Conversation in the Library

VOLUME II

Conversation in the Library

Συζητωντας στη Βιβλιοθηκη

Kütüphanede Muhabbet



VOLUME II

HAFIZ AHMED AĞA & AHMED FETHI PAŞA FOUNDATION
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Dedication

Dr. Alexis Alexandris

was born in Istanbul in 1950. He graduated from Phanar Greek High School, the famous Red School. He pursued higher education in the United Kingdom, earning his PhD from King's College. His doctoral dissertation, *The Greek Orthodox Minority of Istanbul and Greek-Turkish Relations 1918–1974,* published by the Centre for Asia Minor Studies in 1992, remains his magnum opus.

Throughout his distinguished diplomatic career, Dr. Alexandris served in various Greek missions abroad, including a posting at McGill University in Montreal and as Consul General of Greece in Istanbul from 2003 to 2008. Alongside his diplomatic service, he published extensively on Greek-Turkish relations, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, minority issues, and the *Rum Milleti*—the Greek Orthodox nation within the Ottoman Empire.

A perfect bi-cultural, Dr. Alexandris possessed a rare and profound understanding of minority communities in both Greece and Turkey—their traumas and their estrangement. His unwavering dedication to the survival of Istanbul Greekness found a meaningful expression in his support for the revival of the Hafız Ahmed Agha Foundation in Rhodes.

VOLUME II
is a tribute to Rhodes and
is dedicated to the memory of

Dr. Alexis Alexandris

and to

the eighteenth century Rhodian boy Ahmed, who became

Hafız Ahmed Agha

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Prologue

More than Stone:

Rhodes Pious Foundations between Metaphors of Empire, Slavery, and Liberation



Elektra Kostopoulou is a Greek-American historian, whose research and publications address regional histories from the perspective of global queries, viewing them not merely as eccentric old curiosities, but as universal long-term interrogations. Dr Kostopoulou earned a PhD in History with a specialization in late/post Ottoman dynamics from Bosphorus University (Istanbul/Turkey) in 2010, becoming one of the first Greek citizens to complete a relevant doctoral degree at a Turkish state university, additionally earning the university's annual doctoral dissertation prize. Having completed her previous undergraduate/graduate studies mostly in Greece and France, she was hitherto immersed in, as well as questioned, the Western-European scholarly traditions of Greek-Roman archaeology and history. Thus, her doctoral work and subsequent book project *Of Minarets and Minotaurs: The Story of Autonomous Crete (1898-1913)*, has addressed regional autonomy as an example of the convoluted layers of western colonialism, dynastic mediterranean empires, and nationalism in critical discussion with the diverse trajectories of modern globalization. Following her postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University in 2011, she has moved to the US and received various grants, awards, and recognitions. She has joined the Federated Department of History at NJIT/Rutgers Newark in 2016 and has since expanded her teaching and research to engage with the urgency for humanistic relevance in the age of STEM. Although her unusual academic path follows global trajectories, it is rooted in deeply-regional particularities, which have evolved to become an initially subconscious, yet always genuine, confrontation with the dangerous tropes of epistemological hegemony within the self-destructive limitations of structural authoritarianism.

"The invitation to participate in this volume came—as so many of our contemporary interactions often do—in the form of an email from an unknown sender, we often feel inclined to overlook. My initially reluctant acceptance, however, morphed into fascination when the editor, Tarık Tüten, generously shared with me the publication details as well as his own family story. What I had thought a rather generic local project has revealed itself to be a flux of contributions, each and every one of which offer ground-breaking insights. When viewed together, the collection's pieces shape a uniquely important scholarly mosaic that situates the manifold versions of the Archipelago centrally in the powerful historiographical symbolisms of the Mediterranean. Most vital is, of course, the story of Rhodes and of the editor's ancestors themselves. They captivated and—in some ways—liberated me from present, overwhelming global anxieties. As a loyal believer in Archipelago… superstitions, therefore, I would argue that perhaps our collective unspoken needs have summoned these Conversations into existence, during a moment of profound uncertainty. As R.F Kuang's masterfully expressed metaphors of contemporality suggest in Babel (2022), the right etymology produces near magic. In classical Latin, "conversatio" does not refer simply to the exchange of ideas. It is a deeply communal and ethical test as to how one behaves when moving around or forward with others. When all of us accepted the editor's challenge, the endeavor has transformed from a manifestation of simple scholarly expertise to a genuine proposition of ethics. Unlike Latin languages' interrogative style, the equivalent Arabic term provides with rare clarity an answer as to what constitutes the only type of ethical conversation: "mahabbet (vulg. muhabbet)": 1. To have affection/respect for another. 2. To chat together in an affectionate/respectful way 3. -otu, the mandrake, a plant carried about to secure love. Endemic only to the Mediterranean, the mandrake/muhabbet otu (also known as the "love flower") is a piece of our lands carried around the world to secure love. Similarly, the Conversations extended an invitation back to the Mediterranean, unearthing affectionate belongings long buried by time. The spell was done. The answer was found. For my participation in producing this speck of 'magic,' I'm deeply grateful as well as honored."

Elektra Kostopoulou

More than Stone: Rhodes Pious Foundations

between Metaphors of Empire, Slavery, and Liberation

An introduction

Once upon a time in Ottoman Istanbul lived Huseyin Efendi, a retired treasurer who spent his days alone, mourning the empire's decline. One day, a dervish friend of his brought an erudite boy called Tayyarzade to keep Huseyin Efendi company and to spiritually guide him. The boy's education and elegance impressed Huseyin Efendi, who started treating him like a son. But one day, upset with some false accusations against him, Tayyarzade left Huseyin Efendi's household. Devastated, his master tried to entertain his sorrows elsewhere and fell prey to the criminal syndicate of Gevherli Hanim: a bitter, childless, aging spinster, who used courtesans to seduce and abduct affluent men, extorting their families. Eventually, Tayyarzade uncovers the scam, finds his way to Gevherli's labyrinthic dungeon—her old harem quarters—and tries to liberate his beloved master. In the process, he meets a beautiful innocent girl, who mysteriously appears out of nowhere ready to sacrifice her life for him. She tries to help him against the ruthless matriarch but inexplicably disappears from the plot when Tayyarzade exits the dungeon alone. Eventually, he ends up wandering in a garden where he crosses paths with Sultan Murad and his bard. When Tayyarzade informs them of Gevherli's crimes, the sultan decisively liberates the male prisoners and executes the female tyrant.[1]

So goes the 17th century tale of Tayyarzade that introduces this essay and collected volume. At a first glance, the metaphor may read like an unorthodox choice for an introduction that focuses on the pious foundations of Rhodes. Considering, however, that the story of Ottoman Rhodes starts with conquest and ends with narratives of military decline, the selected metaphor speaks to gendered understandings of hegemony that this volume aims to defy. In essence, the goal is to problematize right from the outset the continuous association of regional history with simplistic dualisms of center versus periphery. More specifically, the introduction offers a critique against the gendered construction of geography through the juxtaposition of male virtue—which equals centralization/conquest/revolution—with female obedience or corruption, which equals either the peripheries' subordination to the center or anarchy.[2]

Because so much of history has been decided by war, the association of aggression with success of any kind continues to inform understandings of the past that linger over the present, always in support of existent power structures. Conversely, because even war is commemorated through storytelling, the interpretive labor entailed in it can produce alternative perspectives. Ultimately, if long-term power stems from the ability not to conquer but to successfully adopt, the perpetual continuation of any kind of hegemony is an oxymoron. Past a certain threshold, in other words, relations that depend exclusively on violence transform privilege to an imagination deficit that inflicts hegemony with the anxiety of violent self-destruction. It is in these moments that the seemingly powerless can escape their metaphorical confinement in the dungeons of anonymity or passive subordination.[3]

From a spatial perspective, if centralization is the process that defines and consumes hegemony, it reaches a breaking point when the center's self-indulgence starts overwhelming the peripheries that sustain its functions, leading to disorder that becomes revolution when the old system is replaced by a new one. From this perspective, while hegemony resembles the instant glow of a shooting star, long-term history is mostly a metaphor of distant stars that do not spark because they do not fall. They persist, as a hidden spectacle of alternative clues, awaiting to be discovered in the continuity of geography, the materiality of built environments, the intimacy of lived experiences, the salvation of storytelling. One example of such clues can be found in the pious foundations of the eastern Mediterranean island of Rhodes.

Our collected volume, in other words, presents the pious foundations under scrutiny not as sites of anxiety but as geographies of mobile permanence, where movement meets belonging and subjugation fades into resilience. With that in mind, this introduction briefly situates Rhodes's pious foundations in their continually evolving historical context, following the thread of storytelling within geographies of endurance.

To clarify, let us return to the story of Tayyarzade, once created by the Sufi court bard Tifli to appease the tormented heart of his patron Sultan Murad IV (r. 1623-1640). On some level, Tayyarzade's story rhymes so closely with the sultan's life that reads like an almost Freudian ritual designed exclusively for him. Simultaneously, the allegory's implied association of female royal power with decline speaks to the broader intellectual canons that shaped 17th century perspectives, together with a big part of contemporary academic literature.[4] For context, Sultan Murad's mother was no other but the iconic Anastasia/Kosem Sultan, a former slave girl of Greek-Orthodox origins, who became one of the most influential women in Ottoman history. Acting as the guardian of her underage sons after their father's death, Kosem Sultan was the empire's *de facto* ruler and the first imperial wife to establish motherhood as a platform for dynastic leadership.[5] Among other things, her new role manifested in increased female patronage over the empire's pious foundations: the impressive network of religious centers, soup kitchens, libraries, colleges, clinics, commercial and residential quarters, water sources, and other public spaces that served the welfare of the empire's subjects and connected Istanbul to the vast and quite diverse Ottoman provinces.

Viewed in this light, Tayyarzade's dark references to sex dungeons, promiscuous concubines, and aging matriarchs, had less to do with actual imperial administration and more with the traumatic childhood of Sultan Murad himself. The six-year-old prince had to stay confined for five years in the palace's female quarters after his father's death, in the special cage (*kafes*) designed to guarantee male succession. Although he eventually ascended to the throne thanks to his mother's conspiracies and under her firm control, it is plausible he had never truly escaped mentally his childhood's cage. Throughout his reign, therefore, Murad appeared torn between loyalty and resentment towards his mother, as well as unable to trust any of his consorts, his favorite among whom (Rosana) he ended up stabbing to death, allegedly due to his mother's manipulation. Either way, although Tayyarzade's fictional trials reach their triumphant closure when the men take down the old female criminal, in real life Kosem managed to navigate with ease her son's fable rebellions, while also ruling quite successfully over the empire's robust domains. The concubines who dared to challenge her, by contrast, disappeared into oblivion in the same fashion Tayyarzade's only redeemable female character, the brave young girl that challenges the evil matron, appears and disappears mysteriously somewhere in the labyrinthic harem, almost as just a figment of the male hero's imagination.

Aside from the above facetious reversal of Tayyarzade's gendered symbolisms, this essay starts with said tale to situate the island of Rhodes within the Ottoman context, at a time when imperial sovereignty manifested mostly not through conquest but through the expansion of pious foundations. Kosem's emblematic legacy came to symbolize the transition from the period of military expansion to an early phase of modern state building, which was marked by the increased patronage exercised by privileged women over the empire's vast endowments. From the perspective of imperial princes, by contrast, the same transition translated into coming of age not on the battlefield, but in the palace's female quarters (*harem*), frequently in literal cage-like confinement, under the necessary protection and control of their lovers, wives, and (mostly) of their mothers.[6] As a result, the above evolution of dynastic culture produced internal friction in the continuous Ottoman tradition of exclusively male emperors, who now came to the throne severely traumatized by the character of their succession. Unsurprisingly, the often-misplaced violence and erratic administration of said male rulers was often blamed on the harem.[7]

As a result, both popular and academic views of Ottoman decline have been traditionally based on the selective experiences of the Ottoman dynasty's male members. For instance, the stories prepared by court administrators and bards to appease the childhood daemons of Sultan Murad were indicative, perhaps, of his traumatic relationship with his mother but were not true to her imperial legacy. Indeed, Kosem seized the throne in the name of her son with cruel authority rather than care, but her overall influence could be better described by reference to the impressive projects she initiated in order to strengthen the empire's welfare state—which had rather nothing to do with sex trafficking dungeons. That said, the infamous brutality, wars, and celebrated poetic riddles that characterized the reign of her son, revealed not only his own trauma but also the general anxiety of the Ottoman male dynasty, during a time when the warrior ethics of their former frontier culture were gradually replaced by an enormous empire administered centrally through the court and, mostly, by the harem.

In the previous century, by contrast, and more specifically at the time of Rhodes's Ottoman conquest (1522), the empire was still at the peak of its military might. It is safe to argue, therefore, that unlike his later successors, the island's conqueror Sultan Suleiman I (r. 1520-1566) appeared equally confident in his military victories and in his reproductive abilities. As much was suggested by his decision to partially abandon the tradition of imperial polygamy, previously adopted by the dynasty to guarantee the production of male heirs, in order to marry the ex-Christian slave Roxelana. Under the name of Hurrem Sultan, she became his beloved, his distinguished imperial wife, and the first Ottoman (*Haseki*) Sultan, hence developing an almost mythical, and equally controversial, reputation that for centuries now has continued to inspire popular gossip, academic research, and fiction. The indisputable talents of Hurrem notwithstanding, traditional historiography has long attributed the beginning of the dynasty's downfall to one woman's bewitching powers due mostly to the insights of dominant male scholars. As suggested by all other evidence, however, it is unlikely that the same sultan who called himself the "Magnificent" and the "Lawgiver," had surrendered himself to tradition, lust, or even true love.[8]

Sultan Suleiman's conquests may have stretched the empire's borders farther than ever before, but the territories seized by his forces belonged with a steadily aging world. Arguably, therefore, Suleiman's biggest success was neither satisfying the ambition of his concubines, nor continuing the empire's territorial expansion—both of which he seemed to be managing rather fine. Instead, his reign was called the Ottoman "golden era" because he consolidated imperial order over diverse regions within an unstable global context. Against the overt emphasis placed on his military campaigns (or on his wife), it could be argued that Suleiman's real legacy was one of careful urban planning, diplomacy, and administrative reform. In addition, he adapted western dynastic canons to make his power visible across Europe and—be it true love or not—that was the most likely reason he chose an impressively capable former Christian slave to become his empress, his representative when addressing Christian ambassadors, and his singular imperial wife.

In the same vein, the island of Rhodes was integrated with the Ottoman cosmos at a time when the reign prioritized administrative efficiency over the demographic repopulation of new lands. Hence, the local Christians remained relatively protected from resettlement or forced conversion after the conquest, provided they were willing to pay the heavier taxes imposed on the empire's non-Muslim subjects. But the Muslim dynasty decisively took over the local spaces previously occupied by the Knights of St John, replacing the latter's sovereignty and castles with the symbolism and functions of Muslim imperial foundations. The sultan himself had entered Rhodes ceremonially on horseback, right after the siege, to sanction the conversion of the former Saint John Church into the mosque named after him, where he performed the first Friday prayer. Soon after, he had his own foundation built in stages to provide the socioeconomic and cultural services commonly

associated with imperial Ottoman endowments: feeding the poor, protecting education, building infrastructure. Thus, though it was Suleiman's navy that had conquered the island, it was the empire's pious foundations that actually turned Rhodes into an Ottoman province by changing the local landscape, as well as by establishing durable links between the province and the administrative capital.[9] Hurrem Sultan, by contrast, did not play much of a role in that process. Ultimately, royal women would have had to wait for another century before expanding their influence over provincial endowments, in competition with the growing numbers of male imperial officeholders.

From the ranks of these imperial chamberlains came, eventually, the Rhodes-native Hafiz Ahmed Agha, who traced his lineage all the way back to Sultan Suleiman's expedition and who, upon retiring from a successful career in the service of the dynasty, decided to have his own pious foundation established on his native island. It is unknown if Hafiz Ahmed Agha took this initiative with the intention to move his family back to Rhodes. Either way, any such plans were interrupted when he was abducted, imprisoned, and killed amid the turmoil and client clashes that took over Ottoman lands right after the French and American Revolutions (1789/1776). In this sense, his story tragically resembled that of Tayyarzade's fictional treasurer Huseyin Agha, given that the two men embodied two different stages in the evolution of early-modern Ottoman bureaucracy. From the massive geostrategic shifts triggered in the 17th century by global explorations, all the way to the seismic changes caused in the 18th century by early industrialization, the Ottoman regime maintained its hold of imperial domains through the fragile equilibrium of administrative flexibility. Ironically, the happy ending to Huseyin Agha's fictional drama agreed with a regime that was still capable of adopting to its tumultuous environment. But the chaotic circumstances of Hafiz Ahmed's death overlapped with developments that marked the beginning of the old order's end.

That said, both Hafiz Ahmed Agha's legacy and the Ottoman realm did endure for more than another century. Hafiz Ahmed was survived by his young pregnant widow Saliha Hanim who, soon after her husband's death, gave birth to their son Ahmed Fethi.[10] The latter grew up to follow in his late father's footsteps. He pursued a standard education in Ottoman statecraft and, ultimately, gained success by becoming a prominent statesman. Essentially, therefore, due to his own choices as well as broader developments, his career and life trajectory moved forward like a figurative journey back to his father's native island. To clarify, while Ahmed Fethi was completing his studies, the aftershocks of European and American revolutions were already reaching multiple Ottoman provinces, including but not limited to Rhodes. Hence, by the time Ahmed Fethi was old enough to serve in the army, the raging battles of the Greek Revolution (1821) were spreading over imperial domains like fire. The Greeks continued their struggle for independence over more than a decade, time and again confronted with brutal retaliations. Until, eventually, popular outrage in Christian Europe would force the reluctant Christian Great Powers to coordinate a decisive military intervention against the Muslim dynasty and in favor of the rebels. Thus, came to life independent Greece (1833), the first nation-state to secede from the Ottoman realm under the auspices of western Europe.[11] In that context, it was a rather lucky coincidence that Ahmed Fethi fought mostly on the Russian-Ottoman front during those years and hence did not participate directly in any of the Greek massacres. Because both his origins, as well as his later choices, suggested that his Ottoman identity developed in close proximity to that of modern Greece. To elaborate, it suffices to consider how one early instance of the broader carnage ended up altering his life and the life of his mother, who must have been of a Greek origin as well given that she had raised her son to be fluent in Greek.

Following the unsuccessful Greek uprising that took place on the island of Chios in 1822, the Ottoman forces tried to make an example out of Chios by slaughtering, displacing, or enslaving the local Christian population almost in its entirety. The massacres made headlines in western Europe and were awful enough to inspire significant works of art, such as one of Eugene Delacroix's most famous paintings.[12] Hence, it is plausible that similar feelings inspired Saliha to take under her protection Shemsinur Hanim, an enslaved Christian girl brought to Istanbul in chains after the massacres. At the time, Ahmed Fethi was still serving on the battlefield and did not meet Shemsinur until years later, upon returning to his mother's house severely injured. Shemsinur was the one who took care of him then, nurtured him back to health and, eventually, accepted to marry him— perhaps out of love, gratitude, or simple despair. Ahmed Fethi had more agency on the matter, of course. Thus, it is interesting to consider how his marriage affected his future choices and conduct, bearing in mind that a few years later he was appointed to serve as Ottoman ambassador in Western Europe. Under this prestigious title, Ahmed Fethi had to represent the regime responsible for the Chios massacres, while interacting with powerful audiences still mourning his own wife's slaughtered brethren as symbols of Christian martyrdom and ravaged ancient glory.[13]

It is of note, furthermore, that Ahmed Fethi Pasha was chosen for the above positions by the same Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839) whose forces had previously ravaged his wife's homeland. This seeming contradiction spoke to Ahmed Fethi's own complex potential and desires, as well as to the long trajectories of violence that had long shaped the policies of the Ottoman throne.[14] Simply put, Sultan Mahmud's youth too was marked by the standard cage confinement and assassinations that had come to characterize Ottoman dynastic succession. Unlike his murdered siblings, Mahmud was lucky enough to eventually escape the cage alive, not because of his own heroism but thanks to the bravery and smarts of a Christian slave girl. Specifically, it was the Georgian concubine Cevri Kalfa that had distracted his aspiring assassins as the terrified future sultan fled over the harem rooftops with his life, but not necessarily with his dignity intact. Arguably, that Mahmud rewarded the savior of his life and of his reign by naming a staircase after her, was not the most generous manifestation of gratitude and suggested the sultan did not want to highlight the details of his escape. Later on, he also named a foundation after her, in addition to granting her an important internal promotion, provided she administered the harem quarters that did not have much to do with him. Considering Mahmud's temperament, however, maybe Cevri Kalfa was lucky the sultan dealt with the possible humiliation her bravery had caused him by avoiding her. Not to forget that, at the time, it was more common for concubines that exercised influence over male rulers to end up stabbed to death like Roxane, rather than becoming a legend like Roxelane.[15]

More to the point, Sultan Mahmud chose to escape his childhood traumas neither by fantasizing about the execution of his mother, nor by murdering his concubines. Instead, he fashioned himself to be a Napoleonic reformer, determined to cut rather than untie the gordian knots of imperial client networks and of their provincial pious foundations, on which he blamed anarchy, widespread tax evasion, and military dysfunction. True, Mahmud's violent reforms set in motion a dual confrontation with old Muslim privilege and non-Muslim rebellion from which the empire never recovered. It is questionable, furthermore, whether or not brutality was the most efficient strategy against nationalism, especially at a time when the growing influence of the print culture turned good old-fashioned slaughters to horrid foreign press.[16] That said, Mahmud did break precedent with his predecessors, who had often empowered imperial women to serve as benefactors or ambassadors. Instead, Mahmud labored to replace both his court's old male guard and the harem with young statesmen like Ahmed Fethi, whom he groomed to become the architects of future reforms, as well as his throne's charming representatives in Western courts.[17]

Ahmed Fethi, who spoke with native fluency both French and Greek, was the perfect candidate for this mission. He was thus favored by the sultan especially as Mahmud got older and became increasingly concerned with improving his reputation by forming a court of younger, erudite statesmen. In other words, men like Ahmed Fethi were expected to act as Sultan Mahmud's own version of Tayyarzades: the loyal servants that could exonerate if not the sultan himself at least his

posthumous legacy, convincing foreign observers that the regime's violent choices had been not an ideological choice but a sacrifice made in the service of enlightenment and modernization. Either way, Ahmed Fethi was fortunate to be so very well-liked by the same ruler who otherwise thought mass murder formed the best way to address internal opposition, and that land grabbing was the path to solid fiscal reform. As a consequence, at a time when many provincial foundations were destroyed under Mahmud's orders, Ahmed Fethi not only maintained but also expanded his family endowments in both Istanbul and Rhodes.

As a matter of fact, Ahmed Fethi visited his ancestral island for the very first time either in 1838, right before his departure for Western Europe, or in 1850 when he accompanied Mahmud's successor as his brother-in-law. Either way, he became the administrator of his family foundations' (*mütevelli*) in 1839.[18] Soon after, he decided to commission the building of a prominent clock tower and of a Muslim boys' school—which was later converted to junior high under the administration of the reformed Central Ministry of Education. That the above conspicuous symbols of urban modernization reached Rhodes before the official advent of the Reform Era (*Tanzimat*: 1839-1876) was significant. Sultan Suleiman's pious foundations may have sealed Rhodes's subjugation to the Ottoman capital, but it was Ahmed Fethi's family endowments that reaffirmed the island's integration with Ottoman modernity. From a certain angle, therefore, when Ahmed Fethi visited Rhodes in all of his imperial glory, his arrival resembled and simultaneously reversed Sultan Suleiman's triumphant entrance into the castle of Rhodes three centuries earlier. While Ahmed Fethi's royal distinctions represented the continuation of Rhodes's subjugation to the Ottomans, his connection to the island was rooted in local family origins that defied hegemony from within. He was, simultaneously, a privileged outsider well-versed in projecting royal power via public visibility, and the descendant of complex, intimate cultural bloodlines.[19]

Ahmed Fethi's individual "identity," in other words, was negotiated autonomy. Far from an exception, furthermore, such had always been the hidden rhythm of imperial survival, manifest both from below and at the higher echelons of power. Let us expand, for instance, the comparison between Rhodes's conqueror and Ahmed Fethi's royal patron. In the same way Sultan Mahmud trained his court of modern statesmen instead of his offsprings to implement future reforms, after Sultan Suleiman's death it was the prime minister Sokollu Mehmed Pasha that continued his legacy. Himself a former Christian slave, the pasha used his influence to increase Christian and/or provincial representation in the empire's central administration. Simultaneously, he guaranteed the court's stability during the turbulences of dynastic transition. True, Sokollu Mehmed's reforms were limited to intimate projects influenced by his own origins and/or incentives.[20] By contrast, 19th century reforms were a massive operation that spanned the reign of three sultans and a whole century. They involved and produced an army of new bureaucrats with diverse backgrounds, all of whom shaped to a certain degree the administration's novel, and often contradictory, directions. Yet to the extent that both Suleiman's prime minister and 19th century statesmen drew inspiration from their own distinct origins, the two examples agreed with the pattern of negotiated diversity highlighted above. On that front, the era of reforms magnified rather than disrupted Ottoman administrative precedent. The difference in scale and temporality, however, led to different outcomes. Most important, the regime's attempts to standardize previously fluid canons triggered extensive provincial backlash. Because even the federal experiments of provincial representation revolved around the regime's hierarchical understanding of religious engineering.[21] Essentially, the Tanzimat's biggest success and failure was that it extended the life of the dynasty through top-down reforms.

The Ottoman dynasty's belated fall was marked by the usual vices that characterize any regime's attempt to overstay their welcome in history: irate cruelty, self-destructive totalitarianism, violent secessionism, territorial losses, and bankruptcy. Specifically, Tanzimat bureaucrats initiated costly projects that threw fiscal planning completely off balance, causing widespread reactions. Instead of acknowledging them, the regime tried to suppress popular opposition through military action and rhetoric, presenting the reforms as a clash between enlightened modernity and barbarism. Yet the most disastrous aspect of the Tanzimat was that the frantic quest for administrative efficiency regarding taxation undermined directly previously implicit arrangements that were vital in holding imperial domains together. Pointedly, privileged exceptions and a degree of permitted tax evasion were the necessary concessions successive regimes made towards their subjects. Stated differently, the empire ruled over diverse communities that tolerated political exclusions or discriminatory taxation largely because they were allowed to partially escape them. Hence, it is understandable that when rigid modernization started to challenge the above system of negotiated mutual tolerance, at a time when nationalism already offered political alternatives to empire, the ultimate outcome was chaos. Among the empire's non-Muslims, widespread dissatisfaction manifested mostly through national secessionism. Conversely, the Muslim majority moved towards religious triumphalism and violent suppression, which eventually found expression in the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II (r. 1876-1909). Hence, soon after coming to power, the new sultan was pressed by the majority to terminate the federalist experiments of the Tanzimat, opting instead for a version of modernization that revolved around autocratic centralization and Islamic populism. Predictably, the turn on autocracy exacerbated both internal tensions and the actual administrative dysfunction of the Ottoman realm, expediting the dynasty's collapse.[22]

Thus, by the time the empire witnessed its first successful popular revolution in the guise of the Young Turk movement (1908), any chance to reconcile diversity with popular representation had already been lost. The short-lived constitutional experiment of the early Young Turks quickly transformed into brutal dictatorship, state-sponsored terrorism, forced displacement, and genocide.[23] Soon after, the end of the first World War inaugurated the age of national self-determination not only as a new pillar in international law, but also as a novel way to legally justify coveted expansionism, militarization, and new types of carnage. To sum up, the last Ottoman century overlapped with the frantic headlines of much broader turmoil, the destruction of old systems and the emergence of new ones. In that context, it is plausible that individual actors navigated uncertainty via adaptable, and at times even capricious, behaviors and choices. To illustrate, let us return to Ahmed Fethi Pasha's ambassadorial term in Paris, which was abruptly interrupted in 1839 when Sultan Mahmud offered him the hand of his teenage daughter Atiyye Sultan. Clearly, that the sultan considered Ahmed Fethi a fitting match for his much younger daughter, suggested his ambassador's popularity among Europeans could help the throne restore their family image. As for Ahmed Fethi's role in the arrangement, the way he approached the offer revealed the complexity of his motives and feelings. By all accounts, he was a Muslim Ottoman dignitary about to join the imperial family. Yet, in some ways, he was also Greek.

To clarify, after his marriage to the young princess, Ahmed Fethi became established indeed as a most prominent statesmen, a western-cultured cosmopolitan, legendary spender, and charming *bon vivant*.[24] It is worth noting, therefore, he was ready to reject the marriage if, as stipulated by the condition of monogamy which was required when marrying a princess, accepting it meant divorcing his first wife. Only after the newly enthroned Sultan Abdulmecid I (r. 1839-1861) accommodated his plea for an exception did Ahmed Fethi marry Atiyye Sultan. And when a few years later Atiyye Sultan died without producing a male heir, Ahmed Fethi returned to his first wife and to their children. True, they all lived in a world in which the dominant ideologies of nationalism and empire suppressed dual (or fluid) identities that did not agree with specific ideological canons. The imperial regime used Ottoman Greekness as a category that accommodated exclusively Greek-Orthodox Christians.[25] Similarly, independent Greece had been founded right from the outset to be an entirely Christian state, inseparable from its church.[26] Against these limitations, Ahmed Fethi's origins, choices, and

experiences left behind a trail of capricious ambiguity. He was an Ottoman dignitary who could perform westernization with ease, was married to a former Greek slave, and expressed a pioneering interest in archaeology.

Simply put, Ahmed Fethi's *hidden Greekness* was certainly not an identity he ever articulated with coherency or deliberately. Yet it appeared to be one of the factors that consistently influenced his intimate life choices. How else could one describe Ahmed Fethi of Rhodes, who once-upon-a-time found himself charming European kings and queens, performing westernization with native ease? Who was selected to become the sultan's son-in-law precisely because of the above skills? And who, as a member of the royal family, would influence significantly the aesthetic vista of the Tanzimat, among other things pioneering archaeology, neoclassicism, and musicology—all while bending imperial law and precedent to honor his beloved wife Shemsinur? She, who was not an Ottoman princes but one of the dynasty's enslaved victims, and who did not speak the language of diplomacy but his mother tongue, represented the ultimate embodiment of what could be seen as Ahmed Fethi's intimate connection to *Greekness*.

The riddle of Ahmed Fethi's identity as presented here was thus embedded in multilayered knots that actualized by remaining unsolved. By extension, the fierce ambiguity of his existence was evident also in the many material traces he left behind.

From the clock towers and modern schools, he had built on his family's island, to the new coastal palaces commissioned by his imperial in-laws—to which he contributed cultural expertise— Ahmed Fethi managed to blend his family history with the Ottoman dynasty's most iconic symbols. If the renovation of the Rhodes foundations resonated directly with his origins, his involvement in the design of the dynasty's new headquarters cannot be explained through simplistic references to the stereotypical argument of cultural immitation. To clarify, Topkapi Palace, which had remained the formal seat of the imperial court up until the Tanzimat, had been commissioned in the 15th century by Istanbul's Ottoman conqueror. Erected over the ruins of Eastern Rome, the old palace complex was situated on the hill overlooking two continents and three seas, an iconic reminder of the Eastern Roman Empire's fall to the Ottomans.[27]

By contrast, the new coastal palaces' location, architecture, and aesthetics, imitated western design from a position of cultural subordination, especially if one equates the empire with its Muslim, Turkic dynasty. Beyond the profile of its rulers, however, the Ottoman realm had manifested its power throughout the centuries mostly by way of its inner diversity. From this point of view, it is of note that many of the new palaces' actual builders were Greek or Armenian Christians, who hence maintained their own intimate connections to different versions of western culture. In the same vein, from the perspective of Ahmed Fethi, his connection to Greek culture via family origins shaped understandings of Ottoman westernization that defied the bipolar dichotomy of uncritical imitation or treasonous affiliation with external interests.[28]

Erected right next to the maritime routes dominated by Christian merchants, the new coastal palaces rose above the water like sirens that lured the dynasty to willingly abandon the imperial hills of Eastern Rome; and to spend the wealth exhorted from its domains in the construction of modern mansions that yielded Ottoman symbols of power to the aesthetics and heritage of ancient Greece. Moreover, the nature of the project required also the employment and handsome compensation of builders who had relevant cultural expertise.[29] On some level, therefore, westernization did not signal the empire's cultural takeover from without but its cultural reclamation from within. Admittedly bold, this interpretation agrees nevertheless with the plausible observation that before the Ottomans started copying the West, the West had already appropriated the ancient heritage of the geographies and the peoples that constituted the Ottoman realm. On a more personal level, one cannot guess what crossed Ahmed Fethi's mind when he was advising his royal relatives to go bankrupt over ornate Ionic columns, intricate mosaics, and neo-classical opulence. But being the erudite cosmopolitan that he was, Ahmed Fethi must have known that Greek antiquity had survived its military conquest by Rome, resurfacing to power from within not through war but through cultural privilege.

Although Western European dynasties traced their self-proclaimed origins back to ancient Greece, it was the Ottomans that controlled the multilayered geographies where the legacies of antiquity and the Roman Empire had historically shaped each other. In this context, Ahmed Fethi was perhaps exceptionally gifted, and hence an exceptionally privileged representative of negotiated cultural fluidity, but his background was not all that unique. Rather, it formed a true reflection of Ottoman Mediterranean complexity. By implication, his connection to westernization was not externally imposed but the internal product of long historical processes. The Ottomans had ruled for centuries, after all, over Mediterranean regions, the cultural legacies of which formed an integral component—if not the very foundation—of Western European civilization. It is, therefore, bizarre to characterize Ottoman westernization exclusively as a process of imitation. At the same time, the success of the Greek Revolution had produced indeed an unbridgeable gap between the dynasty and Mediterranean geographies of continuity. Although the Ottoman regime would manage to hold onto most of its domains for another century, it failed to accommodate popular belonging on a collective level and beyond religious divisions. From this point of view, the lived experiences not only of Ahmed Fethi but even of prestigious Greek-Ottoman statesmen mirrored both the exclusive privileges and the profound agony experienced by dynastic realms in the age of national populism.

For instance, when Tanzimat bureaucrats attempted to legitimize administrative reform by reference to tradition/continuity, their focus was placed almost exclusively on either religious hierarchies or on dynastic symbols that ignored from-below sentiment.[30] Similarly, Ahmed Fethi's fascination with antiquities remained the erudite hobby of a collector.[31] In the end, our hero was a pragmatic man, hence likely to realize that seeking collective popular meaning in archaeology, while in the service of the Ottoman elite, was a dangerous choice. Conversely, the Greeks became visible and gained independence not thanks to their warrior skills but by using collective imagination as pragmatic leverage, producing narratives that surpassed all other regional versions of history in length, grandness, and range. Greekness was an affirmation of modernity through alleged continuity and revolutionary folly. In the same vein, when the Great Powers of Europe interfered to stop the much superior Ottoman army from annihilating the Greek rebels, theirs was an act of hegemonic appropriation rooted in equally pragmatic, modern calculations. To put it differently, Greekness imagined the modern nation as a message of freedom/revolution that made or destroyed empires: from the Roman conquest to Christianity; from Byzantine hegemony to Ottoman expansion; and from the Enlightenment, European colonialism, and industrialization all the way to the New World.

Greekness was able to outlive, in fact, even the European empires that initially sponsored the creation of the homonymous state, eventually finding expression in the neo-imperial ambitions and resulting neoclassical architecture of American hegemony. The above top-down chain of cultural appropriation served primarily expansive ambitions. Yet the rebellious spirit of Greekness thrived as a kaleidoscopic manifestation of the multitude, which transformed the antiquity from elite academic reference to universal message of freedom. From Ottoman Rhodes to Athens and from Paris to Washington DC, that dual legacy survived through the reconciliation of top-down elitism with from-below defiance. As a case in point, around the same time Tanzimat reforms were reaching an end, concluded also the American Civil War. Its termination was marked by the abolition of slavery and tragic assassination of the Union's President Abraham Lincoln (1865). Fast-forward to 1922, at a time when the Republic of Turkey emerged from the ashes of empire to claim popular independence, a memorial characterized by impressive neoclassical features was erected to enshrine the memory of Abraham Lincoln in the administrative capital of the American Republic "as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union."

But the most iconic appropriation of the Lincoln Memorial, perhaps to this day, occurred on the day a legendary civil rights' leader climbed up its stairs and declared that emancipation can never exist in the passive voice. Whereas when the liberated act by themselves to reclaim freedom, they alone can cry "I have a dream."[32]

Ahmed Fethi was most certainly neither a rebel nor preoccupied with collective action. But in his own way, he was an audacious dreamer. His hidden Greekness manifested, therefore, in his ability to simultaneously disobey and serve structural injustice, as well as in his loyalty towards his first wife and children. He would spend the last years of his life and the last remnants of his fortune next to them in an attempt perhaps "to have it all," that resulted mostly in mounting debts. When he passed away, therefore, he left his son Mahmud Celaleddin Pasha with not much more than their shared charm. Hence, eventually, Mahmud found a way out of family bankruptcy by marrying Sultan Abdulmecid's daughter, Princess Cemile.[33] Following in his father's footsteps by this means, Mahmud Celaleddin immersed himself in the second phase of the Tanzimat and became the fervent supporter of Midhat Pasha's federalist plans.[34] Amid the broader conspiratorial climate that shaped the rise of Abdulhamid II to the throne, however, the two men met a tragic end. Under the accusation they were plotting against the throne, they were stripped of their power, imprisoned, exiled, and assassinated while in captivity.[35] In the words of Midhat's own son Ali Haydar:

> "On bursting in the door of Mahmoud's room , they threw round his neck a soaped cord , which had been specially prepared, for they were aware that he possessed very considerable muscular strength. Mahmoud made a most desperate resistance , giving vent to piercing cries . They tried every means to hasten his death , with such ferocity that even the animals in the neighbourhood trembled at the sound of his heartrending dies for help. But soon the screams of anguish died away.
>
> A few moments after , two corpses , wrapped in sheets , were transported to a room in the hospital."[36]

Thus, in perfect harmony with the literary canons of ancient Greek tragedy, family history repeated itself when Mahmud Celaleddin Pasha, the grandson of Rhodes's Hafiz Ahmed Agha, died in captivity like his ancestor. His devasted mother had already passed away right after her son's arrest.

Let the conclusion to their story, however, be different. Let us return to the pious foundations of Rhodes, which maintained some of their functions away from Istanbul's continuous uproar. After the assassination of Mahmud Celaleddin Pasha, his sister Saliha Yegane took over the administration of the endowments and started visiting frequently the island to protect their preservation. In this way, centuries of imperial bloodshed concluded in a beautiful library and a secluded space. Despite carrying the name of male founders, said endowments have survived the empire's eventual collapse thanks to the daughter of a female slave. In the end, although most of recorded history is written through war, the subjugated, the enslaved, the peaceful, and the spiritual are never passive. When the roar of battle is over, these unlikely survivors often re-emerge from the rubble to slowly rebuild. Severely injured, heavily traumatized, significantly changed—at times—but undefeated.

Eventually, when in yet another twist of fate Italy defeated the Ottomans in the regional war of 1912, unlike many other majority Greek regions, the Dodecanese islands remained occupied by an external power and did not unite with Greece until 1947.[37] A most consequential implication of that development was that Rhodes's Muslims and their pious foundations were excluded from the treaty of Lausanne signed between Turkey and Greece in 1923. That mandatory population exchange of almost 2 mil people along the lines of religion transformed the human geographies of both countries, leaving behind deep scars and multi-generational trauma.[38] By contrast, Rhodes's forced integration with fascist modernity interrupted population transfers, and the vengeful destruction of pious foundations that usually followed Muslim displacement. The Italian occupation had no incentive to acknowledge the Greek majority's nationalist sentiments or to protect the Muslim minority. Nevertheless, it unintentionally blurred the memory of earlier subjugations by forcing an external version of empire over the population, hence liberating local Islam from its symbolic association with the island's former subjugation to Istanbul.

