ottoman rule in Crete. The first chapter of this study focuses on the practice of conversion to Islam, the language, the daily life of Muslims in Crete and their interaction with Christians on the island. The second chapter revisits the turbulent 19th century where frequent revolts and changes resulted in the decrease of the number of the Muslim community, turning them into a minority. Ultimately, the third and last chapter focuses on the period where the community, after being forced to relocate due to the Population Exchange, kept its peculiar identity in other lands far away from Crete. The bibliography has been chosen in order to cover the unit of analysis; I chose “secondary analysis” as a method of observation, which I further combined with interviews. My trip to Tzunda during the December of 2013 and interviews with the inhabitants as well as interviews with other Turks of Cretan origin in Istanbul were decisive for this study.

Özet

Bu çalışmanın asıl amacı Giritli Müslüman halkın Türkiye’deki geçmişlerine ve şimdiki zamanlarına yakından bakmaktır. Nüfus Mübadelesi sebebiyle zorunlu göçlerinden yaklaşık 100 yıl sonra, nasıl hala Türkiye’de yaşayan “Giritliler” hakkında konuşabiliriz? Giritli Müslüman halkı tamamıyla anlamak için, onların tarihlerine bakmak ve onu üç belirgin aşamada incelemenin önemli olduğu ileri sürülebilir. Bu çalışma, Osmanlı Devleti’nin Girit’teki halk hakimiyeti sırasında meydana gelen Müslüman halkın durumunu incelemeye teşebbüs etmektedir. Çalışmanın birinci bölümü İslamiyeti kabul ediş süreci, dil, Müslümanların günlük hayatı ve onların adadaki Hristiyanlarla karşılıklı etkileşimlerine odaklanmaktadır. İkinci bölüm, sık sık çıkan ayaklanmalar ve değişimlerle Müslüman topluluğunun sayısını azaltarak onların bir azınlığa dönüşmesine yol açan çalkantılı 19.yüzyılı yeniden değerlendirmektedir. Son olarak, üçüncü ve son bölüm nüfus mübadelesinden sonraki dönemdeki Girit dışındaki diğer topraklarda kendine özgü kimliğini koruyan topluluğa dikkat çekmektedir. Analizin bütünlüğünü korumak amacıyla Bibliyografya seçilmiş, şahsi çalışma prensibim çerçevesinde, bir gözlem yöntemi olarak ikincil analiz yöntemini birincil ve ikincil kaynaklarla birleştirmek suretiyle kullanmayı tercih etmiş bulunmaktayım. Aralık 2013 içerisinde Cunda’ya olan seyahatim sırasında yerli halkla yapmış olduğum röportajlar ile İstanbul’daki Girit kökenli Türklerle yapılan görüşmeler bu çalışmada belirleyici rol oynamıştır.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-------|
| Introduction | Pg 1 |
| Chapter 1: History of Muslim Cretans in Crete | |
| 1.1 Conquest of Crete and conversion to Islam..... | pg.10 |
| 1.2 The Muslim Cretans..... | pg.16 |
| 1.3 Language..... | pg.19 |
| 1.4 Daily Life..... | pg.22 |
| 1.5 Interaction with the Christians of the island..... | pg.26 |
| Chapter 2: Crete and Muslim Cretans throughout the nineteenth century | |
| 2.1 The turbulent 19th century | pg.29 |
| 2.2 1821 Revolution and the Egyptian Rule (1821-1841)..... | pg.33 |
| 2.3 Conversion back to Christianity and the reactions of the Muslim community..... | pg.36 |
| 2.4 The Organic Act and the Halepa Pact (1868-1878)..... | pg.40 |
| 2.5 The revolutionary period of 1896-1898 and the Muslim migration..... | pg.42 |
| 2.6 The Muslim Cretans during the Autonomous Crete..... | pg.45 |
| Chapter 3: The community of Cretan Muslims in Turkey | |
| 3.1 The Population Exchange..... | pg.50 |
| 3.2 The “fatherland” and the Turkification measures of the state..... | pg.54 |
| 3.3 The Cretans of Turkey..... | pg.59 |
| 3.4 The “rediscovery” of the Population Exchange and the Cretan identity..... | pg.63 |
| Conclusions | pg.68 |
| Bibliography | pg.72 |

Introduction

“The cross and crescent side by side, from time to time they were in peace and from time to time a Cretan storm caught them up in a rage, and they attacked one another, and they impaled their teeth to one another’s flesh...”

N. Kazantzakis, Freedom or Death

The convention on the Exchange of Populations signed on 30 January 1923, comprises nineteen articles, separate from and the first of the legal instruments leading up to the comprehensive Treaty of Peace which was signed on 24 July 1923 in Switzerland (Hirschon, 7). The Treaty of Peace laid out the conditions for the compulsory exchange of minority populations between Greece and Turkey with a few exceptions, as well as addressing a number of territorial, financial clauses. The Treaty has been subject to immense discussions in academic circles, in addition to diverse disciplines, ranging from demography to international law, from economics to social and political geography (Koufopoulou, 2004). Some argue that the implementation of the Treaty warranted the future generations ensured peace in the region so that no such war like the Greco-Turkish one of 1919-1922 takes place in this geography again.

As a result of the *Population Exchange* process, approximately 2 million people were forced to abandon their homelands indefinitely within the scope of the Convention that was signed between the Great Turkish National Assembly Government and the Greek Government. Among them were 23.821 Muslim Cretans, who were forced to relocate, from Crete to Turkey (Andriotis, 84).

The “exchanged” and their following generations have still not overcome the ‘loss’ they experienced. The words of Lord Curzon, the representative of the UK in the negotiations of the Lausanne Peace Treaty, ring true even today. “For the next 100 years the whole world is going to suffer from this solution” (Aktar, 2006:111).

Almost 100 years after the signing of the Treaty, one cannot help but question the logic behind the decision of extracting millions of people from their homelands and their roots, forcing them to leave behind not only their properties but also their family members in their graveyards and of course all their memories. However, the aim of this study is not to find out the logic that led to the implementation of the Lausanne Treaty.

The main aim of this study is to take a closer look at the community of the Muslim Cretans and to examine how the community has evolved since its formation until today. The research is significantly seeking to find ‘how do the members of the Cretan community in Turkey and especially the second and the third generation of the refugees describe themselves as “Cretans”, even though most of them have never been to Crete?’ Finally, ‘how does the past influence the community today?’ is the last focus of the study.

Whenever the term “Population Exchange” is mentioned, the Greeks automatically associate it with Christian Orthodox population that had been forced to migrate from Smyrna and Pontus along with Muslim population from Macedonia and Epirus. It can appear as an understandable reaction since the majority of textbooks rarely refer to any other communities that have been exchanged. I have to admit that when I first came to Istanbul in 2007, I was surprised by the number of people whose origins were from Crete. Back in 2007, I did not have the slightest idea that Muslim Cretans were such a big part of Crete’s history nor that the “Cretan” community the “Giritliler” in Turkey were so bound with their community and their origins.

But who are the Cretan Muslims or Tourkokritikoi/Cretan Turks/ Turko-Cretans/Turk Giritliler as often appear in the Greek and Turkish literature? According to the dictionary of Modern Greek Language, Turko-Cretan (Tourkokritikos - gr. Τουρκοκρητικός) were the Greek speaking Muslims of Crete, who after 1922 left the island and settled mainly in Turkey (Babinotis, 1781). Although, according to the dictionary’s definition, the term “Turko-

Cretan” has a religious rather than ethnic connotation, it is true that words with the affix Turko- often reflect the ‘Us vs. Them’ polarity that existed in Greek society and is connected to a particular religious and/or ethnic identity (Millas, 2006: 51). Throughout this study the term “Cretan Muslims” is being used intentionally in order to underline the local origin of the members of the Cretan community. The term “Cretan Muslims” finally, differentiates the group from other groups in Turkey that may share common features.

The Cretan origin is after all the most significant facet of the identity of the Muslim Cretans. It matters little to most of the Cretan community in Turkey that they never visited Crete. The relation between the Cretan community in Turkey and Crete can be characterized as emotional and ‘*imaginary*’. Crete constitutes their ‘*imagined homeland*’. To rephrase Benedict Anderson’s words, Crete is an *imagined homeland* because the members of the Cretan community in Turkey never knew or visited Crete, yet in the minds of each lived/lives the image of Crete (Anderson, 6). Nowadays, of course, the imagined homeland that most of them grow up in, is more reachable as the technology and communications have evolved.

The theory of Benedict Anderson applies not only to the relation that the community has with the island but also between the members of the Cretan community in Turkey. They are an “*imagined community*” because the members of this group “will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 6). Through this study, one can conclude that the Cretan community feels connected to each other and part of the same community. They share a special relationship not only with their past but also they have an emotional attachment with Crete; elements that help them maintain an identity that unites the members of the Cretan community in Turkey.

Methodology

This is mainly a historical study that also combines social and anthropological approaches. In order to fully comprehend the community of Cretan Muslims, one should pinpoint that it is of the essence to examine their history in three different periods: from the time that the community was formed, through the period that coexisted with the Christians of Crete as a minority during the autonomy of Crete; and ultimately as a community that continues to exist far from the place of their origin, in the mind as an “imagined homeland”.

Due to the nature of this study, I located a number of Muslim Cretans in Istanbul, who led me to certain members of the community in Tzunda (Cunda) and Ayvalik. There were 8 respondents who participated in this study. The selection of the people, who participated in the research, has been selected according to qualitative than quantitative criteria corresponding to three different generations, ranging in age from 25 to 96. Some of the participants live permanently in Tzunda (in Greek Moshonisia) while others live in Istanbul; both groups though share the same origins and describe themselves as Cretans. They are the people who had been either exchanged due to Lausanne Treaty and their children and grandchildren.

During the process of the interviews the respondents were not asked specific questions as there were not given a specific questionnaire. On the contrary, they were introduced to the topic to be covered and they were given the time and space to elaborate on their thoughts and memories. The interviews were conducted in the Greek and Turkish language. The interviews of the participants are not going to be presented fully as this would constitute a research on its own. They are going to be presented partially, without changing the words of interviewees. In order to preserve the privacy of the respondents, their names have been changed.

When I decided to research about the community of Cretan Muslims in Turkey, I used the already existing bibliography as a starting point, which I located in public and university

libraries in Athens, Rethymnon, Heraklion and Istanbul. The bibliography is mostly in English but there are a significant number of books and articles in Greek and Turkish. The bibliography has been chosen in order to cover the units of analysis; I chose “secondary analysis” as a method which I further combined it with interviews. That is the personal stories of people of Cretan origin, located in Turkey based on primary and secondary sources. Apart from the interviews that I had the chance to conduct, this study was also based on a number of other interviews that had been conducted in the past by other researchers and they had been either published or aired as part of television broadcasts.

Among the existing resources, a number of articles and studies concerning the community of Cretan Muslims and Crete were particularly helpful for the comprehension of the Muslim Cretan community, as well as the realization of this study.

The conquest of Crete by the Ottoman Empire marked the establishment of the Muslim presence on the island, which was achieved mainly through the islamization of the local population especially during the first one and a half centuries of the Ottoman presence on the island (Andriotis, 63). Molly Greene, in her book “A shared world: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean” provided this study with an understanding of the main reasons why a significant number of the Cretans converted to Islam. According to Greene, Crete is a locality that cannot be examined, without previously analyzing the Venetian rule of the island. Almost half a millennium of Venetian presence in the island influenced the impact of the Ottoman presence on Crete in every field of activity. Another resource is the book “*Τουρκοκρήτες*” (Tourkokrites), 1929, by Konstantinos G. Fournarakis who from 1929 until 1936 conducted a valuable study regarding the island of Crete and its history. He was a pioneer on the study of Muslim Cretans in Greek bibliography. His testimony is one of the most valuables because he can be considered as an eyewitness. Fournarakis made an extensive study about Muslim Cretans, the language they were using,

their customs, their education, and their daily life and help us understand the daily life of the community on the island. Furthermore, Lena Tzedaki-Apostolaki, in her article “Cretan Turks: the quest of an identity”, gives us significant information about the everyday life of Muslim Cretans in Crete. Mixed marriages between Christians and Muslims were a common tradition. “The Cretan Muslim would drink his wine, and apart from his religion, nothing separated Christians from Muslims.”

The tensed relations with the Christians and the revolts that frequently occurred by the Cretan Christians against the Ottoman rule changed the population dynamics in major centers and in the villages, especially from the middle of the nineteenth century and onwards. According to some researchers, nationalism played a significant role in the conflicts of Muslims and Christians. Pinar Şenışık in her book “The transformation of Ottoman Crete: Revolts, Politics and Identity in the late Nineteenth Century”, examines the impact of Greek nationalism in Crete. One of the basic arguments of the authors’ analysis through the period that she examines is that the constant conflicts between Muslims and Christians eventually led to the fall of the Ottoman rule in Crete. Nikos Andriotis, in his article “Christians and Muslims in Crete 1821-1924: a constant standoff in and out of the battle field”, describes the tension between the two communities in Crete until the departure of the Muslim community from Crete. Conversions back to Christianity were not an uncommon phenomenon. Manolis Peponakis in his book “Conversions to Islam and back to Christianity in Crete (1645-1899)” draws attention to conversions to and from Islam, a significant practice that influenced the population dynamics on the island.

Elektra Kostopoulou, in her article “Revisiting Hellenic-Ottoman History: The Study of Autonomous Crete (1898-1912) as a New Approach to Comparative Studies” describes the status of Muslim Cretans during the period 1898-1912, a period in which Crete experienced an autonomy under the custody of the Great Powers (France, Great Britain, Russian Empire

and Italy). In autonomous Crete, freedom of religion was protected, and business and political opportunities were offered to the Muslim Cretans.

The Population Exchange, the deportation from Crete which was completed in August 1924, was the end of the presence of Muslims on Crete.

Elektra Kostopoulou, in her article “Long term memory in a foreign present: The population exchange between Cunda and Rethymno” interviews two groups of people which include the descendants of the ‘exchanged’ in Turkey and in Greece. The common point of these two groups is not only the island of Crete, where the first group had to leave and the second had to settle, but also the feeling that they are culturally different from the rest of the two nations. This appears to be a common feeling amongst the refugees and it can be noticed more clearly in the article “Muslim Cretans in Turkey: The Reformulation of Ethnic Identity in the Aegean Community” by Sophia Koufopoulou. Here she argues that the great percentage of the Muslim Cretans that were exchanged, consider themselves as “*mübadils*” (exchanges), a distinction that allows Muslim Cretans to differentiate their ethnic identity. According to the author, the Cretan identity of the Muslim Cretans became the central focus of their interaction with other Turks. The Cretan dialect, the food, the dress code are some of the elements that preserved Cretan Muslim’s ethnic identity. Finally, Bruce Clark, in his book “Twice a stranger: How mass expulsion forged modern Greece and Turkey” speaks about a Cretan community in Turkey. More specifically in the chapter “Ayvalik and its ghosts”, he highlights that the Cretan dialect, food and music still survive among the Cretan population. Indeed, throughout this study the elements of the Cretan culture appear distinctive.

Topic

The presence of the Ottoman rule in Crete lasted from 1669 until 1913; “it lasted two hundred sixty seven years (267), seven months (7) and seven days.”¹ Thousands of Christians, either in clusters that included whole settlements or individually, converted to Islam as soon

as the island went under the Ottoman rule. The two communities were often blood related and even if they weren't, other arrangements carved out a familial relation between them². Mixed weddings wasn't an odd practice and neither was koumparia (to baptize someone's child or to wed a couple) (Clark, 50). The similarity between the two communities was to the extent that, except religion nothing could indicate that they were any different from each other. They spoke the same language and more specifically the same dialect called Kritika, a dialect that still distinguish Cretans from the rest of the Greeks. Chapter 1, will cover the period right after the Ottoman occupation of Crete until 1821. An attempt will be made to explain the significant practice of religious conversion that was experienced in the island and the reasons behind it. Also there will be a closer look at the language of the Muslim Cretans: their everyday life and the relations between the two communities of different religions of the island.