In this context, Rhodes's Muslim foundations pose a fascinating question not about 'how' empires start or end, but about 'what' they are, corroborating the argument that administrative flexibility serves rather than undermines imperial longevity. Most important, this is a story that engages with empire not to glorify but to challenge it. Which brings us from the Ottomans to patterns of 21st century globalization which, among other things, have shaped new directions in academic research—and in research funding. Under the auspices of the new global superpower, sanitized versions of regional history have come to replace old nationalist paradigms, in the service of reconciliation, fiscal centralization, and neoliberal expansion. Additionally, American academia has asserted its intellectual superiority over the lingering epistemological parochialism of European colonialism, through the appropriation of ground-breaking fields—such as critical gender or race studies, subaltern and postcolonial studies etc.[39]

On the other hand, Greek and Turkish national historiographies have traditionally approached Rhodes's unique past as nothing but an anomaly, or a thorn in the side of alleged cultural homogeneity. To a certain degree, therefore, the recent deconstruction of nationalist academic paradigms has protected local history from external appropriation or erasure. Not enough attention is dedicated, however, to the dangers that usually accompany the negation of majority national sentiment by revisionist historiographies. Similarly to religious belief systems, national teleology attracts the faithful via the presentation of political independence in the guise of alleged destiny that justifies both cruelty and sacrifice. Top-down attempts to replace the all-powerful nation with nothing but its absence tend to produce disaster. From a legal or historical perspective, furthermore, according to the international norms established after the Great War, nationalism provides the only path towards political independence. By extension, global systems continue to operate fiscally, legally, and politically along the lines of recognized nation-states.[40]

The secessionist rebels that fought against the Ottoman regime during the last century of its existence understood the above limitations very well. Similarly, all contemporary freedom fighters of any kind, as well as domestic politics almost anywhere in the world, operate within the parameters of the exact same limitations. Thus, paradigm shifts that disregard contemporary international frameworks, popular sentiment, and recent history have disastrous implications—an observation that extends to otherwise well-meaning, sophisticated academic endeavors. It is worth remembering that the "people"—however defined—tend to develop a taste for extremism, violence, or upheaval when their demands for socioeconomic inclusion or political/cultural representation are systematically suppressed by ruling establishments. This tendency further intensifies when said establishments adopt the rhetoric of modernization/enlightenment to introduce from above new canons, perceived by the majority as conceptually alien and materially harmful. Which goes some way to explain why the recent process of US-driven, neoliberal globalization has failed spectacularly across the world, causing intense reactions even at the very heart of the American superpower.

Simultaneously, in the many conflict zones that neighbor the island of Rhodes, the current crisis manifests in series of regional clashes and dreadful military operations. The combination of lawlessness and inhumane violence has eroded the superpower's international credibility, together with its ability to justify the enormous military expenditures realized at the expense of

its own welfare state. As of lately, therefore, the US has surrendered itself to populist upheaval and reactionary authoritarianism, at the backdrop of increased international turmoil, military violence, and genocide. As with other aging hegemonies throughout history, the American superpower has started to take the distinctive shape of decline. For those of us who study the last Ottoman centuries, the similarities are both unmistakable and alarming. While the "Red Sultan," Abdulhamid II became the symbol of paranoid violence, bankruptcy, and autocracy, it remains to be seen if the erratic second Trump presidency, which has inspired mockery and horror across the world, will mark the American establishment's decisive downfall.[41]

The reign of Abdulhamid was, of course, much more complex than the caricatures we remember it by. Moreover, the real disasters associated with his administration did not undermine a thriving empire but failed to overcome pre-existing challenges. Similarly, the Trump presidencies may constitute particularly maladapted responses to American hegemony's existential crisis, but they did not cause it. The US is, of course, the most recent, most sophisticated, most powerful, and thus most brutal version of empire in recorded history. For its various migrant communities, it is also home. America's association with migration could be described, in fact, as a most telling metaphor for imperial diversity. It is the mechanism through which the center has ruled over—and occasionally ravaged—its global domains, in exchange for an ambiguous, often untenable, promise: the "free and the brave" can always escape the poverty, wars, and oppression that shutter global peripheries. Even if their homelands vanish, they have a chance to survive, by coming to the center of empire in search of the "American Dream."[42]

By implication, the American experiment has wrestled with history and with the phobia of decline, by turning acute demographic mobility into its instrument of growth, reproduction, and survival. Most grandiosely captured by the Statue of Liberty, who like a siren's song enchants the migrant masses at the entrance of the New York harbor, the American version of empire did not conquer the world. It coerced it into subordination. She bewitched the tired, the poor, the huddled masses that yearn to be free and took their offerings in flesh or in spirit. At the same time, she often annihilated the worlds they came from, negating potential escapes towards back home. In this way, the superpower has long remained *young* (and somewhat savage) by constantly renewing the ranks of its laborers, its thinkers, and of its soldiers through the manipulation of hope or of despair. Moreover, similarly to the Ottoman dynasty's system of forced recruitment and reproduction, the innovation of birth-right citizenship has long facilitated America's demographic rejuvenation, at times by devouring, and at times by rejecting, the children born first to enslaved and later on to migrant mothers. Through the mechanisms of birth-right citizenship, slavery morphed into migration engineering, replacing the open brutality of the former system with the vampiric charm of the latter, in an irresistible choreography of predatorial power that renders resistance vain if not fully undesirable.[43]

Thus, for as long as young migrant women have been willing to surrender their reproductive abilities to the American dream, the latter has grown stronger. Until it has finally reached, perhaps, the breaking point of its economic, political, and ideological dominance; the climax of its global ambition; and the folly of its arrogance. It is not accidental, therefore, that like every other empire in human history, the superpower's golden era was characterized by the successful—and often equally cruel—engineering of migrants' robust demographic potential through masterfully narrated diversity tales. In the same vein, America's current existential crisis actualizes, among other things, in generational/demographic terms. It is a clash between, on the one hand, the established privileges of an aging population and, on the other, the administrative state's need for, and inability to regulate, the ever-growing numbers of migrant newcomers. By the same token, it is rather typical that—in Tayyarzade fashion—domestic frustrations are loudly expressed mostly by young men, who feel increasingly irrelevant in an empire that charms through education, coerces through elderly privilege, and slaughters with its drones.[44]

Among the above-mentioned three pillars of hegemony, education and the law are often the least corrupt and hence the most vulnerable ones, as least when compared to the military and financial branches of the establishment. By extension, universities and justice constitute hegemony's most conspicuous endowments, which usually come under attack first. This goes some way to explain why the most prestigious representatives of American academia have recently become the main targets of populist rage and authoritarian manipulation. As for their potential to overcome the crisis, it may simply depend on their ability to realize that, in times of hegemonic collapse, a failure in collective imagination often leads to collective carnage. For a cautionary tale, it suffices to consider the Ottomans.

Besides, these two versions of empire momentarily crossed paths over the Mediterranean, right after the Great War, when one of them crumbled in surrender and the other thrashed to be born. At the time, US involvement in regional affairs was limited to humanitarian initiatives, hidden behind the language of ambiguous idealism. It was Europe's empires and peoples that were bleeding then, all drunk with the anxiety of power, determined to risk annihilation for the chance of rebirth. More than a century on, much has changed in terms of the protagonists, but the cycle remains the same. Which leads us back to the same question: if this is how empires end, do they/should they ever survive?

Saving the global superpower from itself is certainly not this author's main goal. It is worth noting, however, that any diverse political entity—including the US—entails complex relational meanings and hence the potential escape from self-destruction. Relational, as used here, means interpersonal mobility, which becomes visible humility when hegemony transforms into the multitude, if only out of self-preservation. Thus, if the global superpower were to exit its own labyrinths of imperial arrogance and populist ruin, it should perhaps move away from the loud cacophony of battle, towards the whispers and crushed homelands of its victims. History's path towards the future may exist in the transnational connections that emerge when the enslaved, the indigenous, the migrant, and the local summon together ancestorial ghosts, in search neither of memory nor of oblivion but of forgiveness. Such has been for centuries, the rhythm of eastern Mediterranean survival.

Let us, thus, circle back to the "Inland Sea," a common description that captures the association of Mediterranean histories with historical crossroads and long durations. The region is synonymous, in other words, to a distinct school of geographical determinism, the foundational principles of which go all the way back to the iconic work of Fernand Braudel.[45] Predictably, however, Braudel's pioneering insights have inspired many subsequent works to reproduce also his lopsided focus on western culture. Artificially detached from real time and space, in this fashion, the east became the *other Mediterranean*. It was reduced to the tales of a vanquished past, overwhelmed by the implied clash between two regional modernities: a sea within the sea, deprived of present relevance. [46] This imbalance is not surprising if understood as the product of western intellectual dominance and, by implication, of cultural imperialism. But it is methodologically negligent and conceptually inconsistent with Braudel's own principles. What is then the Inland Sea if not a coherent geography shaped by shared rhythms? In response, the recent scholarly focus on Ottoman geographies has produced numerous evidence-based studies that reclaim the other Mediterranean back from historical essentialism.[47]

While our introduction aligns itself fully with the above alternative readings of the region's past, it wishes also to transcend them. To sum up, the same framework can be used to engage with pressing issues about the near future. As implied throughout this essay, some of the most evident and violent turning points in history have occurred when old hierarchies started to collapse. According

to this author, the current existential crisis of the global superpower constitutes such a tumultuous turning point that stems from, and will continue to shutter, a malfunctioning international system. Consequently, the dominant hierarchies of the last centuries are unlikely to survive the transition. In the sphere of politics, both nationalism and top-down globalization, already belong with a fast-expiring old order. Nationalism prioritizes artificial, exclusionary cultural divisions that contradict both the contemporary reality of increased global connections and the past fluidity of historical interactions. Hierarchical globalization, by contrast, appropriates mobility and order albeit in the service of empire, thereby destroying past alternatives without offering any real new channels for popular representation. To bypass this hiatus, it suffices to realize that so much of hegemony's dysfunction is caused by the violent erasure of peripheral alternatives. Is it plausible, then, to argue that the antidote against hegemonic decline may be found in neglected versions of past regional experiences?

In the end, geography "always wins," only when its meaning is defined by those who inhabit it. To illustrate, the Mediterranean *long-durée* has existed neither exclusively as revolution nor as conquest, but as a process of survival through (pro)creation. Hence, its meanings have always been shaped by a universe of islands, simultaneously connected and autonomous in time and space. Humans have navigated the waves of Mediterranean history, while anchored onto its lands. Materiality, in this context, translated not only to security but also to the flexibility needed to accommodate, while simultaneously defying, ideological hierarchies—for instance, national, imperial, or religious. In other words, the universal Mediterranean story has always been not an answer but a question. Which one comes first? The lands, which offer the stability of belonging through the continuous reimagination of meaning? Or, the sea journeys, which depart from, discover, return to and, in the process, change the land?

The above dilemma forms a reminder that human agency involves fluid processes rather than rational conclusions. Hence, I propose that a way to bypass the confinements of any kind of determinism, is by emphasizing that *(e)motional belonging* precedes and survives every other ideological construction through *motion*. Namely, my use of the concept refers to the individual choices through which people have always connected from below with any land (or with any sea) in ways that continually reimagine geography and reaffirm the multitude by escaping fixed, externally imposed, conceptual restrictions.[48] Post-nationalism and empire, therefore, the regional future could be one of *motion through (e)motion* which, etymologically as well as conceptually, translates to expressing affection through mobility. Every escape, in this sense, is also potentially a return that stirs things up. It is the process of *motional agency* that affirms belonging not as imposition, but as active choice.

The Mediterranean has always been, after all, a most vivid geography of (e)*motional pauses*. Its timelines are often cyclical, but never stagnant. Occasionally, the waves lure away local storytellers, towards linear adventures and open oceans. But the sea is always there, and when the current brings the stories back, their changed components become healing. At times, the stories return in collected volumes about pious foundations, endowed centuries ago on ancestral islands to serve this very purpose.

And thus, onto our islands, we keep moving. Until we meet again, with the future.

Endnotes

1 On the story of Tayyarzade, see Çizakça, "Deciphering an Ottoman Fairy Tale: Tayyarzade Throughout the Centuries."

2 Jha, "Pursuits of Global Gendered Intellectual History," Kraft, "Spaces of Knowledge and Gender Regimes."

3 For a broader discussion on imperial systems, see Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*; Motyl, *Imperial Ends*; Reinert, "Jacob Bielfeld's 'On the Decline of States' (1760) and Its Relevance for Today"; Cemal Kafadar, "The Question of Ottoman Decline"; Bouquet, "From Decline to Transformation."

4 Sayers, "Sociosexual Roles in Ottoman Pulp Fiction."

5 On Kosem Sultan, see Görgün-Baran, "A Woman Leader in Ottoman History"; Ali and Naz, "Imperial Women"; Arkan, "Tarihî romanlarımızda Üç Haseki Sultan (Hurrem Sultan, Safiye Sultan, Kösem Sultan)"; Fatima Ali and Asmat Naz, "Imperial Women: Patrons of Political Power in the Ottoman (1520-1660)."

6 On imperial women, slavery, and the harem, see Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*; Zilfi, *Women and Slavery in the Late Ottoman Empire*; Thys-Senocak, *Ottoman Women Builders*.

7 Douglas A. Howard, "Ottoman Historiography and the Literature of 'Decline' of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries"; Sajdi, *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee*.

8 Zilfi, "Sultan Süleyman and the Ottoman Religious Establishment"; Afyoncu, *Muhteşem Süleyman; Kanuni Sultan Süleyman ve Hürrem Sultan (Yeditepe Yayınevi)*; İsmail Hira and Emine Yıldırım, "Türk Televizyon Dizilerinde Oryantalist Yansımalar: Muhteşem Yüzyıl Örneği."

9 Kolovos, "The Fortress and the Town of Rhodes According to the Ottoman Survey After the Siege of 1522"; Fabian Leonardo Riesinger. "Empire in Sight : Architectural Transformations after the Ottoman Conquest of Rhodes (1522)." *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 28 (2022): 81–93.

10 Olcay Pullukçuoğlu Yapucu, "An Elegant Senior Bureaucrat Rodosluzade Ahmet Fethi Pasha."

11 Skopetea, *Το Πρότυπο Βασίλειο Και η Μεγάλη Ιδέα*; Koliopoulos and Veremis, *Greece*.

12 Colette Burton, "Remembering Martyrdom."

13 Petros Pizanias, *The Greek Revolution of 1821: A European Event*.

14 Ozavci, "The Ottoman Imperial Gaze."

15 Polatcı Demirkol, Türkan, "Polatcı Demirkol, Türkan. 'Çankırı İnas Mektebi (Central School For Girls) According to the Sicill-I Umumi Register.'"

16 Aksan, "Mahmud II"; Mustafa Gölçek, "Centralization during the Era of Mahmud the Second."

17 Ersahin, "Westernization, Mahmud II, and the Virtue Tradition."

18 I'm forever grateful to Tarık Tüten for sharing with me the fascinating story of his ancestors. Although the initial draft for this introduction was quite different, when I've started engaging with the family story I became captivated by them and changed the story I needed to tell despite the lack of relevant archival research. Hence, I've tried to find traces in the secondary literature, which would have remained incomplete or false if I didn't have the chance to learn some of the details directly from our editor himself. This essay wouldn't have been possible without him acting as my main source as well as my inspiration.

19 Stephanov, "Sultan Mahmud II (1808–1839) and the First Shift in Modern Ruler Visibility in the Ottoman Empire."

20 Tezcan, "The Second Empire."

21 Kostopoulou, "Armed Negotiations: The Institutionalization of the Late Ottoman Locality."

22 Angın, "Representation of Power."

23 Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks*.

24 Dönmez and Özdemir, "Osmanlı Modernleşmesinde Ahmed Fethi Paşa'nın Rolü"; Sunay, "Life style and standard of a Dynasty's Son-in-Law.

25 Ortayli, "The Greek and Ottoman Administration during the Tanzimat Period"; Philliou, *Biography of an Empire*.

26 Mavrogordatos, "Orthodoxy and Nationalism in the Greek Case."

27 Kafesçioğlu “Reckoning with an Imperial Legacy: Ottomans and Byzantine Constantinople”; Adams, “Constantinople as an Imperial Capital: Mehmed II and the Making of the Ottoman Empire.”

28 Akarlı, “The Tangled Ends of an Empire.”

29 Ersoy, “Architecture and the Search for Ottoman Origins in the Tanzimat Period; Wharton, “The Balyan Family and the Linguistic Culture of a Parisian Education.”

30 Deringil, “‘Late Ottoman Empire and Post-Colonial Debate’”; Aytekın, “Peasant Protest in the Late Ottoman Empire.”

31 Eldem, *Pride and Privilege. A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals and Decorations* and “Ottoman and Turkish Orientalism.”

32 Scott-Childress, *Race and the Production of Modern American Nationalism*.

33 Bouquet, “The Sultan’s Sons-in-Law.”

34 Permana et all, “Political Struggle for the Renewal of the Ottoman Empire.”

35 Erdoğdu, “The Administrative and Judicial Status of the First Ottoman Parliament”

36 Mithat, *The Life of Midhat Pasha*, 256.

37 Guidi, “Ottoman-Italian Imperial Continuities in Rhodes.”

38 Yıldırım, “The 1923 Population Exchange.”

39 Zeleza, “Knowledge, Globalization, and Hegemony.”

40 Calhoun, *Nations matter*; Hall, *National collective identity*.

41 Cooley & Nexon, *Exit from hegemony*.

42 Manning, “Gestures of the Impossible: U.S. Immigration, Hospitality and Approaching Democracy.”

43 Chin &Finkelman, “Birthright Citizenship, Slave Trade Legislation, and the Origins of Federal Immigration Regulation.”

44 Eroukhmanoff, Clara. “A Gendered Analysis of US Decline.”

45 Braudel, The Mediterranean.

46 Horden, “Mediterranean Excuses: Historical Writing on the Mediterranean since Braudel”; Cazzato, “Fractured Mediterranean and Imperial Difference”; Clines, “Edward W. Said, Renaissance Orientalism, and Imaginative Geographies of a Classical Mediterranean.”

47 Proudfoot, “The Ottoman Mediterranean and Its Transformation, ca. 1800–1920”; Gratien, “The Ottoman Quagmire”; Greene, “The Mediterranean Sea.”

48 Leavitt, “Meaning and Feeling in the Anthropology of Emotions”; Skrbiš, “Transnational Families”; Askins, “Emotional Citizenry.”



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Rhodes - *Ρόδος - Rodos*

The Island of Many Worlds:
Layers of Belonging and Everyday Pluralism



Victor Gysembergh is a CNRS research professor at the *Centre Léon Robin de recherches sur la pensée antique* of Sorbonne University. His current research focuses on the study of palimpsest and damaged manuscripts using cutting-edge imaging techniques, notably multispectral imaging. His work in this area has led to the rediscovery of several lost ancient texts such as Claudius Ptolemy's treatise on the Meteoroscope, fragments of Hipparchus' Star Catalogue, and fragments of a Latin introduction to Platonic philosophy, often referred to as the "New Apuleius". Dr. Gysembergh's interdisciplinary methodology combines classical philology, philosophy, and history of science to explore damaged texts across various collections. His work illuminates not only the content of these ancient writings but also their transmission through time. Recently, he discovered the only known fragments of ancient commentaries on Aristotle's *Sophistical Refutations* within a treatise by the humanist Agostino Nifo (published as *Forgotten Commentaries on Aristotle's Sophistical Refutations,* Berlin, 2023). His most recent scholarly book is an authoritative edition of the fragments of the scientist and philosopher Eudoxus of Cnidus (*Eudoxe de Cnide. Témoignages et fragments,* Paris, 2024).

Hipparchus of Nicaea and Rhodes

Hipparchus of Nicaea was one of the most influential astronomers and mathematicians of antiquity. His contributions to the development of mathematical astronomy laid the foundation for later advancements in the field, particularly in the Greek and Islamic traditions. Hipparchus made significant strides in observational astronomy, trigonometry, and the construction of astronomical models that sought to describe the motion of celestial bodies with unprecedented accuracy. Recent studies have confirmed reports that Hipparchus compiled the first precise numerical catalogue of star coordinates in history, presumably extending to all stars visible to the naked eye from the latitude of Rhodes.[1]

Multispectral imaging played a pivotal role in the recovery of excerpts from Hipparchus' star catalogue by Gysembergh, Williams, and Zingg. The authors used multispectral images that revealed undertext on palimpsest leaves from the Codex Climaci Rescriptus, a manuscript overwritten in the medieval period. While the upper text was clearly legible to the naked eye, the erased undertext—written in Greek and containing star coordinates—was faint, obscured by the later Syriac writing, and largely invisible in standard light. The capture and processing of multispectral images by the Early Manuscripts Electronic Library, the Lazarus Project and the Rochester Institute of Technology in 2017 enhanced the contrast between different layers of ink and parchment, allowing the ancient Greek astronomical data to resurface.[2]

The process is illustrated in the sequence of images (Figures 1-3) below. The color image shows the manuscript as seen in normal light, where only the overlying Syriac text is visible. The processed multispectral image, produced by digitally combining selected spectral bands, reveals hidden traces of the Greek undertext, including numerical data that correspond to star coordinates. Finally, the tracings were prepared by the authors to provide visual annotation of the text deciphered from a set of several processed multispectral images.

It is often stated that Hipparchus accomplished all or most of his scientific work in Rhodes, and he is sometimes styled 'Rhodian' even though no ancient sources connect this adjective with him. This paper reviews the evidence connecting Hipparchus to the island and city of Rhodes. The results of this study suggest that Hipparchus did indeed make astronomical observations in Rhodes over a period of several decades, although the only astronomical observations that were certainly made in Rhodes date from the last few years of his work as an astronomer.

Despite the scarcity of biographical material about him, Hipparchus is known to have been born in the city of Nicaea (modern-day Iznik) or its surrounding countryside, as attested by the ancient Roman authors Strabo (*Geography*, XII, 4, 9, 566 C.) and Aelian (*On animals* VII, 8) and the Byzantine encyclopedic lexicon Suda (ι 521, s.v. Ἵππαρχος). Claudius Ptolemy reports that he performed observations in Bithynia, viz. the region of Nicaea (see below). Centuries after his death, his native city of Nicaea issued coins depicting him, with the legend describing him as "Hipparchus of the Nicaeans".[3]

1 Gysembergh, V., Williams, P.J. and Zingg, E., 2022, 'New Evidence for Hipparchus' Star Catalogue Revealed by Multispectral Imaging', Journal for the History of Astronomy, 53, pp. 383-393; *id.*, 2025, 'A Note on the New Evidence for Hipparchus' Star Catalogue', Journal for the History of Astronomy, 56, in press.

2 The imaging team consisted of Di Bai, Ken Boydston, Helen Davies, Josephine Dru, Roger L. Easton, Christos Georgiades, Gregory Heyworth, Kyle Huskin, Damian Kasotakis, Vasilis Kasotakis, David Kelbe, Keith Knox, Mike Phelps, Nicole Polglaze, Dale Stewart, Sarah Zaman and Alexander Zawacki.

3 See illustrations online at: https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coin/167946; https://isaw.nyu.edu/exhibitions/time-cosmos/objects/coin-hipparchus-globe.

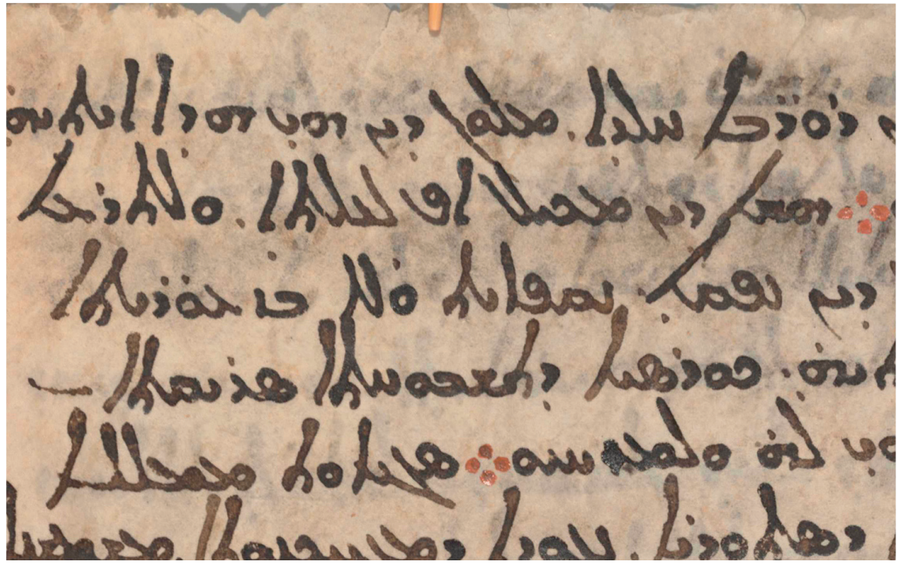


Figure 1. Detail of f. 53v, beginning of the first column of undertext (Syriac overtext in dark brown, and faint traces of a few letters of the undertext). Courtesy Museum of the Bible Collection. All rights reserved. © Museum of the Bible, 2021.

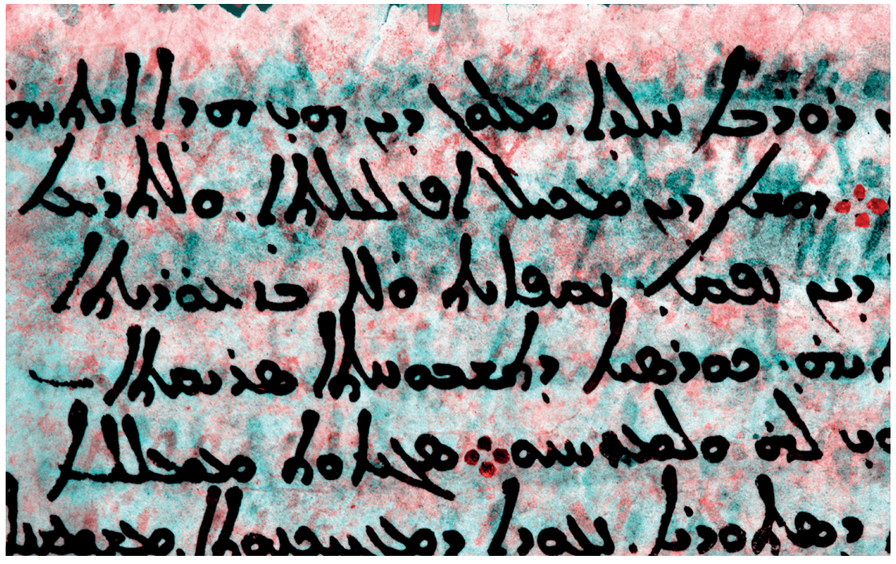


Figure 2. Detail of f. 53v (multispectral image, by the Early Manuscripts Electronic Library and the Lazarus Project of the University of Rochester processed by Keith T. Knox: the enhanced Greek undertext appears in red below the Syriac overtext in black). Courtesy Museum of the Bible Collection. All rights reserved. © Museum of the Bible, 2021.

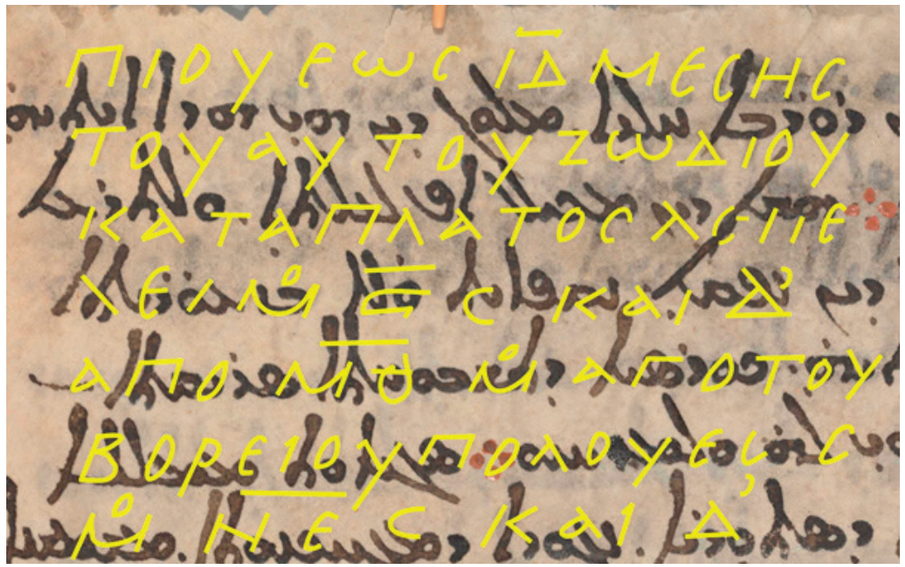


Figure 3. Detail of f. 53v (yellow tracings based on full set of multispectral images). Courtesy Museum of the Bible Collection. All rights reserved. © Museum of the Bible, 2021.

However, Rhodes was an important center of intellectual life in the 2nd c. CE and seems to have attracted astronomers specifically.[4] In three instances, Claudius Ptolemy quotes observations by Hipparchus and specifies that they were made in Rhodes.

> Hipparchus of Nicaea, *On the Moon's Motion in Latitude,* Fragment 17 Dicks = Ptolemy, *Almagest*, I, p. 363, 13 – 364, 1 Heiberg (5 August -127)
>
> Πάλιν, ἵνα καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἱππάρχου τετηρημένων τοιούτων παρόδων φανερὸν ἡμῖν τὸ ἐπὶ τῶν ὁμοίων διάφορον γένηται, παραθησόμεθα καὶ τούτων μίαν, ἣν φησι τετηρηκέναι τῷ ν′ ἔτει τῆς τρίτης κατὰ Κάλιππον περιόδου κατ' Αἰγυπτίους Ἐπιφὶ ις′ τοῦ διμοίρου τῆς πρώτης ὥρας παρεληλυθότος. δρόμος μὲν οὖν, φησίν, ἦν σμα′, τοῦ δὲ ἡλίου διοπτευομένου κατὰ Λέοντος μοίρας η ∠′ ιβ′ ἡ σελήνη ἐφαίνετο ἐπέχουσα Ταύρου μοίρας ιβ γ′, καὶ ἀκριβῶς δὲ ἐπεῖχεν ἔγγιστα τὰς αὐτάς. γίνεται ἄρα ἡ μεταξὺ τοῦ ἡλίου καὶ τῆς σελήνης ἀκριβῶς θεωρουμένη διάστασις μοιρῶν πς ιε. ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἡλίου ὄντος περὶ τὰ πρῶτα μέρη τοῦ Λέοντος ἐν Ῥόδῳ, ὅπου ἡ τήρησις ἐγένετο, ἡ τῆς ἡμέρας ὥρα χρόνων ἐστὶν ις γ′· (…)
>
> Again, to display the amount of the equation (sc. of lunar anomaly) under similar conditions which is derived from Hipparchus' observations of such positions, we will adduce one of these. He says that he made the observation in the fifty-first year of the Third Kallippic Cycle, Epiphi [XI] 16 in the Egyptian calendar [-127 Aug. 5], when

4 For a vivid, though at times exaggerated, portrayal of intellectual life in ancient Rhodes, see L. Rossetti and P. Liviabella Furiani, "Rodi", in G. Cambiano, L. Canfora and D. Lanza (edd.), *Lo spazio letterario della Grecia antica*, vol. 1, tome 2, Rome, 1993, pp. 657-715.

2/3 of the first hour had passed. 'The speed was [that of day] 241', he says, 'and while the sun was sighted in Leo 8 7/12° the apparent position of the mon was Taurus 12 1/3°, and its true position was approximately the same'. So the true observed distance between moon and sun was 86:15°. But when the sun is near the beginning of Leo, **at Rhodes (where the observation was made)**, 1 hour of the day is 17 1/3 time-degrees. (...) (Transl. after G. Toomer)

Hipparchus of Nicaea, *On the Moon's Motion in Latitude*, Fragment 18 Dicks = Ptolemy, *Almagest*, I, p. 369, 4sq. (2 May -125)

ἀναγράφει τοίνυν ὁ Ἵππαρχος ἐν Ῥόδῳ τετηρηκέναι διὰ τῶν ὀργάνων τόν τε ἥλιον καὶ τὴν σελήνην τῷ ϱϡζ′ ἔτει ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τελευτῆς κατ' Αἰγυπτίους Φαρμουθὶ ια′ ὥρας β′ ἀρχομένης (…).

Now Hipparchus records that **he observed the sun and the moon with his instruments in Rhodes** in the 197th year from the death of Alexander, Pharmouthi [VIII] 11 in the Egyptian calendar [-126 May 2], at the beginning of the second hour (...). (Transl. after G. Toomer)

Hipparchus of Nicaea, *On the Moon's Motion in Latitude*, Fragment 19 Dicks = Ptolemy, *Almagest*, I, p. 374, 16-19 (7 July -125)

(…) εἰλήφαμεν πάλιν ἐκ τῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἱππάρχου τετηρημένων, ὡς ἔφαμεν, ἐν Ῥόδῳ διαστάσεων τὴν διωπτευμένην τῷ αὐτῷ ϱϡζ′ ἔτει ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου τελευτῆς κατ' Αἰγυπτίους Παῦνὶ ιζ′ ὥρας θ′ καὶ γ′ (…)

(...) we have again selected **from the distances [between sun and moon] observed by Hipparchus, as already mentioned, in Rhodes**, the observation he made in the same year [as the preceeding one], being the 197th year from the death of Alexander, Payni [X] 17 in the Egyptian calendar [-125 July 7], at 9 1/3 hours. (...) (Transl. after G. Toomer)

In a fourth case, Ptolemy quotes an observation made in Rhodes without naming its author, but we know from another passage of the *Almagest* (p. 525 Heiberg) that Hipparchus used this observation to determine the period of lunar eclipses, and it is therefore generally assumed that he made the observation himself.

Hipparchus of Nicaea, *On the moon's motion in latitude*, Fragment 22 Dicks = Ptolemy, *Almagest*, I, p. 477, 3 sq. (27 January -140)

Πάλιν δὴ τῷ λζ′ ἔτει τῆς τρίτης κατὰ Κάλιππον περιόδου, ὅ ἐστιν χζ′ ἀπὸ Ναβονασσάρου, κατ' Αἰγυπτίους Τυβὶ β′ εἰς τὴν γ′ ὥρας ε′ ἀρχομένης ἐν Ῥόδῳ ἤρξατο ἐκλείπειν ἡ σελήνη καὶ ἐπεσκοτήθη τὸ πλεῖστον ἀπὸ νότου δακτύλους γ.

Again, in the thirty-seventh year of the Third Kallippic Cyclee, which is the 507th from Nabonassar, Tybi [V] 2/3 in the Egyptian calendar [-140 Jan. 27/28], at the beginning of the fifth hour [of night] **in Rhodes**, the moon began to be eclipsed; the maximum obscuration was 3 digits from the south. (Transl. after G. Toomer)

In fact, the assumption that Hipparchus is the author of this observation calls for an important qualification, to account for the fact that Ptolemy did not name Hipparchus as its author in this case, although he could have (as demonstrated by the three instances of observations for which he did specify Hipparchus' authorship). While it is plausible that Hipparchus chose for this purpose an observation that he considered to be highly reliable, this may well have been an observation which was made by an individual who worked with him, such as a fellow astronomer, a student or a servant. That other individuals may have made astronomical observations at Hipparchus' behest is in turn suggested by the recent discovery of fragments from Hipparchus' Star Catalogue. Although we do not have explicit ancient sources about how Hipparchus' catalogue was compiled, the precision of the extant fragments implies a highly labor-intensive observational program that may have been beyond the power of one man. Be that as it may, even if this observation was not made by Hipparchus, the fact that it was made in Rhodes and then deemed by Hipparchus reliable enough for him to use in his calculations can be taken as further evidence of Hipparchus' connection with Rhodes.

Accordingly, there is secure evidence of Hipparchus' connection with Rhodes from -140 to his latest dated observations in -125, although observations explicitly performed by Hipparchus in Rhodes are limited to a three-year timespan from -127 to -140. The argument for his presence in Rhodes turns on the inference that his sequence of equinox observations, also reported by Ptolemy, must have been made in one and the same place as the observations discussed above:

Hipparchus of Nicaea, *On the displacement of the tropical and equinoctial points*, Fragment 5 Dicks = Ptolemy, *Almagest*, I, p. 194, 3 – 196, 21

Now since Hipparchus is somewhat disturbed by the suspicion, derived from a series of observations which he made in close succession, that this same revolution [of the sun] is not of constant length, we shall try to show succinctly that there is nothing to be disturbed about here. (...) For, in his treatise 'On the displacement of the solsticial and equinoctial points', he first sets out those summer and winter solstices which he considers to have been observed accurately, in succession [Ptolemy mentions the solstice observations but leaves out the details]. Then he sets out, first, the times of autumnal equinoxes which he considers to have been very accurately observed: [from -161 Sept. 27 to -142 Sept. 26]. Next he sets out the spring equinoxes which have been observed with a similar accuracy: [from -145 Mar. 24 to -127 Mar. 23]. (Transl. after G. Toomer)

Some have doubted that the earliest observations in this series were performed by Hipparchus, because the whole series would span more than thirty years.[5] However, a recently published papyrus contains a solstice observation explicitly performed by Hipparchus and dating from 26 June -157:

P. Fouad 267A, ll. 11-12 recto (published by Fournet and Tihon 2014)

(...) the observation made by Hipparchus in the 166th year (counting) from (the death) of Alexander, Pachon 28th, [missing] hour of day (...) (transl. A. Jones)

This new text provides strong evidence that the complete series of solstice and equinox observations reported by Ptolemy, starting in -161, originated with Hipparchus. In order to optimize accuracy, it would have been desirable for all of these observations to be made with the same instrument, such as an equatorial ring, in the same place. We may thus infer from Hipparchus' latest observations, which were certainly made in Rhodes, that the earlier observations in the series were also made there.

5 See e.g. G.J. Toomer, *Ptolemy's Almagest*, p. 133, n. 8.

This is consistent with the fact that in the *Commentary on the Phenomena of Eudoxus and Aratos*, the only text of Hipparchus that has come down to us through the medieval manuscript tradition, he writes that he is working under the hypothesis of a 36° latitude, which is a very near approximation of the latitude of Rhodes:

> Hipparchus, *Commentary on Eudoxus' and Aratus' Phenomena*, p. 182, 19 – 184, 2 Manitius
>
> ἑξῆς δὲ ὑποτάξω περὶ ἑκάστου τῶν ἀπλανῶν ἄστρων ἐπὶ κεφαλαίου, τίνι τε τῶν δώδεκα ζῳδίων συνανατέλλει καὶ συγκαταδύνει, καὶ ἀπὸ πόστης μοίρας τοῦ ζῳδίου ἀρξάμενον ἕως πόστης μοίρας ἕσχατον ἀνατέλλει ἢ [συγκατα] δύνει ἐν τοῖς περὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα τόποις καὶ καθόλου ὅπου ἐστὶν ἡ μεγίστη ἡμέρα ὡρῶν ἰσημερινῶν ιδ΄ καὶ ἡμιωρίου.
>
> In the following, I will show for every constellation, in a summary form, which of the twelve signs of the zodiac it rises and sets with, and with which degree of the given sign it starts to rise or set and with which degree it finishes, for the regions of Greece and in general for **every place where the longest day lasts 14 and a half hours (sc. a latitude of 36°).**

While it is possible that Hipparchus assumed a latitude of 36° for other reasons, the evidence reviewed above strongly suggests that this hypothesis was due to the fact that Rhodes was the center of Hipparchus' astronomical activity at least for the period from -161 to -125.