The tensed relations with the Christians and the revolts that frequently occurred by the Cretan Christians against the Ottoman rule changed the population dynamics in major centers and in the villages, especially from the middle of the nineteenth century and onwards. Many Muslim Cretans vacated their homes in the countryside for a safer life in the urban centre and the Christian Cretans left the urban areas for the villages. The greatest part of the Muslim Cretan population of Crete, left the island during the years of 1898-1899, having Smyrna as the main destination and generally in the Asian Minor coast. Even though the new regime of the autonomous Crete declared that "all Cretan citizens are equal before law and have the same rights, regardless of their religion" (Andriotis, 77), the position of the Muslim Cretans in the autonomous Crete and later in integrated Crete, was subordinate. In the second chapter of this thesis, there will be an attempt to examine the status of the Muslim Cretans through the turbulent 19th century and finally through the period of Autonomous Crete.

The Population Exchange, the deportation from Crete which was completed in August 1924, was the end of the presence of Muslims on Crete. The main localities, that Muslim Cretans were transferred to, were Ayvalik, Tzunda (Cunda) and Çeşme.

From the actual population that has been exchanged only few remain alive given the time was rather distant. Further generations, that followed them, has no direct memory of the exchange of populations. Nevertheless, they all describe themselves as Cretans. Currently the Cretans (Giritliler- of Cretan origin) as they identify themselves, one way or another still remain loyal to their pro-Lausanne origins. In chapter three, interviews with the “Cretans of Turkey” will be given, Cretans who live permanently in Tzunda and Cretans who live in Istanbul were interviewed for the purpose of this study. Finally, the last chapter will contain the results of this study.

Chapter One

History of Muslim Cretans in Crete.

1.1 Conquest of Crete and conversion to Islam

The island of Crete had been ruled by Venice since the early 13th century until 1665 without challenge. It had been the latest to be conquered by the Ottomans and remained therefore the less affected by the central Ottoman power (Adiyeye, A. 208). It was organized according to conditions prevailing in the time of the conquest and the Ottoman rule in Crete thus diverges from most of the Balkan and Anatolian provinces (Anastasopoulos, 124). Even though it was the last important conquest of the Ottomans, Crete was not as crucial for the Ottomans as it had been for the Venetians. However it had the status of *eyalet* (province) with its own right, the only island in the empire to enjoy such a status. Over the years it remained a key possession and a significant source of income for the central imperial administration (Dedes, 325; Greene, 22).

In late spring of 1645, the Ottoman forces landed at Gonia, Kissamos, under the leadership of Kapudan Yusuf Pasha (Greene, 17). In the first days of the occupation, two large centers of the island, Hanya (Chania) and Resmo (Rethymno) fell under Ottoman Rule. Most of Crete fell under Ottoman sovereignty during the first two years of the campaign. Only Candia (Heraklion), the biggest town of Crete resisted until 1669. (Three islets on the north coast befell under Ottoman sovereignty later; Grambousa 1692, Souda and Spinalonga 1715). The change of sovereignty meant that Crete passed from the control of an aristocratic, Catholic Republic to a monarchic Muslim Empire with no formal aristocracy (Anastasopoulos, 123).

Crete's incorporation into the Ottoman Empire manifests certain peculiarities. Crete is a sizeable island which never constituted a single or homogenous administrative or social

unit. Anastasopoulos argues, that islands may be seen to form “closed systems” with strong local identity in which local elites and officials can enjoy more independence from central state control than their counterparts in mainland territories (Anastasopoulos, 124). Upon their arrival the Ottoman troops were ordered not to burn down buildings or fell trees or destroy crops, and not to mistreat the inhabitants. Furthermore it seems that full implementation of the *timar* system (granting tax revenues to the provincial cavalry in return for military services) was postponed until the completion of the conquest of the island, almost two decades later (Anastasopoulos, 124). Through these measures the Ottomans won the sympathy of many peasants disaffected under the Venetians and in no time they took control of Kissamos and Apokorona. On the other hand during the Cretan occupation it is known that many of the inhabitants left their homes, seeking refuge in Candia, (which remained under Venetian rule until 1669) the Ionian islands, Venice and wherever else they could (N.A., Adıyeke, N. Adıyeke, Balta, E., 344).

The large churches of Chania and Rethymno (and later of course the churches of Candia) were converted immediately into mosques, like the church of St. Nicholas in Chania, which became the Hünkar Camisi and the Metropolitan Church of Saint Tito in Candia which was turned into the Vezir Camisi. One can simply assume that Orthodox Christians were suppressed by the Ottomans like they were suppressed by the Venetians, to the contrary the Ottomans appointed the first Orthodox Archbishop Neophyros Patellaros, nephew of the one-time Ecumenical Patriarch Athanasios Patellaros, with seven Orthodox bishops under him after almost four and a half centuries, rejoining in that way the orthodox world in the south and the east. After almost half millennium under Latin rule, the Orthodox Church in Crete had not developed indigenous church elite and throughout the period of Venetian rule no Orthodox bishop was allowed on the island (Greene, 175).

The island of Crete from the very first moment was organized differently than other parts of the Empire. It had peculiar administrative structure. The Ottoman Empire did not collect taxes from the island like it normally would from other 'possessions' and the fact that it maintained a special administrative institutional body shows the exceptional status of the island. Crete's Judicial Records in the seventeenth century indicates that during the establishment period of the bureaucratic and political Ottoman administration in Crete, registries and territory allocations were highly common and many other measures had been implemented in order to form the social structure that Ottoman sovereignty was based upon (Adıyeke, A.N., 2004). The records also illustrate that right after the Ottoman occupation parts of the local population experienced a period in which they accepted Islam as their religion. It is known from several sources that the Ottoman Empire has not applied its traditional "şenlendirme-merriment/colonisation" policy of moving Muslim populations from Anatolia to the newly occupied lands in Crete (Adıyeke, A., 209; Greene, 37; Şenışık, 63).

As mentioned above, the Ottoman rule did not transfer Muslim populations from Anatolia to Crete in order to achieve a balance of the population on the island, which was the case during and after the conquest of the Balkans. In the case of Crete, the balance between Christian and Muslim populations of the island was guaranteed by massive religious conversion. Conversion to Islam begins already from the first years of the Cretan war (1645-1669), increases in the first decades after the conquest of the island and continues until the break of the Greek Revolution in 1821 (Andriotis, 63).

Conversion to Islam was not only encouraged by the Ottoman administration but also it was exploited as a public policy. Within this framework in order to form a Muslim segment in the society, two methods rarely employed by the Ottomans, were highly utilized in the case of Crete: the first one consisted of allowing mass religious conversion and the second one consisted of allowing marriages between Christians and Muslims. Records kept right after the

occupation of Crete specify that there were a high number of mixed marriages. This trend continued until the second quarter of the nineteenth century and they were diminished after the year of 1821 with the outbreak of the Greek Revolution (Adıyeke, A., 210).

The most important factor in the formation of a remarkable Cretan Muslim population, within a short period of time, was indeed conversion to Islam. This wave of mass conversion in Crete constitutes the third biggest in the Ottoman history (Adıyeke, N., 203). Molly Green argues that “the conversion was greater in Crete than anywhere else in the Greek world”.

The significant practice of religious conversion that was experienced in Crete, as Molly Greene mentions, is “a particular puzzle” and can be explained by several factors besides the fact that some people simply prefer to stand with the “winners” (Greene, 40).

Muslim soldiers and administrators who settled on the island and whose number is not known for sure, as well as Bektashi dervishes, had a certain role to play in the change of religious balance on the island (Adıyeke, N., 203). Nevertheless the presence of Muslim soldiers and administrators in Crete cannot provide a complete explanation for this mass religious conversion.

The close relationship between religious conversion and a military career must have also contributed to the high conversion rate in Crete (Greene, 41). Indeed loose entry procedures to the janissary corps were seen as a golden opportunity for Cretans and turned Crete into, as Molly Greene states, “the island par excellence of the janissaries” (Greene, 33). Furthermore centuries of lack of trust and repeated refusal from the Venetian rule towards the local population who wanted to join the paid militias that Venice maintained on the island, paved the way for the enrollment of the Cretans in the Ottoman military orders (Greene, 93). In addition, the locals who had become Muslims and were involved with the military were tax-exempt. Giorgos Dedes maintains that the key difference between Crete and other provinces of the Ottoman Empire “was that it seems that even the so-called imperial

janissaries (*kapıkulu*) were appointed among Cretan-Muslims converts, not just the local janissaries (*yerli*), (Dedes, 330).

According to Molly Greene the duration of the war itself more than any other factor, which lasted 25 years and brought considerable social dislocations in its wake, including the weakening of religious institutions, explains the attractiveness of conversion to Islam in Crete (Greene, 40). One can argue though that the weakening of religious institutions have been already achieved through the long presence of Venetian rule where the Orthodox Church has been suppressed.

Members of the tax-paying class also converted to Islam so as to join the political class (Şenışık, 64).

One can argue that the most decisive factor of this religious conversion could have been the avoidance of the poll tax. Evangelia Balta maintains that “there is no doubt that the poll tax (*cizye*) was abhorrent for the Cretans and that amassing of the amount demanded in conditions of war was difficult” (Adıyeke, A; Adıyeke, N; Balta, 351). The Cretans who remained in their towns and declared submission to the Ottomans as non-Muslims, that is they paid poll tax, were obligated to pay an annual rent to the *vakıf* (council of Evkaf), an institution catered for the economic and social needs of the Muslim Cretans (Şenışık, 70). Moreover, in the kadi registers of the Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü it is clear that: “Poll tax should not be demanded from those who embraced Islam”. The Cretan inhabitants who declared submission to the Ottomans, by paying “*cizye*” as non-Muslims, kept their property and they were accepting the status of “*zimmi*” (Adıyeke, A; Adıyeke, N; Balta, 331-332). Non-Muslims had to pay the taxes of *cizye*, *haraç* and *ispence*, while Muslims were exempted from *cizye* and *haraç*, they still had to pay other taxes on the amount written in their respective books representing their properties and products (Adıyeke, N., 207). Exempt from

taxes were the clergy, the disabled and those offering services to the Ottomans (Adiyeke, A; Adiyeke, N; Balta, 344).

Although Greene undermines the importance of this factor, one can argue that it explains the high rate of conversion right after the occupation of Crete. One must not forget that the majority of the Cretan inhabitants were peasants. Indeed the long duration of war must have weakened the economy on the island. By converting to Islam, as Nuri Adiyeke stresses, the new Muslims demanded remarkable or even complete tax exemption, this fact alone enhances the argument of conversion for the avoidance of taxes.

This argument can further be supported with the well-known phenomenon of crypto-Christianity. As a great number of the Christian inhabitants of Crete were converted into Islam, a number of them must have kept their Christianity hidden and with the first opportunity they returned openly to it. It is well known the story of the wealthy family of Kourmoulithes in Heraklion, where they turned into Christianity with the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence, losing all of their enormous fortune and over 100 members of their family as the first attempts of independence failed and the family was thus punished by the Ottomans (Demetriades; Daskalou, 46). Fournarakis refers to crypto-Christians as *Linivamvaki* and *Krifoï* (Fournarakis, 32).

Manolis Peponakis refers to an interesting case which is frequently mentioned in relation to crypto-Christianity and “light” conversion. A congregation sought the opinion of the Patriarch in Istanbul whether it would be permissible to accept Islam on the surface. When this was turned down by the Patriarch of Istanbul they sought the opinion of the Patriarch of Jerusalem Nektarios who was a fellow Cretan and were given approval on the theological principle of economy and on conditions of inescapable need (Peponakis, 67; Dedes, 326).

Another interesting argument of what may be a factor for conversion to Islam is a reference that Antonis Anastasopoulos makes regarding the issue of conversion. He argues

that “it was perhaps the shallow understanding of Islam by the many converts and their descendants that made a state agent, the governor of Kandiye (Candia/Heraklion), issue two decrees around the year 1700 as a reminder that Muslims were obliged to observe the five daily prayers, and that Muslim women were not allowed to display their facial features in public” (Anastasopoulos, 124).

Whatever the reasons might have been, it remains true that by the end of the 17th century the island’s social structure experienced a drastic ethnic transformation and a significant Muslim population was formed (Adıyeke, A., 211). It is clear, however, that converts and steadfast Christians remained linked through innumerable ties. Conversion in Crete did not automatically create a fierce and brutal divide between the two communities (Greene, 107). It remains also true that the seemingly basic dividing line of religious identity was not firmly established in the years following the conquest since there was clearly suspicion about who was, and who was not, a Muslim (Greene, 94).

1.2 The Muslim Cretans

An attempt to explain the reasons why a Cretan at the time and under which conditions would convert to Islam was given above but a significant question remains: who were these converts?

Mostly, they were the adult male and female Christians. The number of Jews and other religious groups who also converted unfortunately is not known, yet it is known that the conversion rate of the Jews was on a smaller scale (Adıyeke, N., 204). A man who converted to Islam could enter the janissary corps since it was forbidden for a “Christian” to join this corps. In many cases the newly converted were called “Bourmades” (sg. Burmas). The word Burmas according to Dedes denotes a “twisting”, presumably in reference to the previous beliefs that have been twisted and turned. Fournarakis maintains that the term “Burmas”,

which later took a derogatory meaning, refers to the way the Ottoman occupation army used to wear their turbans of twisted white cloth. Other terms that were used for the Muslims were: Zorbades, Espehides and Ksekoukoulotoi (Dedes, 331). Greene maintains that the newly converts were also new arrivals from the countryside. The combination of two elements: the zeal of the convert and the peasant's resentment of the city, created in many occasions a fearsome mix. The newly converted Muslims were often characterized as 'terrible' and 'more savage and tougher than the true Muslims' (Greene, 104).

Apparently Christian women could go to the court on their own will and convert. By converting to Islam a Christian woman could actually obtain some sort of power. This observation makes sense if someone takes into account that when a Christian woman who was married to a Christian man, converted to Islam and her spouse did not, by the very fact that Muslim women were not allowed to marry a non-Muslim man, the woman could dissolve her marriage and also could gain legal control over her children (Greene, 94). Elias Kolovos refers to the case of a converted Christian woman Ayşe Hatun from the village of Asites in Maleviz, who as soon as she dissolved her marriage with Mihelis Kakouros, who himself refused to convert; got married Ali b. Abdullah, a convert himself (Kolovos, 115). Christian women could get married to Muslim men without converting their religion, their children however, who were born under the Islamic law were accepted as Muslims. A Muslim woman however, could not be married to a Christian but a Muslim man could marry a Christian woman. In a mixed marriage between a Christian woman and a Muslim man, if something was to happen to the husband (death, disappearance or even if he moved to another place) the children of this marriage could not stay with their Christian mother. Most of these children were brought to Candia, to be given to religious people temporarily, so that they would learn Islam as their religion (Adiyeye N., 208).

In Crete, mixed marriages were not an uncommon phenomenon. These marriages did not take place in isolation and outside of society but in fact it had the approval, both from the Muslim courts and from the church (at the low level of the village priest), (Greene, 105). After all if one considers that the Muslim community was in the majority local converts then the marriage was not a marriage between strangers but rather between parts of the same community. As Molly Greene states it would be a mistake to assume that “Muslim” meant foreign in the same way that “Christian” meant local (Greene, 37). Especially during the first century of the presence of the Ottoman Empire in Crete one can observe that even the family members’ names of the population were mixed. A. N. Adiyeye sets an example where a person named Abdullah can have a brother named Yorgo or Yanni, and so a child could have a grandmother who was Christian and another grandmother who was Muslim (Adiyeye, A. N., 211)

The co-existence of Muslims and Christians is being manifested in the love song of “Sousa” or “Sousana”, a widespread and positive song about the love of a Christian woman and a Muslim man. It is a Greek song created possibly between the years 1669 and 1800 and it is found in several variations throughout Greece (Doulgerakis, 360).

In the story, Sousa is a Christian woman, who is in love with Serif bey, reveals a rare case where a Muslim is an endearing figure in the Greek literature. The song refers to the love of the young couple, which is being terminated tragically, by the brother of Sousa, when he finds out her love for a Muslim. The following version of the story was narrated by my grandmother to her children:

| | |
|---|---|
| <i>“Οντέ θα μπει η άνοιξη, π’ανθίζει το λουλούδι</i> | <i>When the spring has entered and the flowers are blooming</i> |
| <i>Αφουγκραστείτε να σας πω, της Σούσας το τραγούδι</i> | <i>Gather around and let me tell you the song of Sousa</i> |
| <i>Η Σούσα ήταν όμορφη, της Χώρας το καμάρι</i> | <i>Sousa was very beautiful, the flower of Candia</i> |
| <i>Και αγάπα τον Σερίφ Μπέϊ, το τουρκοπαλικάρι”</i> | <i>and she loved Serif bey, the brave young Turk</i> |

The fact that the song itself reveals the opposition to mixed marriages that may have existed and in romances as such, it also reveals the reality behind relationships as such.

Although conversion to Islam was highly encouraged by the Ottoman administration, this did not mean people who converted to Islam, did not experience problems. They suffered in some cases exclusion from their former religious community, and they were not always welcomed in their new one (Adıyeke, N., 204). It is arguable however that whilst in other territories of the Ottoman Empire the relations of Muslims and Christians were somehow hostile, in Crete Muslims and Christians maintained a common and mutual life (Adıyeke A., 210).

1.3 Language

The official written language on the island was Turkish, and although Turkish education along with the activities of the press was considered highly important, the language that was spoken amongst the communities was Greek (Adıyeke, A.N, 210). According to Şenışık it is a very difficult task to ascertain the traditional language and requires further examination for a definite conclusion on the language of the Cretan people; she is quoting Pashley according to whom, in the Greek language: “many Turkish words are now found in, and have even got into the mouth of the Sphakians, among whom no Turk has ever dwelt, and have had extremely little intercourse with the cities” (Şenışık, 67). Many Turkish words still survive in the dialect, sometimes slightly different from and sometimes tailored according to the Greek language. According to Millas, there are approximately 6.000 common words that Greek and Turkish languages share (Millas, 2012).

Pashley maintains that Greek is “the common language of the island” (Greene, 39). M. Greene argues that the local origin of Crete’s Muslims must explain why, despite a large Muslim community, the Cretans remained Grecophone. She also discusses that “all the

inhabitants of the island without exception speak Greek, both Muslims and Christians speak Greek at home as their mother tongue. Very few city dwellers only, know Turkish, at all” (Greene, M., 39).

A.N. Adıyeke argues that the official written language, of the island were both, Turkish and Greek, due to exclusive usage of Greek by most of the Muslim and Christian Cretan communities. She underlines though that Greek was not only spoken between Muslims and Christians, but it was also a language that was spoken between the Muslims themselves. It seems that the differentiation between the two religious communities on the island was primarily and evidently the written language and not the spoken one (Adıyeke, A.N., 210).

Konstantinos Fournarakis, argues that Cretan Muslims always spoke Greek as it was their native language, but they “never bothered to learn how to write or read and when they did they always wrote their texts in Greek but with Ottoman characters”, since their education was in Turkish. Regarding the education of the Muslim Cretans, he attempts to depict the Muslim education system and the schooling of the time as follows: “When the private education was permitted every school in every neighborhood had a teacher, the so called *hotza* (*hoca*<teacher), please note that the whole program was consisted mostly of religious lessons” (Fournarakis, 6).

One can argue today that some of Fournarakis’ points seem to be biased and generalized. He contradicts his previous statement by arguing that although there was clearly an absence of public schools and systematic education, Crete had many Cretan Muslims scholars. He mentions as an example “Ibrahim Pasha Hayderagazade” who wrote a brief history of Crete (Fournarakis, 6). He also states that even if the Muslims Cretans did not know how to write or read, they could recite the poems of Erotokritos, popular among the Cretans. Many of them knew Erotokritos by heart and in many cases they were using his words as philosophical maxims. Lena Tzedaki- Apostolaki maintains that the education level of the Muslim Cretans

was low because they had to receive their education in an anachronistic framework and in a foreign language, that is to say Turkish for the Muslim Cretans (Tzedaki - Apostolaki, L., 154).

By stating that Muslim Cretans “always wrote their texts in Greek but with Ottoman characters”, Fournarakis refers to the Cretan Greek *aljamiado*, where one can find manuscripts written entirely in the Arabic or Ottoman scripture but composed exclusively in Cretan Greek (Dedes, G., 321). In other words using the alphabet of their religion the Muslim Cretans wrote the Greek they spoke in Arabic/Ottoman characters, just like the Karamanli in Cappadocia (Kitromilides, 258). As Dedes, argues, this “Muslim literature in the Cretan dialect of Greek would have to be considered part of the oral literature in Crete, the junior counterpart of the very rich oral Christian literature on the island.” Despite the absence of hardly any written Cretan literature during the Ottoman period, on the Muslim side there is the very much learned and therefore always written, Islamic genre of rhyming glossaries in Ottoman Turkish and Cretan Greek, which is always in the vernacular (Dedes, G., 322). A translated example of Cretan Greek *aljamiado*, written in the Arabic script from a Muslim Cretan, from Selim from Chania (Chaniotis o Selim), is given below (Dedes, G., 355):

| | |
|--|--|
| Απ’ Απριλίου και από Μαγίου αποκινά το θέρος | The harvest season is upon us from April to May |
| Αφουγκραστείτε μου να πω των ορταδώ το τέλος | Listen and let me tell you the end of the <i>ortades</i> |
| Εμίρι ‘καμε ο βασιλιάς και έδωσε και φερμάνι | The king gave an order and issued a <i>ferman</i> |
| Δεν θέλει μπλιό γιανιτσαριά μα θέλει το νιζάμι | Janissaries he wants no more, but he does want the Nizam |

From the poem above one can see the predominant place of the Cretan idiom which in this example is peacefully threaded together with some Turkish words. The whole poem constitutes a *rima*, which is the preferred term to refer to long anonymous (most of the times) verse compositions in the historical tradition (Dedes, G., 323). It belongs to the Muslim branch of Cretan literature and concerns the abolition of the janissaries in 1826. It was written the same year and it was composed exclusively in Cretan Greek (Dedes, G., 321).

1.4 Daily Life

Greek was the language that both communities shared even in the interactions between their communities (the Cretan dialect of Greek). Especially in the island of Crete they were expressing “their love, their passion and their feelings” in Greek, with “mantinades” (Fournarakis, 4). “Mantinades” (sg. mantinada) is a tradition of Cretan folk poetry, they are consisted of rhymed couplets of fifteen syllables and are still widely used in Crete to shape one’s thought into a sharper, more expressive form, as they are containing an independent meaning within two short lines (Sykâri, V., 89).

Besides the same language the population in Crete shared the same music. Dances and the musical instruments also were identical; Violin was the principal solo instrument since the Venetian times and was accompanied by the mandolin. It was during the 18th century from Asia Minor that lyra (pear shaped Cretan lyra, Sykâri, V., 99) was introduced to Crete and became popular in the central and rural parts of the island. Regarding the music Fournarakis writes: “the substance/content of mantinades was the same for Christians and Muslims” adding that many of the Muslim Cretan’s mantinades were lost as it was part of an oral tradition in the island. He writes one mantinada, heard from a Muslim Cretan, regarding the constant challenges the Ottoman Empire had to face during the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Fournarakis, 5).

Μα κι’οι Νινδριώτες είν’ καλοί, είναι και πολεμάρχοι Hydriots are good, they are also warriors

Δεν σαϊντίζουνε ζωή και κάνουνε σαν δράκοι They don’t esteem/respect (their) lives and act like dragons

Βγάζει το γιαγλιδάκι του, σαρντίζει το γιαρά του He takes out his headscarf and covers his wound

Χασάνη ποιος σου βάρηκε να κόψω την καρδιά του Hasan who hurt you? I shall cut his heart

Crete’s musical tradition is shaped among others by Muslim Cretans. Tsivis maintains that the Muslim Cretans listened to the music of instruments like lyra, lute and boulgari (long-necked lute), danced the same dances with the Christians and sung the same tunes. Many Cretan

Muslims were distinguished dancers and others became famous as lyra and lagouto players (Tsivis, 111).

Mustafa Karagules, a Muslim Cretan from Chania, left an indelible mark in the music of the island. It is still quite common to hear his name among the contemporary songs of Cretan music. He composed from 1882 until 1890 many tunes that are widely used/ played until today in the Cretan music. Mustafa Karagule was from a small village named ‘Kallergiana’ in the rural area of Chania. In ‘Kallergiana’ he lived among other Muslim families in a neighborhood called ‘Mantoniana’. He was playing the violin and was endeared by Muslims and Christians. Today it is still mentioned that Mustafa Karagule was participating in festivities that were organized either by Muslims or Christians and sometimes even both (Deiktakis, 55). Among other famous Muslim Cretans musicians whose names are still known are: Hasan Aga Haniotis (from Chania), who lived in the middle of the nineteenth century and was a famous lyra player. Regarding Hasan Aga, Tsivis states that: “He played the lyra with such a passion that it made the ground tremble” (Tsivis, 111). Another famous Muslim Cretan musician was Mehmet Bey Stafidakis, the composer of ‘stafidianos’ tune. According to Tsivis he was a “famous reveler, singer, dancer and bulgari virtuoso” (Tsivis, 114).

Regarding the names of the Cretan Muslims, the most usual names were: Mustafa-s (Μουσταφάς), Huseyin-is (Χουσεϊνης), Ali-s (Αλής), Mehmet-is (Μεχμέτης), Hasan-is (Χασάνης) and Ibrahim (Ιβραήμ), as for the women popular were the names Melek-i (Μελέκη), Zeyne (Ζεϊνέ), Emine (Εμινέ) and Zehra (Ζεχρά). The names of the Cretan Muslims adopted Greek inflexional suffixes –is or –i, -a –e for the feminine gender.

If a woman was married besides the title of hanum (hanım) she kept her father’s surname which was formed with the suffix of –poula which means ‘daughter of’, for instance Rebye Kontakopula spouse of Kazim Habibaki. The surnames of the Muslims were Cretan in a rate of ninety-seven per cent with the suffix of –akis. Cretan surnames usually originated

from the name of an important ancestor or the father of the family, for instance Osman Huseyinakis, Osman son of Huseyin, or Ali Mehmetakis, Ali son of Mehmet. There were always, of course the surnames that declared an attribute or a profession, like in many countries and places all around the world. Many of those surnames survives still in contemporary Crete, for instance Papoutsakis (one who makes shoes – gr. παπούτσι, pron. paputsi < tr. papuç), Berberakis (one who is a hairdresser- gr. Μπερμπέρης, pron.berberis< tr. berber), (Tzedaki-Apostolaki, 155; Şenışık, 68).

The main occupation of Muslims and Christians on the island were olive and olive products (Adıyeke, A., Adıyeke N., 155). Crete is famous for its olive products since seventeenth century. Olive oil trade began in that century and replaced wine, which was the main commodity during the Venetian rule. This shift in the trading commodities does not indicate that during the Ottoman rule the trading of wine stopped, neither that, during the Venetian rule, olive cultivation was not popular (Greene, 118). Many of the Muslim inhabitants of the island were wealthy landowners in the cities or the villages and they were mostly involved in olive industry and soap production (Fournarakis, 18). Indeed the number of olive trees during the Ottoman administration increased ten times. As a result there were approximately 6.000.000 olive trees in Crete in the early 1890's (Adıyeke, A., Adıyeke N., 157). Fournarakis, maintains, that the freehold in olive trade was upon the hands of Muslims in the island. Many of the Muslims merchants, who trade olive products, had in their possession not only big olive tree farms but even ships to carry their products (Fournarakis, 13). During the 18th century, the soap industry developed and the Muslims, Christians and Jews living in the cities benefited from this rapid growth (Adıyeke, A., 215).

Besides the rich Muslims, who lived mainly in the cities, the rest of the Muslim community, who lived in the countryside, was involved in other professions like farming, bakery and confectionery, the craft of knives. Regarding the craft of knives Muslims were

considered experts, and until today the craft of knives is part of the fortitude's legacy of Cretans, both Muslims and Christians (Fournarakis, 12). According to Fournarakis, the 'true Muslims' avoided dealing with humble professions. These 'humble' professions were for the Ethiopians or the Arabs from Benghazi, settled on the island (Fournarakis, 18, 16). Both Muslims and non-Muslims were allowed to rent or purchase immovable properties such as shops, farms and fields (Şenişik, 71).

Another interesting economic activity of the Muslims of Crete was the water trade. Under the Ottoman Administration besides the Evkaf council, ownership and right to trade was also given to the Muslims. It seems that this right could be also inherited (Tzedaki-Apostolaki, 159).

The role of the Muslim woman in Crete deserves attention. Fournarakis maintains that the Muslim women, who lived in the cities, had a modern life and sometimes they were even ahead of their time. Characteristically, Fournarakis mentions the habit of smoking. Muslim women in Crete use to smoke long before smoking was a trend in Europe and in Greece (Fournarakis, 25). Muslim women were not cut off from the society but on the contrary, they were very active. They were mostly educated, and their education included music and painting besides other lessons. Muslim women of Crete were not any different with Christian women apart from their religion (Fournarakis, 26).

The houses of the Cretan Muslims were not isolated in specific areas but were indeed settled in different neighborhoods. Full Muslim cities or villages in Crete did not exist. During the Ottoman rule in Crete, Muslims and non-Muslims had not lived isolated from one another. There was an intimate daily contact between the Cretans, both Muslims and Christians, who often shared workplaces and lived in mixed villages (Şenişik, 98; Tzedaki-Apostolaki, 157).

1.5 Interaction with the Christians of the island

As mentioned before, extensive conversion to Islam as well as interaction and intermarriages among converts to Islam and non-Muslims presage in a way the special social and religious blend of Cretan society (Kolovos, 113). This ‘new’ population that began to emerge on the island, the Muslim Cretans, dominated the society of Crete, both urban and rural until the turbulent years of the nineteenth century (Kolovos, 121).

Between the two populations of the island, there was a distinct social and economic relationship (Adıyeke, A., 210). Indeed the Muslim and Christian communities were bound by numerous ties. As mentioned before, mixed marriages were not uncommon between the two communities (according to a sample from 1660s one out of three marriages were mixed, Kolovos, 112) nor were the active interference in religious matters. Greene, mentions, that sometimes Muslims “interfered in the marriages and baptisms of Christians by being *koumbari* (Greek κουμπάρος>κουμπαριά) and taking their children for baptism” (Greene, 105; Clark, 49).

The Cretan Muslims were often blood related with the Christians and as mentioned before, shared with them, not only the language, but also the music, dances, professions, the villages and the towns. It was not uncommon for Muslims to participate in Christians festivities nor was uncommon for Christians to do the same. Fournarakis mentions, that Muslims beside their religious celebration, had the same ‘social’ celebrations similar to the Christians. They celebrated New Year, 1st of May and even the Saint John’s day or “Klidona” in the Greek tradition. They even had the same superstitions and they shared the same myths and anecdotes with the Christians (Fournarakis, 8).

Another interesting part of the interaction of the two communities is that they were willing to testify on each other’s behalf. According to Islamic law, a Christian litigant would have to rely on a Muslim witness only in a case that involved another Muslim. It seems

however, that in Crete, Christians used Muslims even in intra-Christian disputes. The same applied for the Muslims too, they had frequent recourse to Christian witnesses and the court apparently accepted this testimony as legally valid (Greene, 106).

Also Muslim and Christian merchants each enjoyed commercial relations with merchants from the other community (Greene, 107). Greene refers to the case of a Christian man, named Poulemenos, who went to the Muslim court to register his partnership with an imperial janissary, named Ali Beşe. The agreement between them specified that the accounts would run from March to March and profits would be split on an “equal” basis (Greene, 147).

To the peaceful coexistence of Muslims and Christians must have been contributed the fact that Muslim Cretans “drank every now and then, a little bit of wine, without guilt just as the Christians did” (Clark, 50). One can argue, that Kazantzakis could not describe any better the relations of Muslims and Christians in his novel *Freedom or Death*, although the novel refers to the turbulent nineteenth century (Captain Michales, in the original Greek version). The main character Captain Michales hated and loved at the same time his blood brother Nouri Bey (He was called captain because of his participation in the revolts against the Ottomans). It was not unusual for a Muslim to participate among the Christians in the long standing - 8 days long festivities- that Captain Michales was organizing. The following text is a scene where the Muslim Efendina pleads Mr. Charilaos to help him go the Captain Michales’ feast:

« *“Efendina,” he shouted across, “courage, you poor idiot! Jump!”*

“Have you no faith in God, Mr. Charilaos?” the poor man cried. “By the day that’s above us, come nearer! Give me your hand, help me to get across! I want to go to Captain Michales’, and I can’t!”