There is a single strand of evidence that places Hipparchus' astronomical activity elsewhere. In his *Phases*, Ptolemy writes that Hipparchus performed meteorological observations in Bithynia:

> Ptolemy, *Phases*, p. 26, 23 – 27, 11
>
> Καὶ τούτων ἀνέγραψα τὰς ἐπισημασίας καὶ κατέταξα κατά τε Αἰγυπτίους καὶ Δοσίθεον, Φίλιππον, Κάλλιππον, Εὐκτήμονα, Μέτωνα, Κόνωνα, Μητρόδωρον, Εὔδοξον, Καίσαρα, Δημόκριτον, Ἵππαρχον. τούτων δὲ Αἰγύπτιοι ἐτήρησαν παρ' ἡμῖν, Δοσίθεος δ' ἐν Κῷ, Φίλιππος ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ καὶ Λοκρίδι καὶ Φωκίδι, Κάλλιππος ἐν Ἑλλησπόντῳ, Μέτων καὶ Εὐκτήμων Ἀθήνησιν καὶ ταῖς Κυκλάσι καὶ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ Θρᾴκῃ, Κόνων δὲ καὶ Μητρόδωρος ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ καὶ Σικελίᾳ, Εὔδοξος ἐν Ἀσίᾳ καὶ Σικελίᾳ καὶ Ἰταλίᾳ, Καῖσαρ ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ, Ἵππαρχος ἐν Βιθυνίᾳ, Δημόκριτος ἐν Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ Θρᾴκῃ.
>
> I have compiled and ordered their weather-signs (sc. marked by the stars previously listed by Ptolemy) according to the Egyptians, Dositheus, Phillippus, Callippus, Euctemon, Meton, Conon, Metrodorus, Eudoxus, Caesar, Democritus and Hipparchus. Among these authors, the Egyptians made their observations here, Dositheus in Cos, Philippus in the Peloponnese and Locris and Phocis, Callippus in Hellespont, Meton and Euctemon in Athens, the Cyclads, Macedonia and Thrace, Conon and Metrodorus in Italy and Sicily, Eudoxus in Asia and Sicily and Italy, Caesar in Italy, Hipparchus in Bithynia, Democritus in Macedonia and Thrace.

Bithynia is the region of Hipparchus' birth-place Nicaea, and it is possible that these meteorological observations date to his youth in Nicaea. However, another possible interpretation is that Hipparchus continued to have ties with Nicaea and also did astronomical work there, despite much of his work being conducted in Rhodes. Indeed, this would be consistent with what we know of other ancient astronomers such as Eudoxus of Cnidus, who despite founding a school in Cyzicus is said to have had an 'observatory' in Cnidus and whose political involvement with his native city was honored by a municipal decree.[6]

In sum, while the explicit evidence for Hipparchus' presence and activity in Rhodes is limited to the years -127 to -125, there is every reason to assume that he started working there as soon as -161. This does not preclude the possibility that Hipparchus maintained ties with, and worked in, Nicaea during that period, which may be supported by a possible reading of the passage from Ptolemy's *Phases*. Finally, because we have very little biographical information about Hipparchus, it is also possible that he traveled more widely during the period in question, although there is no positive evidence for this.[7]



6 See V. Gysembergh, *Eudoxe de Cnide. Témoignages et fragments*, Paris, 2024, pp. XXI-XXVI.

7 For the equinox of 24 March 146 BCE (Almagest III.1, p. 135 Manitius), sometimes misunderstood to have been observed in Alexandria by Hipparchus, the observation made using the ring in Alexandria is reported to differ by five hours from the one made by Hipparchus himself.

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Byzantine Rhodes
from the Justinian Era to the Hospitallers (ca. 500-1309s)

Introduction: Rhodes and the Byzantine Mediterranean

For the Byzantines, or more accurately for the eastern *Romaioi*, [1] islands have always been characterized as peripheral and marginal lands.[2] Indeed, in the literary and documentary sources spanning the whole Byzantine millennium, large or small islands and archipelagoes constantly emerge as distant outposts, ideal places for reclusive monks[3] or -more often than not- for political and religious outcasts the Byzantine court wants to exile from the capital.[4] In this respect, one should notice that "It is not only the distance from the continent that determines the choice of the island as a place of imprisonment. Here, the possibility of political control by the central power plays a fundamental role (surveillance and immediate availability of the prisoner)."[5] This allows us to stress the fundamental contrast between islands and continents, highlighting how islands, despite their proximity to the mainland, can become inaccessible due to unpredictable travel conditions, thereby fostering a sense of mental distance.[6] As it will be seen, such a contrast will resurface in the case of a small but strategic island like Rhodes, located within sight of the Anatolian south-western coastline. Moreover, it prompts a further preliminary methodological remark. It has to do with the scale or better the size of the Mediterranean insular spaces defined by the sheer girt of the insular coastline.[7] In other (geo-morphological) words, modern scholars have separated the Braudelian micro-continents like Sicily, Crete, and Cyprus from the pulverized archipelagic Aegean world of which Rhodes was an integral part.[8] But was this also the case for the Byzantines? Or rather were islands basically the same to any Byzantine chronicler, hagiographer, or writer as marginal to the existential (for the court and the elites) political and military games played at the center of the empire (Constantinople)?

1 For the Byzantines as eastern Romans (*romaioi)* see A. Kaldellis, *The New Roman Empire. A History of Byzantium*. Oxford: OUP, 2024, 11-33.

2 S. Cosentino, "Mentality, Technology and Commerce: Shipping Amongst Mediterranean Islands in Late Antiquity and Beyond." In *The Insular System of Byzantine Mediterranean. Archaeology and History*, Enrico Zanini, Philippe Pergola, and Demetrios Michaelidis (eds.). Oxford: BAR, 2013, 64-78, at 65-8.

3 G. Varinoğlu,"'Imagine there is no (is)land': Conceptualizing Byzantine Islands in Southern Asia Minor." In *Identity and the other in Byzantium. Papers from the Fifth International Sevgi Gönül Byzantine Studies Symposium*, Koray Durak and Ivana Jevtić (eds.). Istanbul: Anamed, 2019, 93–113, at 101.

4 H. Evert-Kapessowa, "L'Archipel de Marmara comme Lieu d'Exil." *Byzantinische Forschungen,* V (1977): 27–34; R. Estangüi Gómez, "La reclusion politique à Byzance. L'exil dans l'île de Lemnos (mi-XIV- mi-XV siècles)." *Hypothèses* 2008/1 (11): 173–182. See also E. Malamut, *Les îles de l'Empire byzantin. VIIIe–XIIe siècles*, Vol I. Paris: Boccard, 1988, 175-78, and F. Bulgarella, "Bisanzio e le Isole." In *Forme e Caratteri della Presenza Bizantina nel Mediterraneo Orientale: La Sardegna (secoli VI-XI)* Paolo Corrias (ed.). Cagliari: Condaghes, 2012, 33-41.

5 Estangüi Gómez, "La reclusion politique," 174.

6 Malamut, *Les îles*, I, 31-33.

7 C. Constantakopoulou, *The Dance of Islands. Insularity, Networks, the Athenian Empire, and the Aegean World*. Oxford: OUP, 2007, 9.

8 F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. 2nd edition. Los Angeles: UCP, 1996, 150; Malamut, *Les îles*, 51-81

As will be seen, a possible answer to those questions forces us to examine the main ontological characteristics of an island as caught in the opposition between insularity and connectivity. As Malamut concludes: "we need to oppose the world of the islands, which form active network of communications and exchange, to the world of the island, which can be a terre fermée, a world closed to its surroundings."[9] Islands are defined by the encounter of two opposites: land and sea; nevertheless as the sea could be regarded as a barrier dramatically separating them from the mainland, one should consider its role as a highway connecting insular spaces with the lands around them.[10] Indeed, Mediterranean islands exist along a continuum of connectivity, ranging from relative isolation from dominant political and economic systems to near-total integration within them.[11] In this respect, one should also stress how insularity has often a negative meaning which stems from the geographical conditions and implies socially constructed boundaries such as ghettos, enclaves or other borders between countries.[12] On the contrary, connectivity could be regarded as the main force behind social change, a "corrupting" power shaping local insular (or better maritime) identities and communities.[13] This dichotomy seems particularly relevant in the Aegean Sea, as it is dotted by innumerable islands and archipelagoes (in particular on its northern half) which however, constantly remained within sight of one another or the nearby coast.[14]

With this in mind, one should consider Rhodes as the ideal place to examine not only the importance of connectivity (as opposed to isolation) in molding the political, economic, and socio-cultural trajectories of a small island vis-à-vis those of the mainland. As partially mentioned already, Rhodes is located a few miles to the south of the Dorian peninsula (tod. Datça in Turkey) jutting out of Caria. It is strategically poised to control the access to the Aegean sea from south-east and was regarded as a crucial outpost for reaching Crete by skirting the western Anatolian coast.[15]

Nevertheless, the history of Rhodes has been deeply intertwined with that of its *peraia*.[16] The Greek term *peraia* refers to mainland territories controlled by islands across the sea; [17] in the case of Byzantine Rhodes, Caria remained administratively and economically bound to it from the creation of the so-called *Quaestura Exercitus* by the emperor Justinian I (527-565) through the establishment of the naval Carabisianoi (in the seventh century) and Kybyrraiotai (in the eighth century) themes, and until the mid-twelfth century.[18] As I will return to the political history of the island and these institutions in a few moments, I would also like to stress that, Rhodes was also geographically integrated in the Dodecanese archipelago which include several smaller islands encompassing the strait separating Caria and southern Anatolia from Crete.[19] Focusing on the archipelagic spatial relations (the so-called archipelagic turn) helps us to challenge some of the conceptual limitations and biases ensconced in `conceptions of insular spaces as simply resulting from the encounter of land and sea. This allows us to explore a topological frame which involve the relation between and among islands.[20] Indeed, if "islands embody a "contradictory geography, their spatialities are characterized typically by three relatively durable topological and binary relations: land and water, island and continent/mainland, and island and island."[21]

With this tripartite topology in mind, it is possible to see Rhodes, on a par with other "large" archipelagic Aegean islands like Naxos, Paros or Samos,[22] through the analytical lens of a triple liminality which directly relate to, reverberate onto and define its political, military, economic and socio-cultural historical trajectories. Such trajectories will be examined through the analysis of both literary and documentary sources and (more importantly) archaeology and material culture. We should admit that both these types of sources are more numerous for the early part of the period covered in this contribution (early Byzantine or Late Antiquity: i.e. roughly between the sixth and the late seventh century) although recently better and better published archaeology has helped to shed new light on the so-called Byzantine Dark Ages.[23] Nevertheless a recent ad refined analysis of material culture (mainly ceramics and coins) has allowed to shed new and resilient light on the eighth and ninth century, dispelling the traditional historiographical narrative of a Dark Age followed by a re-birth of the socio-economic and political life in the Aegean in the tenth and eleventh century.[24]

9 Malamut, *Les îles*, II, 598.

10 M. Fitzpatrick, T. C. Rick , and J. M. Erlandson, " Recent Progress, Trends, and Developments in Island and Coastal Archaeology." *The Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology*, 10/ (2015): 3-27 at 9.

11 J. M. Gordon and A. Kouremenos, "Introduction. Mediterranean Archaeology of Insularity in the Age of Globalization." In *Mediterranean Archaeology of Insularity in the Age of Globalization,* A. Kouremenos and J. M. Gordon (eds.). Oxford: Oxbow, 2020, 1-21, at 3.

12 G. Baldacchino and W. Veenendal, "Society and Community," in *The Routledge International Handbook of Island Studies*, G. Baldacchino (ed.). New York-London, 2022), 338-53, at 338-9.

13 P. Horden and Nicholas Purcell. *The Corrupting Sea. A Study in Mediterranean History*. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000, 14-15; 74-77; M. Harpster, *Reconstructing a Maritime Past.* London-New York: Routledge, 2023.

14 E. Malamut, "Les Îles de la Mar Égée entre l'Antiquitè et Byzance." *Revue des Études Anciennes,* 103 (2001): 25-48; K. Roussos, "Tracing the Cycladic Settled Landscape in Late Antiquity and the Early Byzantine Period (Fourth to Ninth Century AD): The Islands of Paros and Naxos." In *Archaeology of a World of Changes. Late Roman and Early Byzantine Architecture, Sculpture and Landscapes*, Dominique Moreau et al. (eds.). Oxford: BAR, 2020, 117-36.

15 Horden and Purcell. *The Corrupting Sea*, 138. For the prevailing winds and currents (and the best conditions to navigate around and through Rhodes) see J. Pryor and E. Jeffreys, *The Age of the Δρομων. The Byzantine Navy ca. 500-1204*. Leiden: Brill, 2006, 336.

16 G. Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese and the Eastern Aegean Islands in Late Antiquity.* Oxford: OUP, 2016, 3; Horden and Purcell. *The Corrupting Sea*, 133-136.

17 L. Sicking, "The dichotomy of insularity: islands between isolation and connectivity in medieval and early modern Europe, and beyond." *The International Journal of Maritime History*, Vol. 26/3 (2014): 494–511, at 507.

18 Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 9-12.

19 For a geographical description of the Aegean archipelagoes (the Cyclades, the Sporades and Dodecanese) and the terminology used by the Byzantine sources see Malamut, "Les îles de la mer Égée," 42-3 and (for the northern half of the Aegean) J. Koder, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini 10 Aigaion Pelagos (Die nördliche Ägäis*). Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1998.

20 G. Baldacchino, "Preface." In *The Routledge International Handbook of Island Studies*, Geodfrey Baldacchino (ed.). New York-London: Routledge, 2022, xix-xxxv, at xxix.

21 E. Stratford, G. Baldacchino, E. McMahon, C. Farbotko, and A. Hardwood, "Envisioning the Archipelago." Island Studies Journal, 6/2 (2011): 113-130, at 124.

22 A.Vionis, "Island Responses in the Byzantine Aegean: Naxos under the lens of current archaeological research," in *Naxos and the Byzantine Aegean: Insular Responses to Regional Change*, Jim Crow and David Hill (eds.). Athens: Norwegian Institute, 2018, 61-82.

23 M. Decker, *The Byzantine Dark Ages*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016; N. Poulou, "Digging in the Dark: The islands of the Aegean and Crete from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages (late 6th-9th c. CE.)." In *Archaeology of the Mediterranean during Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Angelo Castrorao Barba, Davide Tanasi, and Roberto Micicchè (eds). Gainesville: UFP, 2023, 13–52; M. Cassis, *Medieval Archaeology in the Eastern Roman World*. Leeds: ARC, 2024.

24 For the traditional narrative see in particular Malamut, *Les Îles*, 61-104; for a re-evaluation of the Dark Ages in Greece and the Aegean see Cassis, *Medieval Archaeology*, 27-64; for the tenth to eleventh century economic trajectories of the Aegean see C. Wickham, *The Donkey and the Boat. Reinterpreting the Mediterranean Economy, 950-1180.* Oxford, OUP, 2023, 278-89.

In concluding this preliminary section I will now move to the different chronological period of the history of Byzantine Rhodes. As partially mentioned already, I will try to show how the changing political and administrative (as well as socio-cultural and military) role Rhodes played within the empire clearly stemmed from and were prompted by two interrelated geographical, spatial, and economic factors: its strategic position across the trans-Mediterranean shipping routes and its preeminent economic role in the interaction with its *peraia*. In this regard, the next sections will mainly use the material evidence as a contingent frame for reconstructing the fate of the island as mainly contingent upon the ability of Byzantine insular spaces at large to navigate throughout the difficulties characterizing the transition from a unified Roman and Late Antique exchange system to a more regionalized and localized Medieval Mediterranean.[25]

Rhodes and the Late Antique Mediterranean exchange system (ca. 500- ca. 700)

As partially mentioned already, Rhodes was part and parcel of the imperial Mediterranean political and economic network and integrated in the shipping routes linking the central and eastern halves of the Great Sea as hinging on Constantinople. In fact, in the Long Late Antiquity (i.e. roughly between the reign of Justinian I and the arrival of the Arabs), its pivotal role mainly owed to the extraordinarily unified political, military, and economic outlook of the Mediterranean underpinned by the all-encompassing fiscal system as expressed by the *annona civica* and *militaris.* The former subsidized the formidable request of grain and wine to be doled out in Constantinople since its (re)-foundation by Constantine in 330s, the latter supplying the Roman army as quartered along the Danubian limes.[26] "The fiscal system was not only the main source of income for public expenses, but also primarily fuel for commercial exchange. It was the *annona* circuit that allowed for the formation of an integrated exchange system among different regions of the empire. The *annona* had organized a sophisticated and narrowly integrated network that ultimately linke 'tax producing regions' and 'tax consuming regions".[27] Such network had its political and administrative sublimation in the creation of the *Quaestura Exercitus* in 536 which allocated the tax revenues of Cyprus, Cyclades, Caria to provision the troops stationed in the Balkan regions of Scythia and Moesia.[28]

Although the new institution strengthened the economic contacts between Rhodes and its *peraia*, the role the island played in long-distance exchange networks and, in particular, the *annona* routes did not only predicate upon the importance of its agricultural resources and those of Caria, although a possible peak of rural expansion can be suggested in the mid-sixth century;[29] rather, they also depended on its maritime capacity and the strategic location of its harbours (in particular those of the city of Rhodes on the northern tip of the island)[30] along the shipping routes linking Alexandria (and the Palestinian coast) with Constantinople.[31] This should come as no surprise for already between the first and fifth century nautical text included Rhodes in the most important and better documented eastern Mediterranean open-sea routes.[32] The pivotal role Rhodes played across trans-Mediterranean shipping routes is also well exemplified by the travel logs of pilgrims like Paola who traveled across the Aegean from Modone via the Cyclades touching upon Rhodes on her way to the Holy Land in the late fourth century.[33] In the same breath as Paola we should remember bishops like Porphyrius of Gaza whose sea journey from Caesarea to Constantinople had him stopping in Rhodes at the beginning of the fifth century. "In the remote parts thereof, [he met] a man named Procopius, who is now numbered with the angels; for he fell asleep five years ago, having lived a blameless life in fasting and watching and utter poverty. He had also the gift of prophecy and the power of casting out devils;"[34] Similarly Saint Nicholas of Sion sailed back from the Holy Land to Constantinople via Rhodes in the mid sixth century as pilgrim flasks point to the presence of pilgrims traveling to and from Ephesos and Egypt.[35] Moreover, as Deligiannakis cogently shown, the Aegean-Egyptian link is substantiated by literary sources like "the letter sent by the theologian and orator Procopios of Gaza to his brother Zacharia, provincial governor of Rhodes: revealing timber trade (strong commercial links) between Rhodes and Gaza."[36]

Ceramics bolster the picture drawn via literary sources as it also further shows that the eastern Mediterranean connections were predominant in circulation of imported ceramics (with the north African ones playing a rather minimal role as it will be seen in a few moments).[37] Sixth-century brick production in Rhodes is documented (by their stamps) as supplying the fabric of Justinian Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.[38] It is likely that the same workshops also produced the Rhodian lamps of rather crude quality documented for the period fourth to mid-sixth century as in the Justinianic

25 D. Valérien, "The Medieval Mediterranean." In *A Companion to Mediterranean History*, Peregrine Horden and Sharon Kinoshita (eds). London: Wiley and Sons, 2014, 77-91

26 J. Durliat, "L'approvisionnement de Constantinople. In *Constantinople and its Hinterland. Papers from the Twenty-seventh Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Oxford, April 1993*. Cyril Mango and Gilbert Dagron (eds.). New York-London: Routledge, 1995, 19-33; E. Rizos, "Remarks on the logistics and infrastructure of the annona militaris in eastern Mediterranean and Aegean areas." *Antiquité Tardive*, 23 (2015): 287-302.

27 P. Tedesco, "Rome's Fall and the Dawn of the Middle Ages." In *Writings on the Tributary State and Commercial Capitalism,* Paolo Tedesco (ed.). Napoli: ESI, 2024, 19-37, at 33. On the *annona* circuit see Wickham, *Framing*, 76-91.

28 P. Sarris, *Justinian. Emperor, Soldier, Saint.* London: BB, 2023, 258; Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 8.

29 Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 89-91.

30 A.Katsioti, " Rhodes-Constantinople, 6th Century to 1523 AD: A Two-Way Traffic." In *Proceedings of the Symposium on City Ports from Aegean to the Black Sea. Medieval-Modern Networks 22nd-29th August 2015* Flora Karagianni and Ufuk Kocabaş (eds). Istanbul: Koç, 2015, 179-190 at 182-4.

31 S. Cosentino, "Pillars of Empire: The Economic Role of the Large Islands of the Mediterranean from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 76 (2022): 245-80; K. Manoussou-Ntella, "Byzantine Rhodes. The Evolution of a Fortified Harbour-city in the Eastern Mediterranean (4th to 12th c.)." In *Ideas of Byzantium Harbours and Anchorages of a Mediterranean Empire*, Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, Taxiarchis G. Kolias, and Falko Daim (eds). Mainz: VRGZ, 2021, 167-79, at 171.

32 Cosentino, "Mentality," 68-9.

33 P. Maraval, *Récits des premiers pèlerins chrétiens au Proche-Orient (IVe-VIIe siècle)*. Paris: CERF, 1998, 143-64.

34 *Mark the Deacon: Life of Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza*, G.F. Hill (ed.). Oxford: Clarendon, 1913, 34.

35 *Vita S. Nicolai Sionitae (BHG 1347), 62.1–7.* A. Katsioti and N. Mastrochristos, "Aspects of Pilgrimage in the Eastern Mediterranean During the Early Byzantine Period. Archaeological Evidence from Rhodes." In *Für Seelenheil und Lebensglück Das byzantinische Pilgerwesen und seine Wurzeln,* Despoina Ariantzi and Ina Eichner (eds.). Mainz: VRGZ, 2018, 83-96.

36 Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 90.

37 id., 91-3.

38 Katsioti, "Rhodes-Constantinople," 181.

era first Asia Minor and later Samian productions colonized the Rhodian markets.[39] In a similar vein, Phocaean Red Slip the most prevalent type of tableware imported in Rhodes (as produced along the western Aegean coast[40]), whereas African Red Slip wares followed the broader Aegean trend of imported fine tableware, peaking in the fourth to early fifth century before declining, only to recover with long-distance fiscal shipments to Constantinople after Africa's reconquest.[41] In tune with the aforementioned evidence, the fact that Rhodes seems to have primarily imported Late Roman 1 type (from now on LRA1) wine amphorae from Cilicia and Northern Syria .[42] Indeed, Large shipments of wine were transported from eastern Mediterranean to the north, as evidenced by the three sixth-century shipwrecks in the eastern Aegean (off the coast of Knidos and Chios) as possibly associated with the annona transports.[43] Finally, one should also consider the unusually high percentage of coins minted in Alexandria (although the large majority of finds was minted in Constantinople) as pointing to the fact that Rhodes was primarily included eastern Mediterranean fiscal and commercial circuit which .[44]

Parallel to the economic development of the island in the sixth century, one should also document the transformation of the urban fabric, landscape, and planning of the city of Rhodes (one of the two main urban centers together with Lindos on the southern half of the island). Located on the northmost tip of the island, the city boasted an Hippodamian urban grid with residential clusters arranged near the two harbors and the acropolis. At least eight churches were built (of which four have been systematically excavated) between the fifth and the late sixth century. These monumental structures sometimes encroach on orthogonal roads as the city was not fortified because the ancient walls were spoliated for construction materials.[45] The city was the seat of the Metropolitan see of the Cyclades archipelago as several of its archbishops are documented as paying an important role in religious disputes between the fifth and the sixth century as they signed the acts of the fifth (553) and sixth (680-1) ecumenical council.[46]

Nevertheless, one of the most famous bishops of the island was Hesaias who -according to the ninth-century Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor, was first deposed and then castrated as accused of pederasty by emperor Justinian: "[In 528/9] he [Hesaias] and Alexander bishop of Diospolis in Thrace were castrated and paraded publicly while the crier shouted out, 'As bishops, you are not to abuse your holy dress.'"[47] One should, however, mention that Heasias was not the only example of unorthodox behavior and frequentation as often common occurrence in small islands. Indeed, one can frequently document the fascination for solitary insular life on the part of early religious communities which founded hermitage and monasteries on other insular outposts like for instance Pseira off the coast of Crete, Marettimo and Pantelleria around Sicily, and Cabrera in Spain.[48] As mentioned already, a solitary monk was documented as living and praying in Rhodes in the early fifth century although he clearly remained in direct communication with the court in Constantinople.[49] In fact, one can also see isolation pairing with connectivity in allowing unorthodox frequentation on islands mainly owing to their centrality along shipping routes as documented by the preaching of a Miaphysite monk in Rhodes 541 while on his way to Asia Minor.[50]

As already hinted at, isolation was nevertheless central in turning Rhodes into an ideal place of exile as shown by the relegation of the presbiter Sabbatios, leader of the heretic Novatians in 413, and above all by the tragic end of empress " (the second wife of emperor Heraclius (610-41).[51] Her fate as member of the ruling dynasty well showcases the dichotomic character of an insular space like Rhodes. Indeed, the island was central to the bid to the throne staged by Heraclius against emperor Phocas in 608-10: a contemporary chronicle (the *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati*) witnesses to the support the usurper received from local sailmakers on his way to Constantinople.[52] Moreover, it soon turned into a strategic naval hub when Heraclius tried to countermand the Arab invasion of Egypt in the early 640s: an attempt which the late seventh-century Egyptian Chronicle of the Patriarch John of Nikiu describes as unsuccessful for it was marred by political rivalries in view of the impending succession to the dying emperor.[53] When Heraclius died in 641 and his complex family situation leading to a confrontation between two factions resulting in the enthronement of Constans II (641-668) -the son of Heraclius's first wife- as new emperor.[54] "He had Martina and her three sons, Heraclius, David, and Marinus, escorted forth with insolence, and he stripped them of the imperial crown, and he had their noses cut off, and he sent them in exile to Rhodes."[55] It is fascinating to see how the events heralding the dawn of Heraclius's reign and its rather catastrophic sunset (with the Arab conquest of Syria-Palestine and Egypt and the creation of the Caliphate in Damascus), embodied the two contradicting ontological poles characterizing Rhodes as well as any insular space: as connecting hub it was central to the triumphal naval expedition that took Heraclius

39 A. Katsioti, "Aspects of the economic and commercial activity of Rhodes during late antiquity: The case of lamps." In *Sailing the Aegean. Readings on the economy and trade routes,* Charikleia Papageorgiadou-Banis and Angeliki Giannikouri (eds.), Athens: Du Boccard, 2008, 189-208; A. Katsioti, "The dating of the "Samian type" lamps (6th-7th c. AD). The evidence of Rhodes, Greece." In Greek, Roman and Byzantine Lamps from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. Acts of the 5th International Lychnological Congress («LVMEN!», Sibiu, 15th-19th of September, 2015), Laurent Charznovski (ed.), Dremil Lafage: EM, 2019, 125-38.

40 See https://www.levantineceramics.org/wares/751-phocaean-red-slip-ware-lrc with further bibliography (retrieved on 15 February 2025).

41 Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 92-3.

42 ibid.

43 Demesticha and Zavagno, ""Wherever waves can roll, and winds can blow."Late Antique Cyprus and the State provision systems in the eastern Mediterranean," forthcoming.

44 A.M. Kasdagli, "The Provenance of Coins found in Rhodes AD. 498-1522." In *Sailing the Aegean* (above n. 38), 238-55. M. Michaeilidou, "The City of Rhodes." In *Heaven and Earth Cities and countryside in Byzantine Greece Vol.* 2 Jenny Albani and Eugenia Chalkia (eds.). Athens: Benaki, 2013, 241-52 (at 243).

45 Manoussou-Ntella, "Byzantine Rhodes," 169-70.

46 Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 15-16; E. Kollias, *The Medieval City of Rhodes and the Palace of the Grand Master*. Athens: Ministery of Culture, 2005, 43.

47 *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (eds.). Oxford: OUP, 1997, 62. See also *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys and Roger Scott (eds.). Melbourne : AABS, 1986, 253.

48 On islands as ideal place for monastic life see P. Rainbird, *The Archaeology of Islands*. Cambridge: CUP, 2000, 15 and Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 31-33.

49 See above, note 35.

50 Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 15.

51 ibid.

52 "Jacob himself was from the East by birth, as he confided to me. He did many bad things to Christians. And in the city of Rhodes, as a Green with the sail-stitchers, he did bad things to those Blues fleeing from the East. And he betrayed them to the sail-stitchers as people of Bonosos and they were cudgeled." (V. Déroche, "Doctrina Jacobi." *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991): 71-219, at 216-7). On the *Doctrina Jacobi nuper baptizati* see J. Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century.* Oxford: OUP, 2010, 155.

53 *The Chronicle of John Coptic Bishop of Nikiu. Being a History of Egypt before and during the Arab Conquest*, Roger H. Charles (ed.). Amsterdam: Philo, 1918, 185-192.

54 Kaldellis, *The New Roman Empire*, 386-7.

55 *The Chronicle of John Coptic Bishop of Nikiu*, 192.

from Africa to Constantinople via Cyprus and the Aegean archipelago; as isolated outpost, it was regarded as the safest place were to banish (and punish) two members of the imperial dynasty.

It is worth noticing that the exile of Martina also symbolically marked a turning point in the history of both large Byzantine Mediterranean islands as well as the Aegean Sea as Rhodes was engulfed in the naval confrontation between the Byzantine and the Arab fleet culminating with the three sieges of Constantinople (between 650s and 717/8).[56] In 655 Constans II himself barely escaped death at the Battle of the Masts off the coast of Lycia, when the Arab fleet annihilated the Byzantine navy.[57] However, this did not brough about the end of the centrality of the sea for the empire. Rather it prompted the narrowing of the maritime horizons with the Aegean continuing as a zone of active interregional trading whose structural elements (mainly an urban hierarchy around its coast and its maritime proximity to Constantinople) remained in place and contributed to its economic boom in the so-called long eleventh century.[58]

Rhodes in a fragmented Mediterranean (ca. 650-ca. 900)

As seen in the previous section Rhodes offset its productive deficit (although complemented with that of its Carian *peraia*) by its pivotal role along the main routes of circulation of goods as also enhanced by the prevalent shipping routes of the Mediterranean navigation.[59] In fact, its geo-strategic importance allowed the Rhodian economy to remain as resilient even after the end of the *annona civica* and *militaris* for -as Cosentino concludes: "in the seventh and eighth century Byzantine islands (in general) seem to remain an economic space relatively more developed than northern and central Italy, the Balkans or Asia Minor."[60] Nevertheless, the fragmentation of a formerly fiscally unified economic space was further heightened by the arrival of the armies (and the establishment of a functional and belligerent) navy of the Caliph.[61]

This entailed the militarization of the local society and the upgrading of the defensive structures as shown by the walls encircling the acropolis of Rhodes as part of a late-seventh century imperially-sponsored program aiming at fortifying other (but larger) insular urban sites like Gortyn, Eleutherna, and Polyrrhenia in Crete, Salamis-Constantia, Kyrenia, Amathos, and Paphos in Cyprus, Cagliari in Sardinia, and Siracusa and Catania in Sicily.[62] The Byzantine fortifications of the city of Rhodes, were built in the second half of the seventh century and enclosed a rectangular area of the Hellenistic acropolis located between its commercial and the military harbors.[63] They featured a main wall, outer wall, and moat on the south, west, and north sides, with irregularly spaced rectangular towers.[64] As parts of the fortifications are still visible in the structure of so-called Palace of the Great Master (as built in the fourteenth century), Arab sources possibly bespeak of the existence of the Byzantine *kastron* (possibly a refuge last defensive stronghold), when describing the conquest of Rhodes on the part of the army of the future Umayyad Caliph Mu'āwiya, in 653-654.[65] This expedition was meant to neutralize on of the most strategic insular outposts (together with Crete and Cyprus which were both raided in the same year) along the naval route leading to Constantinople.[66] Indeed, the capital was unsuccessfully sieged, even if the fall of Rhodes to the Arabs is mainly recorded by Byzantine chronicles because of the final demise of the famous Colossus.[67] Theophanes states that: "In this year Mauias (sic.) took Rhodes and cast down the Colossus of Rhodes 1,360 years after its erection. It was bought by a Jewish merchant of Edessa, who loaded the bronze on 900 camels."[68] The episode has also been reported by the tenth-century *De Administrando Imperio* written (or better sponsored) by emperor Constantine VII Porphyroggenetos (945-959).[69] Nevertheless, in recent years both Conrad and Woods have rediscussed the alleged destruction concluding that Theophilus's claim that the Arabs destroyed the Colossus is highly unlikely. The notion that they were responsible for its destruction seems to have originated from local Syrian folklore, which held that remnants of certain monuments or structures contained salvaged materials from the statue.[70]

A second, and more decisive Arab raid against Rhodes is recorded in 672/3, once again during a siege to the Byzantine capital (672-4).[71]

> "The later third/ninth century historian of the conquests, al-Balādhurī, and in the universal historian of a generation or so later, al-Tabārī, refer that a strong Arab raid was mounted on Rhodes, led by the veteran commander Junada b. Abi Umayya al-Azdi. The accounts describe Rudus/Rudis as one of the most fertile of the Aegean islands, with olives, vines and fruits and an abundant supply of fresh water. Hence Mu'awiya ordered the Arab troops to settle there, and this Muslim colony remained in place for seven years; the colonists built a fortress within which they could drive their cattle for safety and from which they could watch for the approach of their enemies the Byzantines, who continuously harrassed them."[72]

In particular, the *Kitāb futûh al-buldān* written by al-Balādhurī reports that the invasion of Rhodes was coordinated with *razzias* against Sicily, and Crete; he also quipped that seven years later

56 Malamut, *Les Îles*, 137-8.
57 S. Cosentino, "Constans II and Its Navy." *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 100/2 (2008): 577–603.
58 Wickham, *The Donkey and the Boat,* 269-92.
59 Cosentino, "Pillars," 257.
60 Cosentino, "Mentality," 73.
61 C. Picard, *La Mer Des Califes. Une Histoire de la Méditerranée Musulmane*, Paris: Hachette, 2015, 229-49.
62 L. Zavagno, "Insular Urbanism." In *The Routledge Handbook to Byzantine City. From Justinian to Mehmet II (ca. 500 – ca. 1500)*, Nicholas Bakirtzis and Luca Zavagno (eds.). New York-London: Routledge, 2024, 172-91
63 Manoussou-Ntella, "Byzantine Rhodes," 170-1; Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 45.
64 N. Kontogiannis, *Byzantine Fortifications. Protecting the Roman Empire in the East.* London: Pen and Sword, 2022, 95-7.
65 C. E. Bosworth, "Arab Attacks on Rhodes in the Pre-Ottoman Period." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, 6/2 (1996): 157-164, at 158.
66 Pryor and Jeffreys, *The Age of the Δρομων*, 25.
67 Michaeilidou, "The City of Rhodes," 243.
68 *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Mango and Scott 1997, 481).
69 *Constantine Porphyrogenitus De Administrando Imperio*, Gyula Moravcsik and Romolos J. H. Jenkins (eds.). Washington D.C.: DOAKS, 1967, 85.
70 L. I. Conrad, "The Arabs and the Colossus." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, series 3/6 (1996): 165-87; quotation from D. Woods, "On the Alleged Destruction of the Colossus of Rhodes c. 653." Byzantion, Vol. 86 (2016): 441-451, at 449-50.
71 Pryor and Jeffreys, *The Age of the Δρομων*, 27; also W. Treadgold, *History of Byzantine State and Society.* Stanford: SUP, 1997, 325.
72 Bosworth, "Arab Attacks," 159.

(in 680), at the onset of the second *fitna* (civil war) in the Caliphate, Yazid I (the successor and son of Mu'āwiya) decided to withdraw the Muslim colonists.[73] Indeed, it is worth noticing that the *Kitāb futûh al-buldān* written by al-Balādhurī similarly mentions a group of Muslims from Ba'albek (the classical Heliopolis) as they were transplanted to Cyprus in the aftermath of the second raid against the island (in 654) and accommodated in a city built for them.[74] It is possible that the Arab colony could be located in Paphos (on the south-western coast of the islands) for Muslim tombstones have been yielded in the area of the local Basilica of Limeniotissa as dating to the seventh and eighth centuries; however, Kufic inscriptions were also found at the basilica of Kourion (as dated to the late seventh century) as well as on some Islamic amphorae, Arab-Byzantine coins and Islamic lead seals circulated on the island.[75] In a similar vein as Rhodes, the Muslim colony was vacated by Yazid I in 680 as reported once again by al-Balādhurī.[76]

So it is clear that in the second half of the seventh century Rhodes (as well as Crete) became central as it guarded the access route to the Aegean and the capital as Byzantium started re-shaping its naval commands as a response to the Caliphate naval forces storming the Mediterranean and besieging Constantinople.[77] The restructuring of the imperial fleets came on the heels of the retreat of the Byzantine armies previously stationed in Syria, Palestine and Egypt to Anatolia and the institution of several *stratēgia* (better known as themes) in the so-called Byzantine heartland (the Anatolian plateau and the Aegean).[78] Indeed, although the Byzantine fleet was yet well-organized and military effective in the mid-seventh century, the arrival of the Arabs prompted its strategic and organizational overhaul. As Cosentino states: "the decision [on the part of Constantinople] of putting all naval forces active in the eastern part of the empire under the leadership of a sole commander was probably taken after the abovementioned first (653/4) or the second (668-674) attack against Constantinople" which also entailed the temporary] occupation of several Greek islands.[79] This led to the creation of the fleet (or *stratēgia*) of the Carabisianoi based in Samos or Phygela, with a large coastal and insular jurisdiction divided among local detachments (*droungariates)*.[80] However, as the fleet of the Carabisianoi mutinied at least twice and could not prevent the fall of Carthage to the Arabs in 698, a further regionalization of the navy commands ensued with the creation of the *stratēgia* of Hellas (with Corinth as its capital) and more importantly of the Kybirrhaiotai theme. The latter was based in Attaleia and as already mentioned, included Rhodes and its Carian *peraia.*[81]

Nevertheless, Rhodes remained part and parcel of a regional (Aegean) and (diminished) transregional trade and shipping network. This is once again exemplified by literary sources like the late-seventh century Miracles of Saint Artemios. The account mentions one George of Rhodes, a merchant and a shipowner who regularly traveled between Rhodes and Constantinople where he visited (together with his two sons) the renowned (but fictional) shrine of the Saint to cure his hernia.[82] One can think of George traveling on one of the ships which wrecked around Rhodes (as dated between the fifth and the tenth century) as inventoried by Michael McCormick.[83] Moreover, ceramic evidence points to the active local workshops whose production fulfilled the needs of local consumption as well as export of agricultural surplus.[84]

The island is also repeatedly mentioned by Byzantine sources as an assembly point for the Byzantine fleet in anticipation for defensive or offensive endeavors;[85] for instance, in 714/15 Theophanes reports that "on being informed that a Saracen fleet had sailed up from Alexandria to Phoenix [in Lycia] with a view to cutting cypress wood, [the emperor] Artemios (a.k.a. Anastasios II (713-15) chose the swiftest vessels of his own fleet, manned them with soldiers of the *Opsikion thema*, and ordered that they should all assemble at Rhodes."[86] However, the pre-emptive naval strike against the Muslims' fleet broke up in disarray in Rhodes where the army of Opsikion revolted and supported the bid to the throne of the usurper Theodosios III (715-717).[87] The military importance of Rhodes as naval base is further shown by numismatic and sigillographic evidence. On the one hand, a concentration of bronze coins (almost exclusively minted in Constantinople for the payment of the army) dated to the reigns of Heraclius and Constans II as documented on Rhodes clearly chimes with the abovementioned literary evidence and points to the pivotal role of the island in the military campaign of the late seventh century.[88] On the other hand, one lead seal belonging to a late-seventh *kommerkiarios* of Caria, Lycia, Cherson and Rhodes. [89] As Deligiannakis concludes: "This seal can be associated with the stationing on military forces after the end of the treaty with the Arabs in 691/3 perhaps in preparation of the expedition against Carthage; the resettlement of the Mardaites; or connected with the adrapoda seals (maybe suggesting a mass sale of Slav prisoners through the *apotheke* system)."[90] The second seal was also found in Rhodes as issued by the *kommerkiarios* of Asia and Caria in 691/3.[91] Between 660 and 731, the *genikoi kommerkiarioi* and the provincial *apothekai* (state warehouses or granaries) were responsible for various fiscal and logistical duties, including

73 al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb futûh al-buldān* [*The Origins of the Islamic State*], Philip K. Hitti (ed). New York: Columbia University Press, 1916, I, 375-6.

74 al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb,* 236.

75 L. Zavagno, *An Island in Transition. Cyprus between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.* London-New York: Routledge, 2017, 85.

76 al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb,* 236.

77 T.C. Lounghis, *Byzantium in the Eastern Mediterranean: Safeguarding East Roman Identity (407-1204)*. Nicosia: Cyprus Research Center, 2010, 29-30.

78 "[The thematic] system was [a new way] of devolving the financial support for provincially-recruited soldiers onto the fiscal communities from which they were recruited was introduced; [...] the word theme was used to refer to this collective provincial/communal responsibility as well as the army and the territories over which each division remained established." J. Haldon, "What was a provincial military capital?" In *Byzantine Medieval Cities: Amorion and the Middle Byzantine Provincial Capitals*, Nikos Tzivikis (ed.), forthcoming. On the heartland, see Wickham, *Framing,* 29-32.