“Don’t go, you will eat again pork and you will sin”

“Have you no faith in God, Mr. Charilaos? Give me your hand, help me to get across!” Efendina yelled again.

“Don’t go, you will drink wine and you will sin”

“May the devil take my soul but I will go. I have no other joy left in this world”» (Kazantzakis, 110).

It is essential for the contemporary reader to comprehend that this blend were layered through tolerance and coexistence, within the Cretan society, up until the nineteenth century.

That does not indicate by any means that violence and hatred were absent nor that religiously based animosity played no role in Cretan society. After all one must not forget that tolerance, coexistence, violence and hatred exist in every society, let alone in a religiously divided society as it was Crete.

Crete preserved a Muslim population segment until the late nineteenth century. Şenişik mentions that in 1760, the total population of the island amounted to 275.000, of which the Christians formed less than one fourth (Şenişik, 65). By the year of 1821 the Muslim population was 160.000 and the Christian population 129.000 (Şenişik, 65).

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the two societies had a very powerful relationship. They had common roots but also they had different beliefs (Adıyeke, A., 216). In the nineteenth century, the island experienced constant revolts, struggles and conflicts. As Kostopoulou argues, “through the nineteenth, century political stability had not been a Cretan particularity.” (The Art of Being Replaced, Kostopoulou, 130).

In the following chapter an attempt will be made to examine the turbulent years of the nineteenth century, the constant revolts that occurred in Crete, the status of the Cretan Muslims during the Independent Crete and the impact that all these developments had on the Muslim population of the island.

Chapter Two

Crete and Muslim Cretans throughout the nineteenth century

2.1 The turbulent nineteenth century

From a historical perspective, one can argue that revolts have been an integral part of Cretan history so much that as Şenişik argues: “Crete and revolt became almost synonymous” (Şenişik, 73). The inhabitants of Crete had always been thriving for political independence. During Venetian rule the island witnessed many revolts, among them the revolt of St. Tito in 1363, where the Latin colonists of Crete allying with the Greeks of the island fought for political independence (Şenişik, 73).

Although co-existence between Muslims and Christians on the island was mostly peaceful until the eighteenth century, the following hundred years were full of violent revolts and subject to turmoil, with indeed a very painful impact on the relations between the inhabitants of the island. Adıyeke argues that the rise of nationalist trends and the Greek War of Independence effected Crete and the “altered” identity definitions of the two societies became more distinctive (Adıyeke, A.N, 216). The two communities went far beyond than just drifting away and in many cases there was a large gap between the Muslims, who held the power, and the Christian *reaya* subjects, at least until 1821, where the balances on the island began to change (Dimitriadis, 206).

During the Ottoman rule, one of the most notable revolts was ‘Daskaloyiannis revolt’ that took place in western Crete, in Sfakia, an inaccessible and hard to subdue mountainous village. In the spring of 1770 a Cretan notable and ship-owner from Sfakia named Yiannis Vlachos and known as Daskaloyiannis, led a band of 2.000 well armed men out of the mountains and down into the plains of western Crete. This revolt, the first significant one before the nineteenth century, was part of a wider movement, known as ‘Orloff Uprising’ in

Greek historiography (Greene, 206). The uprisings occurred as part of the Russo-Ottoman War (1768-1774) which shook the eastern Mediterranean in 1770 (Greene, 206). Daskaloyiannis, who had good relations with the Russians, turned to his co-religionists in the hope that Orthodox Russia would replace the Ottoman sovereignty in Istanbul and in the east in general (Şenişik, 74). As Detorakis points out, Daskaloyiannis' plans for political independence fit in the general political atmosphere and the prevailing visions of the time (Detorakis, 308). Greene argues that Daskaloyiannis' vision was not a national one but rather a vision in which Christian-Orthodox Russia would prevail on the East (Greene, 208). The revolt was harshly suppressed by the Ottomans. The Russian fleet never appeared in the port of Chania as promised and the Ottomans moved decisively against the insurgents. Villages in Sfakia were burned, and the Sfakiot merchant ships were destroyed by the Ottomans who furthermore forbade the Sfakiots to have any further contact with Christian ships (Şenişik, 74). Toward the end of 1770, Daskaloyiannis decided to give himself up and the rebellion came to an end. Despite promises of amnesty, Daskaloyiannis was executed by the pasha of Candia in 1771 (Greene, 206; Peponakis, 41).

This failed revolt of Sfakia activated a period of turbulence on the island which lasted until 1821 and as Peponakis mentions it was the period of dominance of the Cretan Muslims (Peponakis, 41). Beside the frequent military riots (the janissaries number on the island was increased after the failed revolt of Sfakia) the local Muslims were encouraged by the janissaries to treat their Christian neighbors with contempt and cruelty despite the fact that sometimes they were even relatives (Peponakis, 41; Dimitriadis, 206). Furthermore the active participation of the Muslim Cretans to the suppression of the revolt of Sfakia in 1770 led to the deterioration of the relations between Muslims and Christians on the island.

Peponakis argues that the dominance of the Cretan Muslims caused a new wave of conversion to Islam during the period of 1790-1821, which led to the increase of the Muslim

population. The Muslim population constituted the 1/3 of the population by 1790. However, before the Greek War of Independence in 1821, it was equal to the Christian population or according to some sources was even higher (Peponakis, 51).

In Chania, Rethymno and Candia the janissaries were very influential in the administration. The janissary agas in Crete had gradually increased both in number and in power, they controlled the tax-farms and played a significant role in the artisan and trade life of the cities. Especially the local janissaries of Crete (yerli) had a clear advantage vis-à-vis the non-Muslims and did not hesitate to show their military strength in everyday life. They were aware of their power and they were also aware of the weakness of the Sublime Porte to impose any order upon them (Peponakis, 42). Indeed, Detorakis argues that janissaries' savagery was fabled; the corps of the janissaries had degenerated to a source of unruly and increasingly criminal terror, harmful for the society (Detorakis, 300). In 1812, the Sublime Porte decided to intervene by appointing Haci Osman Pasha the Kurd as the Governor of the island. Haci Osman Pasha, with the help of Sfakiots and some others, had strangled a number of agas in Western Crete and had earned the nickname 'the Strangler' (gr. Πνιγάρης). He fought the janissaries with such intensity that as Dedes argues, the local Muslims who were not pleased with his rule, used to call him also Papa-Yanni, "This is no Pasha Osmanis, this is Papas Yannis" [‘Αυτός δεν είναι πασά Οσμάνης, παρά’ναι παππά-Γιάννης’] (Dedes, 337). The abolition of the janissaries in 1826 was coupled with the confiscation of Bektashi pious properties -foundations controlled by the local janissaries- and the transfer of their revenues from their provincial holdings to the central treasury.

The abolition of janissaries deprived Cretans of a mechanism that allowed them to gain some privileges by claiming a Muslim identity in order to join the local troops, the access to which was quite open to every Muslim that wished to join them, especially from the seventeenth century onwards (Revisiting Hellenic-Ottoman History, Kostopoulou, 6).

As Kostopoulou, explains “it is easy to imagine how traumatic this development would have been for the survival of the Muslim identity in Crete, an island where Islam was mainly represented by the all-powerful janissary networks”. Indeed the abolition of the janissaries curtailed extremely the Muslim local tradition of war, which has been functioning as an engine driving Cretan conversions to Islam (Revisiting Hellenic-Ottoman History, Kostopoulou, 5). While the janissaries’ corps was annihilated in 1826, from 1836 onwards Greek consulates established throughout the Ottoman Empire encouraging and supporting the Christians (Şenışık, 47).

This chapter focuses on the bibliography related to the Ottoman period in Crete and to the Muslims Cretans known as Turko-Cretans. Through this period the Muslims of the island became culturally “foreign occupiers” representing a dynasty on ancient Hellenic lands (The Minoans, the Ottomans, and the British, Kostopoulou, 294). As Elektra Kostopoulou maintains “it seemed to be commonly accepted that only the Christian Cretans were true locals and had descended from the ancient Cretans. As for the Muslims of the island, they were viewed as a case of cultural minority, with no continuity in time before the Ottoman conquest of Crete” (The Minoans, the Ottomans, and the British Kostopoulou, 294).

Through the nineteenth century the formation of national consciousness that took place, transformed the system of *millet* into nations (Tsitselikis, 31). As Konstantinos Tsitselikis argues ethnicity and religion were closely linked in the phase of ‘national awakening’ and nation -and state- building process (Tsitselikis, 29). This means, that pre-modern cultural diversity, the *millets* began to fade once the region became exposed to European notions of ethno-national purity and *millets* were seen as ‘nationalities’ (Tsitselikis, 30). The idea of ‘us’ against the ‘others’, was enforced among the Muslims. This is due to the fact that the Muslims of Crete lived on an island where the Christian sought the union with Greece (The Art of Being Replaced, Kostopoulou, 133).

The clashes that occurred on the island during the nineteenth century were not just nationalist revolts. The revolts and clashes of the nineteenth century underlined that the two populations of the island differed firstly through religion and eventually through ethnicity (Adıyeke, A.N., 216). By the end of the 19th century, the Classical world had become an inspiration for movements that called for political change and revolution against the “old regime” (The Minoans, the Ottomans, and the British, Kostopoulou, 293).

As Molly Greene argues the survival of the Cretan society “depended on its ability to exclude the world beyond the sea. When that was no longer possible, the end was only a matter of time” (Greene, 209).

2.2 The Greek War of Independence and the Egyptian Rule (1821-1841)

During the nineteenth century in Ottoman Crete, the first revolt broke out about the same time as the Greek War of Independence in 1821 (Şenişik, 74). In mid-June 1821, Sfakia engaged in open hostilities with the Ottomans. According to David Barchard, throughout the nineteenth century, the timing of the outbreaks of violence was in many cases linked to religious festivals. The outbreak of the 1821 revolt coincided with the end of Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting and the ‘Ramadan Bayramı’ (Barchard, 14).

The Greek War of Independence spread quickly to Crete. The Christian population rebelled in all regions, starting even from the most isolated mountainous areas (Dimitriadis, 206). In the beginning of the revolt (1821-1822) the rebels had some early successes which were put to an end with the intervention of the Egyptians who landed on Crete in 1822 and 1823 (Kallivretakis, 11).

The 1821- 1828 revolt in Crete, resulted not only in the radical decrease of the population, both Muslim and Christian; it also resulted in a change in the population’s ethno-religious composition (Perakis, 136). Beginning from 1821, the population of the island and

the ratio of the Muslims decreased heavily. In approximately ten years from the beginning of the Greek War of Independence the population of the island decreased from 260.000 to 200.000 and the Cretan Muslim population shrank between fifty to sixty thousand (Adıyeke, A.N, 211). It is estimated that more than 20.000 Christians lost their lives only in the villages of Eastern Crete (Dimitriadis, Daskalou, 45). Of course the losses were equally distributed for both Muslims and Christians. Many decided to abandon the island for a safer refuge (Andriotis, 66).

The international treaties of 1829, 1830 and 1832 excluded Crete from the newly established Kingdom of Greece and brought to an end the revolt on the island (Andriotis, 65; Kallivretakis, 11). According to the Protocol of London which was signed on February 3, 1830, the administration of Crete was granted to Mehmet Ali Pasha (ruler of Egypt) as a compensation for his help to the Ottomans in 1821 (Şenışık, 74).

During the Egyptian rule (1830-1840) the administration of the island was assigned to Mustafa Pasha who had been on the island since 1822 and had run the *pashalik* of Chania since 1824 (Kallivretakis,12). The Egyptian forces even though they tried a two-pronged approach, making a conciliatory approach to the locals, were not popular especially among the Muslim Cretans as they imposed new taxes on agricultural products, increased the poll-tax and auctioned off monopolies on imported goods through a system of binding (Şenışık, 75; Dedes, 339). For instance the tax for wine and raki which until 1833 was subdued only by Christians, who still had to pay the poll-tax, beginning from 1833 was obligatory for Muslims too.

Under the Egyptian rule, the already destroyed in 1826 Janissaries corps, was replaced by Albanians and Egyptian forces in order to keep the public order. Also the Muslim Cretans were replaced by Albanians in the administration of the provinces. In January 21, 1831, Mustafa Pasha ruled that no Muslim had the right to enter a Christian's house without the

permission of the authorities. In the same order it was decreed that the Muslims could no longer settle in the rural areas unless they had properties on them. The last measure led many Muslims to seek a permanent residency in the cities leaving the countryside, where the Christians enjoyed numeric dominance (Peponakis, 75; Perakis, 137). Indeed, during the course of the nineteenth century, the countryside gradually was transferred from Muslim to Christian owners. Muslims abandoned the countryside and moved to city-fortresses such as Chania, Rethymno and Heraklion, while the Christians made the reverse movement, abandoning the cities for the countryside (Perakis, 137).

It is worth mentioning Elektra Kostopoulou remarks regarding the Egyptian rule “while the Christians continued to be ideologically and materially supported by both Greek and European forces, those of the Cretan Muslims who decided not to obey the will of Egypt, were left to their own devices” (Revisiting Hellenic-Ottoman History, Kostopoulou, 6).

In 1840, following Egypt’s defeat in the Ottoman Egyptian War, the island returned to Ottoman sovereignty and remained under the control of the Ottomans until 1898, despite the numerous protests and revolts of the Christian population (Perakis, 135). The end of the Egyptian rule found the Christian Cretans to not only outnumbering the Muslim Cretans but also to exceeding them in the fields of economy and organization (Peponakis, 108).

On the morrow of the revolt, the Cretan Muslim community was not only decimated but as Kallivretakis argues its access to the machinery of power was reduced, and at the same time the ruling class was deprived of its ability to exploit big estates (Kallivretakis, 13).

The 1821 revolt affected the Cretan society in many ways but mostly negatively. It was the first severe revolt of many more to come throughout the nineteenth century. During the nineteenth century in all Cretan uprisings or local conflicts, instances of tolerant inter-religious behavior are rare. Desecrations of places of worship, uprooting of the graves,

stealing of relics and general assaults on the religious symbols central to the identity of the other side were not uncommon (Barchard, 2).

The immigration of the Cretans both Muslims and Christians to other provinces of the Ottoman Empire and Greece, as well as the plague that struck the island, resulted in the decrease of the population and mostly left the Muslim community fragmented (Peponakis, 70). Meanwhile, the abolition of janissaries in 1826 had crucial outcome: the Muslim element on Crete lost its primacy in leading the revolution against the state which was the case before. This became a Christian operation (Local Autonomy and the Tanzimat, Kostopoulou).

As Peponakis argues the Muslim Cretans seemed “like a body without a soul” (Peponakis, 75). The following fifteen years after the Egyptian Rule, beginning from 1841 was for the island the most peaceful period through the nineteenth century, during which the practice of conversion to Christianity was not a peculiar phenomenon (Peponakis, 71).

2.3 Conversion back to Christianity and the reactions from the Muslim community

The revolt of 1821 in Crete did not only help to strengthen the Christian community, it also put an end to the wide spread phenomenon of conversion to Islam. Between 1834 and 1881 the percentile increase of the Christian community was two times more than the Muslim community. As Kallivretakis argues, an increase of this scale in the Christian community can hardly be interpreted as the result only of internal demographic growth (Kallivretakis, 14). Regarding the number of the Muslim community on the island, very interesting is the position of Peponakis according to whom “population census right after the revolution of 1821 prevent us from ascertaining the exact percentage of Muslims and Christians since there was a “deliberate decrease” in the censuses of the number of Muslims with the aim to ease the unification of Crete with the Greek Kingdom” (Peponakis, 70).

It remains however true that a lot of Muslims converted back to Christianity and that religious identities were quite fluid in early nineteenth century. Right after the revolution of 1821 one can notice the intensified frequency of the phenomenon of Crypto-Christianity, where a great number of Cretan Christians who used to keep their Christianity hidden, with the opportunity of the 1821 returned openly to it.

One can argue that all the Muslims who converted cannot have been Crypto-Christians and indeed as Peponakis mentions many of those who declared themselves Crypto-Christians had no previous Christian religious activity even if the latter was hidden. It is also noteworthy that the new-Christians in their effort to show their religious zeal were taking names referring to Holy Mary and Jesus, “Maria” and “Manolis”. However, they ended up being called with the modifying word Turk, for example Turko-Maria, Turko-Manolis in an attempt to show their reversion and their religious past (Peponakis, 105).

The reasons behind a conversion or a reversion were mainly financial. The new-Christians could assert their rights to paternal property although this procedure met numerous obstacles due to the reaction of the Muslim community. Another factor of someone claiming to be Crypto-Christian was the fear of being accused that he/she rejected Islam (Peponakis, 102). One cannot also exclude the possibility that these conversions may have occurred out of fear of the constantly growing in power of the Christian community despite the rhetoric of the Greek historiography implying otherwise.

As mentioned before there was a wave of conversion to Islam during the period of 1790-1821 and the newly converted Muslims to Christianity may have been from this group of people, since the new-Christians should have been those who knew about their recent Christian past (Peponakis, 101). They were families or individuals who lived in the towns and the villages and came from different social classes.

Officially switching religions was prohibited and according to Islamic law apostasy, was punishable by death. The administration of the island during the Egyptian rule, kept reminding the inhabitants of Crete that interference in other's religious matters was not tolerable. During the Egyptian rule, circumcision and baptisms of people who belonged to another religion were prohibited as well as mixed marriages (Peponakis, 82).

Gulhane Hatt-i Sherif of 1839 and Hatt-i Humayun of 1856, established ideas and reforms concerning the political and social spheres of the Ottoman Empire but foremost showed that Islam could no longer be the answer to the problems that the Empire was addressing. These measures known also as the "Tanzimat" (Reforms) deprived the Cretan Islam of many tools that kept the Muslim identity of Crete alive (Local Autonomy and the Tanzimat, Kostopoulou). According to the Imperial edicts *"All forms of religion are and shall be freely professed in my dominions, no subject of my Empire shall be hindered in the exercise of the religion that he professes, nor shall be in any way annoyed on this account. No one shall be compelled to change their religion"*.

Hatt-i Humayun of 1856 created a new wave of conversions to Christianity and revelations of Crypto-Christians. Noteworthy is the fact that in the village of Episkopi near the province of Heraklion, out of eighty Muslim families, seventy-six converted to Christianity (Peponakis, 88).

Watching their community shrinking dramatically set the alarm bells ringing for the Cretan Muslims. Until the proclamation of the Hatt-i Humayun, one could argue that the Cretan Muslims were not entirely assimilated to their new religion. In at least some villages the Muslim call to prayer was carried out in Greek rather than Arabic and as mentioned before Cretan Muslims were consumers of wine, even of pork (Barchard, 9). After the proclamation of Hatt-i Humayun, the phenomenon of religious fanaticism surfaced. Especially in the cities, in the early 1860s the phenomenon of religious extremism was observed more frequently, on

the contrary in the rural area the disputes over religious fanaticism were not observed with the same frequency due to the family relations among the inhabitants (Peponakis, 110).

Another parameter of the Hatt-i Humayun was that all commercial political and legal differences between Muslims and non-Muslims were to be referred to joint courts, and freedom of representation on provincial and community councils was to be secured for the religious communities. Also the principle of equal taxation for all was accepted (Kallivretakis, 18).

During the revolt of 1866-1869 where 30.000 inhabitants of the island lost their lives, the gap between the two communities had been widened even more and mutual tolerance was undermined and destroyed (Şenisik, 77). The distinguishing difference of this revolt was its religious character. It also had a national character for the Christian Cretans (Andriotis, 67). Churches and mosques, religious symbols of both communities were systematically attacked. As Andriotis mentions, the reaction of the Muslims to the revolt became more stronger (Andriotis, 67). The presence of dervishes and dervish *tekkes* (religious brotherhoods) it is certainly not a coincidence. The missionary action of dervishes was widely spread on Crete, and especially after the 1866 they were trying to bolster the religiosity of the Cretan Muslims. In 1876 only in Chania, 300 Cretan Muslims, the majority of whom were from the upper class, became dervishes (Peponakis, 111). Electra Kostopoulou maintains that amidst the ideological and material marginalization of Ottoman Islam in Crete, the localized community on the island had managed to survive attached to its local pious foundations (The Art of Being Replaced, Kostopoulou, 146).

The Cretan Muslims also tried to invest in the education of their community. Although there were Muslim schools in the cities, in the rural area most of the Cretan Muslims used to send their children, until 1866, to Greek schools (Peponakis, 111). This was partially one of

the reasons that the literacy rate of the population in the countryside was low (Adiyeye, A. N., 214).

The Muslim aristocracy's property (land owned by agas and beys) throughout the nineteenth century and especially after the second half of the century was fragmented. As the population dynamics in the cities and the villages changed, the land ownership was also equally transformed. In many cases after a violent revolt, the Muslim population had no other choice but to stay in the much safer cities. Indeed, Kallivretakis mentions the writings of George Perrot who in 1867 argues that "Agas and beys, stripped of their estates...for a cheap price, inundate the towns, seeking to survive by renting some of the land that the Turkish administration is wasting, though it is unable to satisfy all the idlers that implore it" (Perakis, 136).

2.4 The Organic Act and the Halepa Pact (1868-1878)

Following the revolt of 1866, in an attempt to undermine the insurrections, the Ottoman government announced through the grand vizier Ali Pasha, who was sent to Crete for this purpose, a certain number of administrative privileges to the Christian inhabitants of the island. These privileges were the essence of the so-called Organic Act or Statute by which the island was to be ruled until 1878. According to the Organic Act, the island was divided into five provinces (Chania, Rethymnon, Herakleion, Sfakia and Lasithi) and subdivided into 19 districts. In addition the Organic Act provided for the involvement of Christians at every level of the administration and in the compositions of the courts. On the basis of this Act a local bank was established and the elections for a General Assembly with legislative competence at local level were organized. Finally, Turkish and Greek were recognized as official languages (Şenışık, 78; Kallivretakis, 21).

With a mixed membership drawn from both ethnic groups on the island, the Assembly was to meet forty days each year, to pass measures relating to local issues and so on, through its decisions had to be ratified by the Governor General and the Ottoman government (Kallivretakis, 21). Şenişik mentions that the Christian representatives of the General Assembly believed that the Organic Act had not granted equal privileges to all inhabitants, since the Christians had 38 members and the Muslims had 36. In her work, she also mentions that Christians complained about the biased decision of the courts of law against them (Şenişik, 78).

A revolt in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1875, after which the Russo-Ottoman War broke out in the spring of 1877, created a highly charged atmosphere in Crete. A number of committees were established because livestock theft and murders increased. In 1878, Crete went through another revolt. The pattern was similar to the previous experiences. The main desire of the Cretan Christians remained *enosis* (union) with Greece (Şenişik, 79). After the Ottoman Empire's defeat by Russia, the Treaty of San Stefano obliged the Ottoman Empire to comply with the terms of the Organic Act (Şenişik, 78). The Treaty of Berlin in July 1878 decreed that 'the Sublime Porte is obliged to implement in the island of Crete, the Organic Act of 1868, after such amendments as may be judged necessary' (Kallivretakis, 24). In October 1878, the Halepa Pact was signed and ratified on 9 November by imperial decree. According to the Halepa Pact, the Governor General of Crete could be a Christian and the General Assembly should be composed of 49 Christian and 31 Muslim deputies. A local gendarmerie was created, in which both communities participated. Administrative correspondence and judicial decisions were to be composed in both languages, while Greek was to be the only official language for sessions of the courts and the General Assembly (Kallivretakis, 24).

Most of the measures and administrative projects that the Ottoman regime continued to implement throughout the century challenged directly the local Muslim establishment. Especially in the cases of the Organic Act and the Halepa Pact, the Ottoman Empire started to enforce a program of reforms that fostered equality between Muslims and non-Muslims. As Kostopoulou argues, the most important aspect of this process was ‘that the last ideological bridges between the capital city and local Islam, that is the Muslim apparatuses of administration and justice, were shaken to the point of no return’. Indeed, the Christian legal networks gradually replaced the old imperial system of law, a development that had significant importance for the future of the Cretan Muslims (Revisiting Hellenic-Ottoman History, Kostopoulou, 5).

2.5 The revolutionary period of 1896-1898 and the Muslim migration

Revolts on the island as seen throughout the whole chapter were not a peculiar phenomenon. On the contrary one can argue that revolts were part of the norm on the island. The submission of the Halepa Pact on October 1878 introduced a new circle of violence in the rebellious nineteenth century. The experiment of the “parliamentary system” of Crete under the Ottoman rule, introduced a decade of division of Cretan society into two political groups, the Liberals or “barefooted” and the Conservatives or “karavanades” (Kallivretakis, 25).

The animosity and rivalry between the two political parties had reached to the point to ‘split the people’ and paved the way for acts of murders and further violence (Şenişik, 80). At the end of the 1880s, animosity between the two Christian parties reached its peak. In the elections of 1889, the electoral outcome was in favor of the Liberals, which complicated matters even more on the island. The politically charged atmosphere between the two Christian parties led to a revolt which did not last long but it was decisive for the parts of the Muslim community which remained in the rural areas to leave those lands. As Şenişik

mentions, in addition to the clashes between the partisans of both parties, Christians began to attack Muslims, who in their effort to save their lives took refuge in the big cities. Muslims from Rethymno, Chania and Heraklion were also compelled to migrate (Şenişik, 82).

As Andriotis argues, this revolt was different from the other revolts that occurred in the past regarding the determination of the Cretan Christians to not allow the resettlement of the Cretan Muslim back to their residences. Andriotis also cited the remarks by the Consul of Britain in Chania, Billioti, regarding the tensions between Christians and Muslims in the town of Chania “in my opinion Muslims and not Christians are in danger” (Andriotis, 68, 70).

In an attempt to suppress the Cretan revolt of 1889, the Ottoman government issued an edict, according to which the privileges granted by the Halepa Pact, were restricted and the number of deputies in the General Assembly was reduced to 35 Christians and 22 Muslims (Şenişik, 104). From the end of the revolt of 1889 until the revolutionary period of 1895-1898, acts of violence were constant among Muslims and Christians (Andriotis, 71)

Towards the May of 1896 and while financially the island was not in a good state, the tension in Crete escalated for once more. The revolt of 1896, which was followed by repeated requests from some of the Cretan Christians for the revival of Halepa Pact, was one of the most severe that the nineteenth century had experienced. Many people from both communities were killed within a short period of time, houses were burned and plundered, tree plantations had been destroyed by either the Muslims or the Christians and mosques and churches were demolished. Every single shop in the bazaar was closed and no one was to be seen on the streets (Şenişik, 114; Andriotis 72; Perakis, 139). One of the consequences of the revolt was the disruption in the agricultural production that the tree destruction caused and had a long lasting impact in the development of the rural economy of the island (Andriotis, 73).

During the summer of 1896, in only one day 22 Muslim settlements were burned. Until September 1896, 105 Muslim settlements were burned or destroyed by the Cretan

Christians in the periphery of Heraklion (Andriotis 72). 5,180 Muslim families were left homeless. On the other hand due to the reactions of the Muslims, 3,099 Christian families also left without shelter (Şenişik, 137).

The clashes between the populations on the island continued and the year of 1897 and spread quickly across the island. The province of Sitia, near Heraklion, remained uninfluenced from the violent clashes between Christians and Muslims until the 1897. During 1897 some of the Christian insurgents attacked Muslim villages in Sitia and massacred men, women and children. The number of Muslims killed in Sitia amounted to 2,500 of whom only 25 managed to escape (Şenişik, 156). At the same time in the western districts the situation was getting worse. In several districts of Chania, the Muslim inhabitants were blockaded and begged to be rescued. With the intervention of the European forces, about 3,000 Cretan Muslims including 600 Ottoman troops found refuge in various places (Şenişik, 158).

During the years of 1896 to 1898, there was a great mobility of population within the island. The last Muslims living in the interior parts of the island began to flee to the cities and as the population of the cities increased, they began to suffer from hunger and diseases (Şenişik, 158; Andriotis, 74). The demographic map of the cities and the rural areas changed radically. The Muslim population on Crete from 1881 to 1900 reduced to the half, specifically it was reduced by 55,7% and the percentage to the total population was from 25,9% in 1881 to 11% in 1900 (Andriotis, 74).

The majority of the Cretan Muslims emigrated to Heraklion, where 25 square miles of military cordon was established by the British forces in order to prevent anymore conflicts between the Christians and the Muslims. As Şenişik mentions, it was estimated that 49,500 Muslims civilians were assembled in Heraklion and within the cordon area (Şenişik, 168).

As the Cretan Muslims were gathered in the cities and while the departure of nearly 8,000 Ottoman troops on 28 October 1898 was decided by the European forces and the

Sublime Porte, large numbers of Cretan Muslims found themselves under the pressure of “forced migration” to the mainland of the Ottoman Empire, despite the assurances they had received from the administrative authorities and the European Powers’ representatives regarding their personal safety and the protection of their property (Perakis, 137; *The Art of Being Replaced*, Kostopoulou, 131; Andriotis, 75). During the years of 1898 and 1899, the destinations of the Cretan Muslims were the coast of the Asia Minor, Rhodes and Kos, Syria and North Africa (Andriotis, 75; Kara-Çelik, 91). As Kostopoulou mentions, according to a variety of oral and archival sources, the massive Muslim emigration from Crete continued during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the First World War (1914-1918).

In November 1898, the Greeks were defeated in the Greek-Ottoman war. However, the Ottoman province of Crete became autonomous. The entire Ottoman contingent was gone and the Ottoman flag was hauled down (Şenişik, 228). Although the Ottoman Empire was politically retreating from the island, in the urban centers of Herakleion and Rethymnon, the Cretan Muslims were still the majority (*The Art of Being Replaced*, Kostopoulou, 137).

The much desired autonomy of the island was the outcome of a century of Christian revolts and of continuous Ottoman administrative reforms. (*The Art of Being Replaced*, Kostopoulou, 131).

2.6 The Muslim Cretans during the Autonomous Crete (1898-1913)

Christian insurrection against Ottoman power led to the intervention of French, English, Italian and Russian troops, definitely setting the ‘Cretan question’ (Tsitselikis, 36). The European forces authorized a regime of autonomy for the island under Ottoman suzerainty. That meant that autonomy was granted to Cretans as a temporary experiment, one of the most important preconditions of which was the cooperation of both communities with the new regime (*Revisiting Hellenic-Ottoman History*, Kostopoulou, 7). The Muslim

community during the Autonomy period was not deprived of physical protection and political representation. The status of Autonomy prevailed under the supervision of the European forces, who until 1908 kept an International Occupation Force on the island responsible for assuring the guarantees given to the Muslims (Perakis, 138).

Prince George, the son of king of Greece Konstantinos, arrived at Suda bay, at Chania on 9 December 1898. In the government house, the French admiral handed official control of the island over to him. The Cretan flag was raised and the Ottoman flag was left only on the fort at Suda as a last symbol of Ottoman suzerainty in Crete (Şenişik, 229).

As Tsitselikis argues, the legal status of the Muslim community in the Cretan state was one of the most elaborate ever applied by a Christian Greek administration. On 24 January 1899, a new Cretan Assembly was elected consisting 138 Christians and 50 Muslims and in April, the first government was formed. Among others, Eleftherios Venizelos, known for his support for an “absolute equality of the Christians and Muslims”, was appointed as the Minister of Justice. The Muslim Hasan Skilianakis was appointed Minister of Transport and Public Security (Şenişik, 229; Perakis, 138; Tsitselikis, 37).