79 S. Cosentino, "Naval Warfare: Military, Institutional and Economic Aspects." In A Companion to the Byzantine Culture of War, ca. 300-1204 Yannis Stouraitis (ed.). Leiden: Brill, 2018, 308-356 at 322.

80 Ibid.

81 T. Lounghis, "Byzantine war navy and the west, Fifth to Twelfth Centuries." In A Military History of the Mediterranean Sea, G. Theotokis and A. Yildiz (eds.). Turnhout: Brepols, 2018, 21-43 at 24-25.

82 V, Crisafulli and J. Nesbitt, *The Miracles of St. Artemios*. Leiden: Brill, 1997, 185-9.

83 M. McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, AD 300–900* Cambridge, MA: CUP, 2001, 601.

84 Poulou-Papadimitriou, "The Aegean during the 'Transitional' period of Byzantium: the archaeological evidence." In Naxos and the Byzantine Aegean (see above n. 21), 29-50, at 32.

85 Kollias, *The Medieval City of Rhodes*, 47.

86 The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor (Mango and Scott 1997), 535.

87 Pryor and Jeffrey, *The Age of the Δρομων*, 31; also H. Ahrweiler, *Byzance et la Mer*. Paris: Boccard, 1961, 28 and Treadgold, *History*, 344.

88 Kasdagli, "The provenance of coins," 237.

89 https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals/BZS.1947.2.70/view retrieved on 15 February 2025.

90 Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 103.

91 Kollias, *The Medieval City,* 48.

provisioning Constantinople and the imperial army.[92] By examining the seals of *kommerkiarioi* as discovered on Rhodes as well as on Cyprus, Crete, Sicily, Malta, and the Balearics one can witness to the evolution of Byzantine administrative structures and the resilient economic role of the Byzantine island network well into the eighth century.[93]

Indeed, with the territorial loss the empire experienced over the course of the seventh and early eighth century and following upon the failed last Arab siege of Constantinople in 717/18, the islands guarding the access to the southern Aegean (Rhodes and Crete) and the south-western Anatolian coast turned into a borderland with Cyprus as an outlier acting as a real bridge between the Byzantine and Islamic economic networks in the Early Middle Ages.[94] It is not by chance that both Cyprus and Rhodes were targeted by the Abbasid Caliphs Harun al-Rashid between 806 and 808.[95] Rhodes did not fall to the invaders because of its impressive and advances (in terms of military architecture) fortifications. [96] As Kontogiannis concludes: "The existence of a double line of walls in Rhodes: the lower parts of the Rhodes outer wall had a talus, meant to withstand artillery fire, mining, etc. This has not been observed so far in Byzantine military architecture."[97] It is possible that the fortifications were somehow linked to the existence of local shipyard and the importance of the "military" harbor as a base for the fleet.[98]

Indeed, the early ninth century should be regarded as the real turning point for Rhodes as well as the other insular spaces of Byzantium; the loss of Sicily (to the Aghlabids) in 824 and Crete (to the Andalusian pirates) in 826-7 precipitated a shift in the Byzantine government's approach: it signified the adoption of a comprehensive grand strategy rather than a mere incremental defense which culminated in the renewed attention to the fleet under Basil I.[99] In particular, the creation of the Cretan Emirate as lasting until 961 (when the Byzantines recovered the island) prompted a drastic change for Rhodes turning it into a military bulwark vis-à-vis the dangerous raids the Arabs staged from Crete targeting the Aegean sea. [100] Numismatic evidence bolsters the picture I have drawn for in Rhodes one can document an increasing quantity of bronze coins starting from the reign of Michael II (820-29) or Theophilus (829-841) hinting at the presence of a contingent of Byzantine troops (or a detachment of the fleet) on the island as also documented by bronze belt buckles (dated between the late seventh and the ninth century) as belonging to Byzantine army officials.[101] In this regard, the renewed significance of the fleet allows us to conclude that a new role was assigned by the state to the Aegean islands (and to Rhodes in particular): they should pander to the maintenance of maritime connections (military and commercial) with the capital, while at the same time ensure the islands' economic survival.[102]

Rhodes in the "Byzantine" Aegean from the tenth to the thirteenth century

The return of Crete and Cyprus under full Byzantine control in the second half of the tenth century, following upon the more important role played by the imperial fleet under the Macedonian emperor Basil I (867-886), ushered in a demographic resurgence of the Byzantine Aegean archipelagoes whose economic role increased to peak between the eleventh century and the twelfth century.[103] Starting in the eleventh century, commerce emerged as the driving force behind the Byzantine economy, adding complexity and stimulating economic growth.[104] In particular, Rhodes, Chios and Crete as well as the southern coast of Anatolia benefitted from the re-orientation of the spice and silk "roads" as Fatimid Egypt acted as a new catalyst for trade with Persia and central Asia (via the Red Sea).[105] Yet Rhodes appears in Byzantine literary sources as a military outpost as well as an ideal place of exile: during the 949 failed expedition against Crete, one *ousia* (the standard Byzantine naval company) and also 4 *dromons* of 220 men each were left in Rhodes to guard the imprisoned brother-in-law of the emperor, Stephen Lekapēnos.[106]

In fact, in Rhodes one can document an increase in land cultivation as well as an intensification of production which paired with the boom in trading activities and reflected in the development of the urban fabric and landscape of the city of Rhodes (on which I will return in a few moments).[107] On the one hand, Anne Marie Kasdagli has documented a resurgence in the quantity of coins yielded on the island as mostly minted in Constantinople. However, she points out the peculiar presence of clipped or worn out Byzantine bronze folles dated to the mid-eleventh century; they should be regarded as "imitations" of Byzantine specimens issued by Tzacha Bey, the Seljuk emir of Izmir who temporary conquered and ruled Rhodes in 1090s.[108] As Byzantine low denominations returned to the island after its reconquest by Alexios I Comnenos (1081-1116), it is interesting to notice a hoard of gold coins found in the Rhodes and dated to the late twelfth century: it contains one highly refined gold coin (*hyperperon*) of Manuel I Comnenos and some contemporary Moorish coins documenting the trade route of gold bullions (later to be melted to produce coins) from Niger to Constantinople (and Europe).[109]

92 J. Haldon, "Commerce and Exchange in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries: Regional Trade and the Movement of Goods." In *Trade and Markets in Byzantium (Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Symposia and Colloquia)*, Cècile Morrisson (ed.). Washington, DC: Doaks, 99-124 (at 113-14).

93 Cosentino, "Mentality," 72-3.

94 J. M. Gordon and W. R. Caraher, "From the Land of the Paphian Aphrodite to the Busy Christian Countryside: Globalization, Empire, and Insularity in Early and Late Roman Cyprus." In *Mediterranean Archaeology of Insularity in the Age of Globalization*, A. Kouremenos and J.M. Gordon (eds.). Oxford: Oxbow, 2020, 237-74, at 263; on Cyprus as an economic bridge between the Caliphate and Byzantium see Zavagno, *An island in transition*.

95 Pryor and Jeffrey, *The Age of the Δρομων*, 41-2.

96 "In this year, in the month of September of the first indiction, Aaron, the leader of the Arabs, sent Choumeid2 at the head of a fleet against Rhodes. This man sailed straight to Rhodes and, on arriving there, carried out much devastation, but the fort that is there remained uncaptured." *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor* (Mango and Scott 1997, 663)

97 Kontogiannis, *Byzantine Fortifications*, 152.

98 Kollias, *The Medieval City of Rhodes*, 44; an arsenal is documented in Rhodes in the tenth century when warships were constructed to attack Fatimid Egypt (Pryor and Jeffrey, The Age of the Δρομων, 72).

99 Lounghis, *Byzantium,* 85.

100 Kontogiannis, *Byzantine Fortifications*, 92.

101 Malamut, *Les îles*, I, 31-33; Poulou-Papadimitriou, "The Aegean during the 'Transitional' period," 30-31.

102 Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 111.

103 Malamut, *Les îles*, I, 152-164; Kaldellis, *The New Roman Empire*, 522-23.

104 A. Laiou and C. Morrisson. *The Byzantine Economy*. Cambridge: CUP, 2007, 136.

105 id., 137.

106 Pryor and Jeffrey, *The Age of the Δρομων*, 259-60.

107 Wickham, *The Donkey and the Boat,* 302.

108 Kasdagli, "The Provenance of Coins," 239. On Tzacha bey see C. M. Brand, "The Turkish Element in Byzantium, Eleventh-Twelfth Centuries. "*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 43 (1989): 1-25 (at 2-3).

109 Id., 240.

On the other hand, and starting from the tenth century onwards, we can document the presence on the island of large estates belonging to local or Constantinopolitan aristocratic families. For instance, one Theodore Alopos (a Rhodian living in Constantinople) owned extensive properties on the island whereas inscriptions and toponyms suggest that members of the Vardas and Armenopouloi family, (the latter sponsoring the construction of a small cruciform church near the Byzantine wall) had their residence in the walled city.[110] Sigillographic evidence also shows imperial officials boasting titles like *krites* (judges), dux, or *archontes* as dated to the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries.[111]

In particular, we should stress the importance of the *archontes*: a title which encompassed a wide array political, judicial and military functions as it was often attributed to members of the local insular elites. Indeed, we can document *archontes* presiding over the government of eight-to-tenth century Cyprus, Crete, Sardinia, and the Balearics.[112] This accounts for a deliberate Byzantine strategy for *archontes* were chosen from among the ranks of the local elites as heads of local administration. In this regard, it seems that the central authorities recognized that as members of insular societies were better accustomed to interacting with "the other," and, therefore, better equipped to develop adaptive strategies to military and political difficulties as they arose.[113] A good example is offered by the three members of the Cypriot aristocracy (*phangoumeneis*) who were part of an embassy sent by Justinian II (686-695 and 705-711) to the Umayyad Caliph sitting in Damascus to negotiate the repatriation of some Cypriot prisoners.[114] Nevertheless, it seems that in Rhodes the *archontes* never acquired a similar degree of autonomy for, as already mentioned, the island remained part of the Kybirrhaiotai theme until the late twelfth century; therefore, the title of *archon* should simply entail either a high-status local official whose authority extended over the port cities of Rhodes (like the city of Rhodes and Lindos), or its role as one of the subordinates of the *stratēgos* of the Kybirrhaiotai.[115] In other words, and contrary to the abovementioned large Byzantine islands and archipelagos, Rhodes seems to have never attained an autonomous administrative and military status (as it will be seen, this only happened in the early thirteenth century under Leo Gabalas).[116] Indeed, it seems that the *archonte*s were superseded by the *krites* and dukes in the second half of the twelfth century, although it is not clear if and how their functions and responsibilities overlapped.[117]

Finally, the political and commercial role of local, imperial, ecclesiastical elites was reflected by a spate of building activities in several rural and urban sites across the island. Sigillographic evidence document the continuous political importance of the Rhodian Metropolitan although several of his suffragans in the Aegean islands slowly barreled out his sphere of ecclesiastical influence although keeping an intense correspondence with him.[118] Nevertheless, several new ecclesiastical and monastic buildings can be documented as built on the island during between the reign of Alexios and Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180)[119]. Moreover, during the Komnenian period the city and the harbor of the city of Rhodes experienced an upgrade of the urban defense reflecting its newly acquired importance along the routes leading the Crusaders to the Holy Land as exemplified by the stopovers of the Venetian and Genoese fleets in 1098;[120] a new defensive wall was constructed to the south of the existing early medieval one, likely to enclose parts of the settlement outside the original walls.[121] This expansion created a tripartite division of the city: the citadel, the inner castle (later known as the *Collachium* of the Hospitallers), and the newly built outer city.[122] Within the fortified Byzantine settlement, a church dedicated to the Virgin Mary (*Panagia tou Kastrou)*, was built in the late eleventh or early twelfth century (as also refurbished in the thirteenth century), as indicated by coins found in its sanctuary, including a significant number from the reign of Alexios I.[123] Originally, a Byzantine domed cross-in-square church, it was extensively modified in the fourteenth century during the rule of the Hospitallers when it was elevated to the rank of Latin Cathedral.[124] A similar chronological development could be documented for another church (possibly dedicated to the Archangel Michael).[125]

As the Byzantine empire spiraled into the dramatic dynastic crisis following upon the demise of the Komnenian dynasty and leading to the catastrophic Fourth Crusade, the Constantinopolitan rulership over the Aegean slowly pulverized into several politically and administrative independent duchies.[126] This is confirmed by the 1198 imperial *chrysobull* issued by Alexios III Angelos (1195-1203) in favor of the Venetians who had established a trading post on the island already in the late eleventh century.[127] As Malamut concludes, Rhodes's importance as strategic trading post for Venetian commerce amped up in the course of the twelfth century other powers (like the Genoese) slowly encroached in the Aegean sea.

> "In 1170, the Venetians had not yet obtained the right to trade freely in all the islands but the Byzantine authorities on the islands systematically blocked access to the Genoese through various forms of harassment while favoring the establishment of the Venetians. The Venetians openly engaged in commercial warfare against the Genoese, seizing their ships in Chios, Euboea, and wherever else they encountered them. The Genoese retaliated by resorting to piracy in the islands, blurring the line between merchants and pirates. For instance, in 1192, they presented themselves as merchants to land in Rhodes, where they looted the port and attacked Venetian ships in turn."[128]

As Venetians and Genoese vied for power in the Aegean, Rhodes and the Cyclades fell under the control of a local independent ruler: Leo Gabalas. The exact duration of Gabalas' independent

110 Kollias, *The Medieval City of Rhodes,* 54; Katsioti, " Rhodes-Constantinople," 183.
111 Kollias, *The Medieval City of Rhodes,* 35-6; Malamut, *Les îles*, I, 325-59.
112 Zavagno, *An island in Transition*, 87-88.
113 L. Zavagno, "'The Navigators'. Mediterranean Cities and Urban Spaces in the Passage from Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages (ca. 600 – ca. 850 CE)." *Studia Ceranea* 13 (2023): 165–187 (at 175-177).
114 *Constantine Porphyrogenitus De Administrando Imperio* (above n. 63), 224-5.
115 Malamut, *Les îles*, I, 300-1; T.E. Gregory, "Rhodes." In *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, A. Kazdhan (ed.). Oxford: OUP, 1991) II, 1792.
116 Deligiannakis, *The Dodecanese*, 317.
117 Malamut, *Les îles*, I, 325.
118 https://www.doaks.org/resources/seals/byzantine-seals#b_start=15&c2=Rhodes retrieved on 15.02.2025.
119 Malamut, *Les îles*, I, 242-44.
120 Kollias, *The Medieval City of Rhodes*, 51-3; Pryor and Jeffrey, *The Age of the Δρομων*, 105.
121 Kontogiannis, *Byzantine Fortifications*, 139-40;
122 ibid.
123 Michaeilidou, *The City of Rhodes*, 247.
124 Michaeilidou, *The City of Rhodes*, 248-9.
125 ibid.
126 Malamut, *Les îles*, I, 332. On the Fourth Crusade and its aftermath see M. Angold, *The Fourth Crusade* (Harlow: Pearson, 2003).
127 Michaeilidou, *The City of Rhodes*, 247.
128 Malamut, *Les îles*, I, 171.

rule over Rhodes remains uncertain. The island is absent from the *Partitio Romaniae* (the treaty that oversaw the division of imperial territories between the Crusaders and the Venetians after the capture of Constantinople in 1204), indicating that it had already broken away from central Byzantine authority by 1203.[129] Writing from Nicaea (the capital of one of the Byzantine "successor" states in the second half of the thirteenth century), Gregory Akropolites in his *Histories* describes Gabalas as a renegade as he describes the naval expedition set forth by John III Vatatzes to win back the island from the "usurper."[130] Following upon the return under "Byzantine/Nicaean" rulership, it was the turn of the Genoese to mount a serious threat to the island. Indeed, according to George Akropolites:

> "In 1248, the town of the island of Rhodes was captured by the Genoese by stealth at night. For its ruler, John Gabalas, brother of the caesar Leo Gabalas who was master of the island after his brother's death, was away with the emperor in the area of Nikomedeia, attacking the Latins in Constantinople. [However,] the emperor John III Vatatzes immediately prepared a battle-worthy fleet in Smyrna, arranging for horse-carrying triremes to transport up to 300 horses, and appointing as their commander Theodore Kontostephanos [...] So then the *protosebastos* Theodore put out to sea with the triremes and, arriving at the island of Rhodes, did everything as the emperor had commanded, and routed the Latins."[131]

As Rhodes was swiftly back to the Byzantines, a new threat materialized: the rising power of the Menteşe.[132] The latter was one of the independent Turkic principalities (*beyliks*) carved in the Anatolia after the demise the Seljuk Empire of Konya by the hands of the Mongols in 1243. Some of these *beyliks* turned into maritime powers like the Menteşe Emirate, which by 1269 had established control over Caria (and the *peraia* of Rhodes).[133] Indeed, as in 1261 the Nicaean emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos had managed to take back Constantinople from the Latins, his brother John Palaiologos was sent to Rhodes in order to strengthen its defense vis-a-vis repeated raids of the Menteşe navy.[134] However, as the two brothers fell off, starting from 1275, the island was granted as a fief to various Genoese corsairs until one of them, Vignolo di Vignoli, transferred it to the Hospitallers (also known as the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem) in 1309.[135]

Conclusions

The arrival of the Hospitallers in Rhodes brought the almost continuous millennial Byzantine (and pseudo-Byzantine) rulership to an end. The arrival of the Crusader Knights on the lookout for a new headquarters after being ousted from Lusignan Cyprus, highlighted, once again the strategic importance of the island and its preeminence along inter-regional and regional shipping routes making it a longed prize for Mediterranean powers. As repeatedly mentioned already, any island is a prisoner to the inescapable isolation-connectivity opposition; however, the relatively short distance separating the island from its fertile Carian *peraia*, its location controlling the southern entrance to the Aegean sea, its size (which favored a better political and military control), its role in relation to the smaller archipelagic islands surrounding it (which were not part of this contribution) and finally, its role across trading routes connecting the eastern half of the Mediterranean with Constantinople and the Aegean basin, were mainly the byproduct of connectivity. In other words, and though fortified, Rhodes never simply turned into an isolated military outpost lost in the confrontation between the emperor and the Caliph. In fact, Rhodes remained economically resilient after the end of the *annona* circuit and the economic and political fragmentation of early Medieval Mediterranean. It was only after Crete fell to the Andalusian pirates in 820s that its military role clearly amped up although Constantinople already included the island (and the city of Rhodes) in its late seventh century imperially sponsored building campaign aiming at fortifying several (insular and not) urban sites. Nevertheless, it was not a deserted or socio-economically declining Rhodes the one that saw the return of the "naval ambitions" of the Byzantines from the late ninth century onwards as in the mid-tenth century both Crete and Cyprus returned fully into Constantinopolitan hands. However, from the eleventh century onwards, Rhodes became part and parcel of the increasingly more complex and distributive denser patterns of exchanged hinging on the regional routes crisscrossing the Byzantine Aegean. Although, we do not possess the same amount of ceramic evidence and distribution as in other parts of the Aegean Sea, the relevance of the archbishopric as well as the presence of imperial and landowning elites is documented by the large spate of (ecclesiastically and not) urban and rural building activities (dated between the eleventh and the twelfth century) as sponsored by them as well as the increased distribution and circulation of coins. Finally, at the end of the twelfth century and in the chaotic political and military aftermath of the Fourth Crusade, the historical trajectories of Rhodes became more and more entangled with those of the Byzantine rump states, Venetian, Frankish, and Genoese Aegean fiefdoms and later the Turkic beyliks vying for power in the Aegean Sea. It was yet a story of connectivity, but a more localized and politically disjointed one culminating in the conquest of the island by the Hospitallers in 1309. In this sense, and without forgetting episodes of isolation (either stemming from the search of monastic solitude or the need for political exile), Rhodes connects us with the histories of the Great Sea. After all, as Paul Rainbird cogently concludes "by focusing on the sea as a means of communication we can remove the perception of insular life in the past as isolated or insular although despite this the idea of islands as a microcosm a world in miniature apart from the actual world continued to exist."[136]



129 R. Macrides, *The History of George Akropolites* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 188.
130 Macrides, *The History*, 187-8; 248. See also Gregory, "Rhodes," 1792.
131 Macrides, *The History*, 246-7.
132 Michaeilidou, *The City of Rhodes*, 246.
133 H. Inalcık, "The Rise of the Turcoman Maritime Principalities in Anatolia, Byzantium, and Crusades." *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 9(1985): 179-217 (at 182-185); Macrides, *The History*, 247.
134 Macrides, *The History*, 350; Michaeilidou, *The City of Rhodes*, 247.
135 Kollias, *The Medieval City of Rhodes,* 16.
136 Rainbird, *The Archaeology of Islands*, 41-2.

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The Hospitallers presence in Rhodes (1309/10-1522)

Some considerations on their social and cultural influence on the island

In loving memory of a dear friend,
Michael Heslop (1941-2022),
who loved Rhodes and Medieval Studies.

In the aftermath of the Crusades and more specifically of the Fourth Crusade (1204) and at the beginning of the 14th century, new developments occurred in the south-eastern Mediterranean as a new Latin power established itself in the Aegean Sea, creating a new 'state'. It was the Hospitaller Order who in search of a new basis found a vital area in Rhodes and the Dodecanesian Islands. The presence of the Knights of Saint John there for over two centuries (1306/1309-10 to 1522/23) created new realities and had a specific impact on the life of the Greek Orthodox inhabitants.

During the following two centuries the Order also developed a certain dynamic contact with the local population. Before the Hospitallers' arrival the island had been ruled by the local Byzantine dynasty of the Gavalades, namely the *caesars* Leo and John Gavalas (c. 1204-c. 1240 and c. 1240-c. 1250 respectively)[1] who had maintained the ambition to keep Rhodes and its surrounding islands under their exclusive authority separately from the Byzantine Empire, which had fallen to the Latins in 1204. The central administration of Constantinople was not in a position to put a halt to the local *archons'* authority and ambition, therefore Rhodes was to remain even after the Gavalades in a semi-autonomous position already before the arrival of the Knights.[2] This was a critical moment for the future of the area, leaving open opportunities for other candidates, mostly of Western origins (Venetian and Genoese), to rule it.

Observing the behaviour of the local Greek population while all these changes were taking place is of great interest. Since 1306 the Hospitallers were coveting Rhodes as a prospective basis, yet the Byzantine Emperor still considered Rhodes as a part of the Byzantine state. Reality though very soon proved different, as the Order managed to capture the island without a serious resistance. At that point, the local Rhodians in a way took matters in their own hands, by making a deal with the Knights and choosing to ignore the fact that Emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus never acknowledged the authority of the Hospitallers over the island.[3] It was a sample on how a Greek population handled the presence of a Latin ruler, as during that time in other Helladic lands, there

1 On Leo Gavalas' personality and career, see A. Savvides, Βυζαντινά στασιαστικά και αυτονομιστικά κινήματα στα Δωδεκάνησα και στη Μικρά Ασία: 1189-*c. 1240,* Athens 1987, p. 301-341 and on the subsequent period until the advent of the Knights, see also Idem, "Rhodes from the End of the Gabalas Rule to the Conquest of the Hospitallers: A.D. c. 1250-1309, *Domus Byzantinus,* 2 (1988), p. 199-232.

2 A. Luttrell notes that the island of Rhodes had escaped from the larger conquest of the Greek lands after 1204, allowing the inhabitants to preserve many of their institutions and forms as continued by the traditions of the Byzantine era: on this see A. Luttrell, "The Greek of Rhodes under Hospitaller Rule: 1306-1421", repr. on his *The Hospitaller State on Rhodes and its Western Provinces, 1306-1462,* Variorum Reprints, 1999, p. 193.

3 A. Luttrell, "Το Βυζάντιο και οι Ιωαννίτες Ιππότες της Ρόδου (1306-1409)", *Symmeikta,* 11 (1997), p. 193.

had taken place the establishment of other Latin authorities as well, with different reactions of the part of the inhabitants. For instance, nearby Crete was under Venetian rule since 1210/11, but with the Cretan families of Byzantine aristocratic origins, strongly opposing Venetian authority for a long time until the 1520s.[4]

A crucial part of the mutual agreement with the Order was involving the preservation of the Orthodox Church. The clergy and the Orthodox churches as well would remain untouched provided that they would recognize the supremacy of the Latin Church.[5] This was of great importance comparing again with other cases of Latin rules. In fact, the local Orthodox Metropolitan was able to preserve his position, something rare in Greek lands under Latin rule. Attempting a comparison again with the Venetians we need to mark the fact that the Serenissima prohibited the Orthodox clergy of higher rank by replacing them with another ecclesiastical office, the one of *Protopapas*.[6] As the late Zacharias Tsirpanles († 2023) observed, the Venetians did not show such kind of tolerance in their domains in Greek lands despite the fact that were considered as more "secularist".[7] Therefore and from this point of view the Rhodians and the inhabitants of the rest of the Dodecanesian islands could be considered as privileged compared with the population of other Greek areas in the mainland and on the islands of the Aegean or Ionian Sea under Latin rule and, consequently, with the Catholic Church in charge.[8]

The Hospitallers' presence in Rhodes and the Dodecanese had also a crucial impact in social life and structure. In general, we do not observe major changes in the social pyramid. The initial intention of the Order to insert and apply the feudal system failed due to the nature of the Order itself, which meant that there were no noble families established on the island in order to create a crucial class of noble feudal lords. On the other hand, not many older Byzantine aristocratic families had survived on the island, thus securing a Greek aristocratic class.[9] What we can observe during the 213 years that the Order ruled the island, is that in fact an upper Rhodian class was formed, that rallied around the Hospitallers, offering services and enjoying a close collaboration with them. Many rich and educated Rhodians served as members of a kind of diplomatic corps, as interpreters and envoys, especially in delicate missions, related with the Muslims and more specifically with the Ottomans.[10] The knowledge of languages in addition to Greek made them ideal cases for such kind of missions and also absolved members of the Order from potential dangers in a mission of such kind.[11] The collaboration of local Rhodians with the Knights actually contributed to the creation and consolidation of a rich and educated upper middle class that framed the brotherhood and assisted in its administration. The very fact that, following the surrender to the Ottomans after the 1522 siege, many of those families chose to leave the island for good and follow the Order to its new historical adventures, away from their homeland, is indicative enough. This kind of fermentation is unique in Latin Greece and it is visible only in the case of the Hospitallers' rule.

Relevant with the aforementioned realities, is also the contribution of the Order to the intellectual efflorescence in Rhodes during their long sojourn, with more visible signs of it in the 15th century. Tsirpanles made some noteworthy observations putting things on a balanced basis. The historical research on this particular subject is rather difficult and can be seen from many aspects. The remarkable thing in the case of Rhodes is that despite the fact it was smaller and more isolated compared for instance with Crete, it was able to manifest examples of a flourishing intellectual life. Again, Venetian dominated Crete consists of a useful measure of comparison due to the geographical vicinity and the interaction that the Hospitallers had with Crete and the Venetians in general.[12] There is also the fact that both were brilliant examples of a non-typical feudal dominion in Greek lands. One of the important aspects in the cultural life of Rhodes is the presence even for a short time of important intellectual personalities and the list included Westerns and Greeks as well. Of great importance was the initiative of the Greek and Latin inhabitants of Rhodes to seek the employment of a teacher with the objective to educate all the children of Rhodes, rich and poor.[13] The matter is a complicated one and has many points of view, yet the bottom line is that Rhodes managed to accomplish a high level of educational and intellectual performance.

The over two-centuries presence of the Knights in Rhodes and the Dodecanese can be viewed as a 'precursor', a miniature form of the modern European Union's function on a late medieval Greek Island with its surrounding territory.[14] Their impressive fortifications echo through the ages.[15] The Hospitallers, a multinational organization, flourished in its Dodecanesian dominion and living side by side with the Greeks offered an example of cultural interaction, which marked the history of Rhodes and its area in a most turbulent period of its historical fortunes.

4 See A.G.C. Savvides, "A Bibliographical Survey of Latin-Dominated Crete after A.D. 1210.1211 (with notes on its Byzantine prosopography), *Byzantiaka,* 35 (2018-19), p. 243-279, esp. 250 ff., 266 ff.

5 A. Luttrell, *The Town of Rhodes: 1306-1356,* Rhodes 2003, p. 77.

6 Concerning the institution of "Protopapas", see Despoina Michalaga, "Το εκκλησιαστικό οφφίκιο του «πρωτοπαπά» και η λειτουργία του στα βενετοκρατούμενα Επτάνησα", Κερκυραϊκά Χρονικά *(Ι΄Διεθνές* Πανιόνιο Συνέδριο*, Κέρκυρα, 30* Απριλίου*-4* Μαΐου *2014),* p.369-382.

7 Z. Tsirpanles, Η Ρόδος και οι Νότιες Σποράδες στα χρόνια των Ιωαννιτών Ιπποτών (14ος*-16*ος αι.), Rhodes 1991, p. 151.

8 It is not our intention in the limited frame of this article, to compare analytically the situation of the Orthodox population under several Latin dominions. What is clear though, is that under the Hospitallers the Greek Orthodox population was enjoying a kind of religious freedom that could not be noted in other cases (Frankish, Venetian, Catalan etc.).

9 A. Luttrell, The Greek of Rhodes under Hospitaller Rule: 1306-1421", ibid., p. 196.

10 A detailed pertinent bibliography now in A. Savvides & Photeine V. Perra, "Hospitallers and Ottomans between the two great sieges of Rhodes (1480-1522/23)", in Simon Phillips (ed.), *The 1522 siege of Rhodes: causes, course and consequences,* London & New York, 2022, p. 11-39.

11 See Photeine V. Perra, "Homines dicte insule sunt Greci et fidem grecam tenent: A prosopographical contribution to Greek-Hospitaller relations", *Byzantiaka,* 36 (2020-21), p. 347-358.

12 Cf. the late Elizabeth A. Zachariadou's († 2019) *Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydin (1300-1415),* Venice 1987, see index at Hospital(ers) of Rhodes & Rhodes.

13 On the cultural coexistence and intellectual movement in Rhodes, see the extended study of Z. Tsirpanles, "Ελληνική και λατινική παιδεία στη Ρόδο", in Η Ρόδος και οι Νότιες Σποράδες στα χρόνια των Ιωαννιτών Ιπποτών *(14ος-16ος*αι.*),* Rhodes 1991, p. 341-412.

14 This notion was expounded between 2001 and 2009 in A. Savvides' lectures on late medieval and early modern S-E Mediterranean history at the University of the Aegean (Rhodes Town).

15 See the collected studies by the late Michael Heslop in his *Medieval Greece: encounters between Latins, Greeks and others in the Dodecanese and the Mani,* London & New York, 2021.



Street of the Knights, *Ippoton*, in Rhodes, lined with the residences, or '*auberges*' representing the seven '*langues*' constituting the Knights Hospitaller: France, Provence, Auvergne, Italy, Aragon, England and Germany. As Photeine Perra refers to Alexios Savvides' lectures at the University of the Aegean in her article in the pervious pages, could the multilingual Knights be regarded as a 'miniature form', a forerunner of the European Union?

Photo: Felix Bonfils (1831-1885), 1870s.

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He has published extensively on Ottoman history, including his landmark book, *An Introduction to Religious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986); "Murad Reis Tekkesi (Rodos)," in Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, ed., *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf ve Sufiler*, 2nd ed. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014), pp. 375–408 [1st ed. 2005]; "Some Cases of Mistaken Identity in the Ottoman Epigraphy of Murad Reis on Rhodes," in *σοφία άδολος*: Studies in Honor of Ioannis Papachristodoulou (Archaeological Institute of Aegean Studies, Rhodes, 2014), pp. 233–57; and 'Σχόλια γύρω από την ιστορία του Καστελλορίζου με αφορμή την Οθωμανική *Ιστορία της Νήσου Μέις* του Χαμπιμπζαντέ Αχμέντ Κεμάλ' [Comments on the History of Kastellorizo in Light of *A History of the Island of Meis* by Habibzade Ahmed Kemal], *Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά*, vol. 23 (Rhodes, 2010), pp. 62–84.

"My association with the Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library began in 1997, when Elias Kollias, then director of the Ephorate of Antiquities, invited me to translate its original catalogue from Ottoman Turkish into English. At the time, Dr. Kollias imagined that the task would require no more than a month. Were he alive today, he would, I suspect, be surprised—if not appaled—to learn that the project has now extended over three decades.

The reasons for this protracted endeavor lie in the nature of the original catalogue itself. Abbreviations are frequently used for the names of authors and titles of works, but these are of little help in securely identifying either. Moreover, the catalogue provides no account of the twenty-five classificatory headings, most of them being Islamic sciences, into which the library's holdings are divided, nor does it offer biographical information on the scholars whose works defined the sciences. It soon became clear that the project could not remain a mere inventory of books. Rather, it had to evolve into a broader undertaking: a historical survey of the Islamic sciences, a biographical study of their authors, and a contextual discussion of the Prophet Muhammad, the Kur'ān, and the formative period of Islam.

In this light, a thirty-year effort for what was once thought to be a one-month task is perhaps not as implausible as it may seem. The British historian Arnold Toynbee confronted a similar experience: what began as a modest set of notes eventually grew into his monumental 'A Study of History', a multi-volume work that took him three decades to complete and expanded into nothing less than a history of the world.

At the close of my own study of the library, I was fortunate enough to be introduced to Tarık Tüten, the representative (mütevelli vekili) of the administrator (mütevelli) of the library's pious foundation. Tarık has been an unfailing source of patience and support, particularly as I have contended with a debilitating illness. His encouragement has extended well beyond friendship: he has been an ardent advocate of my research on the library and on the history of Ottoman Rhodes, and he has shown himself to be a first-rate scholar through his involvement in the field of Ottoman studies and in the publication of this volume."

John Robert Barnes

The Ottoman Past
in the History of Rhodes

Evidence of Rhodes' Ottoman past is apparent to anyone looking at the skyline of the Old Town where the spires of minarets and domes of mosques can be seen. On a casual stroll through the medieval town, the visitor encounters mosques, fountains, an imposing and still-functioning bathhouse, a library, schools, and a clock tower - all monuments of a bygone Ottoman era. Information about a specific building or structure can usually be found in any one of a number of tourist guidebooks that are available today. More often than not, the descriptions found in them are brief but are sufficient to satisfy the cursory interest of tourists.

For anyone wishing to discover something more about the Ottoman period of Rhodes, the same guidebooks offer by way of introduction an overall history of the island from ancient times to the present. In these guides a good deal of attention is naturally devoted to the Classical and especially the Hellenistic period of Ancient Greece. This is followed by the Byzantine era and a lengthy section on the Knights of St. John. When it comes to the Ottoman period, the four centuries of history from 1522 to 1912, this kind of touristic literature has very little to say. Often, it is usually critical of the Ottoman era and dismisses it in little more than a paragraph.

Ottoman Rhodes is described as a dark period of four hundred years about which nothing worth mentioning is known - apart from the fact that the Greeks of the island, as elsewhere, were reduced to "slavery." A well-noted example of this abject status is the fact that the Greek population was not allowed to live within the medieval walled town and was locked out after sundown.

Those who are dissatisfied with this kind of response generally found in touristic literature should consult the first and new editions of *Encyclopaedia of Islam*[1] for a more scholarly assessment of the period, as well as the articles on Rhodes in the Turkish *İslam Ansiklopedisi*[2] and the *Türk Ansiklopedisi*.[3] It is recommended that İ.H. Uzunçarşılı's study on the naval organization of the Ottoman Empire should be considered as well[4].

However, in their articles on Rhodes, both the first and second editions of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* have virtually nothing to say about the Ottoman period - nothing, that is, save the fact that, apart from the Classical and Hellenistic era, the island had only really been important during the period of the Knights of St. John. That importance was due to its strategic location in the southeastern

1 The article "Rhodes" in the 1993 reprint edition of the first *Encyclopaedia of Islam* has two entries with two authors, A.S. Atiya and Ettore Rossi. Neither of them has anything to say about the Ottoman period. For A.S. Soucek "Rodos," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* CD-Rom Edition, VIII: 570, "After the conquest and for the rest of the Ottoman period (1522-1912), Rhodes lost much of its former prominence and strategic importance. . ." (In a later edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* the architectural historian and Ottomanist Machiel Kiel's entry on Rhodes is noteworthy, Ed.)

2 Besim Darkot, in the article "Rodos" in the İslam *Ansiklopedisi* **IX:** 753-8, is of the same. opinion, and says so from the beginning: "Ottoman rule on the island of Rhodes lasted for 390 years (1522-1912). Within that time Rhodes was not the scene of any important events."

3 The article "Rodos" in the *Türk Ansiklopedisi* XXVII, 341-2 equally has little to say on the subject, but does state that it was a maritime sancak in the Province of the Kapudan Pasha and that a number of worthy admirals came from the sancak of Rhodes.

4 İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin Merkez ve Bahriye Teşkilatı,* Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1948. This otherwise excellent study has very little to say about Ottoman Rhodes.

Aegean where it posed a threat to Muslim shipping and pilgrims along the maritime route to Alexandria. In addition, Rhodes under the Knights was a menace to the Turkish principalities along the Aegean littoral of Anatolia. But with the Ottoman conquest in 1522, the reader is told, Rhodes lost its historical raison d'etre, and its only purpose was to serve as a port for the Ottoman fleet from time to time. The island was used primarily as a rendezvous point for an Ottoman armada assembled against the French occupation of Egypt in 1799, and as a stopping point in 1824 for re-victualing the Egyptian fleet of Ibrahim Pasha en route to the Morea to suppress the Greek uprising there. Apart from that, Rhodes was not historically significant under the Ottomans and had no role to play in the annals of the Ottoman Empire.

Published accounts of travels in the Levant by English travelers, as well as British Foreign Office reports of the nineteenth century, represent another source of information about Ottoman Rhodes. But again the reader is brought up short by the English myopic obsession with Classical Antiquity to the exclusion of everything else, and by a condescending attitude toward anything Muslim or Ottoman. For many of them, Rhodes throughout the nineteenth century wallowed in an endless torpor of oriental indolence where nothing ever happened. Foreign office reports for the period are fond of pointing out the lack of social and medical services on the island, where there was " ... no hospital, no infirmary, no asylum; the lame, the blind, the mad, and the old are all left to their fate."[5]

Throughout the course of the twentieth century, the cemetery of Murad Reis has been regarded as a locale for finding Ottoman history. From 1930 on, various people have taken an interest in the grave site and have published their findings. Here then was one place on Rhodes where history could be found. A perusal of publications from 1935, 1945, and 1986 in Italian and Turkish readily informs the reader who is historically significant in this Ottoman graveyard.[6]

Within and around the tekye and cemetery of Murad Reis there are a total of 242 engraved inscriptions over fountains, on wall plaques, and on grave stelae. But only some twenty have been found by these authors to be historically noteworthy. They comprise, by and large, the epitaphs of the *rical,* the leading men of the Ottoman Empire-grand viziers, admirals of the fleet, pashas of high rank, and khans of the Crimea. The reason for many of them being found in the graveyard of Murad Reis is because they were either exiled to Rhodes where they ultimately ended their days, or they were sent to the island and executed there. In either case, they represent an ill-fated element among the Ottoman aristocracy. Everyone else buried in the cemetery has been deemed of either lesser interest or of no importance altogether because they either were not of high rank, were women, children, or attendant staff, or they were persons about whom nothing was known beyond a name and a date.

Since these exiled or executed notables of the Empire have been the exclusive focus of attention in published studies, the natural consequence of this limited vision is to regard the burial ground of Murad Reis as little more than a "cimetiére de criminels," as a mid-nineteenth century French topographical map of Rhodes would have it. Invariably, whenever any Europeans visited the tekye and cemetery of Murad Reis, they would ask if anyone of importance was buried there. The resident shaikhs were only too happy to point to the graves of noteworthy individuals who had been condemned to Rhodes. The effect of this negative view is that it was not restricted to the grave site alone, but came to be applied to the entire island as well. By extension, Rhodes was less an outpost than a backwater of the Empire, and viewed as little more than a Devil's Island for those who fell out of imperial favor.