One can argue that the idea of cooperation and co-administration was not unfamiliar to the Cretans, in fact the legal status that was applied for the Muslim community can be considered in the framework of the Halepa Pact according to which the autonomous Cretan state was established adopting a balanced treatment of Christians and Muslims (Tsitselikis, 37). On the other hand one should not forget that Cretan Christians were making an effort to respect Muslim rights often against their own will, since the Christians were forced by the European Powers to guarantee the protection of Muslims and to cooperate with them for the restoration of peace and prosperity (Hellenic-Ottoman History, Kostopoulou, 8). Indeed between the years 1898-1912 the educated Muslim Cretans, who were referred to as ‘effendi’, actively participated in the administration of the autonomous Crete, occupying some of the

most prestigious administrative offices (Tzedaki-Apostolaki, 154; Hellenic-Ottoman History, Kostopoulou, 7).

The official language of the Cretan state was proclaimed Greek, however this did not constitute a problem for the Muslim community for whom as mentioned before, Greek was their native language. Muslims' language rights were mainly implemented in the field of education where according to the general education law, the state provided Muslims the right to have special education in religion and linguistic matters. In Chania, Rethymno and Heraklion, elementary public schools were established for Muslim pupils. The supervision of Muslim educational institutions was the responsibility of the High Directorate of Education and the Counselor of Education of the Cretan state was a Muslim (Tsitselikis, 41).

The Islamic religious foundations were granted legal personality similar to the status that enjoyed under Ottoman law. As Tsitselikis mentions "according to the article 16, Act 145/1900, the foundations included the mosques, and the convents of religious brotherhoods (*tekke*), buildings for religious or educational use, the seminaries (*medrese*) and the libraries, the water reserves (*sebilhane*), the fountains and the cemeteries" (Tsitselikis, 39). It is worth mentioning that the institution of the *Evkaf* (foundations) survived on the island more than the Ottoman Empire did and even after the unification with Greece in 1913 (The Art of Being Replaced, Kostopoulou, 138; Tsitselikis; 39).

The experiment of autonomous coexistence between Muslims and Christians, colored by both rivalry and cooperation and from 1901 until the departure of the Muslim Cretans from Crete one can argue that there was generally a diverse path of conflict and cooperation. The League of Christian-Muslim Women is a representative example of cooperation between the two communities. The League was a mixed association with a social activity, who placed particular importance on the rehabilitation of excluded and poor women from both communities and sought to secure them jobs (Tsitselikis, 44; Andriotis, 78).

Despite the 'protected' legal status of the Muslims, as the Cretan state became increasingly oriented towards political union with the independent Greek state, political tension and renewed violent inter-ethnic clashes led Muslims to gradually flee the island and from the majority in the cities of Heraklion and Rethymno, to become minority (Tsitselikis, 38). Between the years 1900 and 1911 the Muslim population of the island decreased from 33,496 to 27,852 (Perakis, 138). Decisive to the migration of the Muslim community was the '*boykotaj*' (boycotts) from the Cretan Christians to the shops owned by Muslims (Adıyeke, A.N., 219; Andriotis, 79).

Eventually the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) marked the end of the Cretan autonomy and the integration of Crete into Greece. The Greek state appeared less concerned than before about the Muslim communal rights while at the same time, the Muslims that remained on the island appeared increasingly more concerned to prove their loyalty to Greece (The Art of Being Replaced, Kostopoulou, 142).

The siding of the Ottoman State with Germany during the First World War according to A.N. Adıyeke 'obliterated the factional harmony on the island' (Adıyeke, A.,N.,219). In 1914, one year after Crete's annexation to the state of Greece, tension rose again between the two communities. From 1914 to 1917 Christian refugees from Asia Minor arrived in the island seeking shelter in schools and mosques, adding more tension to the already deteriorated relations. Still, an important Muslim community remained on the island until 1923. On 24 of July 1923, Greece and Turkey signed the Lausanne Treaty, according to which all Muslims had to leave the island.

The status of the Muslim Cretans throughout the turbulent 19th century was strongly challenged and the Muslim community began to be perceived as a minority. Cretan Islam throughout the nineteenth century gradually turned into a subculture. The "decisive element" of religion transformed "a group of people" into "a community", the Cretan Muslims.

Conversion and reversion to and from Islam eventually shaped the communal identity of Cretan Muslims. Even the fluidity in the choice of the religion throughout the nineteenth century, underlines the importance of the religion. The switching of religion was widely used as “a tool” serving a variety of reasons, such as better economic purposes or better social status. After all one should not forget that the most significant criterion taken into consideration, in the population exchange of 1923, was religion.

Chapter Three

The community of Cretan Muslims in Turkey

3.1 The Population Exchange

The Population Exchange ended the presence of the Muslim community in Crete. As Aytek Soner Alpan mentions, the Population Exchange constituted a historic turning point in the process of nation-/state- building both in Greece and in Turkey, affecting directly not only more than 1.5 million people but also both nations collectively (Alpan, 200).

The Treaty defined who were to be included in the exchange and who were to be exempted from it, as well as the conditions for transferring property and compensation and the creation of a Mixed Commission to supervise the emigration and to oversee the liquidation of property (Hirschon, 8). Article 1, of the Convention regarding the population exchange between Greece and Turkey, stated:

As from the 1st May, 1923, there shall take place a compulsory exchange of Turkish nationals of the Greek Orthodox religion established in Turkish territory, and of Greek nationals of the Moslem religion established in Greek territory. These persons shall not return to live in Turkey or Greece respectively without the authorization of the Turkish Government or of the Greek Government respectively³.

As the Population Exchange implemented under the auspices of the League of Nations, its impact transcended the boundaries of Turkey and Greece and while the conventional view in both countries holds that the exchange constituted the final act that completed nation-building in the two countries, many are the voices, especially the last two decades, who argue that the exchange was a form of “ethnic cleansing” (Kitromilides, 2008: 266; Alpan, 200). As Kitromilides explains “the exchange may be seen as a form of ‘ethnic cleansing’, masquerading behind the respectability of international law and sanctioned by the

blessings of the League of Nations and the great powers of civilized Europe who were present and parties to the Lausanne negotiations” (Kitromilides, 2008: 266). Indeed after the signing of the Treaty of Ankara between Greece and Turkey, Raymond Hare, an American diplomat, proposed an answer regarding the Population Exchange: “We can summarize the situation like this; Venizelos can be considered as the ‘father’ of the Population Exchange, while Dr. Nansen engaged to fulfill it. As for Hamid Bey, representative of the Ankara’s government, he suggested to have a compulsory character” (Aktar, 2006:138; Collins, 203).

As a result of the Population Exchange, at least four hundred thousand Muslims were forced to leave Greece and settle in Turkey, among them 23.821 Cretan Muslims (Andriotis, 84). On the other hand it is estimated that about one million and two hundred Christians fled to Greece before the signing of the Lausanne Treaty, without protection or supervision (Hirschon, 14). As Kitromilides argues ‘relocation’ and ‘resettlement’ “sound quite mild and neutral terms when they are used to describe the massive upheaval brought into the lives of individual families and communities by the process of uprooting and deportation involved in the exchange of populations” (Kitromilides, 2008: 262). Indeed the Population Exchange was in no sense repatriation for either the Muslims of Greece or the Christians of Turkey (Hirschon, 8).

As is quite natural, the news of the Population Exchange came as a shock to the remaining communities both in Greece and in Turkey. Regarding the Muslim community in Crete, one can argue that the final deportation of the community could be viewed as the natural outcome of long linear conflicts. A closer look, though, on the data of investments and real estate decisions of the Cretan Muslims as well as the data of the censuses of the population of the Muslim community, where the massive emigration waves of the Muslim population had been reduced from the beginning of the twentieth century, surely indicates the

inability of Cretan Muslims, not to mention all of the population that has been exchanged, to foresee the future (The Art of Being Replaced, Kostopoulou, 130; Tzedaki-Apostolaki, 165).

Some of the Cretan Muslims tried to be excluded from the Population Exchange sometimes with success but mostly without any. Indeed some of them managed to avoid it, permanently or temporarily by obtaining another citizenship, mostly the Italian citizenship. Few of them managed to be excluded permanently from the Exchange due to the offer of their services to the Greek state during the past. There were also some of the Cretan Muslims, who remained temporarily owing to their expertise in fields where they could not be replaced. For instance Mustafa Pasakakis was one of the few, whose residence permit was extended due to the fact that he was the only one who manufactured the light bulbs “Lux” in Chania (Tzedaki-Apostolaki, 149). Upon the news of the Population Exchange, many Cretan Muslims attempted to convert to Christianity but without any success (Clark, 51). Despite the efforts of the Cretan Muslims to remain on the island, according to the population census of 1928 there were no Muslims remaining in Crete (Tzedaki- Apostolaki, 149).

The departure of the Cretan Muslims officially began on August 1923 and completed one year later (Andriotis, 84). The departure of individuals, with the exception of men who could be called for military services between the ages of 18-50, was not prohibited. However that was rarely the case since individual departure required economic wealth. As Tzedaki-Apostolaki mentions, the first organized group of Cretan Muslims was composed by one thousand twenty nine Muslims of Heraklion and nine hundred Muslims of Rethymno, who boarded consecutively in the steamship “Kerasous”⁴ having as destination the port of Ayvalik of Asia Minor (Kydonies), on December 3, 1923. The last group of Cretan Muslims left Crete, in the middle of July 1924. As many others before them, the last 300 hundred Cretans Muslims, departed from Heraklion to Ayvalik, this time with the steamship “Antigoni” (Tzedaki-Apostolaki, 148). The journey from Crete to Ayvalik lasted 6 days, during which the

exchangees were obligated to ensure their survival with their own means (Tzedaki-Apostolaki, 148). In Greece the ‘mapping’ of the refugee memory was undertaken by the Centre for Asia Minor Studies. Indeed the Greek public memory benefited from the action of the not state-sponsored Centre for Asia Minor Studies which produced a massive collection of archival materials regarding the population exchange from the 1930s, unfortunately, the collection of the Centre was concentrated to the arriving Orthodox community rather than of the departing Muslims (Iğsız, 455; Alpan, 214).

The identity of the Cretan Muslims but also the identities of all those who were relocated and resettled, were far less clear cut than the Convention implied. The Lausanne Treaty evaded addressing the issue of the ethno-national identity of the minorities that have been exchanged (Alexandris, 117). Religion and not language or ethnicity, was the ‘defining criterion of identity’ in the Population Exchange (Hirschon, 8). The exchanged Muslims who were affected of the Population Exchange were linguistically and culturally a heterogeneous population, having a variety of individual and community memories (Bayındır-Goularas, 119). Yet the people that were affected from the Population Exchange, after the Exchange, where as Bayındır-Goularas argues, the formation of a collective memory occurs, they obtained a new attribute on their identity, the attribute of the ‘refugee’ and the ‘exchangee’ (or ‘exchangeable’) (Bayındır-Goularas, 119).

For the Cretan community the ‘identity of the exchangee’, was emphasized from the start. As Sophia Koufopoulou argues, unlike the majority of Muslims who were expelled from Greek territory, the Cretans do not refer to themselves as ‘muhacirs’ (in Turkish immigrants, refugees) but as ‘mübadils’ (exchangees) since the term ‘muhacir’ was not only associated with poverty but also with various other ethnic groups in Turkey (Koufopoulou, 210). There should also be noted that in some cases, the ‘mübadils’ distinguish themselves even from the Cretan immigrants who left Crete during the turbulent nineteenth century, although not in the

same degree. Above all, however the Cretan exchangees identify themselves as Cretans before anything else.

“There are two groups of Cretans in Turkey, those who left during the nineteenth century and those who came with the Population Exchange, the latter group came with order (düzenli göç). Sometimes the two groups are even related, a fact that prevents the alienation of the two groups.” Mehmet G.

The term ‘mübadil’ allowed the Cretans to differentiate themselves not only regarding their ethnic identity but also their social status. The Cretans did not choose to leave Crete but they were forced to do so according to an interstate decision (Bayındır-Goularas, 119). The term ‘mübadil’ is a reminder that they left behind some remarkable property of which they received the 1/3, they were exchanged by another population, emphasizing in that way their feeling of superiority towards other displaced Muslims. Similar is the distinction of the terms ‘refugee’ and ‘exchangee’ among the Asia Minor Greeks in Greece (Balta, 24).

The presence of the thousands of Muslims that had fled- or who were eventually deported- to Anatolia from the “lost” Ottoman lands brought stories in the newly founded state of Turkey, that did not really fit with the dominant historiography of victory. The Cretan, the Bosnian, the Macedonian populations of Turkey, had managed to maintain aspects of their particularity together with a collective remembering of their origins for years, despite the fact that this was not the official ideology of the state (Memories of Conflict, Kostopoulou, 39).

3.2 The ‘fatherland’ and the Turkification measures of the state

“At first, life was really hard, although my father was very rich. I saw a lot of rich people becoming poor. What can I say? A hut in your place is better than a manor in a foreign place.” Ali O.

During the first years of their settlement in Turkey, and after the painful experience of the Population Exchange, the Cretans faced several problems in their new homeland. The new

society and culture the Cretans found, certainly must have seemed strange to them. Although Tzunda had external and geographical similarities with Crete the most important of which were the large areas that were given for the cultivation of olive trees, was still remaining a strange and alien place for the Cretans (Koufopoulou, 212). On the other hand as Koufopoulou mentions, “given the recurrent visual reminders of their former residence and the similarity in landscape between their old and new communities, Cretans did not have to change their attitudes as dramatically as they would have done if they had been relocated to a completely different environment. This similarity allowed them to live and identify themselves much as they had done in the past” (Koufopoulou, 212).

When the Cretan immigrants first arrived on the Aegean coastal towns and cities, very few of them knew Turkish. Not being able to communicate with the locals naturally resulted in the isolation of the Cretans in their own communities. One cannot help but noticing that the common feeling among them, is that they were strangers in a foreign land, despite the economic status that each of them may had or even the not so unfamiliar place they had to live.

“When we first came here, my father took my mother and my siblings and brought them to Patrissa⁵, they were afraid of the “Turks”. They thought that they were going to go back to Crete and so 1 year passed, 2 years, 10 years...” Hasan K.

One must not forget the social background of the Cretan exchangees. Muslim Cretans were coming from an island that had a total population of 370.000 people, among whom the Muslim Cretans actively participated in the administration and they enjoyed a high status in urban areas. On the contrary the new reality was much different. As Keyder argues, “the Muslims who arrived in Turkey represented less than four percent of the population, were dispersed in a much bigger land, were mostly settled in the countryside, and generally did not have much impact on the political and social development of the country” (Keyder, 43).

Moreover, although the common religion had played a fundamental role in the formation of a common identity among the Cretan Muslims during their presence in Crete, one can argue that Cretan Islam was itself a distinct case, which in a larger scale, as in the case of Turkey, was no longer the “decisive element” that hold the community together.

“When I was in the army, a soldier called yarı gavur accusing me that he had to serve in the military for two and a half years because of ‘us’. We got into a fight but the ‘always’⁶ took my side. But that’s who we were, we were yarı gavur. My parents were Cretans. As for me, well I am both Cretan and Turk. I drink my wine and enjoy the music and the dance.”
Hasan K.

As mentioned above Cretan Muslims had adopted in their religious practices, elements of their pre-Lausanne life which distinguished them from the total Muslim population in their new homeland. Therefore, they had to face many times the experience of rejection and in many occasions they were stigmatized as ‘half infidels’ (*yarı gavur*) from the local Turks. Unlike the Christian refugees in Greece, any assertion of a distinctive identity would not have been welcome in the prevailing Kemalist ideology of nation-state building (Hirschon, 20).

“The rest of the Turks differentiated us, my grandmother had a distinct Cretan accent, she was using a lot tse and tse⁷, and therefore they treated us as like Greeks. We left our old neighborhood like thieves. Those who experienced the worst discrimination were those who had heavy Cretan accent, like my grandmother” Leyla S.

By contrast to the Greek state, Turkey had not the experience of being a nation-state, in fact the Turkish nation formed through the process of ‘ethnic unmixing’ (Keyder, 43). In addition, it was “unfortunate” for the Cretan Muslims that the Turkish nationalism, unlike most formulations for national identity, emphasized in cultural and linguistic criteria for membership of the ‘national community’ (Homogenizing the Nation, Aktar; 93). As Keyder

mentions, “the national body was supposed to express homogeneity deriving from ethnic unity, which would then be made concrete through speaking in a single voice” (Keyder, 47).

In the aftermath of the Population Exchange the nascent Turkish state was called to assure the unity of a nation within its borders. Nevertheless the young Turkish Republic was hardly homogenous. Even though the Muslim exchangees were directly and formally recognized as Turks, they were almost immediately granted the Turkish citizenship and without any doubt, still they were people who had different origins and were coming from several regions with various cultural and ethnic identities. As, Alpan characteristically argues, the Turkish state “was quite determined to sweep the Population Exchange underneath the rug, and this required silencing the refugees of the Population Exchange and orchestrating collective silence about this event” (Alpan, 209).

Indeed the new Republic yearned to create a homogeneous nation-state whose citizens were Muslims, were speaking Turkish and had a Turkish culture (Ince, 49). Within this framework emphasis was given on the Turkish language, and one of the most well known campaigns, “Citizen, Speak Turkish!” (Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş!) was launched a few years after the Population Exchange. As Ince mentions, there was even an attempt to pass a law in the Parliament making Turkish compulsory and not speaking it punishable by fine. Some municipalities in Bursa, Balıkesir (Tuzunda and Ayvalık are districts of Balıkesir province) and Bergama in 1927 took the initiative to impose fines to those who were not speaking Turkish in public areas (Ince, 60). Both Bergama and Balıkesir were places of resettlement for large groups of the exchangees who came from Greece, namely at Balıkesir were settled the 15% of the total Muslim exchangees (İğsız, 456). The “Citizen, Speak Turkish!” campaign was at first met with negative reactions and as İğsız mentions “some people would seat under the signs reading “Citizen, Speak Turkish!” and speak their own language or simply tear down

the signs” (İğsüz, 456). Around this period, according to the article 159 of the Turkish Criminal Code, insulting “Turkishness” constituted a crime (İğsüz, 456).

In that context, all the Greek place-names were Turkified, among these places Tzunda was renamed after the Turkish general who conquered the island in 1922 during the war between Greece and Turkey, Alibey, which remains the official name of the island (Koufopoulou, 210).

“Now we can live and speak freely, in the past we could not speak Greek. The people who came here in the beginning were not allowed to speak Greek because they thought we were Rum and the police (zantarmades) would beat us”, Hasan K.

On 21 June, 1934 the “Law on Surnames” passed in the Parliament with the aim to ‘abolish differences that do not really exist’ (Ince, 61). According to the articles 7 and 8 of the Law, all names that implied rank, tribe, foreign race or nationality and the names that were considered funny, rude or even disgusting, were forbidden. The new surnames should be also in Turkish according to article 5 (Ince, 61). Following these changes, the Cretans gave up their surnames with the characteristic suffix –akis and adopted new ones. Reactions, demands and other activities that were expressed by some refugee organizations were perceived as schismatic and annoyed the state. After all, refugee organizations did not have the similar fate as the refugee organizations in Greece (Hirschon, 19). In the case of Turkey refugee organizations were closed and banned already from the 1924 since it was a clear policy of the state to suppress and impose silence on the Population Exchange (Alpan, 209).

Remarkable is also the fact that during the first years of the Turkish Republic, there was hardly any discussion in the school text-books, of the ethnic composition of Anatolia and the Population Exchange. According to Alpan “the Turkish state’s approach still is rooted in purposeful neglect” (Keyder, 48; Alpan, 217). The same absence of reference on Population Exchange can also be noted in the Turkish literature until 1980. Since 1980 though, one can

notice a growing interest, where a number of publications on the Population Exchange have started to attract the public's attention (Millas, 2004: 224).

The Turkification policies were aimed mostly for the non-Muslims citizens of Turkey who supposedly had a status of protection according to the Lausanne Treaty, however were also imposed on the Muslim exchangees. As Ayhan Aktar argues, "there is no doubt that the policies of Turkification were responsible for the hemorrhaging of non-Muslims communities from Istanbul" (Homogenizing the nation, Aktar, 93). On the other hand regarding the Cretan exchangees, there was never an "option" of leaving the country. As for those who once dreamt that they could return to their homes, the Lausanne Treaty specified that they "shall not return to live in Greece" forcing them in a way, not only to realize that they were not going back to Crete but also to recognize that the adjustment in the new reality was crucial.

3.3 The Cretans of Turkey

The assimilation policies the Turkish state implemented following the Population Exchange, created an environment where anything other than the Turkish national identity and Turkish culture, was not welcomed. Within this framework, everything that constituted a reminder of the pre-Lausanne era had to be reconstructed.

The example of the language is quite telling. In order to avoid to be characterized as *yari gavur* or *gavur findanı* (infidel saplings) due to the fact that Cretans were speaking Greek, the usage of Cretan dialect was restricted at home. It seems though that the language is of key importance for the preservation of the Cretan identity. Although the Cretans avoided speaking any other language besides Turkish in public, one can argue that the Cretan dialect was and still is in a way the core of the identity of the Cretans. Indeed, almost all Cretan participants in this research stated that they had to learn Turkish at school as their second language and until the age of five or six, they all grew up hearing and speaking the Cretan dialect.

“I have learned the Cretan dialect from my grandmother and from her aunt. Until the age of five, I didn’t know any Turkish. At home we were speaking only in Greek, especially between us, when we didn’t want others to understand what we were saying” Leyla S.

“My aunt and all my relatives spoke only in Greek, I forgot, but I am going to attend a course with my two sons” Eyyüp B.

The same applied for religion as well. In their effort to be accepted from the other Turks, they became more religious. As discussed before, many of the Cretans Muslims who had been exchanged were Bektashi and Alevi Muslim, religious practices that they had to abandon and ‘convert’ to Sunni Islam, a conversion thought that it was going to ensure “greater acceptance and equality with other Turks” (Koufopoulou, 215). The majority of the Cretans however preserved the religious practices and customs of the pre-Lausanne life, that is the interaction of religious practices and customs from both Islam and Christianity. Koufopoulou mentions, that during the Muslim *Hidrellez* celebration of the Prophet Ilias, the Cretans in Tzunda, dye eggs red and make *tsoureki* like the Christians do during the Easter (Koufopoulou, 215). Although it was not one of the purposes of this study, during the interviews I determined that almost all the Cretans that took part in the study were secular with an individual religiosity.

One concept that seems that remained intact, not only from the Population Exchange but also from the assimilation policies of the Turkish state is the institution of the Cretan family.

“The Cretans love their family [είναι «σπιτιόριδες»], they are noble and they read a lot. My grandmother used to translate books. Even the Cretans who haven’t had formal education are different from the other Turks, they are more attached to their families, they have different culture, and the bond between them is very strong.” Leyla S.

Certainly, the institution of the Cretan family played and still plays a significant role in preserving the common identity. Furthermore as mentioned above, the role of Cretan women in the family, was anything but conventional. As Koufopoulou argues the Cretan women are still the “gatekeepers of the Cretan identity”.

“Cretan women are strong. I myself married a Cretan woman, because they are different from the others. You see, they had freedom already from their houses so you cannot impose anything that they don’t want to them” Emre P.

During their presence in Crete, the Cretan women were engaged to “regular contact with the Christian Orthodox and Europeans in general, especially in urban areas, which led to the increasing secularization and modernization of their traditional Muslim way of life” (Koufopoulou, 215). It can be argued therefore, that one of the main elements of the Cretan culture, the characteristic Cretan diet was preserved by the Cretan women⁸.

“We used to eat kalitsounia⁹ in our home, fennel, and wild greens. We didn’t eat lamb; we used to eat veal, Cretan pasty and dolmathes (dolma). My parents are long gone, but I continue to make these foods.” Leyla S.

One of the various anecdotes, heard by Cretans regarding their diet is: “do not let a Cretan and a cow in the same field, because the cow will starve”, joking in that way about their fondness for herbs and vegetables. Indeed, the Cretans became well known throughout Turkey for their “culinary expertise, variety and innovation” (Koufopoulou, 216). Similarly to the Asia Minor refugees in Greece, the Cretans contributed to the local cuisine of their host country. They are the ones that introduced to the Turkish cuisine, the broad beans, artichokes, escargot (hohlious), various edible wild greens and the use of olive oil in almost every dish (Koufopoulou, 216).

“We do have a different cuisine from the rest of the Turks. We love wild greens and escargot, artichokes and olive oil, although it is difficult to find these things in Istanbul” Eyyüp B.

As mentioned previously, Muslim Cretans had a tradition on music and folk poetry, namely the tradition of “mantinades”. A very well known mantinada among the Cretans is:

“Girl, if you go to Crete, give greetings to Crete; give also greetings to the mountain Psiloritis”

[Αν πας στην Κρήτη κοπελιά, χαιρέτα μου την Κρήτη, χαιρέτα μου και το βουνό που λένε Ψηλορείτη]

The tradition of mantinades is still surviving among the Cretan families, even in the second and the third generation of the Cretans and even among those Cretans who cannot speak Greek anymore. However, the music tradition did not survive in the same degree. Some of the participants in this study could sing several songs of Ksilouris¹⁰ and they all knew him and his songs but on the other hand one can observe a justified confusion about what is Cretan and what is Greek in general. The traditional song “Samiotisa” for instance was viewed from the third generation of Cretan exchangees as a Cretan song, while in fact is a traditional song of the Greek island Samos.

Admittedly, one can argue that the assimilation policies of the Turkish state were quite effective but at the end unsuccessful in disavowing the Cretan identity which did not fit into the picture of the homogeneous nation.

“All my relatives were from Chania. I was born and grow up in Istanbul but I feel Cretan, I grow up with the Cretan culture” Leyla S.

Despite the efforts of the Turkish state to assimilate the “newcomers” to the country, the Cretans managed to maintain their particularities and identity. In opposition to many scholars’ beliefs the Cretan exchangee identity is not a newly established identity; it is rather an identity that is being rediscovered from the later generations of Cretan exchangees. It should be noted however that the “Cretan exchangee identity” was never in conflict with the “Turkishness” of

the Cretans; on the contrary the evolution of the “identity of the exchangee” was completed simultaneously with their “Turkishness”.

3.4 The “re-discovery” of the Population Exchange and the Cretan community

From the 1980’s onwards one can notice a shift in the relations between Greece and Turkey, which had immediate consequences in both countries. As Kostopoulou argues “the end of the Cold War, the Greek entry to European Union, the rise of political Islam in Turkey” and the deconstruction of “Kemalism”, signaled the end of an era (Memories of Conflict, Kostopoulou, 40). In Turkey, the past began to be challenged publicly and policies and ruptures were increasingly probed (İğsız, 458). Although it seems that the Turkish state was not as ready as the Turkish public to be re-introduced with its recent history and to the subject of Population Exchange, one can argue that in the end of the twentieth century, there was a shift in the way that people engaged with their past and their families’ history.

A typical example which portrays this change is the publication of a novel by Kemal Yalçın in 1998, entitled: *The Entrusted Trousseau: Peoples of the Exchange* (“Emanet Cengiz”). The book concerns the story of a Turkish citizen who visits Greece and tries to find the Greek Orthodox family that entrusted to his father their daughter’s wedding trousseau, during their deportation from Asia Minor, believing that they would eventually come back. Although, it has been argued that the novel broke a 65 years Turkish silence surrounding the Population Exchange, one can help but wonder about the book of Ekmel Molla “What I saw in Greece in 1950”, a book of a Cretan Muslim exchangee who describes his journey back to Crete in 1950 and his experience of the Population Exchange. Unfortunately, Ekmel Molla’s book was never translated to Turkish despite the fact that it was printed in Istanbul. In 1998 “*The Entrusted Trousseau: Peoples of the Exchange*” was honored with the Ministry of Culture’s 1998 Novel Success Prize while a few years later, in 2002 other state officials filled

a complaint and prosecuted the book and the author, on the grounds that it offended and insulted the Turkish national pride and identity (Iğsız, 452).

Moreover in 1999 an earthquake in Turkey and another one a month later in Greece led to the diplomatic rapprochement of the two countries. Meanwhile some months later, a group of second generation exchangees from Greece, established the “Lozan Mübadilleri Vakfi” (The “Foundation of Lausanne Treaty Emigrants”). The Foundation began collecting oral history accounts from all kinds of exchangees and their descendants who live in Turkey, arranged return visits to Greece, and among others published, for the first time in Turkish, the popular poem Erotokritos, which still survives in the oral tradition of the Cretans.

The trips that the “Foundation of Lausanne Treaty Emigrants” organized, gave the opportunity to many of the exchangees and their descendants to visit the towns and the villages of their ancestors. Namely one of the participants of this study during one of these trips went to the town that her ancestors used to live before the Exchange: Chania. She was fascinated by the fact that her family’s descriptions about the house they were used to live, were taking form in front of her eyes. She was not of course the first, many others either joining the trips of the Foundation or individually, visited Crete and established friendly relations with the locals. Almost all of the participants of this study, at some point visited Crete. The younger generations cannot give a specific answer in the question why they decided to travel to Crete.

“I think it is because of my grandfather, I really don’t know why I went to Crete. My uncle drew me a map and I went to see our house, my grandfathers’ house.” Kivanç K.

While some of them cannot detect exactly the reasons behind their trip to Crete, others are quite conscious of their visit to Crete.

“It was my dream to visit the house of my grandparents. When I found it, I closed my eyes and imagined them living there. As I was leaving from Crete, I was really moved. I promised myself to visit Crete every year.” Neslihan B.

Regarding this aspect, worth mentioning is the movie of Çağan Irmak, “My grandfather’s people” (Dedemin insanları) which depicts the desire of a Cretan exchangee to visit the city of his origins; Rethymno.

Along with the contribution of the “Foundation of Lausanne Treaty Emigrants” one can notice a change in the way that people began to conceptualize their past and their families’ history. This change led to an appropriation of their history not only in a personal but also in a public way. Documentaries, literature, films began to give prominence to stories of people who experienced the Exchange and as Iğsız argues, stories that have been instrumental in bringing “plurality” and “polyphony” to the public domain (Iğsız, 459). The “rediscovery” of the memory of the exchangees through foundations and other initiatives as well as the contribution of the Turkish academia, generated a narrative of the past and helped consolidate the identity of the exchangees.

Currently, there seems to be more intense the need the descendants of the exchangees feel to keep the unity of their community and honor the past of their families. Especially the third generation of the exchangees started to become more involved in discovering the identity of their ancestors and they were ‘favored’ in their effort not only by technology but also from the positive political atmosphere between the Greece and Turkey. Within this framework the third and the fourth generations of the Cretan exchangees decided to create a separate foundation focused on the Cretan exchangees and immigrants, the Cretan’s Association of Culture, Friendship and Cooperation (Giritliler Kültür Dostluk ve Yardımlaşma Derneği). The only requirement for someone to join the Association is to be of a

Cretan origin. Having as a central focus the Cretan community, the Association arranges annual “Cretan festivals” and invites musicians from Crete.

A few months earlier, in April 2014, the Association published a 95 pages Turkish-Cretan language guide, in an effort to revive the Cretan dialect. In the prologue of the language guide is mentioned that “One of the most important factors for the survival of the Cretan culture is the preservation of the language...” (Türkçe-Giritçe Konuşma Kılavuzu, 4) The Turkish-Cretan language guide contains phrases that nowadays most probably are not used even in Crete, for instance the phrase “taşteru ti taşini” which means “tomorrow morning” is a phrase that only older generations of Cretans can recall, it is however part of the Cretan dialect. The Turkish-Cretan language guide also contains phrases that one can use if decides to visit Crete.

The Associations’ newspaper, “Kritikos” (Giritli) numbers now 8 issues and is being distributed in 13 cities of Turkey and two countries, Greece and Lebanon (In Lebanon there also exists a Muslim Cretan community). The newspaper is published consistently on a 4 month basis. In the newspaper, besides the activities of the Association, one can find traditional Cretan recipes, mantinades, personal stories and news regarding the Cretan community.