Anyone making a careful study of the gravestones in the cemetery of Murad Reis would come to the conclusion that while a number of the twenty or so leading men of the Empire that have been singled out for study are of some historical interest, they have nothing to do with the history of Rhodes. Nor does anyone else in the graveyard, save for a few officials in the service of the Province of the Archipelago in the nineteenth century. So then, after a close examination of the literature on the history of Ottoman Rhodes and a study of the epigraphy at Murad Reis, it would appear that the assessment of the tourist guidebooks and scholarly reference works is altogether justified in negatively describing the Ottoman era. Or so it would seem.

Lawrence Durrell once described the cemetery of Murad Reis as a secret garden.[7] What he meant was that he found the place a quiet retreat where he could shut out the noise of the outside world. His choice of words however can be taken literally, for Murad Reis has kept its secrets well throughout the centuries. The first thing to realize is that nothing should be taken at its face value, for there is little in the cemetery that is as it seems. The mosque of Murad Reis is an example. The congregational mosque is not only a symbol for the cemetery, it is a famous landmark on Rhodes and a much-photographed icon associated with the island. Virtually anyone seeing it would accept it for what it is. Virtually anyone would, that is, except for architects with a historical sense. On close inspection, it is obvious that the style of the minaret does not accord with the style of the mosque. Ottoman mosques do not have onion-shaped domes for minarets; they have conical spires, as can be seen in the minarets of mosques throughout the Old Town.

Entering the cemetery area, the visitor sees before him seried rows of sarcophagus-like cenotaphs in close formation. Prefabricated cement forms can be seen alongside traditional cenotaphs made of stone blocks faced with marble. All this seems perfectly natural; indeed, it would be difficult to imagine the cemetery any other way. But this arrangement is the product of Italian restoration of the site after 1925. Economy of space was never a consideration in Ottoman graveyards, but it served the purpose of Italian landscape architects. They were intent on clearing more than one-half of the cemetery area of graves and turning the place into a park-like area, a sight more aesthetically pleasing, no doubt, to the guests of the newly-created luxury hotel, the Albergo delle Rose, not to mention the players on the tennis court adjacent to the cemetery.

As for cement forms, it should be realized that cenotaphs were constructed with stone, not cement, a building material unknown in Rhodes until the arrival of the Italians. Prefabricated cement memorials were created to replace crumbling stone structures. If Italian restoration specialists had taken the time and the expense to recreate cenotaphs made from stone blocks, this would have entailed the additional expense of facing them with marble. It was simpler, faster, and more economical to replace them with mass-produced cement forms. These were also used extensively in the new Turkish cemetery of Gani Ahmed that the Italians created in 1925. The cemetery of Gani Ahmed is where the tombs and remains of the common population that had been buried outside the walls of the Old Town were transferred.

Another image that the visitor readily becomes accustomed to is the sight of marble grave stelae planted randomly at the head or foot of rectangular stone border graves. These border stones have

5 F.O. 198/13, General Reports from the Consuls, 1858-60, Report from the island of Rhodes.

6 Vitalis Strumza, *II Tecche di Murad Reis a Rodi,* Bologna: Stabilimento Tipografico L. Cappelli, 1934, extract from *Rivista delle Colonie Italiane* No. 1, 1930; Celalettin Rodoslu, *Rodos ve İstankoy Adalarında Gömülü Tarihi Simalar,* Ankara: Çankaya Matbaası, 1945; Zeki Çelikkol, *Rodos 'taki Türk Eserleri ve Tarihçe,* Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1986.

7 Lawrence Durrell, *The Greek Islands* (New York: Viking Press, 1978), 129: "I linger a little before leaving the town of Rhodes where I spent such happy post-war years, locked into the secret garden of Murad Reis."

been implanted low in the ground in outline form to indicate the presence of a grave. They may or may not have sandstone markers indicating a headstone and a footstone, but they are without an inscribed grave stele. The Italians freely placed inscribed tombstones inside border graves as a solution to the problem of what to do with an excess number of marble grave stelae. Naturally, there is no relation between the person mentioned on the stele and the individual interred in the border grave.

When it comes to identifying high-ranking officials of historical importance, there has been a tendency in publications on Murad Reis to either take what is written on the stone memorial at face value, or impose a pre-conceived notion of who that person must be based upon what is known about a figure in history with that name. But what appears as self-evident in these inscriptions is rarely the case, and what is presented is a person with a mistaken identity. This wrongly assumed identity is accepted and repeated in subsequent publications as if it were obvious. The consequence of this is that the actual identity of the person in question is never discovered.

This last-mentioned example--a blind acceptance of what is inscribed--is, perhaps, the most pernicious example of deception, if only because it is so difficult to detect. The only way to know the true identity of an individual is to question what is written in his epitaph and, whenever possible, to correct the image that is presented through careful research.

The difficulty of determining who is of historical importance and correctly identifying is evident in Vitalis Strumza's study I l *Tecche di Murad Reis a Rodi.* Of the twenty persons presented in Strumza's original study of the cemetery of Murad Reis, five are not of historical interest because nothing is known of them beyond what is said in their epitaphs,[8] while an additional five have been incorrectly identified,[9] which leaves ten out of twenty whose identity has been accurately determined and who may be regarded as historically significant. Out of the fifteen persons of presumed known historical interest, twelve were executed or died in exile. This fact weights his study so that the dominant impression the reader receives is that the cemetery of Murad Reis was a graveyard reserved for an ill-starred few of the Ottoman ruling class.

But appearances are deceiving. The remaining two hundred and twenty persons interred in the cemetery were neither executed nor did they end their days on Rhodes in exile. Further, the fifteen persons Strumza is concerned with do not represent their own kind. The majority of Grand Viziers, Khans of the Crimea, and Pashas sent to Rhodes were exiled there for only a short time. They were usually restored to office when the Porte found it appropriate, and thus returned to Ottoman government service. Whether anyone is engaged in a study of some fifteen or so notables of the Empire identified in Strumza's work or investigates the personal histories of a much broader number of Grand Viziers, Pashas, and Khans of the Crimea who were exiled for a time to Rhodes, it is doubtful if biographical information of this kind would offer any understanding about Rhodes' Ottoman past.

8 Strumza provides only an Italian translation, without historical commentary, of epitaphs for Mahmud Pasha of Bosnia; Salim Bey, Administrator for Religious Foundations on Rhodes; Said Bey, Minister of Finance for Egypt; Hacı, Necib Bey, General Director of Finance for the Province of the Archipelago and his wife Nefise Hanım; and Hatice Hanım.

9 Şahin Giray, Fetih Giray, and Saadet Giray Sultan have all been wrongly described by Strumza as "Khans of the Crimea," while the person described as Şah Safi Mirza has been identified as a Safavid Shah of Iran and the legitimate son of Shah Hüseyin, one of the last Safavid Shahs. Memi Pasha has mistakenly been identified as the well-known Rodos Beyi of history.

Be that as it may, before abandoning altogether the cemetery as a locale for discovering the history of Ottoman Rhodes, it may be worthwhile to have a second look at a grave located in the *hazire,* the small walled graveyard area situated next to the mosque. One of the graves encountered in the hazire is that of Elhacı Ahmed Pasha, who died in the year 1715. The first thing to note about the sarcophagus-like stone cenotaph is that it is impressive in size. The large headstone has been broken off and rests against one side of the memorial, and does so in such a way that it gives the impression that it was randomly placed there and actually belongs someplace else. The inscription on the headstone is brief and uninformative, simply requesting the passerby to say the Fatiha, a prayer for the repose of the soul of Kaymakam Elhacı Ahmed Pasha.

As to the term kaymakam, it is an appellation that has a variety of meanings. The most common is that of an official who is substituting for someone else. Given the fact that this individual held the rank of pasha, it is fair to assume that the person in whose place he was officiating must have been a high-ranking dignitary. Fortunately, *Sicill-i Osmânî,* the Ottoman national biography, provides information on the identity of Kirli Elhac Ahmed Pasha. He was Haseki Ağa in the Bostancı Ocağı, chief of the lower grade officers in the corps of the Imperial Guards employed in the gardens in and around the Sultan's palace. In 1707 he became Bostancı Başı, Commander of the Imperial Guards. In this office he had supervision of the Bosphorus, the Golden Horne, the Sea of Marmara, and the Black Sea. In December 1711, with the rank of vizier, he became Kapudan-ı Derya, Grand Admiral of the Ottoman fleet. A year later, in January 1712, he became Istanbul kaymakamı. In April 1712 he was again appointed Kapuda-ı Derya and at the beginning of 1713 he became governor of Mosul. In 1714 he was made governor of Rhodes, where he subsequently died.[10]

The significance of this biographical entry in *Sicill-i Osmânî* is that Ahmed Pasha had been an important officer in the palace service of the Sultan. Upon graduating from palace service, he was twice appointed Grand Admiral. In the interim between these appointments he served as Istanbul kaymakamı, that is, he acted in the capacity of the Grand Vizier when that officer was away from the capital on campaign. After being appointed Grand Admiral for the second time, he was governor of Mosul, and then of Rhodes. In the latter office he lasted less than a year, for he died in 1715 for reasons that are unknown, but the entry in *Sicill-i Osmânî* may provide a clue; he died *maktulen,* that is, he was probably executed. Although he was twice made Grand Admiral and was governor of Rhodes, he preferred to be remembered on his epitaph as serving as kaymakam in the place of the Grand Vizier.

The case of Elhac Ahmed Pasha is neither unusual nor an aberration. Karabağ Süleyman Pasha, who had been trained in the Tersane, the Imperial Maritime Arsenal in Istanbul, was appointed Kapudan-ı Derya on three occasions, in 1755, 1757, and in 1760, and on the last occasion with the rank of vizier. He then became governor of Rhodes in 1763, but died there not long thereafter.[11] The Rodos Beyi, the governor of Rhodes, held a unique position of preeminence among the derya beyis, the governors who adminstered maritime sancaks or subdivisions within the Province of the Kapudan Pasha. Exactly how the Rodos Beyi achieved this is in need of further research, but it is possible to offer an outline with the information presently available.

After the conquest of Rhodes in December 1522, Sultan Suleyman appointed Kurdoğlu Muslihüddin Reis, one of his chief naval commanders during the siege, to be in charge of the newly-conquered island. According to A.S. Atiya in the first part of an article on Rhodes in the first edition

10 "Kirli Elhac Ahmed Pasha," *Sicill-i Osmânî*, 238.

11 "Süleyman Pasha, Karabağ," *Sicill-i Osmânî*, iii 83.

of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* "Rhodes became the seat of a Turkish Pasha."[12] İ.H. Uzunçarşılı states as well that Muslihüddin Reis was appointed by Sultan Süleyman as Rodos sancakbeyi.[13] While this was the case, the situation of the island after the conquest prevented it from functioning as an independent administrative entity. As part of the peace terms, it is known that the population of Rhodes was exempt from taxation for a period of five years.[14] It is not clear if a land and population registers were drawn up immediately after the conquest or later. At any rate, holders of medium and large-size fiefs (timar, zeamet) were not deriving their income from the island's revenue during this five-year period, and neither was the *Sancakbeyi*. The azab forces manning the medieval walled town must have received their pay from the state treasury, and it may be assumed the sancakbeyi probably did as well.

Further, although Sultan Süleyman appointed Muslihüddin as *Sancakbeyi* of Rhodes at the end of December 1522,[15] it must have been with the understanding from the Sultan that he was free to pursue his piratical activities. If Italian records for the period are correct, Muslihüddin was active as a corsair in the southwestern Aegean and Mediterranean from 1522 to 1535.[16] In these early years, Muslihüddin used Rhodes in the same way he had Bizerta, as a port base from which to launch his piratical operations. As a consequence, during the same period Rhodes was administratively tied to Mytilene, which at the time was part of the province of Rumeli, and Dizdarzade Mehmed Çelebi, the *Sancakbeyi* of Midilli, took charge of the island.[17] Rhodes remained under the administration of Mytilene from 1522 until 1538 and like Mytilene during this time, Rhodes would have been administratively tied to the *Beylerbeylik* of Rumelia.

It is not clear what administrative status Rhodes had at the time in its relation to Mytilene (that is, whether it ranked as a *kaza*), or what the exact position of the Rados *Beyi* was. Mytilene itself would have been under the Sancak of the Kapudan at Gallipolli. It is possible that the *Sancakbeyi* of Mytilene acted as overseer of Rhodes and appointed lieutenant governors (*Kaymakam-ı Mir-i liva*) to administer the island in Muslihüddin's absence. This would explain the presence of two persons who are described as *Mir-i livas* (that is, *Sancakbeyis*) for Rhodes between 1522 and 1530. The name Mehmed Bey appears early as *Mir-i liva* from about 1522 to 1525, and that of Abdülcelil İsfendiyar Bey from about 1525 to 1530.[18] More properly, they would have ranked as *Kaymakam-ı Mir-i liva*, lieutenant governors.

According to Italian sources, Muslihüddin Reis died in 1535.[19] This conclusion probably derived from the fact that reports of his activity as a corsair in the Mediterranean ceased after that date. The reason for this perhaps was due to the changing status of Rhodes. After being subject to the sancak of Mytilene from 1522 to 1538, with the creation of the Province of the Archipelago, from 1538 to 1546 Rhodes had an independent position *(müstakil)* as a sancak outside the administration of the newly-

12 AS. Atiya and Ettore Rossi, "Rhodes," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 1993 repr. of first edition (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), 1147.

13 İ.H. Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* II, eighth printing (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1998), 315.

14 Ibidem.

15 Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* II, 315: 5 safer 929, which is Tuesday, 23 December 1522.

16 Salvatore Bono, *Corsari nel Mediterraneo,* Perugia, 1993, and the article "Kurtoğlu Muslihiddin Reis" in the Wikipedia encyclopedia.

17 Çelikkol, *Rodos'taki Türk Eserleri,* 14, citing Ş erafettin Turan, *Rodos'un Zaptından Malta Muhasarasına* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayını, 1970), 71.

18 Ettore Rossi, "L'Iscrizione ottomana in Persiano sul bastione della Torre di S. Maris a Rodi," *Annuario della R. Scuola Archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni Italiane in Oriente* viii-ix (1925-26), 342-3. Mehmed Bey and Abdülcelil İsfendiyar Bey are described as Mir-i liva, an early term for Sancak beyi.

19 "Kurtoğlu Muslihiddin Reis," Wikipedia encyclopedia.

created maritime province. This may have been due to the fact that Rhodes became during this time a source of revenue *(has)* for the Kapudan Pasha, Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha. At this point, Muslihüddin may have had his naval activity restricted to the province of Rhodes, the southeastern Aegean, and by this time became subject to the Kapudan Pasha as squadron commander in support of the Ottoman fleet when the occasion demanded. This would necessarily have put an end to his traditional high-profile role as a privateer.

Rhodes' exceptional administrative status of being outside the Province of the Archipelago ended with Hayreddin Pasha's death in 1546, and it is only from this date on that the maritime sancakbeyi of Rhodes was included within the Province of the Kapudan Pasha with the rank of *Derya beyi*.[20] While the three periods of Rhodes' administrative status and their dates are known, the same cannot be said of Muslihüddin Reis's role as *Sancakbeyi* during each of them. That role as presented here is simply a surmise, but it offers an understanding of how Muslihüddin's position evolved over the years from essentially one of a freebooting corsair to that of derya beyi, a maritime sancakbeyi resident on Rhodes within the Province of the Kapudan Pasha. As *Derya beyi,* Muslihüddin became a naval commander responsible for policing the southeastern Aegean with his squadron, and adding his ships and marines to the Ottoman fleet when the occasion demanded. Ultimately, however, questions surrounding the early years of the island's administration can only be resolved through research in the Istanbul archives.

A word may be in order regarding how the creation of the Province of the Archipelago came about. The earliest records relating to the maritime province date to the year 1550, some four years after Rhodes entered the Province of the Kapudan Pasha. The province in that year comprised the *sancaks* of Gelibolu (Gallipoli), Midilli (Mytilene), Rodos (Rhodes), Egriboz (Euboea), İnebahtı (Naupaktos), and Karlı ili (Epiros), which indicates that Rhodes was part of Province of the Archipelago at an early date. With its creation as a *sancak* in 1522, the island may have formed the original nucleus of the future province along with Gallipoli and Mytilene. [21] The addition of Rhodes created an early core of naval bases along the eastern Aegean to control piracy in the region, fully fourteen years before the Province of the Kapudan Pasha came into being.

While the Province of the Kapudan Pasha comprised only six sancaks in 1550, by the end of the sixteenth century the maritime beylerbeylik expanded to twenty-seven. As an overview, the Province of the Kapudan Pasha developed in the following manner. The sancak of Gelibolu (Gallipoli) comprising the Gallipoli peninsula was taken from the European Province of Rumeli and the port town of Gallipoli was made the seat of the Kapudan Pasha. To complete the control of the Hellespont, the sancak of Biga comprising the Biga Peninsula with its capital of Kale-i Sultaniye was taken from the Province of Anatolia.[22] To the south of Biga, the sancak of Kocaeli in the region of Bithynia and Suğla in the area of İzmir (Smyrna) and its environs were obtained from the *Beylerbeylik* of Anatolia as well and added to the maritime province. For the western Aegean, the sancaks of Eğriboz (Euboea) and Mizistre (Mystra) were removed from the Province of Rumeli, along with the sancaks of İnebahtı (Naupaktos)

20 "Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid Eyaleti," *Türk Ansiklopedisi* x, 332: Barbaros Hayrettin Paşanın da "Derya beylerbeyliği" ne tayin olunduğundan ve kendisine Gelibolu sancağından başka, Rodos, Midilli ve Eğriboz sancaklarının da verildiginden bahsetmekte...." and "Kaptan Paşa" *islam Ansiklopedisi* vi, 207: Rodos'un müstakil durumu, Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa'nın vefatını müteakip (1546), bozularak, Rodos beylerine derya-beyi payesinin verilmesinden sonra, Cezayir eyaletine idhal edilmiş".

21 Ayhan Afsin Ünal, "XVI. ve XVII. Yüzyıllarda Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid (Akdeniz-Ege Adaları) ya da Kapdan Pasha Eyaleti," *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi,* No. 12 (2002), 253.

22 The peninsula of Biga corresponds in area to the Troad (Troas), the ancient region of Troy.

on the Gulf of Corinth and Karlı ili (Epiros) on the eastern shores of the Ionian Sea. In the southeastern Mediterranean, the sancaks of Dimyat (Damietta) and Alexandria were taken from the province of Egypt, while the sancak of Mehdiye was taken over from that of Tunis. The *beylerbeylik* of Algiers as a separate province completed the military-administrative frontier along the southern Mediterranean. Forming a ring of naval bases around the Aegean, Ionian, and Mediterranean seas, they protected their own territory and supplied ships for the Ottoman fleet as well as a compliment of marines.[23]

This newly-created province was called the *Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid Eyaleti*, the Province of the Islands of the White Sea,[24] or simply the Province of the Archipelago, which became synonymous with the Province of the Kapudan Pasha. At its creation, it was under the command of Hayreddin Pasha, who was Admiral of the Ottoman fleet and *Beylerbeyi* of the Province of Algiers. Hayreddin Barbarossa thus governed two provinces, the Province of Algiers and that of the Kapudan Pasha from Gallipoli, the capital of the maritime province.

After Hayreddin Pasha's death in 1546, for a time the Kapudan Pasha was reduced to *sancakbeyi* rank. When Piyale was made *Kapudan-ı derya* in 1554, he was accorded the title of Bey only and rank of *Sancakbeyi* of Gallipoli.[25] In 1558, in view of his victories in the western Mediterranean, the Imperial Divan awarded him the rank of *Beylerbeyi* (governor of a province) and the title of Pasha. After the conquest of Chios (*Sakız*) in 1566, shortly after the accession of Selim II, Piyale Pasha was assigned a yearly *has* income of 400,000 akçes and made second vizier (*vezir-i sani*) with a seat in the imperial divan (*kubbe veziri*).[26] During the conquest of Cyprus in 1570, Piyale Pasha was elevated to the rank of third vizier.[27] High vizierial rank and a seat in the imperial divan were not accorded to the Kapudan Pasha again until Damad İbrahim Pasha was made Grand Admiral in 1588.[28]

With respect to Muslihüddin Reis, Rhodes' first Ottoman governor, nothing is known of his naval activity during his long term of service, perhaps often nominal, as *sancakbeyi* after 1535. Surprisingly, there is no mention of him in the battle of Preveza in 1538. He was replaced in the position of Rodos Beyi by one of Turgut Reis's lieutenants, Deli Cafer Reis, who administered the island from 1552 to 1557-8. In 1552 Muslihüddin Reis exchanged his position as derya beyi of Rhodes for that of Mytilene. He remained in that post until sometime after 1560. In 1559 Muslihüddin as derya beyi of Mytilene and his brother Kurdoğlu Ahmed Bey, the *Derya beyi* for Rhodes, were a part of Kapudan Piyale Pasha's fleet in the naval battle off the island of Jerba (Tr. Cerbe). They also took part in the siege of Jerba the following year which succeeded in evicting the Spanish from the island.[29] After the Jerba campaign, Muslihüddin Reis returned to Mytilene as derya beyi and died a short time thereafter.[30]

23 "Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid Eyaleti," opera citato, 332.

24 In normal English parlance, the Province of the Archipelago.

25 "Piyale Pasha, Damad İkinci Vezir," *Türk Ansikl.* xxvii, 44; "Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid Eyaleti," opera cit., 332.

26 "Piyale Pasha," İslam *Ansiklopedisi* ix, 568. "Kubbe Vezirleri," *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü* II (istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1983), 307.

27 Ibidem.

28 "Kaptan-ı Derya," *Türk Ansiklopedisi* xxi, 240; *Sicill-i Osmânî* iv, 785. The term "Grand Admiral" was reserved for Kapudan Pashas with vizierial rank.

29 Katip Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-kibar ft Esfar'ıl-bihar,* i, 111 on the Jerba campaign: "Moton (Modon) onüne vardıkta , Rodos Beyi Kurtoğlu Ahmet Bey ve Midilli Sancağı Beyi Mustafa Bey birkaç parça gemi ile geldiler." Midilli sancak beyi Mustafa is identified in the *Türk Ansiklopedisi* article on the Jerba naval battle as "Mustafa Muslihiddin." "Cerbe Deniz Muharebesi," *Türk Ansiklopedisi* x, 213: "Türk donanması gayet iyi tertiplenmiş olup derya beyleri olarak Rodos beyi Kurdoğlu Ahmet, Karesi Beyi Gazanfer, Midilli beyi Mustafa Muslihiddin, Kocaeli beyi Ali Börtek, Seyit Ali Reis, Oluç Ali Reis, Cafer Reis bulunuyordu."

30 There is some confusion as to what happened to Muslihüddin Reis after his appointment as derya beyi for Mytilene in 1552. According to Seydi Ali Reis's memoir *Miratü'l-memalik,* when it had been assumed in 1554 that Seydi Ali Reis was lost at sea after attempting to return the Indian Ocean fleet from Basra to the Ottoman naval port of Suez, Muslihüddin Reis was appointed Silvey (Mısır) Kapudam in his stead: "İskender Pasha, benim oldüğüm haberinin bütün Osmanlı ülkelerinde yayıldığını da bildirdi. Hatta Mısır Kaptanlığına Rodos sancağı beyi Kurdoğlu'nu tayin etmişler...." And so Seydi Ali Reis'in Hatıraları. But this is a mistaken recollection on his part, since it is known that the Süveyş Kaptanlığı at the time was given to Muslihüddin's son, Kurdoğlu Hızır Reis. See İ.H. Uzuçarşılı, *Osmanlı tarihi* II, 400.

When Muslihüddin's brother Kurdoğlu Ahmed Pasha became Rodos Beyi in 1557-8, the manner of appointing persons to this position may have changed. Muslihüddin and Deli Cafer Reis gained their naval experience at sea as corsairs. With the appointment of Ahmed Pasha, governors of Rhodes obtained their training in the Tersane-i amire, the Imperial Maritime Arsenal in Istanbul. Ahmed Pasha rose through the ranks to become Tersane kethüdası, Director of the Maritime Arsenal, second in rank in that organization only to the Kapudan Pasha. Corsairs, regardless of their position or rank within the Ottoman navy, retained their title of Reis, which signified they commanded their own vessel. Throughout much of the sixteenth century, sancak beyis, including derya beyis, held the title of bey. It is worthy of note that Muslihüddin's brother had the distinction of being titled "pasha."

Kurdoğlu Ahmed Pasha's appointment as Rodos Beyi from the office of *Tersane Kethüdası* is indicative of the importance Rhodes was being given within the administration of the Province of the Kapudan Pasha. The moment of his election happened to coincide with increased naval activity of the Ottoman fleet. This began the Ottoman campaign against the Spanish to take the island of Jerba in 1559-60. In 1565, Ahmed Pasha took part in the siege of Malta, and in 1570 during the conquest of Cyprus as Rodos Beyi he blockaded Famagusta (Magosa) and guarded the island with forty ships while the main fleet under Piyale Pasha returned to Istanbul. Ahmed Pasha was not present at the battle of Lepanto on 7 October 1571, in all likelihood because he had been recently appointed governor-general (*beylerbeyi*) of Cyprus. The Rodos Beyi was present, however, in that historic battle: Hasan Bey led a fleet of six ships. A certain Kaya Bey replaced Hasan Bey as Rodos Beyi from 1571 to 1573.

Nothing is known of the activities of the Rodos Beyis from 1573 on--not even their names, until the year 1610 when Memi Bey became derya beyi for Rhodes. Of Albanian origin, Memi Bey was also educated in the Tersane-i amire. In 1591-2 he was made Trablusgarb Beyi, Commander of Tripolitania in Libya. Upon being dismissed several years later, he returned to the Imperial Arsenal in Istanbul and was appointed Rodos Beyi in 1018/1609-10. He joined with Grand Admiral Kayserili Halil Pasha in attempting to rid the eastern Mediterranean of Tuscan and Maltese pirates that were harrassing Ottoman shipping between Alexandria and Rhodes. Memi Bey made a name for himself in capturing two galleons belonging to the French Knights of Malta. One galleon was commanded by someone known to the Turks as the "Grave-digger Captain" for the number of Muslim ships he had sunk. Both galleons were taken to Rhodes as prizes and added to the fleet.[31]

In 1614 Memi Bey joined Halil Pasha on a punitive expedition against Malta as retaliation for the number of raids conducted by the Knights of St. John against Ottoman vessels in the eastern Mediterranean. Although the objective of the expedition was to quickly raid the island in order to destroy property and take prisoners, the attack was not successful as the Knights were forewarned of their coming and anticipated where the Ottoman troops intended to land. While

31 "Memi Pasha," *Sicill-i Osmânî* iv, 514-15.

doing reconnaissance of Sapienza Island, a mile off Methone, Memi Bey and Sencuvan oğlu,[32] the derya beyi for Alexandria, encountered a combined fleet of twenty galleys from Malta and Tuscany. Although Sencuvan's ship escaped, Memi Bey's did not; he died in battle, and his ship was taken as a prize.[33]

Ebu Bekr Pasha, the founder of the mosque in the tekye of Murad Reis, is yet another noted example of someone educated in the Maritime Arsenal who was made Rodos Beyi. He is something more---an early example of someone who after serving as Rodos Beyi became Kapudan-ı derya. It is not known when he was assigned to Rhodes, but it may be assumed sometime in the early 1630s. By 1640-41 he became Ak Deniz Kumandanı, Commander of the Mediterranean and Aegean, and in muharrem 1054/March 1644 he was appointed Kapudan Pasha. He died the following year, but left a grown son who became the Beylerbeyi of Tunis.[34]

More than a century after Ebu Bekr Pasha, the Rodos Beyi was still being appointed to the highest office in naval administration. After being appointed derya beyi for Rhodes, İbrahim Pasha was made Tersane Kethüdası in 1758. In 1768, with the rank of mir-i miran (equivalent to that of beylerbeyi), he was appointed Kapudan-ı derya and the following year was made vizier.

There is no date on the mosque at Murad Reis to indicate when it was first completed. However, according to records kept in the Administration Office for Religious Foundations, the cami was built by Ebu Bekr Pasha at the same time he built a fountain in 1046/1636-7 near the present-day Akteon restaurant along the Mandraki esplanade.[35] The fountain was removed at the beginning of the twentieth century, but the dedicatory stone slab that had been placed over it has been preserved in the courtyard of Diomede de Villaragut, a part of the garden area of the Archaeological Museum of Rhodes. The inscription states that Ebu Bekr Pasha built religious and charitable foundations throughout the passes, defiles, and along the byways of the Empire to aid pilgrims and wayfarers. Constructing a fountain in Rhodes doubtless was intended to benefit those who took the pilgrimage route by sea between Istanbul and Alexandria. The mosque he built at Murad Reis most probably was also founded to serve travelers, as the tekye of Murad Reis functioned more like a hospice for visitors and pilgrims than as a residential lodge for dervishes. The mosque at Murad Reis has particular significance since it was originally built and subsequently restored by two governors of Rhodes.

It is not clear when, but possibly dating from the time of Ebu Bekr Pasha's appointment to Rhodes in the 1630s, the Rodos Beyi exclusively among the derya sancak beyis could be advanced to the office of Kapudan Pasha.[36] Likewise, former Admirals were appointed as governors of Rhodes.[37] The significance of the office of the Rodos Beyi is evident from the fact that he was second in rank after the Kapudan Pasha in the divan of the Grand Admiral.[38] When the Kapudan Pasha was in Istanbul, the Rodos Beyi was in charge of the Ottoman fleet, whose base was Rhodes.[42] In addition, it was the duty of the Rodos Beyi to police the southeastern Aegean and act as an escort for ships voyaging between Rhodes and Alexandria. It should be noted that apart from the battle of Preveza in 1538, the Rodos Beyi was present in virtually every major naval battle between the Ottoman Empire and European powers, acting as a derya beyi commander supporting the Ottoman fleet.

The reason why the Rodos Beyi was the alter ego of the Kapudan Pasha when the Grand Admiral was in Istanbul and why only this derya beyi alone could become Grand Admiral is due to the strategic position of Rhodes in the Province of the Kapudan Pasha. For centuries Muslim shipping and the pilgrimage route by sea had been attacked by the Knights of Rhodes. Removing the Knights from the island, however, did not stop their predations in the southern Aegean and in the open stretch of sea between Alexandria and Rhodes. Protecting the sea route to Mecca remained a priority with the Ottoman government until Napoleon took control of Malta in 1798 and thereby put an end to the predations of the Knights. By virtue of its position, then, Rhodes was in the best location for defending the pilgrimage route by sea.

Before leaving the cemetery of Murad Reis, the visitor should stop before the door of the mosque to reflect what is written over it. The dedication is by Murabıtzade Hasan Bey. His grave is not found in the cemetery of Murad Reis; it is, rather, located near his residential konak, a structure that can be seen today inside the Eleutheria Gate, situated behind and to the left of the Temple of Aphrodite off the Plaza of Argyro Kastro in the Old Town.[39] Formerly located on a hill to the left of the temple, his tomb was removed in the late 1930s to the Turkish cemetery of Gani Ahmed nea Zephyros by Cesare Mario de Vecchi, the Italian governor of the Dodecanese.[40]

In spite of his grave not being located in the cemetery of Murad Reis, Hasan Bey has left a written memorial over the entrance to the mosque. It reads that the once beautiful edifice that had been the cami of Murad Reis had fallen into ruin, but was restored to its former state by Murabıtzade Hasan Bey from the spoils of war in the year 1212/1797-98. It has been surmised by Zeki Çelikkol in the first edition of his study on the Ottoman monuments of Rhodes that the Hasan Bey in question must be none other than the famed Cezayirli Gazi Hasan Pasha.[41] This guess, however, is wide of the mark. Murabıtzade Hasan Bey was Rodos Beyi most probably from 1781 until his death in 1815.[42] His period in office amounted to a sinecure, for apart from Muslihüddün Reis, the first Rodos Beyi, it was unusual for an official to remain as governor of

32 Probably a corruption of the French form of St. John. The derya beyi of Alexandria may have been the captured son of a Knight of St. John of Malta.

33 Katip Çelebi, *Tuhfetü'l-Kibar ft Esfari'l-Bihar* i (İstanbul 1980), 160-61. By this time, in 1614, Memi Bey may no longer have been the Rodos Beyi, but was the bey of Dimyat (Damietta). If Anderson is referring to the same event, he gives a different account of what happened: "Two of these scouts, Neapolitans under Diego Pimentel, their Lieutenant General, had the good fortune to surprise 2 Turkish galleys at Prodano island to the north of Navarin and to capture them both. Three other Turks came out from Navarin, but the Neapolitans held onto their prizes and got away...." R.C. Anderson, *Naval Wars in the Levant* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 82.

34 "Ebu Bekr Pasha," *Sicill-i Osmânî* i, 174.

35 Strumza, *II Tecche di Murad Reis,* 3; Çelikkol, *Rodas'taki Türk Eserleri,* 28.

36 "Kaptan Paşa," *İslam Ansiklopedisi VI,* 209: "Kaptan Paşa İstanbul'da bulunurken, kendisine Akdeniz'de Rodos Beyi vekalet ederdi. Bu mevki filo kumandanları arasında Kaptan Paşadan sonra en yüksek bir makam olup, bu mevkiden Kapudan-ı deryalığa yükselen ümera dahi görülmüştür."

37 Ibid.

38 "Kaptan Paşa," *İslam Ansiklopedisi* vi, 209. See as well M. Efthymiou-Chazilacou, "Rhodes et sa region elargie au xviiie siecle: Les activites portuaires," unpublished doctoral dissertation submitted to the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Sorbonne, University of Paris, November 1984, p. 4 fu 10 for the observation that the Rodos Beyi ranked directly after the Kapudan Paşa in that officer's divan.

39 Strumza, *II Tecche di Murad Reis,* 4.

40 Çelikkol, *Rodos'taki Türk Eserleri,* 29, fn 129.

41 Ibid.

42 The early date of Murabıtzade Hasan Bey's activities as Rodos Beyi comes from French consular reports. The reader is referred to the study of M. Efthymiou-Chazilacou.

Rhodes for more than a few years. Given the timing, Hasan Bey may have been a *Derebeyi*, one of the governors of a province who, due to the weakness of the Ottoman central government at the time, was capable of maintaining a quasi-independent stance toward the Porte while allocating a considerable degree of wealth and power to himself. He is said to have controlled much of the mercantile trade of the island.[43]

A year after Murabıtzade Hasan Bey restored the mosque, he figured prominently in a moment in history when he was called upon by the Porte to command a fleet in September 1798 to aid Lord Nelson in maintaining a blockade against the French in Alexandria.[44] Another fleet under the command of Kadri Bey accompanied a Russian naval force to liberate the Ionian Islands from the French. Hasan Bey may have also been active in sending reinforcements from Rhodes to assist in the defense of Acre against Napoleon's forces.

The long history of naval warfare with the Knights was replaced in 1798 with Napoleon's occupation of Egypt and attempted conquest of Syria. A short interlude of peace was ended with the outbreak of the Greek War for Independence and the constant threat that liberation of the island posed for the Empire. It may be said that Rhodes only ceased to play an active role in the defense of the southeastern Aegean and eastern Mediterranean after 1833. In spite of a decline in naval warfare after the Greek uprising, the dockyards of Rhodes remained busy with ship construction, and were employing some five hundred workers by mid-century.[45] In the latter part of the nineteenth century the island was to take on a new role as the capital of the *Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid Vilayeti*, the Province of the Archipelago. But this, like the history of Ottoman Rhodes itself, awaits further research in the archives of Istanbul. In conclusion, considering the important role played by Rhodes in Ottoman naval organization and in the defense of the Empire, it may well be time for guidebooks and scholarly reference works alike to reconsider the island's Ottoman past as part of its history.



Map of Rhodes
Pîrî Reis (d.*1554), Kitāb-ı Bahriye*,
17th century expanded version, fol. 4b,
Ink and pigment on European paper.

Walters manuscript W.658,
courtesy of The Walters Art Museum.

43 On Murabıtzade Hasan Bey, see M. Efthymiou-Chazilacou, opera citato.

44 "Selim III," *İslam Ansiklopedisi* x, 450: "Bundan bir gün sonra, 24 rebiülevvel 1213 (5 eylül 1798) tarihinde, bir rus filosu Kara-denizden gelerek, Büyükdere önlerinde demirledi. Osmanlı donanması da iki kısmı aynldı; bir kısmının, amiral Nelson'a yardım maksadı ile, iskenderiye'ye ve diger kısmının da rus filosu ile beraber, Yediada üzerine gönderilmesi uygun görüldü. İskenderiye'ye gidecek filonun kumandanlığına Rodoslu Murabıt-zade Hasan Kaptan ve diğer filonun kaptanlığına da Kadri Bey tayin olundular."

45 Efthymiou-Chazilacou, opera citato, 127.

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The Architecture of the Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library
of the Medieval City of Rhodes and the Religious, Educational and Charitable Institutions that Surround it

Introduction

This study aims to present the architecture of the Hafiz Ahmed Agha library 1793-4[1] in the medieval town of Rhodes, in conjunction with the surrounding religious, educational and charitable foundations. The library, containing rare manuscripts focused on the Ottoman and broader Muslim world was donated by its founder to the town of Rhodes, intended for the benefit of visitors, scholars, and researchers. The manuscripts it contained were written mainly in the Arabic and Ottoman Turkish language.

Public libraries were an integral part of the Ottoman Empire's educational system and functioned as knowledge centers, conserving and disseminating Islamic, scientific, and philosophic works. Their founding helped paving the way towards the Tanzimat reforms (1839-1876), which promoted the modernisation of the Empire and the wider spreading of education. Most libraries were stand-alone buildings or integrated into mosques, *medreses* (religious schools), and *tekkes* (place of worship). The libraries were often funded by *vakufs* (religious and charitable foundations), such as the Hafiz Ahmed Agha foundation in Rhodes.

The most important libraries include: the Edirnekapi library (Constantinople, 1828); the Feizullah Efendi Public Library (Constantinople,1828); the Nuruosmaniye Library (Constantinople, 1755); Fatih Medrese Library (Constantinople, 19th century); the Gazi Hüseyin Paşa Library (Salonica, 19th century); the Mehmed Ali Paşa Library (Kavala, 19th century)[2].

The continuation of the founder's donation by his son Ahmed Fethi Pasha, who in 1852[3] built the Clock on the SW corner tower of the Byzantine Castle and the Collachium of the Knights, and the School in the adjacent building in conjunction with the second Byzantine tower, came as a complement to the great creation of Suleiman's social foundation.

Following Rhodes' treaty of conquest by the Ottomans in 1522-23, Suleiman attempted to organise charitable and educational institutions. They converted the use of big churches into mosques, such as the Great *Sandjovan* Mosque, in the conventual church of Saint John of the Collachium and the *Kaduri* mosque in the Knights' cathedral and previously the Byzantine cathedral of Our Lady of the Castle[4] or smaller Catholic and Orthodox churches into *masjids* for the old town's *mahalles* (small neighbourhoods). He organised the theological school in the *Hurmali Medrese* in Agios Georgios' convent[5] and the soup kitchen for the poor, the *Imaret*[6], next to the Ottoman library. At the same time, they first proceeded with the construction of big mosques, such as Ibrahim Pasha's Mosque,

1 Γεωργαλή (2008), 382-3; Balducci (1932), 65-66.
2 Information on Google.
3 Information on Google https://www.fethipasavakfi.com/gr/muvakkithane-saat-kulesi-rustiye-mektebi.php
4 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 158.
5 Gabriel (1923), 202-207; Ορλάνδος (1948), 99-106; Ντέλλας et al. (1997), 532, 535-538, 550-551; Ντέλλας (2008c), 37-43.
6 Ντέλλας et al. (1997), loc. cit.; Ντέλλας (1998), 167-178; Ντέλλας (2008l), 376-377.

Ροδος Μεσαιωνικη Πολη

Rhodes Medieval Town

Πυροβολείο Ελιών
Bulwark of the Olives

Πύργος Απ. Πέτρου
Tower of St. Peter

Πύλη Ελευθερίας
Liberty Gate

Πύλη Απ. Παύλου
St. Paul's Gate

Πύλη του Πρωτομαστόρου
Gate of the Grand Master

Πύλη d'Amboise
D'Amboise Gate

Πύργος Pagnac
Pagnac Tower

Πύλη Κανονιών
Cannon Gate

Προμαχώνας Αγ. Γεωργίου
Bastion of St. George

Πύλη Αγ. Αικατερίνης
Gate of St. Catherine

Πύργος Ισπανίας
Tower of Spain

Πύλη Ακαντίας
Akandia Gate

Πύργος Ιταλίας (Carretto)
Tower of Italy (Carretto)

Πύργος Παναγίας
Tower of the Virgin

Πύργος Αγ. Αθανασίου
St. Athanasious Tower

Θέατρο
"Μελίνα Μερκούρη"
Melina Merkouri Theatre

Πύλη Αγ. Ιωάννου/Κοσκινού
(Κόκκινη Πορτα)
St. John / Koskinou Gate (Red Gate)

1 - Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library
2 - Clock Tower
3 - Old School, *Rüştiye*
4 - Suleiman's Mosque, *Süleymaniye*
5 - Church of the Holy Apostles or Imaret
6 - Complex with the Monastery of Saint George, *Hurmalı Medrese*
7 - Saint Mark's Church (*Sadri Chelebi Mesjid*)
8 - Saint Paraskevi Church (*Takkedji Mesjid*)
9 - Hamza Bey Mosque
10 - Church of Saint John of the Knights (Great Sandjovan Mosque of Rhodes)
11 - Neoclassical School
12 - Ottoman Court House

0 100 200 300 400 500

which was originally dedicated to Sultan Suleiman[1], and Redjep Pasha's Mosque[2], and hammams, such as the *Eski* Hammam and the New Hammam[3]. Suleiman appointed *imams*, Muslim clerics and teachers, and he specified the real estate property of his foundation, the *vakufs*, for their and the mosques' upkeep. But most importantly, he endowed his foundation with the taxes from Rhodes and Kos, but also the *maktu* (lump-sum taxes) of the other privileged islands of the South Sporades. Indicatively, the tax income for Rhodes in the 17th century amounted to 345 881 akche, administered by the *mütevelli*. At various times during the 18th century and up until the Italian period (1912-1948), the taxation of Rhodes and Kos, but also of the other islands, became heavier[4]. Nonetheless, the 18th and 19th centuries crack-down on piracy by the Ottoman fleet enforced the sense of security and peace and contributed to the development of the islands' economy. Rhodes and Kos in particular, being centers of the wider SE Aegean region, had leading roles in the abundant agricultural production and the dynamic trade and shipping, in conjunction with its industry, ports, and shipyards.

At the same time, the Greeks and the Jews dominate the shops of the bazaar and the old market in the 19th century, as well as the trade with Smyrna and Alexandria, but also the West and East[5]. Therefore, this explains the increase in income from tax for the *Vakuf* foundation and the construction of important mosques in the 18th and 19th centuries, such as the Sultan-Mustafa mosque 1764-5[6], the Suleiman mosque 1808[7], the Mehmet Agha mosque 1820[8] and more. Correspondingly, the Christians also built post-Byzantine churches in the 18th century, particularly the cross-groined vaulted churches, such as the Rhodes Cathedral (*Mitropoli*) in 1750[9], the Holy Virgin of Trianta in 1756, St Nicholas in 1759, Our Lady Tsambika the Lower in Archangelos in 1760, St Irene in Lachania in 1760, and the monastery of Archangel Michael Panormitis in Symi in 1783, as well as many churches from the 19th century until 1924 (a total of approximately 135) in the town's *marasia* (neighbourhoods outside the old town) and the other villages of Rhodes, but also of the Dodecanese and across the straits on the coast of Asia Minor[10]. Jewish synagogues were also built in the Medieval town of Rhodes[11]. At the same time, public baths and educational buildings get built for the Muslims (the Yeni or Mustafa Hammam,[12] the Neoclassical School 1876 and following its destruction in 1898), the Orthodox, and the Jews of Rhodes.

The private *vakuf* foundation of Hafiz Ahmed Agha with the Library (1793-4) in the 18th century, and his son Ahmed Fethi Pasha with the Clock Tower and the *Rüştiye* (Junior High School, 1852) in the 19th century came as a complement to education and the charitable foundations of Suleiman's public *vakuf*, raising and promoting the town as an important cultural center in the Ottoman Empire's eastern Mediterranean.

1 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 161; Balducci (1932), 93-99; Ντέλλας (2008j), 364-365.
2 Balducci (1932), 98-113; Μάγος (2008), 366-367; Ντέλλας (2017), 171-179; Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 161-2.
3 Balducci (1932), 39-58.
4 Ντέλλας (2012), 104-105; Παπαχριστοδούλου (1994), 400, 435.
5 Ντέλλας (2012), 94-96.
6 Balducci (1932), 113-127; Ντέλλας (2008k), 368-369.
7 Balducci (1932), 126-139; Βογιατζής (2007), 396–400; Ντέλλας (2008i), 360-363; Ντέλλας et al (2009), 129-154.
8 Balducci (1932), 87-92; Ντέλλας (2008g), 91-96; Οικονομίδου (2007), 140-144.
9 Ντέλλας (2021), 19-52.
10 Ντέλλας (2012), and in the churches in the ΚΣΕΔ annex.
11 Ντέλλας (2008h), 101-106 and also the Kahal-Shalom synagogue, 113-114.
12 Balducci (1932), 45-58, Κανετάκη (2008), 380-381.

Rhodes has been a lively intertemporal town from its founding in 408 B.C. to this day and it has preserved important monuments from all the periods of its long history. The Medieval Town in particular, which is the center of ancient Rhodes, retains excavations of the Ancient town and the most important monuments of the Byzantine (5th century - 1309), Hospitaller (1309-1522), Ottoman (1523-1912), Italian (1912-1947) and modern Greek periods. Restorations done in recent years have showcased most of them. The importance of the Medieval Town of Rhodes led to its designation as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1988. The coexistence of monuments from all these periods creates a rich historical environment for the life and function of the Library and contributes to its showcasing and exposure on the western end of the Medieval town's bazaar.

1 - The Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library

During this period, private initiatives also emerged—such as that of Hafiz Ahmed Agha, chief equerry to Sultan Selim III (r. 1789–1807)—who donated a building in 1793–94 to establish the Ottoman library in Rhodes. His aim was to improve the education of the town's Muslim population, particularly serving the imams and students of the Hurmali Medrese, which had been founded under the Suleiman Foundation.The library collection was originally stored by Hafiz Ahmed Agha in Murat Reis Tekke[13] and when the Library building was completed in 1794, it was transferred there[14]. Later it also supported the needs of the other educational institutions, the *R*üştiye gymnasium in between the library and the Hospitaller Grand Master's Palace, built by Ahmed Fethi Pasha, son of Hafiz Ahmed Agha in 1852 along with the Clock tower[15]. But also the newer foundations, like the School of the first building of the "Suleiman Medrese of 1876", which was built on the ruins of the Great Sendjovan Mosque following its destruction in 1856. But even after its destruction and rebuilding in 1898, it supported the needs of today's Neoclassical School. The School functioned as a Primary, Middle and High School for boys and girls from Rhodes, but also from the other islands, Cyprus and Asia Minor[16]. And finally it served the *Idadiye* (High School) in Mandraki, Rhodes, the building that during the Italian period (1912-1948) was converted into a Court House. At the same time, Rhodes would be visited by scholars of the medieval Qurans in the old Ottoman writing, in Arabic and Persian that indicate the town's important place in the Muslim world of the eastern Mediterranean, along with the other centers of the Ottoman Empire like Constantinople, Smyrna, Salonica etc.

The library complex is accessed through the monumental entrance on Orpheus Street, across from the western main entrance of the Suleiman Mosque at the end of Socrates Street. The main structure is in the center of the courtyard[17], which is surrounded by a high wall. On either side of the entrance, to the east and to the west, there is an auxiliary two-story building, serving to support the library's functions and its wardens' accommodation. Auxiliary spaces in the back of the courtyard provide storage and sanitary facilities. The library building consists of two tall square rooms measuring 7.5 x 7.5 m each. They are covered by semi-spherical domes resting on octagonal bases formed of the four corners and the four diagonals supported by acute quarter-spherical triangles adorned with radiating ribs. The northern square space, serving as the entrance, has three openings

13 Balducci (1932), 81-86.
14 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 153.
15 Γεωργαλή (2008), 382-3.
16 Ντέλλας et al (2017), 345-348.
17 Balducci (1932), 65-66.



Figure 2: The Hafız Ahmed Agha Library complex, a mini *külliye*, consisting of the Library, the former classroom (left) and the librarian house (right) in the courtyard. Photo: G. Ntellas, 2025.

on the outside. The southern square space has two windows and one light aperture on its external sides. The main entrances to the courtyard and to the main library building are both monumental; they are accessed via semi-circular marble steps and highlight their architecture.



Figure 3: The Hafız Ahmed Agha Library reading room.
Photo: T. Tuten, 2025

The morphological elements of the library are of particular interest, highlighting their architectural construction in the 18th century post-Byzantine period. The doors leading from the street into the courtyard, the main building and the internal connections are arched, with lowered arches and rectangular frames with composite cross-sections. The main entrance lintel is taller and includes the Ottoman inscription: *'Sâhibu'l-hayrât ve'l-hasenât sâbıkan Rikabdâr-ı Hazret-i Şehriyârî Rodosî Hâfız Ahmed Ağa' (*Possessor of charitable deeds and former chief equerry to his Sovereign Sultan, Hafız Ahmed Agha from Rhodes 1208=1794).[18] The library's main entrance is topped by a horizontal fringe with a composite cross-section. The wooden door bears decorative sheathing with local motifs similar to those of other areas in the Balkans. On the exterior, the rectangular windows have protective grating and glass in wooden frames with composite cross-sections, as well as arced lintels with composite cross-sections. Internally, they are covered by built-in arced openings with lowered arches. The arced light apertures have wooden lattice panels on the outside, and wooden frames with glass on the inside.

The distinctive features of the library's openings—characterized by composite cross-sections that frame them—set them apart from the corresponding elements in Hospitaller architecture. While similar in form, they differ in width and depth, being thinner and less shallow, and reflect a development within the tradition of medieval Rhodian architecture. This feature appears in many such monuments of the same period in Rhodes. Thus, doorway frames with similar shapes and cross-sections appear in churches from the 1750-60 period in Rhodes such as the Cathedral, Our Lady of Tsambika the Lower in Archangelos, the Holy Virgin of Trianta, Agios Nicholas in Rhodes town and more. Similar doorway frames appear in mosques, such as the Sultan Mustafa Mosque

18 Foundation's website www.fethipasavakfi.com

1764-5, the Murat Reis Mosque from 1636-7 and 1797, but also in synagogues. For example, the *Kahal Kadosh* Synagogue, aka Holy Synagogue of Peace or New Synagogue, is a building from the last Ottoman period, perhaps from the early 19th century, according to the date on its pebble mosaic 5601=1841.

The main facades of the library are topped by a complex, coated, built-in fringe of large dimensions, implying a later intervention with neoclassical influences, perhaps from 1852 when the founder's son, Ahmed Fethi Pasha, took charge.

The library is constructed of walls made of visible ashlar masonry in porous limestone, as is common in monuments of all periods in Rhodes. The doorways are made of gray and white marble. The floor is wooden, while the courtyard floor is made of pebble mosaics decorated with lace ribbons and vine frames designed with white and black pebbles. The roof's domes are built with Rhodian limestone and wooden shuttering, covered with *Khorasani* mortar, which is one of the best insulating materials used in Rhodian monuments.



Figure 4: The librarian house, nowadays the residence of the caretakers (left) and the former classroom.
Photos: G. Ntellas, 2005

According to the 1793 foundation charter, the library's two day-time doormen and two night-watchmen were to reside inside the complex. It therefore stands to reason that the auxiliary structures must have existed since then, to accommodate the guards. Oral tradition claims they were built by the founder's successor, Ahmed Fethi Pasha, but this is probably when the final organisation of the two auxiliary buildings was completed[19].

The layout of the two auxiliary structures follows the architecture of 18th and 19th century Balkan houses, which was prevalent at the time. The western wing's ground floor functioned as day offices for the guards, while the eastern wing's ground floor was the nighttime room. The two rooms on the western wing's first story and the corresponding one on the eastern wing functioned as *odas* and stand-alone living quarters, in accordance with the Muslim way of life. Of particular importance are the western wing's first-story NW *oda* and the corresponding one in the eastern wing. They are arranged with a raised wooden floor, a fireplace, and surrounding *sediye* beds for sleeping or lounging. On the lower level, on the wall next to the *oda's* entrance a ceiling-high *musandıra* closet is

19 Γεωργαλή (2008), 382-3.

placed to serve the needs of the residence. On their external facades and toward the *hayat*, the *odas* are connected to windows and rectangular light apertures.

On the western wing's ground floor there is an open-air gallery in front of the rooms opening to the courtyard; its facade is made of stonework and it has a series of two arches with a light aperture in between. On the first story outside the *odas*, an open-air gallery is formed on the *hayat* by a wooden construction with stanchions, grating, and characteristic corbels that give the impression of an arched shape. On the eastern wing's ground floor the gallery is formed by a series of stone piers and wooden beams, as is the wooden gallery on the corresponding *hayat* on the first story. They have a mezzanine and flat wooden roof made of beams, decking and the local traditional *patelia* insulation (made of clay soil). The buildings are protected from rain by a wooden canopy (*tourades*) with bowed metal sheets, found on the upper zone of the facades, above the windows or light apertures and the balcony. Farther up, the parapet is covered with *Khorasani* mortar (an insulating material made of ground roof tiles) to protect the masonry from humidity.

The complex and the guards' houses are served by two small auxiliary spaces integrated into the south side of the courtyard: a vault-storage room, and a sanitary facility with toilets.

The library complex was studied and recorded between 1988 and May 1991, and it was repaired by the Medieval Town Office of Rhodes Municipality. The work revealed morphological elements of the building, the other structures, and of the courtyard, which were restored[20]. The building continues to function as a library.

2 - The Clock Tower (Ahmed Fethi Pasha)

Ahmed Fethi Pasha's clock tower is integrated into the SW corner tower of the *Guardia* of the Byzantine castle or the Hospitaller *Collachium*. The bottom part of the old tower survives, with a four-sided space accessed from the northern interior side of the Byzantine castle, in the courtyard of the Neoclassical School. The etchings by E. Flandin, published in 1853[21], record its exact condition before the gunpowder explosion in the Great Sandjuvan Mosque (1856), and the construction of the Clock Tower (1852). At the time there was also a very interesting 18th-19th century mansion that was unfortunately destroyed in the 1856 explosion; it was situated in front of the Great Sandjuvan Mosque and its minaret, and north of the SW tower of the Collachium. We can therefore know that the Byzantine tower had already mostly fallen, since only a part of the cross-groin vault with diagonal ribs remained. This is evidence that, prior to the construction of the Clock Tower, Fethi Pasha had the tower restored, with its vaulted construction and a groin vault with ribs at right angles. The Byzantine outwork and the road separating it from the main wall are retained to a considerable height in parts of the western and southern sides of the tower. During the Ottoman period, a road has been created in the SW corner that connects the lower level of Orpheus street to the west with the intermediate level of the Byzantine wall and southern outwork, eventually reaching Panaetius street on the low level and continuing east to Theophiliscus street. The segment of the Hospitaller era southern moat, between the southern wall and the courtyard of Suleiman's Mosque, was restored in 1991-92.

20 Γεωργαλή (2008), 382-3.
21 Flandin (1853)



Figure 5: Engraving of the SW tower of Guardia, E. Flandin 1853



Figure 6: Ahmed Fethi Pasha's Clock Tower from Suleiman's Mosque
Photo: G. Gerolympos, 2005

Above the lowest tower, close to his father's manuscript library, Ahmed Fethi Pasha then built the Clock Tower and the *Muvakkithane* (timekeeper's room) of Rhodes as a sign of gratitude for Sultan Abdulmedjid's 1850 visit, according to the inscription at the entrance[22]. The aim was both to honour the memory of his father, Hafiz Ahmed Agha, but also to serve the common good of the people of Rhodes, enabling them to know the time "both alaturca and alafranga". Of course, in 1856, four years after its construction, the tower had the ill fortune to be greatly damaged by the gunpowder explosion in the neighbouring Great Sandjovan Mosque, ruining its upper floors as evidenced by a contemporary engraving[23]. Ahmed Fethi Pasha immediately had it restored, and thus the Clock Tower was preserved. The architect of the Clock Tower is not known, but it is likely that it is a work of some member of the Balyan family. Garabet Amira (1800 - 1866), and his son Nigoğayos Balyan (1826 - 1858) were the architects of the Imperial Armoury (*Tophane-i Amire*) Clock Tower, which quite resembles the one in Rhodes[24]. The old clockwork, which simultaneously operated the clock faces on all four sides of the tower, is now exhibited on the courtyard of the Old School.

The Clock Tower is accessed from the road of the southern outwork. From a small courtyard to the east of the tower, a stone staircase leads to the level of the tower and its entrance. The Clock Tower is tall, pyramidal, with a peculiar roof and a wooden light aperture. Its walls are constructed of visible Rhodian limestone masonry and the domed roof is coated with *Khorasani* mortar; there are four levels with wooden mezzanines and internal stairs. The architectural style is particularly interesting, its morphological elements including eclectic baroque features. The baroque style was in use in the 19th and 20th centuries Ottoman Empire and particularly loved in Constantinople. Consequently, the Clock Tower shares similar characteristics with constructions from the capital, such as the *Tophane-i Amire* clock. Similarities can also be found with the bell towers of 19th century churches in Rhodes and the Dodecanese, but also more widely in Greece and Asia Minor[25].

The ground-level facades include arched windows and an entrance to the east with frames and inverted keys and finials with fringes and a rectangular inscription niche above the door. They have sixteen additional external small cylindrical columns of limestone two by two, on raised stands with quadrilateral capitals and stands with curved cross-sections, fringes on the stands and the finials of the small columns and stone balls above the fringes of the small columns.

The second floor is recessed and more modest in design, featuring protruding corner pilasters with bases and curved plaster finials, atop which smaller stone spheres are placed. It has rectangular openings on the four sides, with protruding frames and a complex fringe whose ends are supported on protruding small semicolumns at half the height of the window with a complex capital.



Figure 7: Ahmed Fethi Pasha's Clock Tower from the East
Photo: G. Ntellas, 2025

The third floor corresponds to the second, also indented. The openings differ and are made of double-lobed windows with finials of the circular clock with a composite arch frame and gabled finials with a curved fringe.

The fourth floor under the roof is made of an octalateral stone dome. This consists of four segments of curved cross-section domes on the facades and four intermediate corresponding curved cross-section segments that start in the corners and end upwards in the idiosyncratic dome. This is protected externally with *Khorasani* mortar.

22 According to the translation by Mehmet Rifat for the Archaeological Department of the Ministry of Culture and Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 151.

23 Ντέλλας (2007), 374 and table 328α.

24 According to information by the foundation www.fethipasavakfi.com/gr/muvakkithane-saat-kulesi-rustiye-mektebi.php: "Ahmed Fethi Pasha completed the Rhodes Clock Tower and Timekeeper's house near his father's manuscript library in 1850-1852 period. It is believed that the Clock Tower was built on the foundations of a Byzantine defense tower. Although there is no definite information about the architect of the tower, it bears very similar architectural features to the Tophane-i Amire Clock Tower, the first clock tower of Istanbul built by Abdülmecit I in 1847-1848 during Fethi Pasha's tenure as the Marshal of Tophane-i Amire. At the very least, we can assume that the Rhodes Clock Tower's eclectic Baroque design of the period was the work of the members of the Balyan Family, the famous 18th and 19th century *Hassa* architects, probably Garabet Amira (1800 - 1866) and his son Nigoğayos Balyan (1826 - 1858), who were also the architects of the Tophane-i Amire Clock Tower. The clock of the tower in Rhodes was purchased from Edward Prior (1780 - 1859) and his firm Edward Prior, Chambers & Co., members of the Prior family of London, a well-known manufacturer and merchant of the period and a clock supplier to the Ottoman Empire. During the tower renovation in the last years, the 170-year-old mechanism which simultaneously operated the clocks on the four facades of the tower, was removed from its place and now exhibited on the terrace on the tower floor, and an electromechanical renovation of the tower clock is planned.".

25 Ντέλλας (2012), 359-363, and in the ΚΣΕΔ annex: In Agios Nicholas in Emporio, Chalki by architect Eleutherios Sellas (1894); in Agios Giorgios in Malona (1895) and in the Dormition of the Virgin (1924), in Afandou, Rhodes, by Lindians Theodoros Frantzis and his son Filimonas Frantzis; in Agia Photeini in Smyrna, by architect X. Latris (1856); etc.

At the top it resolves in an illuminative lantern topped with a small rectangular wooden light aperture and a four-pitched roof that bears the clock's bell. The clock tower is open to visitors in the courtyard of the neighbouring Rushtiye School and there are efforts underway to restore the old clockwork.

3 - The Old School (*Rüştiye*)

The School-Gymnasium (*Rushtiye Mektebi* or *Rüştiye Mektebi* in modern Turkish spelling) which was located next to the Clock Tower, was built by Ahmed Fethi Pasha in 1852-1853. The inscription above the building's entrance mentions, among other things, how upon the visit Sultan Abdul Medjid Khan, field marshall and commander of the artillery squad Fethi Pasha built this School, which he added to his late father Ahmed Agha's *Vakuf* and finally this great School was inaugurated in the memory of his wife Atiye Sultan[26]. Next to Suleiman's western entrance there is an old two-story house with an inscription on its western facade mentioning that it used to be a Medrese built in 1803. It seems that Ahmed Fethi Pasha probably built a larger school in 1853 and perhaps replaced the previous one.



Figure 8: Ahmed Fethi Pasha's Old School, *Rüştiye* above Byzantine and Medieval walls
Photo: G. Ntellas, 2025

The School was a two-story building that originally included a third story in the second to the east Byzantine tower of the southern wall of the Collachium and three courtyards (one eastern, one northern, and one western). Northern access was gained from the southern road between the Byzantine wall and the outwork, under the vaulted passage in a ground-floor space with pointed openings and three open-air spaces. Today the ground floor houses sanitary facilities. A pointed arch was connected to the eastern courtyard and the ground floor of the Byzantine tower and a staircase leads to the northern courtyard on a higher level. From there an eastern entrance existed to the tower's first floor, which was obviously used as a classroom with two connected spaces and with one window each. Another smaller staircase leads to the western building's upper floor, which consists of four spaces, with two rooms intended as classrooms with tall windows. Another internal staircase led from the western building to the second floor above the Byzantine tower with two spaces used as classrooms; the northern one had six windows while the western had five, and they were connected through a door.

26 According to the translation by Mehmet Rifat and Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 151.

The ground floor of the tower consists of thick masonry, which remains visible, and it bears the characteristic Byzantine upward deviation on the outside. The southern entrance is the only opening and it was obviously used as a storage space. The collapse of the second floor and excavation work in the tower's ground floor brought a Hospitaller doorway to light, connecting to the interior of the Collachium. These events made the medieval fortification visible and showcased the Byzantine tower, with the wall and the southern outwork and moat.



Figure 9: Medieval fortification on Panaitiou Street, Suleiman's Mosque (left) and Clock Tower in the background
Photo: G. Ntellas, 2025

The ground floor of the School's western building is of wide masonry, while the upper floor is 20 cm thick. Externally it is coated in *Khorasani* mortar for water insulation. The windows are large and rectangular, like most 19th century buildings, being the development of the 18th century mansions. Today the building operates as a residence of the foundation on the upper floor and the courtyard space serves as a cafeteria catering to the Clock Tower's visitors with toilet spaces on the ground floor.

4 - Suleiman's Mosque

Suleiman's Mosque is situated outside the SW tower of the Guardia and the Clock Tower of the southern wall of the Collachium and the Byzantine town of Rhodes, at the end of Socratus street in the center of the old market. The mosque[27] comprises three square spaces, with the central one being the largest and tallest (15m high), covered with domes and lead sheathing and two consecutive porticos along the northern side. The first consists of seven semi-spherical domes that rest on a colonnade, and it is surrounded by a second, U-shaped one, which is wooden and covered with roof tiles. The minaret with its two balconies rises between the central and western domes, reaching 34.5 m in height. The northern courtyard includes the octagonal water fountain, which is also covered by a semi-spherical dome and supported on eight columns.

27 Balducci (1932), 126-139; Βογιατζής (2007) 396–400; Ντέλλας (2008i), 360-363; Ντέλλας et al. (2009), 129-154.

Particularly remarkable is the transition from the square ground plan to the semi-spherical vault of the central dome, which is achieved in two stages. In the lower part, four squinches decorated with 'stalactites' curve the square ground plan's corners. Higher up, four quarter-spheres in the corners together with four shallow arches in the center of the sides resolve in eight points that are bridged by corresponding spherical triangles and create the circular rim that supports the semi-spherical dome.



Figure 10: Suleyman's Mosque, *Süleymaniye Camii*, Photo: G. Ntellas, 2005

The T-shaped ground plan and the arrangement of the facades, openings, and morphological elements of the mosque are symmetrical. The two side spaces each have two openings on their three sides and one large arch connecting to the central one on the fourth side. The central space has three openings on the north, two windows with the *mihrab* niche in the center of the south side, and one window each on the protrusions of the other two sides and two rows of clerestory windows. The three doors towards the northern portico have lowered arches with two-coloured, red and white, arch stones. The rectangular windows of the lower zone have pointed discharging arches, as visible in the northern facade towards the portico, while in the other external facades consecutive renderings through the years appear to have converted them to semicircles.







Figure 11: Interior of Suleyman's Mosque and the garden fountain
Photos: G. Ntellas, 2005

According to the latest research, the mosque was completed in 1808[28]. Engravings from the 19th century and old photographs show the mosque and its minaret with only one *şerefe* (balcony), while another one shows the fountain and its historic plane tree. The decoration of the central entrance may have made use of the, suitably modified, Renaissance-era *arcosolium*, originating in the ruins of Saint John[29]. Besides, it does not have an inscription about the identity of the monument. Extensive damage was probably caused by the great earthquakes in 1856 and in 1863; 1856 was also the year of the great explosion ignited by a thunderstrike to a forgotten powder store in the belfry of the nearby Great Sandjovan Mosque (originally the conventual church of the Order of the Knights of Saint John), which caused widespread destruction. Consequently, the wooden portico was added, and the mosque was repaired. The minaret was replaced in the 19th century; the new one had two balconies, as seen in subsequent depictions, marking its new status as Imperial Mosque of Suleiman. At the same time, the double-tiered minaret of the old Suleiman Mosque was substituted by one with a single balcony, and the Mosque was renamed in honour of Ibrahim Pasha who had commissioned it

28 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 161-2.
29 Guerin (1856), 138; Balducci (1931), 14–24, tables III–V; Kollias (1998), 137.

in 1540 in honour of the Sultan. As it transpires from Italian era photographs, this same minaret was rebuilt, perhaps after the great earthquake of 1928; further work was done to strengthen its upper portion that had collapsed in the 1956-57 earthquakes.

In the 1980s, the minaret presented a steep tilt, resulting in parts of its upper balcony collapsing on 15/12/1987. In 1988, Ministry of Culture agencies in collaboration with the Rhodes Framework Agreement Office, urgently proceeded with the controlled lowering of the minaret to prevent further damage or loss of life. At a later stage, work was undertaken to restore and configure the neighbouring Byzantine fortification of the southern wall of the Collachium and the moat; the stone doorway of the mosque's courtyard was transported further south in 1991 in order to showcase it.

At the time, the mosque presented serious problems due to the collapse of the minaret and the destruction of the domes' lead sheathing. Small cracks had appeared in the walls and there was corrosion to the wall paintings and to the plaster, metal, and marble decorations; the woodcarvings had been corrupted by more recent overpainting. The wooden portico was falling apart and the water fountain had problems with subsidence and cracks. The work for the restoration and conservation of the Suleiman Mosque monumental complex, as well as the configuration of its environs, was completed by the Ministry of Culture between 1998 and 2005[30].

First the damaged lead sheathing of the domes was replaced. The external *Khorasani* coating was repaired and then painted with lime paint to protect the mosque and its decorations from corrosion due to humidity. Using a special wooden scaffolding, the minaret was rebuilt with new limestone masonry and strengthened with horizontal metal blades, vertical titanium pirus, and lead fixing for the masonry joints[31]. The fountain was restored. The repairs to the interior of the mosque and the porticos were completed. Preservation and enhancement work was carried out on the wall paintings, the plaster decorations, the wood carvings with their overpainting, the casings, metal elements, marble architectural features, and the Renaissance-era marble doorframe of the main entrance. Finally, the mosque's courtyard and garden were configured and the old imam's house was restored.

These projects showcased an important monument of the town, a symbol for its identity and a place of worship for the Muslims of Rhodes. The Ministry of Culture and the Public Vakuf Administration of Rhodes are responsible for the monument's operation and it is periodically open to the public, providing the appropriate respect is shown for the mosque and Muslim traditions.

5 - Church of the Holy Apostles or Imaret

The Church of the Holy Apostles and the Old Municipal Soup Kitchen or *Imaret* is located on the south side of Socratus street, across from Suleiman's Mosque in the medieval town of Rhodes[32]. The space of the Old Soup Kitchen was formerly occupied by a three-aisled Catholic church from the 14th or 15th century, which was probably destroyed during the first great siege of Rhodes in 1480 and the powerful earthquake that followed in 1481. A cylindrical stone pillar with a capital of composite cross-section, belonging to the original church's south colonnade, is also found *in situ*; the base of another pillar, belonging to the northern colonnade, has been revealed across from the first one. During the excavation and inspection work on the foundations of the Soup Kitchen's storage domes, the ruin of an underground crypt was revealed; it has a three-sided arch to the east and traces of a windowsill have been preserved to the southeast, as well as the western entrance with a segment of the Hospitaller staircase that leads to it[33].



Figure 12: Church of the Holy Apostles, Photo: G. Gerolympos, 2003

A small, single-spaced church was later built on its ruins, between 1480 and 1522. The church was originally covered by a Gothic groin vault with ribs and featured an interior five-sided arch formed by a vault with radiating smaller vaults and ribs. It also had an arched doorway on the northern side of the sanctuary—now walled up—and an arched niche on the southern side. Other preserved elements include a pointed window in the sanctuary and another northern arched doorway that was later converted into a rectangle, the lower part of an entrance on the western side and two lighting apertures, a rectangular one on the western and a circular one on the eastern side of the groin vault.

A vaulted space was later added to the south side, ending in a straight wall to the east, with an arched apse in the eastern part of the north side, probably an arcosolium. It was therefore likely a mortuary chapel, since underground grave crypts were discovered beneath the eastern part of the two spaces. An arched doorway was opened in the south side of the church to connect it to the chapel, whose few architectural elements consist of a niche with a triangular pointed top on the south side and a rectangular window on the western side.

30 Ντέλλας (2008a), 17-27.
31 Χατζηδάκης & Φλώρος (2007), 152-159.
32 Ντέλλας et al (1997), 538-540, 551-2; Ντέλλας (1998), 167-178; Ντέλλας (2000), 357-358, Ντέλλας (2008), 376-377.
33 The excavation was performed by the Eph. of Antiquities of the Dodecanese with archaeologist Natasa Psarologaki.



Figure 13: Holy Apostels and Old Sistium
Photo: G. Gerolympos, 2004

During the work for configuring the pebble mosaic courtyard, excavations revealed a carved marble plaque *in situ* before the western entrance of the church, with Renaissance sepulchral decoration and an inscription of Venetian nobleman Jacobus de Priolis who died in 1476. This is evidence that the three-aisled church was in use at the time, as it must have been a burial above the floor and inside the church.

Following the 1522 conquest of Rhodes by the Turks, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent founded a poorhouse, or *Imaret*, in the space of the church, which bears his name[34]. Of particular interest is the impressive doorframe with the arched gate and pilasters with bases and capitals, a tall architrave and a complex cornice as a finial. The marble plaque at the center of the architrave with the Arabic inscription "we feed you by the will of God" indicates the use of the space as a soup kitchen for the poor. Two vaulted storage rooms were constructed for the needs of the charitable foundation above the underground crypt to the northeast of the church, with arched doors, rectangular and arched windows and lighting apertures. An even larger pointed vault was built to the west, the kitchen, where the food would be cooked and distributed. The rectangular windows and the doors have horizontal transoms and discharging arches. The tall chimney has pointed holes in the tip and a cover with Ottoman-style elements. Two six-sided light apertures at the center of the dome serve as ventilation. The church underwent modifications, the sanctuary arch being converted into an oven. Fragments remain of the reed-latticed groin vault of the main church, which was probably destroyed in the siege of 1522; it was substituted with a bowed arch and the oven chimney was added.

34 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 158.



Figure 14: Old Soupkitchen, the Ottoman *Imaret*
Photo: G. Gerolympos, 2005

During the work by the Ministry of Culture to restore the monumental complex (1986-1999), the Soup Kitchen's structures were fastened. The storage room vaults were restored with internal connection and a raised wooden floor for the presentation of the underground crypt of the large church, where the foundations were appropriately configured and the Hospitaller staircase was completed to provide access from the courtyard. The church and its western rectangular entrance were restored. The floors of the underground crypt and the church were restored with *Khorasani,* as were the roofs of the domes. The pebble mosaic courtyard was configured and the remnants of a medieval silo in the northwestern corner of the complex were showcased (an underground stone-built space for storing wheat during sieges); the cylindrical well in the center of the courtyard was also restored. As it presented deep cracks from the lateral pressures, the dome of the kitchen had to be restored by lifting it to its original position, and strengthened with underpinning, metal tie rods, and wooden tie rods in the attic.

Additionally, new uses were integrated in the complex, with periodic exhibitions by the Municipal Gallery of Rhodes in the eastern domes and a municipal cafeteria in the cooking space, where a kitchen space was configured on the southern side and an attic with a stair internally. Spaces for hygiene utilities were configured in the eastern part of the courtyard[35]. Monuments periodically open to the public include the underground crypt and the church with the southern addition, which houses a small exhibition on the history of the complex and the restoration work.

35 Ντέλλας (2011), 68-69.

6 - Complex with the Monastery of Agios Georgios (Hurmali Medrese)

The Monastery of Agios Georgios is located in the western part of the Medieval Town, on the axis of the market and Socratus street, between the Byzantine and the Hospitaller fortification. The three-winged layout of the cells and of the *catholicon* (the conventual church) circumferentially and with the courtyard at the center, are typical of Byzantine monastery architecture.



Figure 15: Monastery of Agios Georgios-Khourmali Madrasah, *Hurmalı Medrese*
Photo: G. Gerolympos, 2004

The *catholicon* is a domed tetraconch, probably from the 14th or early 15th century with additions made in the 15th and early 16th century.[36] It has a narthex with a semicylindrical arch to the west, an open portico with a ribbed groin vault to the north, and traces of a second one to the northwest.

The church was constructed on top of an older, perhaps middle-Byzantine, church, whose remnants can be found in a small space to its southeast, according to an engraved decorated marble with a performance of Deesis, the Virgin Mary among honoring angels, that was found on a step in the entrance[37]. A document from 3 November 1347 mentions a gate in the town's wall through which one passes on the way to the church of Agios Georg of Cappadocia.



Figure 16: Agios Georgios-Khourmali Madrasah
Photo: G. Gerolympos, 2003

The emphasis on the vertical axis in conjunction with the general aesthetic approach towards the interior of the church in Byzantine architecture, with the dome acting as a sky lit up by the windows, in the case of *tetraconch* churches, nearly reaches perfection in spite of their small size.

36 Gabriel (1923), 202-207; Ορλάνδος (1948), 99-106; Ντέλλας et al (1997), 532, 535-538, 550-551, Ντέλλας (2008c), 37-43.

37 Παπαβασιλείου (2021), 243-256.

The morphological elements of its doorways, corbels, fringes, an arcosolium, and the blind apses of the dome and the entrance combine Byzantine and Gothic influences, with semicircular and pointed arches, composite cross-sections, and engraved decorations in the first (15th century) and second (late 15th-early 16th century) 'Rhodian style'. This rare type in Greece, the high quality of construction, and the interesting morphological elements of local style give particular artistic value to the monument, which is an excellent example of Hospitaller-era Rhodian architecture.





Figure 17: Agios Georgios-Khourmali Madrasah (above) and North side and the residence (below).
Photo: G. Ntellas, 2005

Excavations in the eastern part of the monastery's courtyard revealed a patio with marble inlays on the floor, possibly of a 5th-6th century paleochristian church[38], integrated in the boundaries of a block of the ancient town's Hippodamian town-planning grid.

The ground floor cells of the northern and western wing present similarities and can be traced to the Hospitaller period, perhaps the 14th century. They are stone-built in rows, roofed with lowered domes. They have doors with rectilinear lintels externally, discharge arches internally, small rectangular fanlights towards the courtyard and simple slits, perhaps crenellations, rectangular indents for closets, and small niches with lowered arches for devotional stands, in the Byzantine style. The upper floor features an open-air corridor (facing the courtyard in the case of the western wing, and the back side in the case of the northern one), which connects several rooms, small *odas*, with small windows and fanlights, fireplaces, and closets; stone stairs lead down to the courtyard. It was added during the Ottoman period, possibly in the 18th-19th century. The two floors of the east side were similarly arranged with *odas*, a gallery with built pillars and horizontal stone arches for architraves on the ground floor's facade towards the courtyard and an open covered wooden *hayat* on the upper floor from the 19th century.

On the western side of the northern cells a door connects to the monastery's courtyard, which today features the garden of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation, resurrecting its historical character, with the old house, the traditional water well and the restored cistern with the canals for watering all the plants. Traditionally a windmill would be in operation to draw the water and water the garden.

The two-story mansion, along with a small two-story auxiliary construction on Hierocles street[39], which was restored by the Ministry of Culture, is directly adjacent to the northern and eastern cells. It has typical elements of 18th and 19th century Balkan mansions, constructed of Rhodian limestone and wooden elements. The groundfloor and the upper floor initially includes two rooms (*odas*) with an open intermediate space and the T-shaped *hayat*, and stretches along the eastern part of the courtyard. On the face of the ground floor's outdoor *hayat* there are two pointed arched openings with a lighting aperture in between, while on the upper story there used to be a wooden balcony with railing, which was later transformed into a wood-framed wall, was covered with planks and windows and a built-in *sofa*[40] on the western side with windows and light apertures. At a later stage, a kitchen and a hammam were added to the northern side of the upper floor. The ground floor has been constructed of masonry of sufficient thickness. Whereas the upper story consists mostly of thin walls (20 cm) and five horizontal timber reinforcements. The mezzanine and the roof are wooden. Interesting structural elements with windows and plaster lighting apertures, while the southern "good *oda*" stands out with the carved closet (*musandıra*), a fireplace that included carved and painted plaster palmettes and plant elements on the bellows and the chimney cap with the wooden navicular cover and wood-carved and painted decoration. The mansion has been restored and is expected to be integrated into the operations of the monastery, serving as a monument open to visitors and a venue for cultural activities.

38 Αρχαιολογική Δελτίον 37 (1982), Χρονικά, 407-410, figure 2, table 282α; ΑΔ 38 (1983), Χρονικά, 399; ΑΔ 42 (1987), Β2 Χρονικά, 664-6.

39 Ντέλλας (2008b), 28-44.

40 Translator's Note: although the English sofa and the Greek *sofas* come from the same root (the Arabic *sufa*), the Greek term denotes a kind of raised platform found in traditional houses. It was a type of multi-purpose furniture, used for sleeping, sitting etc and often with storage space underneath.

During the Ottoman period, Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent converted the monastery into a *medrese* by the name of Hurmali, using the cells as students' dormitories and the *catholicon* as a mosque[41]. A girls' school operated in the east wing's cells[42] during the final years of the Ottoman period, while during the 20th century the monastery was turned into housing for poor families.

The additions to the houses surrounding the catholicon were removed during the Italian period. Subsequent restoration work, conducted between 1974 and 1985, was followed by intermittent excavations in the courtyard, which continued until 2001.

Large-scale restoration work and configuration of the space in the entire monastery (1995-2001) restored and showcased the complex that functions today as a monument and archaeological site periodically open to the public[43]. It houses exhibitions in the ground-floor cells, special concerts and masses in the *catholicon*, seminars in the upper floor, and workshops in the eastern wing's ground floor.