As Koufopoulou characteristically underlines, the Cretans, like many refugee groups, “recreated their past by retaining certain key elements of their culture” (Koufopoulou, 217). While other parts of their tradition have vanished or diminished in importance, for instance the music, the key elements of their cultural continuity, elements such as the language, the food, the institution of the family, the tradition of mantinades, the family stories, the establishment of associations and foundations, reveals the desire of the Cretan community not only to keep the memory of the community alive but also to pass it on to the next generations

as well. The Cretans of Turkey, through the concrete symbols of their community, managed to keep a unity despite the difficulties the community faced.

A walk in the streets of Tzunda, during the winter can be quite enlightening as one can make a distinction between the locals and the tourists. The elderly gather at traditional cafes in the evenings talking in the Cretan dialect, while the next day keeping their weekly routine, they go for shopping to the street market, the benches of which have only vegetables and wild greens. People who are not used to the Cretan culture may find this sight peculiar, to a Cretan though it is not, on the contrary, this scenery strongly reminds of the villages of Crete.

Conclusions

The formation of the Muslim Cretan community coincided with the conquest of Crete by the Ottomans in 1669. By the end of the 17th century the island's social structure experienced a drastic ethnic transformation and a significant proportion of the population converted to Islam. Conversion did not automatically create a fierce and brutal division between the Christians and the Muslims. In fact the Muslim and Christian communities were interconnected in various ways. Mixed marriages between the two communities were not uncommon nor were the active interference in religious matters. The Cretan Muslims often had blood ties with the Christians and shared with them not only the same language, but also the villages, the towns, professions, and other cultural elements such as music, dances, traditions and customs.

During the 19th century, the rise of nationalist movement trends, the Greek War of Independence as well as reforms and policies implemented by the Ottoman rule on the island, affected Crete and challenged the Muslim Cretan community. Progressively, in the nineteenth century the Cretan Muslim community decreased and its access to the machinery of power was reduced. A massive Muslim emigration from Crete which started at the end of the nineteenth century, continued during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and the First World War (1914-1918). In 1898 autonomy was granted to Cretans as a temporary experiment. One of the most important preconditions of this autonomy was the cooperation of both communities with the new regime. The experiment of autonomous co-existence between Muslims and Christians from 1901 until the exodus of the Muslim Cretans from Crete was colored by both rivalry and cooperation. Eventually, the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) marked the end of the Cretan autonomy and the integration of Crete into Greece. The status of the Muslim Cretans throughout the turbulent 19th century was strongly challenged and the Muslim community began to be perceived as a minority. Cretan Islam throughout the nineteenth century gradually

turned into a subculture. The “decisive element” of religion transformed "a group of people" into "a community", the Cretan Muslims.

Indeed religion played a fundamental role in the formation of a collective identity in Crete and defined the distinctive line between the Cretan Muslim community and the Cretan Christian community. On the other hand, the element of religion lost its importance upon the news of the Population Exchange and the arrival of the Muslim Cretans in Turkey.

For the Muslim Cretan community the “identity of the exchangee” was emphasized from the beginning. The Cretans began to identify themselves as “mübadil” (exchangees) in order to distinguish themselves from various other ethnic groups in Turkey, not only regarding their ethnic identity but also their social status. But above all, their prior identification is the ‘Cretan’ one.

The stories brought by thousands of Muslims that had fled -or who were eventually deported- to Anatolia from the “lost” Ottoman lands into the newly founded state of Turkey, that were not in line with the dominant historiography of victory. The Cretan and other exchanged communities of Turkey had managed to maintain aspects of their particularity together with a collective memory of their origins until today. Despite the efforts of the Turkish state to assimilate the “newcomers” to the country, the Cretans managed to maintain their particularity and to preserve their identity.

This study attempted to analyze the characteristics of the community of the Muslim Cretans from its formation until today. This study was based on the following aim: to take a closer look at the community of the Muslim Cretans and to examine how the community has evolved since its formation until today. More specifically ‘how do the members of the Cretan community in Turkey and especially the second and the third generation of the refugees describe themselves as “Cretans”, even though most of them have never been to Crete?’.

In this study is argued that the Cretan origin is the most significant facet of the identity of the Muslim Cretans. It matters little, to most of the Cretan community in Turkey that they never visited Crete. Crete constitutes their '*imagined homeland*'. The Cretan community shares a special relationship not only with its past but also has an emotional attachment with Crete; elements that helps the community maintain an identity that unites the members. The collective memory and identity of the Muslim Cretans remains vivid from the formation of the community on the island of Crete until today.

The Cretan identity is not an invention of the modern times nor is the Cretan community a group of people without a past; it is rather an identity that has continuity through time and the community's past is crucial in understanding the formation of the Cretan identity. By constantly perpetuating the key elements of their cultural continuity and through concrete symbols of their community, such as their language, their story telling, their mantinades and their food, the Cretans managed to keep a unity despite the difficulties their community experienced in the past.

¹ The sign in “Firka Fortress” in Chania (Fırka= barracks)

² κουμπαριά= to baptize someone’s child or to wed a couple is called koumparia

³ Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, available from: <<http://goo.gl/KTWYLB>>

⁴ In Greek Κερασούντα and in Turkish Giresun

⁵ Patriça (in Turkish) is a village in Tzunda

⁶ Albay (in Turkish)=the colonel

⁷ The Cretan accent is characterized by the sound ts instead of k.

⁸ Indeed the street market in Tzunda is impressing. In almost every bench, one can find herbs that are not easily found in Istanbul and people who talk to the clients or between them in the Cretan dialect

⁹ Kalitsounia is pastry that were made during the celebration of Christian Easter on Crete

¹⁰ Nikos Ksilouris was a Cretan singer and composer

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APPENDIX



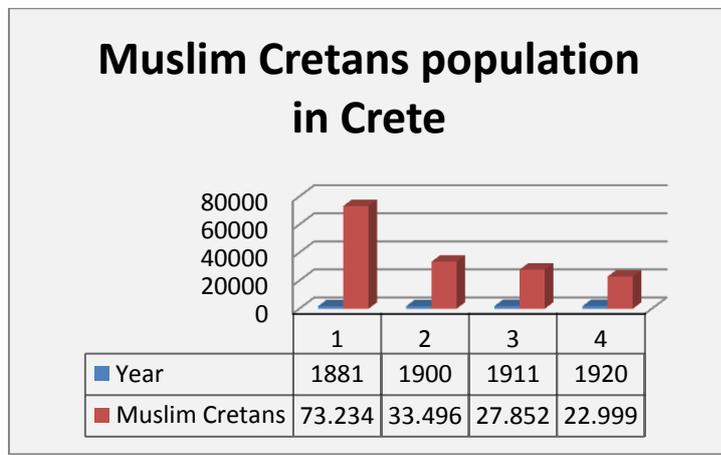
Picture 1 Dervishes in Chania



Picture 2 Cretan Muslims smoking nargile



Picture 3 The flag of the Aytomous Crete



Picture 4 The Muslim Cretans population in Crete



AJL BEY (CUNDA) ADASI
Göçler ve Mübadele Paneli
Ayvalık Cunda Adası

Muharrem ayında toplu asure dağıtılması geleneği 90 yıl sonra bu yıl Giritliler arasında tekrar canlandırıldı. Mersin'in, Bağcılar İhsaniye (Melemez) Köyü'nde gerçekleştirilen etkinliğe Adana, Mersin, Tarsus, Silifke'den gelen Giritlilerin yoğun ilgisi vardı. **Sayfa 4'de**



MELEMEZ'DE AŞURE VE PİLAV GÜNÜ

Muharrem ayında toplu asure dağıtılması geleneği 90 yıl sonra bu yıl Giritliler arasında tekrar canlandırıldı. Mersin'in, Bağcılar İhsaniye (Melemez) Köyü'nde gerçekleştirilen etkinliğe Adana, Mersin, Tarsus, Silifke'den gelen Giritlilerin yoğun ilgisi vardı. **Sayfa 4'de**



ANTALYA'DA GIRİT EVİ YAPILIYOR

Girit kültürünün Anadolu'ya yerleşmesinin en büyük göstergesi olan Girit evinin gelecek kuşaklar tarafından bilinmesi amacı ile Antalya Giritler Derneği'nin Girit Evi projesi çerçevesinde Muratpaşa Belediyesi tarafından Şarampol içinde bulunan yeşil alan üzerine Girit Evi'nin temelleri atıldı. **Sayfa 5'de**

8. Sayı - ARALIK 2013

GIRITLİLER

Kültür Dostluk ve Yardımlaşma Derneği

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ GIRİT 4. GIRİTLİLER ŞENLİĞİ



İçel İli Girit Türkleri Kültür ve Dostluk Derneği, Lozan Mübadilleri Vakfı, Tarsus Girit Türkleri Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği ile Lübnan'daki Giritlilerin kurmuş olduğu Ulinnoha Derneği'ne, Girit'teki Giritlileri temsil eden Giritlilerin lideri Dr. Kostis Pitarokilis'e, bizlere olan desteğini hiç bir zaman esirgemeyen Tanas Cimbi's'e ve Davutlar Ekspres Gazetesi'ne teşekkür plaketi takdim edildi. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığının desteklediği 4. Giritliler Şenliği sponsorları; Çengel Ticaret (Davutlar), Er Petrol (Söke), Davutlar Ekspres Gazetesi (Davutlar), Güler Pastanesi (Ayvalık) Güneş Ticaret (Söke-Kuşadası), İkiiler Dizeal (Selçuk), İliği Tarım (Söke), Karadeniz Kerestecilik (Söke), Kirtaklar Mandıra (Selçuk), Liman Balık (Davutlar), Peker Optik (Kuşadası), Rade Mutfak - Kapı - Banyo (Söke), Paşa Corba Salonu (Ayvalık) Selçuk Kuyumculuk (Selçuk), Sanex Organic Products (İzmir), Zeynel Tarım (Davutlar) pankart ile katılımcıların bilgilerine sunuldu.



Devamı Sayfa 5'de

Kritikos

Giritliler Gazetesi 8. Sayısına ulaştı. Bu bizler için çok büyük bir mutluluk. Gazetemizi yayınlamak düzenli bir finansman kaynağı olmayan derneğimiz için ne kadar zor olsa da Giritli hemşehrilerimiz sayesinde bu zorluğu aşmasını biliyoruz.

Gazetemiz Türkiye'nin dört bir yanına dağıtılıyor. Tabii bu bildiğimiz gazete dağıtım şirketleri ile değil yine Giritli dernekleri ve derneklerin olmadığı yerlerde Giritli hemşehrilerimiz sayesinde oluyor. Bu sayede Giritliler Gazetesi Hatay'dan Samsun'a kadar Giritlilerin olduğu her yere ulaşıyor. Tabii Lübnan ve Girit'te unutmamak gerekiyor.

12 sayfa renkli basılan Gazetemiz artık düzenli reklam almak için siz Giritli hemşehrilerimizin desteklerini bekliyor. Gazetemizin 6. sayfasında iletişim bilgileri, son sayfasında derneğimizin banka hesap numarası bulunmaktadır.

Mayıs ayında 4. Giritliler Şenliğini gerçekleştirdik. Türkiye'nin her yerinden, Lübnan ve Girit'ten de Giritli hemşehrilerimizin katılımı ile 5000 üzerinde Giritli muhteşem bir gün geçirdi. Emeliği geçen herkese teşekkürlerimizi sunuyoruz. İnşallah 18 Mayıs 2014'de 5. Giritliler Festivali hepimizin katkıları ile daha da güzel olacak.

İstanbul, İzmir ve Mersin'de demek temsilcilerimiz bizleri bu şehirlerimizde temsil edecekler ve zaman içinde çeşitli etkinlikler düzenleyecekler. Dernek temsilcilerimizin bilgileri 8. sayfamızda bulunmaktadır.

Girit kültürünün gelişmesi için projelerimiz var. Proje hazırlama konusunda tecrübeli Giritlilerin yardımlarını bekliyoruz. İletişim bilgilerimiz 6. sayfamızda.

Görüş, talep ve eleştirileriniz bizler için çok önemli lütfen gazete@giritlilerdernegi.com adresine yazınız.

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Ulinnoha Derneği



Ulinnoha Derneği ve Lübnan Muhacir Giritliler Komitesi Başkanı Ali Bekraki yazıları ile bizlerle.

Sayfa 9'da

Söke'deki Giritliler



Emekli öğretmen Mustafa Genç, Girit tarihi hakkındaki yazıları ile bizlerle.

Sayfa 7'de

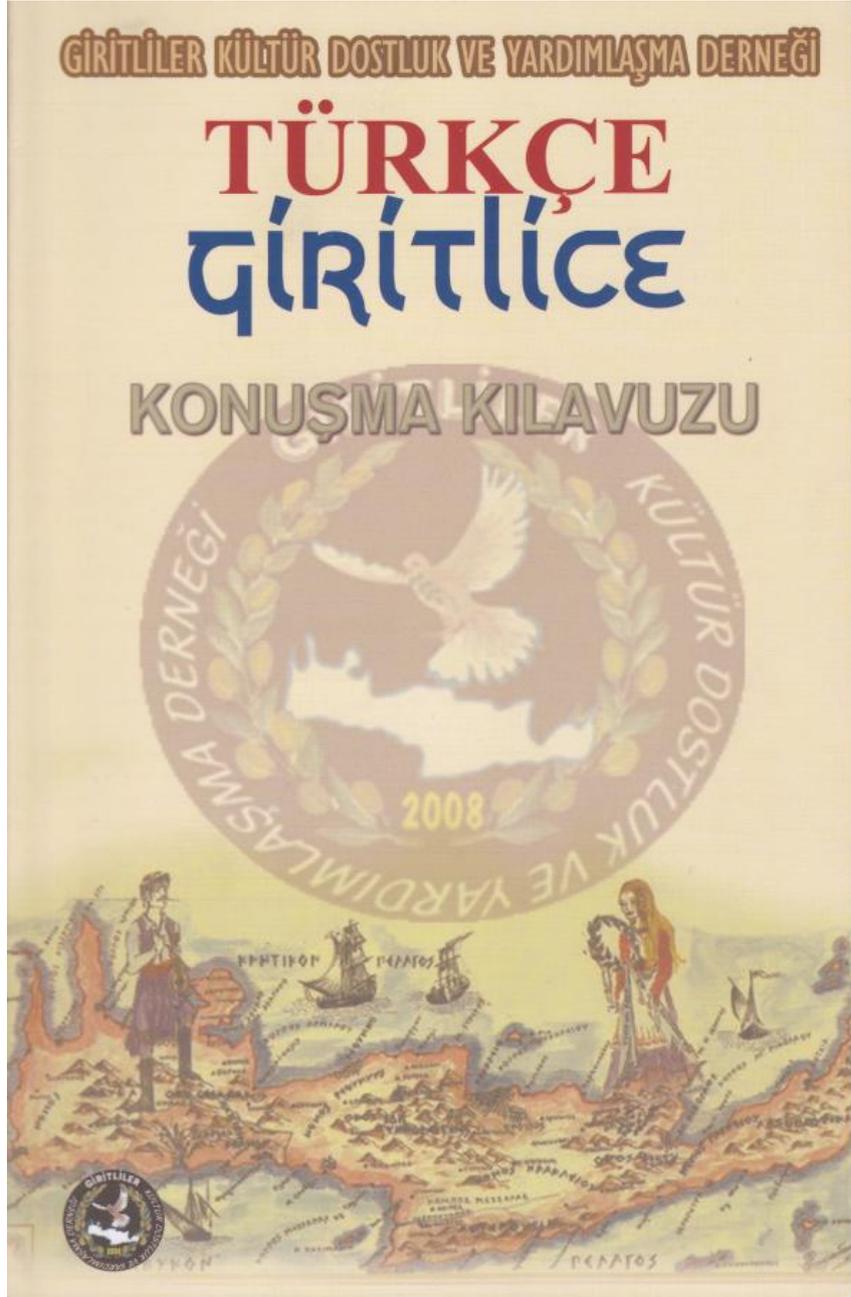
Madinades



Giritlice ve Türkçe manî denilince ilk aklı gelen isim Mavro Hüseyin manîleri ile bizlerle.

Sayfa 10'da

Picture 5 Newspaper from the Foundation of the Cretans "Giritliler Kültür Dostluk ve Yardımlaşma Derneği"



Picture 6 Turkish-Cretan language guide