7 - Saint Mark's Church (Sadri Chelebi Mesjid)

The small church that is found on the northwestern side of the Rhodes *Burgo* close to the Monastery of Agios Georgios, has a free cross-plan with a raised central bay in transverse barrel vault acting as a dome, which is a rare type that spread in the 14th c[44]. The pointed arches of one light aperture and the vaults of the cross's arms reveal Hospitaller influences, even though the dome's arch is semi-cylindrical, and the apse is quarter-spherical. Originally the church's western arm was longer, but it was shortened after sustaining damage. A small arch-covered semi-open space in the northeastern corner leads to the later eastern entrance in the northern arm of the church, but two newer ones have been revealed, in the northern and southern walls and a newer one in the western wall of the north arm across from the current entrance.



Figure 18: Saint Mark's Church (Sadri Chelebi Mesjid)
Photo: G. Ntellas, 2004

41 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 158.
42 Balducci (1932), 146-148.
43 Αρχαιολογική Δελτίον 42 (1987), Β2 Χρονικά, 669-670; Ντέλλας (2011), 68-71.
44 Gabriel (1923), 190; Ορλάνδος (1948), 89-91 and image 82, 84; Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2001), 128-9 .

During the 1986-7 and 1998-9 excavation work in the interior of the church and the courtyard, the original floor came to light, as well as various burials beneath it and the part of the western arm that had collapsed. On the internal side of the southern wall, in the part that had been blocked by the newer western and in the lower zone of the masonry, fragments of wall paintings were discovered, of 15th century Palaeologan art[45]. They were the only ones that survived the Ottoman era interventions, when the church was converted into a mosque, the Sadri Chelebi Mesjid. Traces of three *mihrab* niches on the inside of the church and one in the southeastern corner of the courtyard, are remnants of the Ottoman phase.



Figure 19: Saint Mark's Church (Sadri Chelebi Mesjid)
Photo: G. Ntellas, 2004

The excavations were followed by strengthening and preservation work of the segments with the wall paintings. The facades of the church were repaired and enhanced, and the roof tiling was restored. The entrance and the cobbled western courtyard were configured, and the floorplan of the church and the *Khorasani*-floored western arm, as well as a Muslim fountain, were showcased in 2004[46].

To the west, the monument connects with the restored garden of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation that provides opportunities for further visibility in conjunction with a historical tour of the area's monuments. The church is periodically open, particularly on Saint Mark's day when a service is held and the monument participates in the ceremonies of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation with its historic garden and its visit.

45 Βολανάκης (2014), 52-53. The work was undertaken by the Ministry of Culture and the excavation with oversight by archaeologist Anastasis Psarologaki.
46 Ντέλλας (2011), 71-72.

8 - Agia Paraskevi Church (Takkedji Mesjid)

The church of Agia Paraskevi is located on Hippodamus street, in the western part of the Burgo of the Medieval Town of Rhodes. It belongs to the free cross plan dome type and probably dates to the 15th or early 16th c[47], while the church was converted into a mosque during the Ottoman period known as Takkedji Mesjid.



Figure 20: Agia Paraskevi (Takkedji Mesjid)
Photo: G. Ntellas, 2025

The eastern arm of the cross is shorter than the others, which are roughly equal in length, a feature also found in other Rhodian churches of this type. In the northern side it has a Prothesis Apse, while the western part presents the peculiarity of lowering after the dome support. The altar apse is three-sided externally and semicircular internally, covered by a quarter-spherical vault. The cross's arms are covered with pointed arches. The main dome rises at their intersection, with an externally twelve-sided tympanum, on which there are four windows aligning with the church's axes. In its northern end an underground mortuary crypt is preserved.

The morphological elements of the Church of Agia Paraskevi indicate Byzantine and Gothic influences. It has three important doorways and interesting windows and light apertures. The main western entrance, as well as the one towards the northeastern courtyard, are rectangular doors with semicircular overdoor apses with frames and fringes, they have composite cross-sections and Rhodian characteristics, which combine Gothic and Byzantine morphological elements. It has a sharp decorative upper point with reversed curvature in the middle of the lintel, and a place for carving a coat of arms on the intrados. This type of doorway decoration was widely used in the Hospitaller-era urban architecture of Rhodes. The entrance doorway to the northeastern courtyard is analogous. It only differs in that it has two curved corbels to minimise the opening of the door's lintel. The eastern entrance to the northern arm of the cross is rectangular with a circular cross-section, and it has carved decoration on the lintel, with symmetrical heart-shaped leaves and buttons in between. The light apertures in the altar apse and the dome are semicircular with a composite cross-section, whereas the windows have similar characteristics to the urban ones of Hospitaller Rhodes, with horizontal lintels externally and lowered arches internally.

The church's dimensions, its careful construction with ashlar masonry in local limestone, and its noteworthy morphological and typological elements, make it one of the most imposing in the medieval town.

47 Gabriel (1923), 191-192; Ορλάνδος (1948), 109 and image 96; Βολανάκης (2014), 39-40.

The church houses a 17th century wall painting exhibition from the Tharri monastery in Rhodes, and it is a periodically open monument.

9 - Hamza Bey Mosque

It is located on Timocreon street in the western part of the Saint Phanourios neighbourhood or Burgo. It consists of a square prayer room covered with a dome and is roofed with Byzantine-type roof tiles, an open portico with a simple wooden canopy covered with sheet metal and the minaret in the western corner[48].



Figure 21: Hamza Bey Mosque
Photo: G. Gerolympos, 2004

Each facade, symmetrically organised, has two rectangular authentic windows with a composite Muslim discharge arch and a similarly shaped cupboard in the middle of the flanks. Correspondingly, instead of an arch, the windows of the main facade have a discharge triangle with stepped sides. At the top level at the center of each facade there is a pointed light aperture, except for the main facade where it is round. The main entrance is of particular morphological interest, with a lowered arch externally flanked by two rectangular cornices with curved cross-sections. All the openings have wooden frames with interesting woodworking technique, as well as the gratings on the external side and the glass-containing frames on the inside. The south side *mihrab* is of interest, the semicircular niche topped with a conical curved endpiece decorated with carved stalactites. The niche is framed by a rectangular, carved, curved, and painted cornice that rises in the middle of the upper side. The upper zone of the two spherical triangles of the *mihrab* side's dome are also decorated with stalactites, while the lower zone has carved stripes.

The mosque is constructed of externally visible masonry with horizontal courses, topped by a curved cornice with curved cross-sections, and hidden horizontal wood binding at two heights at least, at the window lintels and in the upper zone of the four sides, in other words at the base of the semi-spherical vault of the dome that strengthens the construction.

48 Gabriel (1923), 191-192; Ορλάνδος (1948), 109 and image 96; Βολανάκης (2014), 39-40.

The restoration of the mosque was completed in 2004[49]. The cylindrical minaret is also stone-built with an internal spiral staircase and octagonal base, which concludes with radiating stripes on its trunk. It has one balcony, configured with a continuous cantilever and composite molding. Deep cracks and disarranged masonry were causing problems to the minaret, which led to a metal scaffolding being used to support it and the systematic removal of its upper part to prevent accidents. The mosque is accessible to visitors with the help of neighbours.

10 - Church of Saint John of the Knights (Great Sandjovan Mosque of Rhodes)

The foundations of the conventual church of Saint John began being laid upon the arrival of the Knights Hospitaller in Rhodes in 1310, at the highest point of the Collachium, close to the Grand Master's Palace[50]. In 1314 it was fully functional[51]. The Order's religious, but also political activities would be carried out here (such as synods, election of the Grand Master, and the interring of illustrious knights)[52]. According to the information provided by numerous medieval pilgrims, the holy relics kept there were renowned[53].

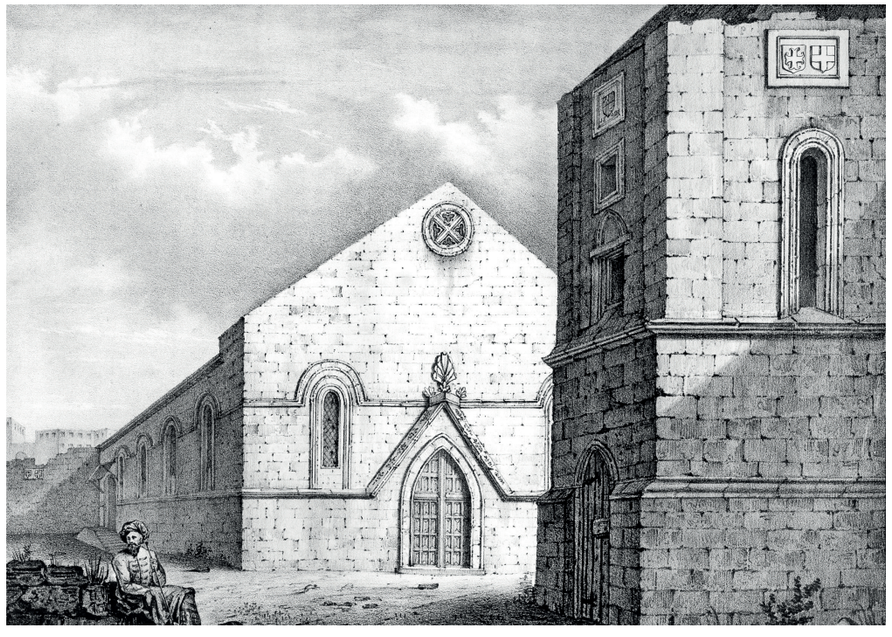


Figure 22: Church of St. John of the Knights. C. Rottiers, 1828.

49 With architectural plans and supervision by architect Michalis Zerlentis.
50 Lojacono (1936), 254; Gabriel (1923), 167-170; Kollias (1998), 99-101.
51 Luttrell (2003), 174.
52 Bosio (1630), 362.
53 Such as Nicola de Martoni in 1394-1395, Seigneur d' Anglure in 1395-1396, Luchino dal Campo in 1413 etc

During the Hospitaller period seven chapels were added, probably mortuary chapels[54], and during the reign of GM Fluvian (1421-1437) the directly related *canonica* was constructed, in other words the quarters of the church's prior, Jean Morel (1437)[55].

Following the town's surrender to the Ottomans in 1523, it was converted to the principal Muslim mosque, the Great Sandjovan Mosque of Rhodes[56]. The church was destroyed when the forgotten gunpowder store inside the belfry exploded due to a lightning strike in 1856[57]. In 1932-34, P. Lojacono attempted to graphically restore the monument following exploratory excavations. A collapse of the school wall in 1989 led to its systematic excavation, and today it is freely accessible having been configured with the aim of showcasing the church.

The main church was a three-aisled, wooden-roofed basilica, with two arcades and four cylindrical columns. It had a transept consisting of four Gothic groin vaults. Three of them corresponded to aisles, while the fourth one covered the rectangular sanctuary. The groin vault of the transept, found in the middle, was taller than the others, covered by a double-pitched roof with roof tiles, and lit by pointed light apertures to the north and south, and round ones to the east and west. Internally, the wooden semi-cylindrical roof was decorated with wood carvings and painted stars. The side aisles were covered by a single-pitched wooden roof[58].

Of the three gates, the western was the greatest, pointed and framed with a decorative fringed gable, with a carved palmette at the top. The western facade had a characteristic triangular tip pointing upward, and it was complemented by the circular light aperture and the two large windows. The northern gate was comparable to the western one only smaller, and the southern one, being rectangular with a lintel above the door in the shape of a horizontal arch, must have been a later addition.

The main church was lit by pointed windows, while the transept and the sanctuary had double-lobed windows framed by pointed arches with composite cross-sections. Below the sanctuary apse, at a lower level due to the ground's layout, a transverse tunnel connected the northern and southern parts of the church.

Upon its conversion into a mosque in 1523, a mihrab pointing to the southeasterly direction of Mecca was built into the middle of the eastern section of the central aisle; the minaret was raised on top of the bell tower. The church is mainly known from the depictions of 19th century travelers, particularly Rottiers, Flandin, and Berg[59].

11 - The Neoclassical School

The original two-story school was built in 1876 on the ruins of the catholic Church of Saint John of the Knights or Great Sandjovan Mosque of Rhodes, as it was known after 1523, which exploded in 1856 when a lightning strike ignited the powder store forgotten inside its belfry. The original 1876 school had morphological elements influenced by Hospitaller-era Rhodian architecture, but this too was destroyed by a fire, or an earthquake and a considerably larger, ground-floor, neoclassical

54 Bosio (1630), 145-147, 362, 567-568.
55 Τσιρπανλής (1995), 94-95, 294-298.
56 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 147-149.
57 Gehlhoff-Βολανάκη (1982), 52 et seq.
58 Ντέλλας (2007), v. Α' 370-395 and v. Β' 325-354.
59 Rottiers (1828), tables 25 and 26; Berg (1862), 53, 55.

building was rebuilt in 1898[60]. The Church of Saint John of the Knights, which was excavated following a collapse of the school's eastern stone fence, was configured and enhanced with the restoration of the surrounding extant foundations until the height of the floor and the remaining pillar bases[61].

The Neoclassical School is a raised single-story quadrangle with a rectangular internal patio and a surrounding gallery that gives access to the twelve classrooms. It is covered by wooden roofs with French roof tiles. The problems and the deep cracks led to the school being closed in the 1980's. After being abandoned, the school's condition deteriorated significantly.



Figure 23: Rare photo of the old "Süleymaniye Madrasah" (1876-1898), Hurmalı Medrese in front, Fethi Pasha's Clock Tower in the back.
From the Hamidian Album, late 1870s.

The monument's restoration by the Ministry of Culture aims to showcase its architectural and cultural value and to ensure safety in its new functional use. There are plans to configure the courtyard and the archaeological walking tour of the western and southern wall of the Byzantine castle, and the new access from Cleobulus square. The Region of the South Aegean, which is administering the building, has decided to house a modern and multifaceted cultural and educational center in it. According to the plans, expected strengthening and restoration interventions include repairing, strengthening and restoration of the foundations, the masonry of the superstructure and the wooden roof, the coating, the wooden frames, the maintenance of the painted decorations, the marble and wooden floors, new toilet facilities and cafeteria, as well as electrical and mechanical installations. Following restoration to their original shape, most rooms are planned to serve multiple purposes depending on the Center's needs. In particular, apart from exhibitions, they can host meetings and conferences, a library, offices relating to the operation of the Center, and a cafeteria. The patio in particular will be able to host events (concerts etc.).

At this time, the school is being restored as an educational and cultural center. The work started in 2011-2015 and then continued in 2022 and is expected to be completed in 2026[62].

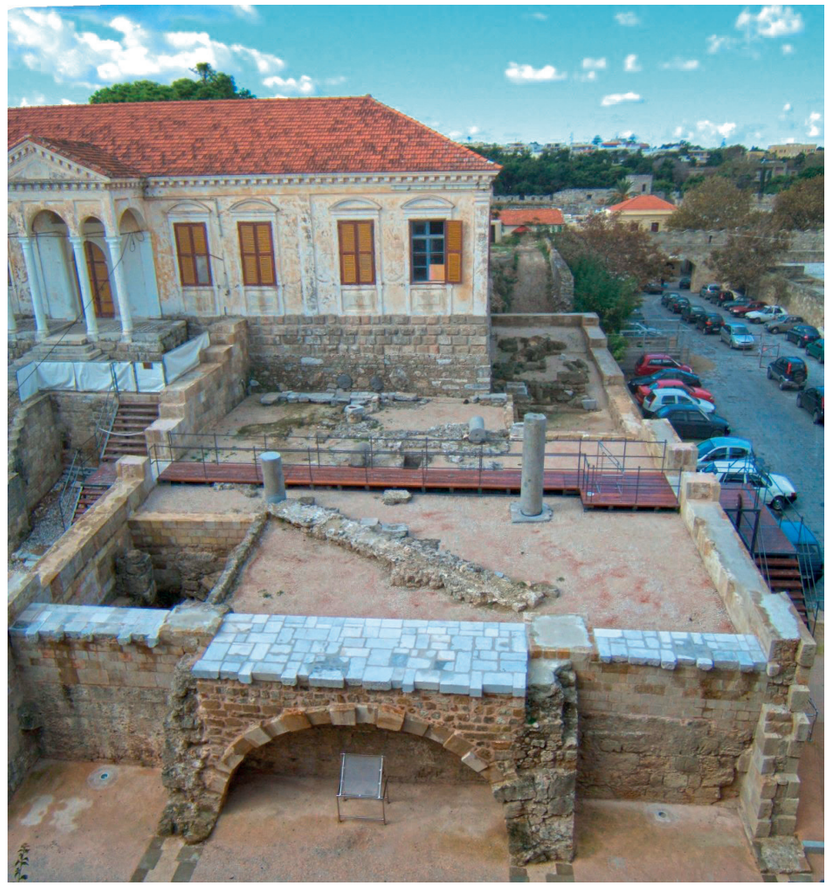


Figure 24: Excavation works at the location of the Church of St. John's with the Neoclassical School.
Photo: G. Ntellas, 2006

60 Ντέλλας et al (2017), 345-348.
61 Ντέλλας (2008d), 45-52.
62 The project is ongoing from 2022 until 2026, with subcontracting and with direct supervision by the Service of Modern Monuments and Technical Works of Dodecanese and the technical supervision team consisting of: Evangelia Kaka and Natalia Morari, architects; Stephania Fachouridou and Kostas Psomas, civil engineers; Kostas Kapnoulas, electrical engineer; Nectaria Dassacli and Paraskevi Nikolaidou, art conservators.

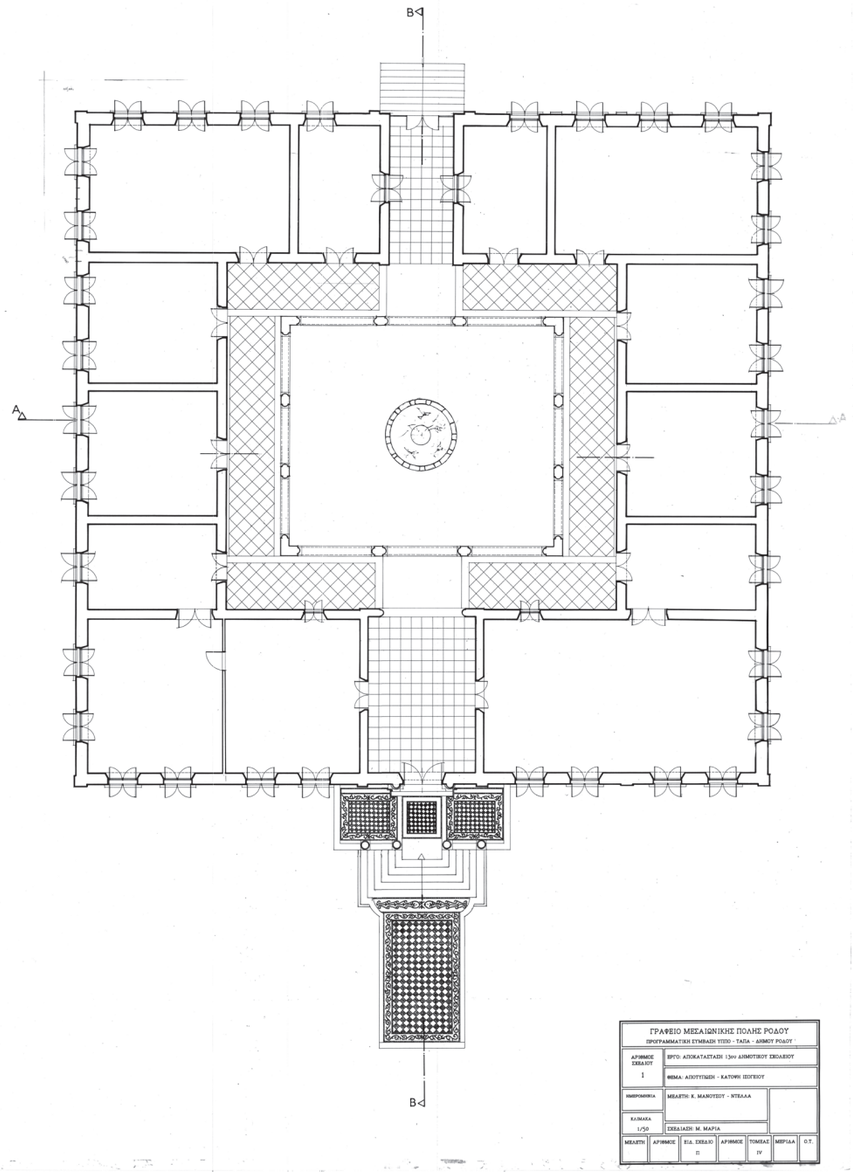


Figure 25: Floorplan of the Neoclassical School (1898) by Katerina Manousou-Ntella (1993).

12 - Ottoman Court House

This is a neoclassical building built on top of a Byzantine tower on the southern wall of the castle (or Collachium) on Theophliscus street in the medieval town of Rhodes. It is a building from 1907 that used to be the seat of the *kadi* of Rhodes. Above the main entrance and below the windowsill of the central window of the upper floor's southern facade, the inscription of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876-1909) is built in, as well as the building's construction year 1329 (=1907). The Ottoman Court House continued to operate during the Italian period (1912-1945), as indicated by the inscription on the facade 'Tribunale sceri'[63].



Figure 26: Ottoman Courthouse, 1907.
Photo: G. Gerolympos, 2003

On the tower, the two-storey Ottoman Court House was built, having the southern as the main facade. The raised bottom floor consists of the main monumental entrance with two rectangular pilasters, with a semicircular ground plan with two columns, as well as two symmetrical access staircases. The main entrance doorway to the neoclassical building leads to a small hall and from there to a *hayat* space towards the back courtyard, which has been configured on top of the Byzantine wall. From this point, access is provided to the two corner rooms, *odas*, on either side of

63 Ντέλλας (2008e), 61-64.

the entrance, as well as to the toilet in the northeastern corner and the wooden staircase leading to the upper floor. The upper floor is arranged similarly to the ground floor, two corner *odas*, a smaller space between them, perhaps the *eyvan*, the *hayat*, and the corresponding toilet in the same corner, which retains the traditional eastern-style marble toilet bowl. The mezzanine is wooden, as is the floor of the two ground-floor *odas*. The rest of the ground floor and the courtyard are covered with pebbled floors. The main structure is covered with a four-pitched wooden roof, while the toilets have an independent double-pitched one on a lower level. The typology of the building is of particular architectural interest, as it represents a transitional type from the 18th-19th century. Ottoman period mansion to the neoclassical building.

The arrangement of the southern main facade is entirely symmetrical. It includes large neoclassical rectangular windows with light apertures and French shutters and iron grating with the characteristic 'snail' designs of Rhodes. Similar grating is found on the transom windows of the main paneled entrance and the door towards the back courtyard. The windows are framed by a protruding zone of plaster and topped with horizontal architraves and fringes. Six vertical rectangular pilasters on the plaster, as well as a horizontal strip on the mezzanine and one more on the finial accompanied by base moldings and a protruding ledge that bears the tip of the roof made of French roof tiles.

The building was operational until the '90s, and it housed the offices of the Public Vakuf of Rhodes. Serious problems made its restoration by the Ministry of Culture necessary. The restoration work was completed in 2002.

Even today one can easily discern the robustness of the Byzantine tower at the base of the building. At the lower section of the southern facade of the main entrance, the access door to the semi-basement tower is located. Of the square Byzantine tower, a vault with massive walls remains. The walled-up old northern and authentic door from the castle was restored, and the repair of the internal and external sides of the Byzantine tower and the *Khorasani* cover of the floor, which delivered one of the rare extant remnants of the Byzantine fortification of the castle of Rhodes.

In recent years, the building has housed the studies of visitor-students of the American universities with the 'Paedia' Center for Greek Studies and a small museum in the Byzantine tower.

Epilogue

The great works of the Ottoman period in the end of the 18th c. until the early 20th c. reveal the particular importance of Rhodes. The coexistence of architectural monuments from all periods within an ancient grid of Hippodamean urban planning and the renowned medieval walled town has created a rich complex of works. The reuse of medieval churches as mosques and other social and educational functions shows, on the one hand, the Ottoman administration's stance towards the old monuments and the attempt to utilise and incorporate them into their way of life. At the same time, the construction of new monuments in the central unbuilt area complements the necessary functions and provides the town with even greater monumentality. The beginning was defined by the construction of the Ottoman Library in 1793-4, then the "Medrese of Suleiman" of 1803 and Suleiman's Mosque of 1808, the Clock Tower and the school-gymnasium "Rüştiye" by Ahmed Fethi Pasha in 1852-1853. The explosion of the Great Sandjuvan Mosque of 1856, was followed by the first two-story Neoclassical School in 1876 and after its destruction by the single floor one of 1898, and finally the Ottoman courthouse of 1907. The Hamza Bey Mosque comes from the same period.

Along with the older and newer houses and shops, all these social, educational, and religious monuments clustered around the Hafiz Ahmed Agha library in the NW area, as they have been preserved, restored, and showcased in the contemporary era, represent a typical example and mark the intertemporality of the medieval town of Rhodes.

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Rhodes Harbour
Steel engraving, 1840s
by John Henry Le Keux (1812–1896)
Hafız Ahmed Agha Library archive, Rhodes

Katerina Manousou-Ntella studied Architecture at the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Greece. She has a master's degree in Geography and Spatial Planning from the Institute of Geography, Sorbonne University, Paris and a Doctorate from NTUA, Laboratory in History of Architecture, on *"The Town of Rhodes during the Medieval Ages. The early development of the fortifications from late antiquity to the fortified knight's town (7th c.-1480)"*. Dr. Manousou-Ntella has written and co-edited 6 books and up to 65 scientific articles in Greek, English and French. Since 1985 she has worked at the Ministry of Culture on Rhodes, as an architect of historical monuments in charge of restoration projects for the restoration of medieval monuments, the monumental ensemble of the fortifications and the archeological site of the moat. She was deputy chairman of the "Restoration of the monuments of the medieval town of Rhodes scientific committee". Since 2022 she was heading the department of restoration projects and works of monuments, museums and cultural buildings of the "Service of Monuments and Technical Works of Dodecanese". Since her retirement in 2024 she is the honorary supervisor of the same service - Ministry of Culture.

"The fortified island city of Rhodes stood as a strategic crossroads in the eastern Aegean, serving as a vital conduit for the exchange of ideas, people, and goods across the Mediterranean. At the heart of its identity was a vibrant, multicultural society, where Greek Orthodox Christians, Latin Catholics, Jews, and Muslims lived side by side—coexisting with remarkable resilience despite religious differences. As a port city, Rhodes flourished into a major commercial and transit hub. Its lively marketplace—later transformed into an Ottoman bazaar—became the economic pulse of the city. From the 16th to the 18th centuries, this bustling center was concentrated in the eastern sector of the medieval city, near the heart of the commercial harbor. A pivotal moment in the city's urban development came in 1793 with the establishment of the Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library. Positioned west of the bazaar in what had been open land, the library marked the beginning of a westward expansion of civic life. Soon after, a grand mosque was constructed, which by the mid-19th century replaced the imperial Mosque of Suleiman. Educational buildings followed, gradually reshaping the area from a religious center into a lively hub of learning and culture. The addition of the Clock Tower, built atop the corner Byzantine Guard Tower, introduced the symbolic presence of time into the cityscape. This striking landmark became a visual and cultural anchor, reinforcing the growing significance of the complex within the urban fabric of Rhodes. This volume, Conversation in the Library, sheds new light on this transformative era—an enduring chapter in the layered and dynamic history of Rhodes."

Katerina Manousou-Ntella

The Transformation of the *Magna et Communis Platea* of the Hospitaller's Town of Rhodes into an Ottoman Bazaar[1]

After the great siege and the conquest of Rhodes town in 1522[2], the material remnants of one of the eastern Mediterranean's most splendid towns[3], where elements of the early Renaissance had already started appearing[4], passed from the hands of the Knights Hospitaller to the Ottoman Turks (Figure 1). The most prominent feature of the unique urban landscape of Rhodes is the creative coexistence of western and eastern elements of form and typology in the geographic melting pot of cultures[5] within which the town evolved over time.



Figure 1: Graphic depiction of the walled town of Rhodes in the 16th century.
(G. Braun - F. Hogenberg "Calaris-Malta-Rhodus-Famagusta", 1572)

After 1522, Rhodes retained strategic importance due to its geographic location in the Eastern Mediterranean and was immediately turned into the most important Ottoman military and naval base in the southeastern Mediterranean[6], with a garrison of 1415 soldiers, 662 cannon and 1249 harquebuses.

1 Many thanks are due to my dear friend archaeologist Anna-Maria Kasdagli for her suggestions regarding the rendering of the translation of the text. Photos 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 by the author.
2 Buttigieg & Philips (2013), 85-112.
3 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 147-175.
4 Κόλλιας (2001), 10-17.
5 Slot (1982), 71-73.
6 Kolovos (2022), 140.



Figure 2: General layout plan of the central functions of the town of Rhodes during Late Antiquity

As a regional administrative centre[7], it built up vigorous maritime and ship-building activity[8]. Galleys for the Ottoman fleet and the islands' trade needs were built from the forests of Rhodes. Sailing ships from Rhodes took active part in the trade of goods between Greece, Constantinople, Syria and Egypt. The presence of Venetian trade representatives is already mentioned[9] in the first years following the conquest of the town, permanently resident within the walled town. The year 1631 is described[10] as a period of relative prosperity for Rhodes. The procurement of cereals from the Anatolian shores was necessary, but the island was self-sufficient in meat, fruit, and all sorts of vegetables and medicinal products, which were even exported to Smyrna and Beirut.

In this context, the town was gradually modified to fit the housing and urban plan of Ottoman towns. The contrast between the concepts of space in European and Muslim towns[11] was sharply expressed in the diachronic town of Rhodes, whose design was initially based on the Hippodamian urban planning system of the Hellenistic metropolis[12]. The starting point was frequently met in the Mediterranean urban planning system, where the plazas and Forum were places for gathering rather than transit, generally enclosed but accessible for religious, political, and commercial activities (Figure 2, A).

Over the centuries following, two completely contrasting systems of urban planning were consecutively implemented. In the typical western *ville d' accession*[13] of the Hospitallers, the market was organised in accordance with a medieval trade system dominated by open air transactions and the guilds' workshops. Its operation was exposed to the public space and free of the control of religious or state authorities, with a marked presence of European traders and banking houses[14]. As early as 1389 the high street of the town, already known as *magna et communis platea*[15], was an unbuilt space similar to the *platea lata* of the medieval towns of the West[16](Figure 3). It was 30 to 80 metres wide, flanking the land wall of the Knights' *Collachium*[17], serving as its defensive zone (*terra deserta*). It was the citizens' main gathering space for festivals as well as religious ceremonies, but also had military and administrative functions. The widest available space was on the east side in the broad, flat area overlooked by the towers of the Marine Gate[18] (Figure 3).

After 1522 there was a change in the structure of the urban grid, which was transformed from the official public space of the Hospitaller town to a lively bustling hub for commerce [19](Figure 4). The high street lost its military and administrative character and became the centre of financial life with a closed, hierarchic structure connected to religion. The bazaar, which gradually expanded over the entire central part of the town, was a lively area of commerce, exchanges, but also social interactions. It was central to both social and cultural life, and associated to the charitable

7 Efthymiou-Hadzilacou (1988), 19.
8 Matton (1954), 64-68.
9 Belon (1553), 13.
10 Stochove (1689), 221.
11 de Planhol (1984), 9-27.
12 Κόλλιας (2000); Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2000).
13 Lavedan-Hugueney (1974), 33-58.
14 Μανούσου-Ντέλλα & Ντέλλας (2019).
15 Κόλλιας (1992); Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2022).
16 Σαρηγιάννης (1973), 243-250.
17 Κόλλιας (1992); Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2022).
18 Gabriel (1921), 12, 63-66.
19 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 147-175.

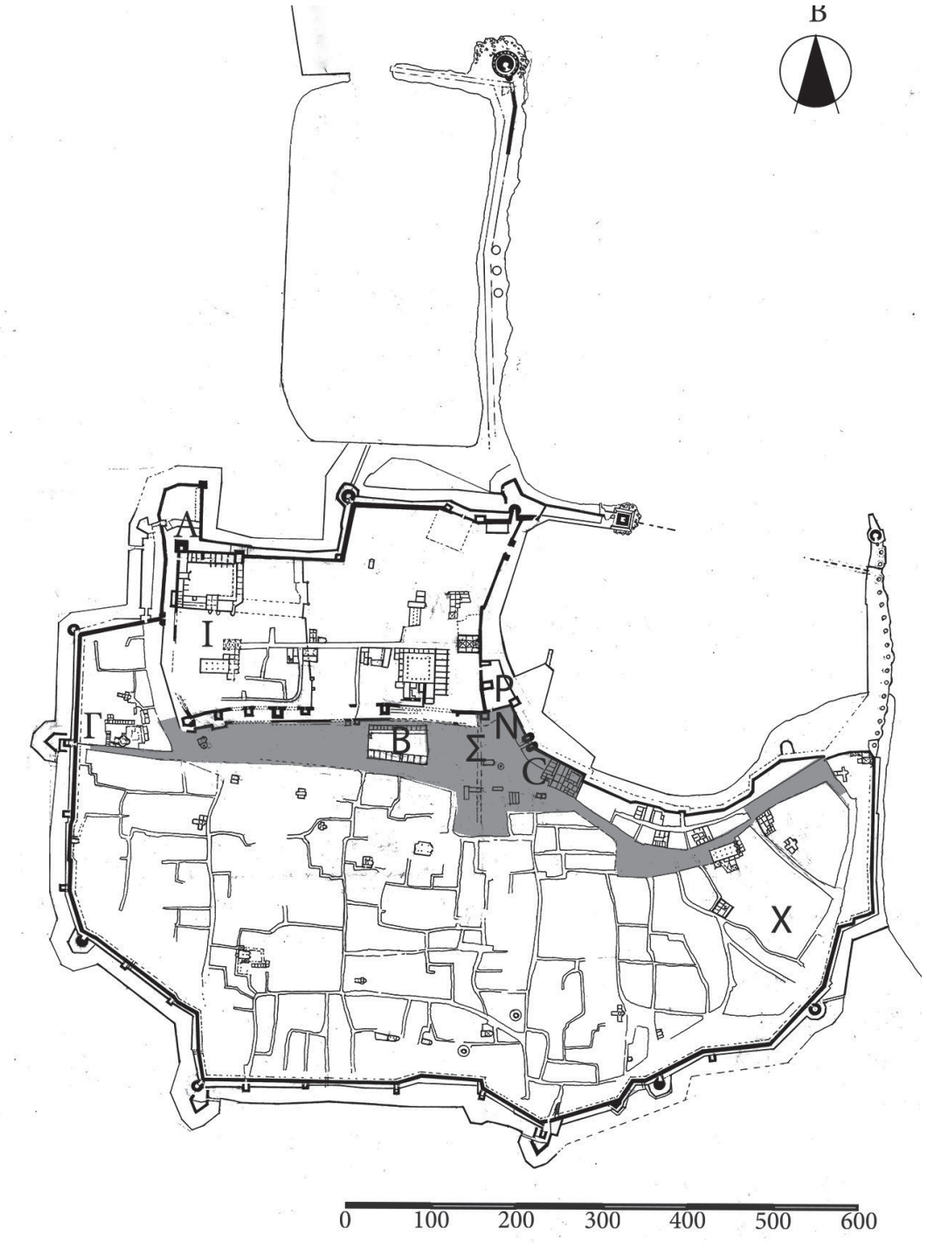


Figure 3: General layout plan of the medieval town at the end of the 15th century.

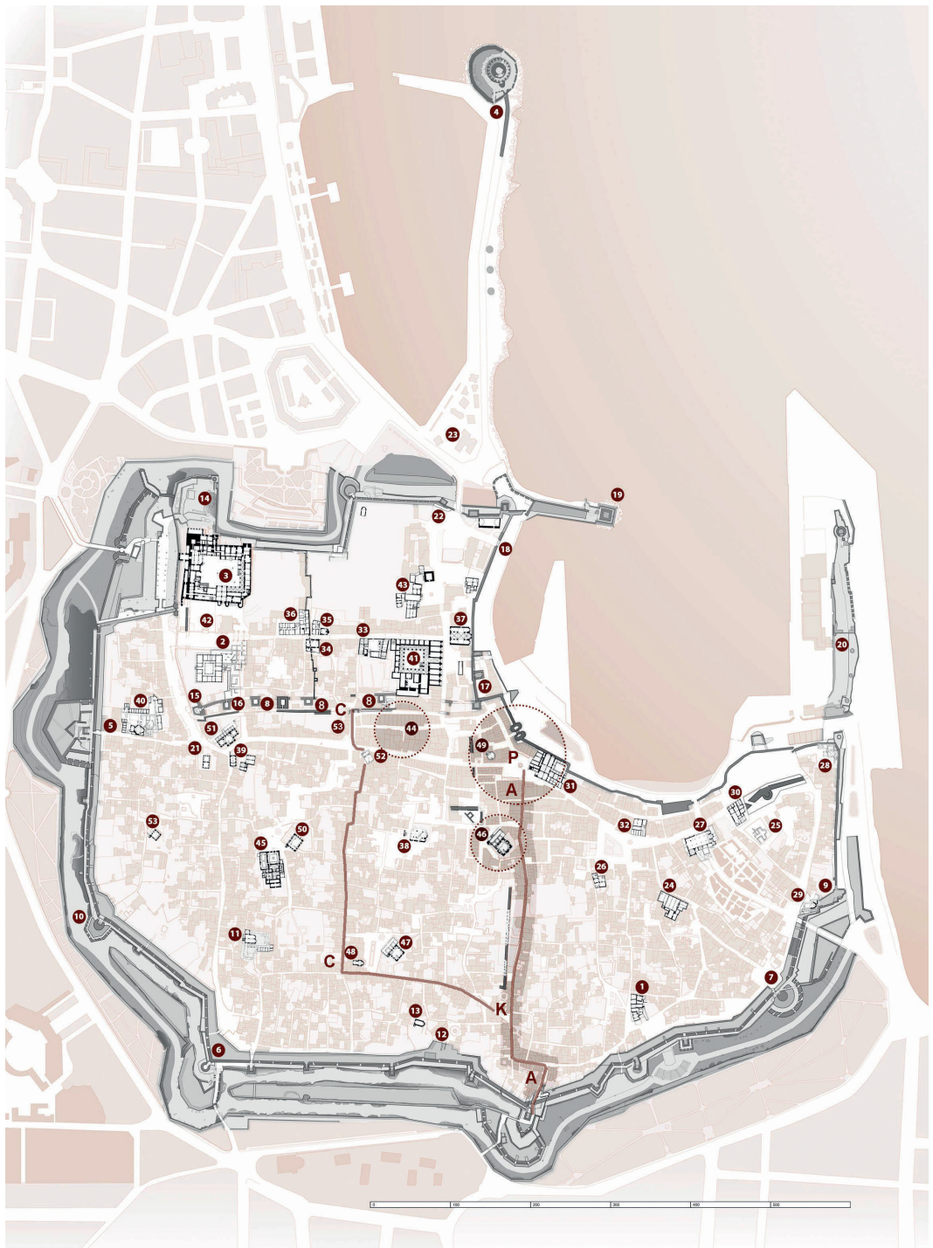


Figure 4: General layout plan of the town of Rhodes with the monuments of the Ottoman period.

activities of the *vakufs*. The dimensions of the high street were modified by the constant addition of shops, even in the middle of the street, with covered alleys and labyrinthine passages. As a typical bazaar adjusted to the climate of the eastern Mediterranean, it was related to the Ottoman centres of Smyrna, Constantinople and Damascus. It was organized in commercial zones where each profession had its own space (textile traders, metal workers, perfumiers, jewellers etc). The main market was located between the 16th-century mosque of Suleiman (Figure 4, 46) –known today as the Ibrahim Pasha Mosque– and the Bezesten gubernatorial mansion (Figure 4, 31). The Shadirvan Mosque, the bath house (Eski hammam) and other public and educational institutions were part of the same complex (Figure 4 P). Coffee shops, *hans* and *caravanserais* were intended for recreation and social contact, as well as housing travellers who usually brought goods from distant regions, creating a multicultural trade centre.

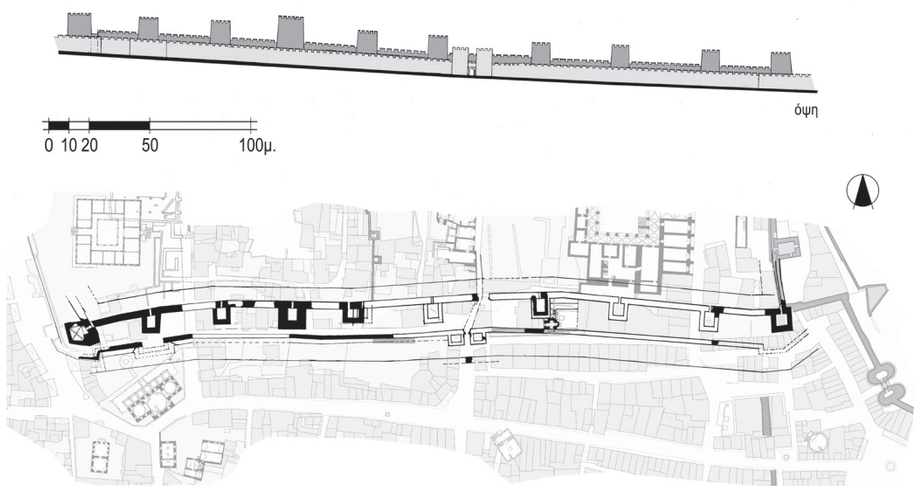


Figure 5: Graphic representation plan of the southern wall of Kollakio in the center of the walled town of Rhodes .

It is clear that, at least until the mid-16th century, the town remained divided as follows (Figure 4):

- the inner fortress, where the Ottomans established themselves[20], and
- the outer fortress, which the Ottomans shared with Jews[21], and some very few Greeks who remained until their final expulsion[22] and relocation to the neighbourhoods surrounding the walled town (known as *marash* in Turkish or *marassia* in Greek).

The fausse-braye of the southern wall of the Collachio (Figure 5) survived as a boundary until the second half of the 19th century[23]. The towers were gradually abandoned or adapted to new uses. In its eastern part, apart from the southeastern corner tower[24], the fortification with its moat disappeared, gradually incorporated into newer buildings associated with the market (Figure 4).

An Ottoman register from 1530[25] already recorded 18 neighbourhoods (*mahalle*) in the inner and outer fortress, where 581 Ottoman families had settled.

Documents from the first years of Ottoman Administration show:

- the conversion, by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent himself in 1523[26], of the Hospitaller conventual church of Saint John the Baptist (Figure 3) into the grand Mosque of the Castle[27], also known as *Senjuvan*[28];
- the establishment of the Market Mosque (Bezesten Djami) in the hall on the upper floor of the Hospitaller Commercial Court (*Commercium*)[29] by grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha[30] (Figure 4, 31). The covered part of the market or *Bezesten*[31] was established in the ground-floor arcade of the Merchants' Lodge or *Loggia Mercatorum* (Figure 3, C), retaining its administrative and commercial character as an important landmark in the heart of the town[32];
- the founding of the poorhouse complex (*imaret*)[33] (Figure 4, 39) by a decree of Suleiman the Magnificent in the first years after the conquest, at the highest spot of the *high street*, where the great Cross is notably depicted in Caoursin's illustrations[34]. Relatively recent restoration work on the *imaret* buildings[35] has revealed important remnants of the side aisle of the Hospitaller church of the Holy Apostles[36]. According to a 1568 firman of sultan Selim II[37], the public welfare institutions connected to Imaret included the hammam known today as the New Hammam or Mustafa Hammam (Figure 4, 45). It is, however, clear that the monument in its current form dates from the period when the Mustafa Mosque was built[38], in 1765.

20 Κόλλιας (1992); Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2022); Barnes (2021), 325, Figure 4.
21 Ευθυμίου (1992).
22 Τσιρπανλής (2002).
23 Guérin (1856). He mentions that the gates, towers, and a part of the walls forming the fortification of the Collachium have been retained, without forming a clear fortification boundary.
24 Δοντάς (2012).
25 Kolovos (2022), 131-146.
26 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 149.
27 Kolovos (2022), 132. Mentioned as the "cami-i-serif" of Ibrahim Pasha.
28 Τσελεμπί (2005), 379-380.
29 Gabriel (1923), 93-101.
30 Τσελεμπί (2005), 378. As mentioned: "Inside the market there is the mosque of Makbul Ibrahim Pasha"
31 The bezesten was an institution of prime importance in Ottoman towns. This is where valuable items were sold, documents and valuables were safeguarded, product quality was inspected, and currency exchange rates were determined (source: Wikipedia).
32 Matton (1954) 72-73. In 1880 it is reported that the fish market was housed inside a ground level area of the *Commercium*.
33 Balducci (1932), 13.
34 Caoursin (1481).
35 Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2001), 124-125.
36 Ντέλλας (1998), 167-169.
37 Balducci (1932), 45.
38 Balducci (1932), 115.

- the founding of the Khurmali Medresse[39] (Figure 4, 40) that operated in the conventual compound of Saint George[40] in the western part of the town.
- the establishment of the Shadirvan or Sinan Bey Mosque[41] complex with its fountain[42] (Figure 4, 49; Figure 6) and the old bath house (Eski Hammam)[43], in the first years following the conquest. They occupied the site of the Latin church of Saint Sebastian [44](Figure 3, Σ) with the pedestal of the cross which projected into the axis of the high street's Marine Gate. The church of Saint Sebastian had been built *in platea civitatis Colocensis*, next to the cross (*iuxta crucem*), around 1435. The founders [45] were Filippa, daughter of Jacob de Puteo, and Saffredo Calvo, who thus invoked the saint's help against the plague[46]. This key spot in the broad, level area of the square towards the Marine Gate, was the centre of the Ottoman bazaar (Figure 8). The Ottoman foundations are considered important mainly due to their location, but also their antiquity. The elegant series of domes of the Hammam and the originally ground-floor mosque built by Sinan Bey, along with the fountain turned towards the high street, stand out in the picturesque depictions of the town, mainly from the early 19th century; the mosque was later destroyed by fire and rebuilt on the first floor in 1887.



Figure 6: Actual view of the Siantrivan Mosque and the Fountain on the main street of the Bazaar.

39 Balducci (1932), 146-147; Τσελεμπί (2005), 379. More specifically, it is mentioned that there were: "The Khurmali, Timurlu, and Ibrahim Pasha medresses, one Quran school, seventeen schools and one school for the study of the holy tradition".

40 Balducci (1932), 74-76.

41 Balducci (1932), 73-76; Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου (2008), 97-100.

42 Παπαχριστοδούλου (1997), 510-511. This is likely the medieval Fountain of the Plaza whose distant memory was retained in the name "Fountana".

43 Balducci (1932), 42-45.

44 Μανούσου-Ντελλα (2022), 138.

45 Τσιρπανλής (1995), 89. In 1435 the pope recognised their right of *jus patronatus*.

46 Τσιρπανλής (1995), 57. A man of considerable wealth and influence in his time, Calvo is reported to have owned a "house enclosed by wall" serving as his residence near «Saint Sebastian's square».

It seems that after 1480, within a more general reorganization of the town, the wide space of the Hospitaller high street was gradually occupied by buildings of a commercial character[47] serving the operation of the market (Figure 7). These include a ground-level Hospitaller building[48] of the *loggia* type, found on the east side of «Saint Sebastian Square» and covered by two monumental cross-vaults, and probably more vaulted buildings concealed by later additions to the bazaar (Figure 3; Figure 9,10,11).



Figure 8: Graphic depiction of the central area of the Bazaar inside the Sea Gate in the mid-19th century (E. Flandin 1853)

A typical case is the addition of the 16th-century elongated compound[49] set inside a courtyard, with its main entrance opening onto the high street (Figure 3, B; Figure 14), carrying above it a square frame with the arms of grand master Fabrizio dell Caretto (1513-1521). This compound spread in an east-west direction from the «Saint Sebastian Square» to the *Collachium* Gate on the modern Lachetos Street. Its situation precisely on the axis of the Marine Gate (Figure 3, B; Figure 8) is worth noting, as it divides the Saint Seabastian Square into two sectors of equal width and delimiting the commercial zone. It is an imposing structure whose appearance is preserved in engravings of the first half of the 19th century[50] (Figure 12), having retained its original aspect for at least three centuries. It was organised into two parallel wings separated by an open space and its typology is reminiscent of the *hans* of Ottoman towns, although its exact use has not been determined. Our only clue is that in the

47 Gabriel (1923), 12, note.1. In 1391 at least 14 new warehouses are documented in the area of the high street. It is mentioned as a place for selling vegetables, possibly in an open-air market, and it originally abutted the *Collachium* fortification.

48 This originally isolated structure was incorporated into the complex of Ippokratous square's eastern frontage in the period of the Italian Occupation, after a design by architect Florestano di Fausto. Καρανάσος (2023), 163.

49 Manousou & Ntellas (2022), 159-161.

50 Flandin (1853), 28, 29; Rottiers (1828), LXIXb, LXX.



Figure 7: General view of the centre of the walled town of Rhodes from the harbor.
(Aerial photograph 2000, N. Kasseris)

early 20th century its ground floor was occupied by private shops and warehouses, while its upper floor accommodated poor families[51]. In its current condition the original plan is not apparent, as it has been incorporated into later structures (Figure 4, 44), and the modern Polydorou Street is a remnant of its spacious enclosed courtyard. Only the northern face of the compound, facing the *Collachium* wall, is visible in its original form (Figure 13), as well as the central portion of the southern facade on the high street, with its triangular top and the rectangular frame with the coat of arms (Figure 14). The internal structure of the ground-level vaults is visible in the unique traditional Coffee Shop[52], a major landmark on Socratous Street, with its ornate wooden facade (Figure 15). Recently, the first-floor gallery of the northern wing, with its vaulted rooms[53], has been restored and converted into a small hotel.



Figure 9: View of the medieval ground-floor building with the cross-vaults (Loggia) in its current form.

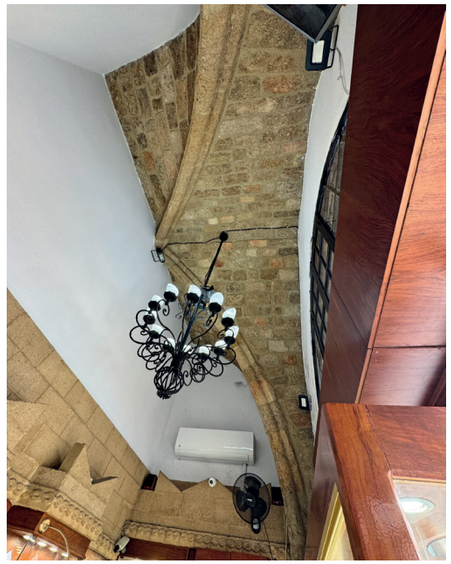


Figure 10-11: Interior views of the shops of the building with the cross-vaults.

51 de Belabre (1908), 139-141.

52 The Coffee Shop has been declared a protected element of the old market both in terms of its use and the equipment.

53 This is where the pauper accommodations used to be housed.

It is possible to formulate the following two hypotheses:

- it may have been incorporated in the functions of the bazaar, where the presence of a trade *han* and three *hans* for travellers is mentioned[54];
- it may originally have been used for military purposes[55] or as lodgings for the 24 families of volunteers to the Castle guard, which is mentioned[56] as one of the 16 Muslim neighbourhoods in the town. Perhaps this is why its designation as «barracks» survived until the time of Rottiers.



Figure 12: Graphic depiction of the north wing of the 16th century barracks complex (B.E.A. Rottiers, 1828).

In the analysis of the Ottoman bazaar area in terms of urban planning, it must be stressed that following the blocking[57] of the gates of Saint George, Saint Athanasius, Acandia and the Arsenal (the shipyard), the remaining access points to the town were (Figure 4):

- The three sea gates: the *Collachium* Sea Gate, Marine Gate and Gate of Saint Catherine, which provided access from the main port and its Pier of the Windmills. Soon the bazaar's activities extended to the space outside the sea wall, on either side of the two main gates of the inner and outer fortress. As recorded in an old photograph[58], an imposing two-storey building

54 Τσελεμπί (2005), 379-380. The description of the bazaar is particularly vivid: "The market and bazaar are beautiful. There are three hundred vakuf-owned shops at the Suleiman Han mosque and four hundred more. There is also a bezesten, eighteen bakers, eight coffee shops, the customs house at the docks, a trade *han*, three *hans* for travellers…".

55 de Planhol (1984), 25. As was often the case in Ottoman town centres.

56 Kolovos (2022), 132. A neighbourhood is mentioned for volunteer soldiers (*gönüllüyan*) at the Rhodes fortress, comprising 21 homes.

57 Use of the three inland gates and the Arsenal Gate was discontinued in the late 15th-early 16th c. due to defence considerations.

58 Δοντάς (2012), 41. It is mentioned as an albumen print photograph by Tancrede R. Dumas.

–possibly a *han*– and a series of vaulted shops or warehouses existed outside the Marine Gate and in the space between the wall and the –then still existing– fausse-braye as early as 1880-1885. In another panoramic photograph from 1862[59] the waterfront neighbourhood is visible outside the Marine Gate, which became known as the "Customs House Gate".





Figure 13: Actual view of the northern side of the barracks complex (left).

Figure 14: Actual view of the central access to the barracks complex from the main street of the bazaar (below).



Figure 15: Today's view of the traditional cafe on the main street of the bazaar with its characteristic wood-carved facade.

59 Δοντάς (2012), 30-31. These are valuable pictures by photographer Francis Bedford from the Naillac Tower on 15 May 1862, just before its destruction in 1863.

A mosque stood adjacent to the Sea Wall, raised above vaults opening towards the public space at ground level, where a water fountain most probably was to be found (Figure 16).[60]. The Customs House was on the seafront, on the pier of what was then the main harbour. In the same area inside the town, on the axis of the *Collachium* Sea Gate, the great Hospital of the Knights[61] is mentioned as a public granary in the 17th century[62] and, in subsequent centuries, as a place for treating patients[63], a *medresse*, a warehouse, and a barracks.

Finally, a 1912 view[64] of the Commercial Port with the Dock buildings confirms the presence of important administrative buildings outside the medieval walls, including the Customs House, the Post Office, and the Town Hall. The Neoclassical Style had clearly prevailed in the formal architecture of the late Ottoman period before the neighbourhood was demolished by the Italians who cleared the area in the early 20th century[65].

- Amboise gate[66], providing access to both the inner and the outer fortress; after the blocking of the Gate of Saint George[67], it replaced it in importance and served mainly the countryside of the island's west coast by way of the Long Straight (*Makry Steno*)[68], Saint Stephen's hill, and the neighbourhood known as *Neomaras-Niochori*[69] (Figure 17).
- The Koskinou Gate[70] or Gate of Saint John that mainly served to connect with the countryside of the east coast of the island and Lindos, via the Rhodes-Lindos Road, as well as the *marassia* to the south of the town, particularly *Mitropoli* and *Saint Anastasia* (Figure 18).

Thus, the modern Pythagora Street was added as a main access route to the bazaar, forming the boundary between the Turkish and Jewish quarters of the outer fortress, leading from the Koskinou gate to the entrance of the Bezesten (Figure 4 A-A). It is an important thoroughfare defined by the outline of the eastern part of the Late Byzantine fortification of the *Chora*[71] (Figure 19). As it was the main road connecting the old market to the southern *marassia,* it became even more important to the organisation of the Ottoman town. Notably, the new metropolitan church[72] was integrated into the southern extension of this axis (Figure 18).

60 Matton (1954), 69.
61 Gabriel (1923), 13-36.
62 Savary (1788), n. 12-13.
63 Rottiers (1828), 250-273
64 Δοντάς (2012), 92. After 1877, the Town Hall was housed in the first building of the new front of the modern Panaitiou Street, opposite the courtyard of the Neoclassical School that was built on the site of the Hospitaller conventual church of Saint John - Senjuvan Mosque following its total destruction by a gunpowder explosion in 1856.
65 Καρανάσος (2023), 116-126.
66 Gabriel (1921), 32-34
67 Gabriel (1921), 34-42; Κάσδαγλη & Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2007).
68 Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2000), 27-42
69 Τσιρπανλής (2002), 95-100; Efthymiou-Hadzilakou (1988), 126-130.
[Translator's Note: the name *Niochori,* still in use today for what is now the city centre, means "new village/town"; the word *Neomaras* combines the Greek *neo* (new) and the Turkish *marash* (neighbourhood/village) into a portmanteau that conveys the same meaning].
70 Kasdagli & Manoussou-Della (1996).
71 Μανούσου-Ντέλλα (2021), 116-123. [TN: the term *chora* was widely used in Byzantine times to denote a capital or main settlement, particularly of an island].
72 Τσιρπανλής (2002), 87-94; Κασδαγλη (2019), 202-207. According to Latin missionary Peter Fangonis, in 1645 the Orthodox metropolitan church was in the *Paximada* neighbourhood and was dedicated to the Dormition of the Virgin.



Figure 16: Graphic depiction of the central area of the port during the 18th century (Choiseul-Gouffier, 1782)

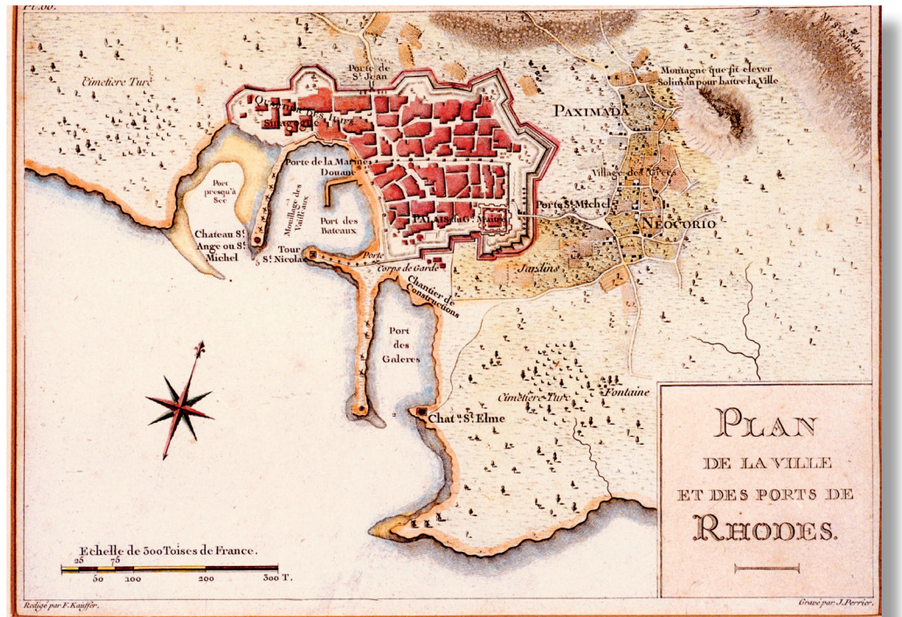


Figure 17: Plan of the town and ports of Rhodes during the 18th century (M.G.A.F Choiseul-Gouffier, 1782)

The main mosque of the outer fortress, known as the Ibrahim Pasha Mosque[73], was built at the edges of the Ottoman period bazaar, on a slight eminence to the west of Pythagora Street (Figure 4, 46). This is the «Mosque of Suleiman», founded in 1540 personally by Ibrahim, grand vizier to the sultan. The mosque was dedicated to Sultan Suleiman, as is clearly attested by the dedicatory inscription above its entrance, from archival evidence, and descriptions[74]. One important piece of documentary evidence is the presence of an imperial-style minaret with twin balconies. This is clearly visible in surviving depictions[75] from the second half of the 16th century until the end of the 19th (Figure 14), as well as in Francis Bedford's historic photograph[76]. It must have been highly visible from afar, in the days before the construction of the bulky two-storey complexes in the centre of the old market in the early 20th century. The mosque included the ablutions fountain which still survives, although originally it occupied the centre of a large courtyard[77] that accommodated the congregation and common prayer of large crowds of the faithful.

73 Balducci (1932), 93-97; Ντέλλας (2008a), 364-365.

74 The floor of the mosque's portico includes *spolia* dating from Antiquity until Hospitaller times. These include, more specifically: a fragment of an inscribed cinerary casket, part of a small mullion and a screen slab of the Early Christan period, two screen slabs from the 12th c. and two pieces of medieval tomb slabs. I am grateful to my friend, archaeologist Eleni Papavasiliou for this valuable information.

75 Μαΐλλης et al (2002).

76 Δοντάς (2012), 30-31.

77 Newton (1865), 4. The British Admiralty map, dated 1838, reveals that the unbuilt space to the west of the mosque was much larger prior to the construction of a complex of commercial shops in the late 19th - early 20th c.

At an early period, approximately until 1750, the main area of the bazaar, where Turks, Jews, and Christians traded, spread in the free spaces around the market's Süleymaniye Mosque[78]. This early bazaar extended to the gate of the *Collachium*; outside the *Collachium* and to the southwest stood a mosque that remains unidentified to this day[79], which was converted to the present day historic «Karpathos» coffee-shop (Figure 20, 21). It was situated at a prime location on the axis of the main bazaar street and was accessed through a slightly raised polygonal platform opposite the Hospitaller Carretto[80] compound.

The imposing Redjep Pasha[81] Mosque was built in 1588, at the heart of the Turkish neighbourhood, looming over a large enclosed courtyard with its typical fountain in the shade of a large plane tree (Figure 4, 47). Today the two main entrances to this courtyard are visible, providing access from the two main streets of the Turkish neighbourhood: today's Hagiou Phanouriou and Omirou streets. This is obviously a major focus that served the public functions of the Muslim community[82], namely common prayer, and essential needs of social contact set apart from the public space of the town.

78 Known today as the Ibrahim Pasha mosque.

79 The existence and location of the mosque are evidenced by the cadastral record and the outline of the specific property.

80 It is worth mentioning that the original façade of the vaulted compound, before the wooden additions, left the façade of the old mosque visible from the public space.

81 Balducci (1932), 99-113; Κίζης (2017), 180-190.

82 de Planhol (1984), 9-27.

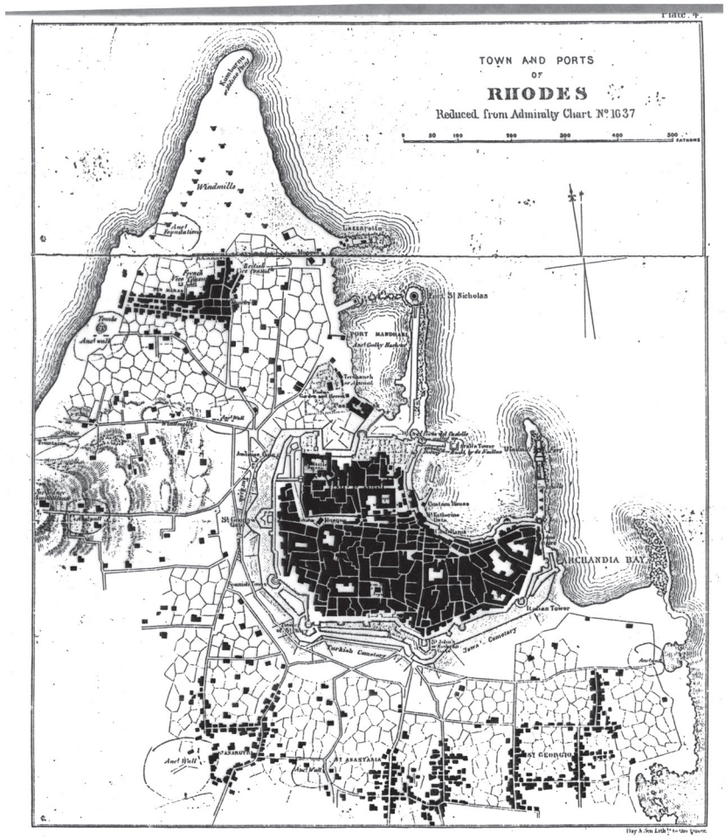


Figure 18: The British Admiralty map, dated 1838 (C.T. Newton, 1865)

Christian tradesmen, Greeks and Latins, retained their shops in the old market, but they were obliged to leave the walled town before sunset, at the time the gates would close[83]. During the first transitional period, many Greeks and Western Europeans were departing daily to Crete or Italy, leaving the island nearly uninhabited[84]. In spite of the best efforts of those in charge to retain them

83 The single exception was the Consul of Venice and his family who, according to a traveller's account from 1547, had the right to remain inside the Castle during the night in spite of being a Christian. Archival documents record that a Venetian consul or vice consul named Zorzi Zacaria had already been established in Rhodes. He was most probably succeeded in 1531 by Vetor Zacaria, a member of the same family, which was well known in Rhodes. This probably means that their residence was in the Hospitaller mansion that bears their family arms and is often referred to as the «Admiralty» or «the Greek Bishop's Residence».

84 Τσιρπανλής (2002), 19-29.

through favourable treatment and privileges, Rhodes was often described as a deserted town[85]. In 1621, traveller Hayes de Courmenin mentions[86] that the town was inhabited by 1200 Turks and 200 Jews. Ten years later they had increased to 3000 Turks and 500 Jews[87]. In the mid-19th century[88], the town's population consisted of 5500 Turks and 1000 Jews.



Figure 19: Actual view of Pythagora Street with the monumental neoclassical building dating to the Ottoman period.

The Orthodox metropolitan church of the Hospitaller outer fortress was stated[89] to be functioning as the centre of a Greek neighbourhood numbering five families in 1530 (Figure 4, 38). It was eventually converted into the mosque originally known as Kurt Zade Ahmed Bey Djami in 1738[90], having probably been abandoned and left to ruin for two centuries[91], despite the Greek residents' immediate relocation to the *marassia*. It was then restored by Ianik Zade Ismail Aga, as recorded on the two marble slabs mounted above the main entrance and on the north side of the building.

85 Choiseul-Gouffier (1782), chapter 6. In his 1776 tour he notes the town's dereliction and the unchecked destruction of the island's forests.

86 Matton (1954), 67.

87 Stochove (1689), 221.

88 Guérin (1856), 54-62. He also mentions 500 Turks in the suburbs and the island's countryside, and 20,000 Greek inhabitants of whom 5000 lived in the *marassia.*

89 Kolovos (2022), 133.

90 Balducci (1932), 82-83. The later name *Demirli Djami* obviously referred to the iron gratings that were later added to the mosque.

91 The condition of this imposing Orthodox church during the two centuries following the relocation of the Christians to the *marassia* requires more investigation, based mainly on archaeological evidence.





Figure 20, 21: Exterior and interior view of the Mosque on Lachitos Street, the actual traditional cafe "Karpathos"

It is therefore clear that in the 16th-17th-century town there were empty spaces with abandoned and dilapidated buildings; these were gradually taken up by new buildings and functions in the mid-18th century. This seems to be the case with the part of the Hospitaller high street to the west of the *Collachium* Gate. At the northern front the derelict Hospitaller mansions[92] and shops remained, together with the useless moat until the end of the 18th century (Figure 18). At the south front the remains of Hospitaller period dwellings and shops endured until the mid-19th century, when the devastating gunpowder explosion at the Great Senjuvan Mosque[93] altered the aspect of the town. The establishment of the Imaret, Khurmali Medresse and the Hammam charitable foundation complex, as early as the 16th century are exceptional.

The financial heyday of Rhodes followed, expressed by the building of new mosques and other charitable and educational foundations, but also of churches[94] in the town's Greek *marassia*. From 1750 until the end of the Ottoman period, intensive construction expanded the centre of the walled town and changed its form.

The great mosque known today as Suleiman's Mosque[95] was established in 1808 in the open space[96] outside the southern wall of the *Collachium* and the corner tower of the *Guardia* (Figure 4, 15), inside a courtyard that to the north was adjacent to the Byzantine fausse-braye (Figure 4, 51). In contrast to a commonly held belief, there is no definite evidence of an earlier mosque on the site. It is, after all, clear that no such early mosque appears in illustrations of the 16th-17th-century travellers[97] (Figure 1). Access to the courtyard was through a distinctive doorway in its northeast corner, and its centre was occupied by the distinctive fountain. One of its particular features is the use of a Renaissance period arcosolium[98] as a decorative frame in the central doorway of the prayer hall; it was probably removed from the nearby church of Saint John. The mosque, which was particularly prominent, as it stands on the highest point of the bazaar axis, formed the nucleus of the charitable functions that radiated around it (Imaret, medresse, Library). After 1851 the tower-shaped clock was added, as well as the first Ottoman School of the Fethi Pasha Foundation (Figure 4, 16), one of the most distinctive landmarks of the old market. The minaret of Suleiman's Mosque was rebuilt[99], probably after the late 19th century series of earthquakes[100], with twin balconies, a distinguishing feature of imperial mosques.

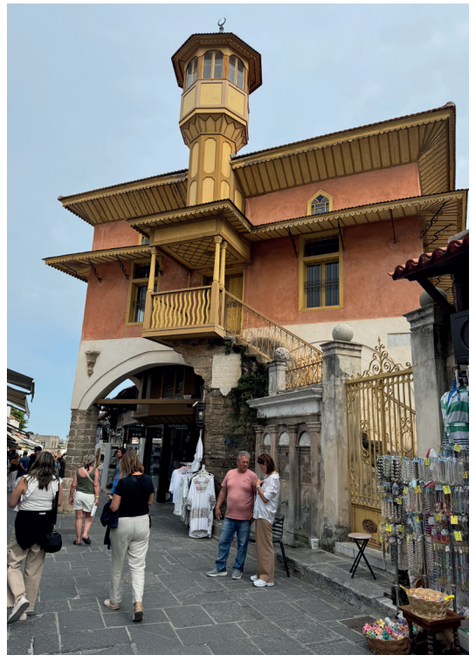




Figure 22, 23: Actual view of the recently restored Mehmet Ağa Mosque on the main street of the bazaar (left) and the pre-existing section of the ground-floor structures (right), which define the southern frontage of the medieval high street.

92 Μανούσου-Ντέλλα & Παπαβασιλείου (1999), 593. According to the archaeological research that was initiated following the discovery of an Early Christian *balneum* west of the *Collachium* Gate, the scanty remnants of an important building of the Hospitaller period were found, which define the southern front of the Hospitaller high street. This building is identified as the impressive Hospitaller mansion depicted by Rottiers and mentioned by Gabriel as the Hospitaller *Castellania*.

93 Gehlhoff-Βολανάκη (1982); Manousou & Ntellas (2022); Barnes (2021). It should be explained that the gunpowder magazine to the west of the mosque's main entrance was struck by lightning during a thundrerstorm, causing the disastrous gunpowder explosion. The building and its exact location are noted in the plan drawn by members of the Imperial Ottoman School of Engineering in 1847.

94 Ντέλλας (2012).

95 Ντέλλας et al (2009), 129-154; Ντέλλας (2008b), 360-363; Gabriel (1923), 210; Balducci (1932), 128-138; Βογιατζής (2007), 396–406.

96 This is the defensive zone of the *Collachium* that appears to have remained unbuilt until the early 19th c. in the westernmost part of the Hospitaller high street.

97 Μαΐλλης (1993), 33-58.

98 Guérin (1856), 138 ; Balducci (1931), 14–24, table III–V.

99 Δοντάς (2012), 37, 47. In Rubellin's (1870-1880) photographic depiction, the minaret of Suleiman's Mosque has one balcony, while a 1902 photograph by Fougeres and Merle shows the restored minaret of Ibrahim Pasha Mosque with one balcony.

100 Παπαδόπουλος (2014), 148-160.

This modification highlights the shift in importance between the two imperial mosques, known today as the Ibrahim and Suleiman Mosques. It coincided with the expansion of the centre of the bazaar and the town through the gradual occupation of the free spaces to the west of the *Collachium* Gate in the modern Lachetos street. The more recent Suleiman Mosque dominates the main street of the bazaar –modern Socratous Street– taking on the role of the market mosque. At the same time, more access points were opened allowing communication between the inner and outer fortress, as well as the integration of new uses in the towers (Clock, Schools, Courthouse etc).

A particular case of urban planning intervention is the integration of the Mehmet Aga Mosque[101] on a diagonally raised platform (Figure 4, 52). Positioned on the intersection with the Modern Hagiou Phanouriou Street (Figure 4, C-C), which used to be the main axis leading to the grand Redjep Pasha Mosque, its vaulted bridging is carried by a strong stone pillar that projects decisively into the axis of the main bazaar street (Figure 22). According to the inscription still mounted above the entrance, "in 1820 Hadji Mehmet Aga, master marksman of the navy, restored this Mosque that had lain deserted for many years". The reference to an older ruined mosque was corroborated by the discovery of an older vaulted construction in the east wing of the ground floor[102] (Figure 23). This may possibly have housed shops looking out on the main bazaar street and marking the southern front of the Hospitaller high street.

The aspect of the Ottoman urban landscape was complemented by a network of public water fountains[103] with inscriptions and beautiful taps and decorations that today remain as freestanding structures or set into the walls of other buildings. A freestanding example is the triple fountain[104] (Figure 24) built in a small square on the intersection of the major Pythagora and Omirou streets (Figure 4, K), the latter being an important street of the Turkish neighbourhood that led to the second gate of the courtyard of the grand Redjep Pasha Mosque (Figure 4, A-C).



Figure 24: Actual view of the triple fountain at the intersection of Pythagora and Omirou streets.

101 Balducci (1932), 87; Οικονομίδου (2007), 140-144, table 147-162

102 Οικονομίδου (2007) , table 155.

103 Παπαχριστοδούλου (1997), 511.The Turks viewed the construction of a public water fountain as a form of almsgiving, and would endow it with a plot of land for its upkeep. Τσελεμπί (2005), 380. 70 springs and one decorative fountain inside the town are mentioned.

104 Οι Ροδίτικες Κρήνες (2000), 116-117.



Figure 25: Actual view of the Alhadeff Bank building dating to the early 20th century.



Figure 26: Actual view of the northern end of Pythagoras Street and the rear view of the Alhadef commercial complex that was incorporated into its axis.

The two great fires that broke out in July 1876 and July 1924 were crucial historical events that seriously affected the reorganisation of the centre of the old market:

- The fire - known as the *yangini*, from Turkish *yangın* - broke out on Sunday, 18 July 1876[105] after sunset, when there were no Christians inside the town. It was a massive financial blow to 508 Christian families as approximately 100 shops were either burnt or looted. In the following years, the ascendancy of the Jewish element was asserted by the transformation of the centre of the old market. The construction of massive complexes[106] with dominant neoclassical elements (shops, warehouses, and a bank) marked the new era (Figure 25; Figure 26), lessening the visual impact of the imposing Suleiman Mosque, now known as the Ibrahim Pasha Mosque.
- The conflagration that started on 17 July 1924[107] and destroyed approximately 60 shops, gave the Italian administration the opportunity to carry out interventions to the town's Turkish neighbourhood. The aim was the rehabilitation of urban fabric and the restoration of the surviving part of the Hospitaller *Commercium*. The result was the radical redevelopment of the centre of the old market into its current form.

From the 14th to the 20th century, Rhodes underwent important cultural interactions in the privileged region of the eastern Mediterranean, and as such it may be considered a "testing ground of defensive and urban architecture". The transition from the high street of the Hospitaller period to the Eastern bazaar reflects the radical transformation of the town under Ottoman rule. Even though the subsequent Italian administration (1912-1947) strove to enhance the Western elements of the town[108], the Ottoman past remains alive in the current structure of the old market. The dynamic nature of eastern elements, the picturesque alleys and small shops coexist with late medieval architecture. The elegant round domes and the sky-high minarets have created an eastern atmosphere and are now major landmarks particularly distinctive from the sea (Figure 7).

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105 Παπαχριστοδούλου (1997), 477-478.

106 A characteristic example is the construction of the neoclassical mansions on and around the axis of Pythagora Street (Figure 9, 26), confirming its increasing importance as a road for the movement of merchants and residents in the area.

107 Καρανάσος (2023), 155-164.

108 Τσιρπανλής (1998).

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Map of Rhodes, *Isola di Rodi*
from *L'Isole più famose del Mondo*
by Italian geographer and cartographer Tomaso Porcacchi da Castiglione Arretino (1530-1576),
published by Simone Galignani, Venice, 1572.
Copper engraving by Paduan engraver and publisher Girolamo Porro (1520-1604).

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"I feel deeply grateful for the honour of being part of this beautiful collective work. Sharing the knowledge I've gained over the years—working with the monuments and people of my home city—has been a true gift. It's a small, but meaningful contribution to the research and understanding of my country's past."

Panagiota Psarri

People and Monuments of the Medieval Town of Rhodes

in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

Thanks to its architectural distinctiveness, but especially due to the originality and intactness of its fortifications, the medieval town of Rhodes is world renowned as a cultural asset of supreme intertemporal value, and of ecumenical reach and radiance.[1] As a typical example of eclectic development of a purely medieval architectural style, the town is noted for its imposing defences, but also for its layout. One essential element of this layout is that the medieval urban web followed the design of the ancient town, as attested by the remnants of classic and Hellenistic fortifications, but also of the Hippodamian plan whose traces remain in the foundations of the settlement's medieval buildings.[2]

A series of noteworthy ecclesiastic buildings is attributed to the town's contact with the Orthodox Hellenism of Byzantium, as is the construction of its layout with the proto-Byzantine fort being built in the 7th century to repel Arabian raiders. The town's heyday, however, was during the time of the Knights.[3] During the nearly two centuries of the Knight's rule over the island, from 1309 to 1522, Rhodes acted as one of western policy's outposts in the southeastern Mediterranean, making the most of the Order's concerted effort and technological experimentation in the field of fortifications. For all the progress achieved, however, it was not able to prevent the island's subjugation to the Ottoman factor.

The Turkish conquest of 1523 signalled the end of the progress achieved in the arts, the economy and letters during the Knights' rule, but it also served as the occasion to reconnect the island with its vital space, Asia Minor. Thus the beginning of a new era was inaugurated, during which new cultural

1 See Παναγιώτα Ψαρρή – Μαρία-Χριστίνα Γεωργαλλή, *Η διαχρονική- οικουμενική αξία της μεσαιωνικής πόλης της Ρόδου ως μνημείου παγκόσμιας κληρονομιάς στα Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά* (Ρόδος: Στέγη Γραμμάτων και Τεχνών Δωδεκανήσου, 2012), v. ΚΕ', 197-210

2 On the remnants of the Hellenistic fortifications, see Μελίνα Φιλήμονος-Τσοποτού, Ρόδος Ι. Η ελληνιστική οχύρωση της Ρόδου (Αθήνα: Ταμείο Αρχαιολογικών Πόρων και Απαλλοτριώσεων, 2004). On the transformation of the town, see Κατερίνα Μανούσου - Ελένη Παπαβασιλείου, Μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου: Η αρχαιολογική έρευνα ως βάση για τον σύγχρονο σχεδιασμό- διευθέτηση της πόλης, 583-602, in νέες πόλεις πάνω σε παλιές, Επιστημονικό Συνέδριο, Ρόδος 27-30 Σεπτεμβρίου 1993, Ελλην. Τμήμα ICOMOS- ΚΒ' Εφορεία Προϊστορικών και Κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων - 4η Εφορεία Βυζαντινών Αρχαιοτήτων - ΤΕΕ, Τμήμα Δωδεκανήσου (Εκδοτική Παραγωγή: Επτάλοφος ΑΒΕΕ: χ.η.). Also, Κατερίνα Μανούσου-Ντέλλα, Ρόδος. Στοιχεία πολεοδομικής ανάλυσης μιας μεσαιωνικής οχυρωμένης πόλης in Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας (Αθήνα: Χριστιανική Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία, 2000), Δ', Volume ΚΑ', 27-42 and Η. Κόλλιας, Η παλαιοχριστιανική και βυζαντινή Ρόδος. Η αντίσταση μιας ελληνιστικής πόλης in Ρόδος 2.400 χρόνια Η πόλη της Ρόδου από την ίδρυσή της μέχρι της κατάληψη από τους Τούρκους (1523) Διεθνές Επιστημονικό Συνέδριο Ρόδος, 24 -29 Οκτωβρίου 1993 (Αθήνα: Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού ΚΒ' Εφορεία Προϊστορικών και Κλασικών Αρχαιοτήτων 4η Εφορεία Βυζαντινών Αρχαιοτήτων, 2000), v. Β', 299-308. Concerning the traces of the Hippodamian plan in the foundations of medieval buildings, see indicatively Μαρία-Χριστίνα Γεωργαλλή, Η αρχιτεκτονική πρόταση διαμόρφωσης των θόλων της ιπποτικής οικίας Τζεμ ως παράδειγμα εφαρμογής των αρχών διατήρησης της διαχρονικότητας - οικουμενικότητας της μεσαιωνικής πόλης της Ρόδου στα Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά, op. cit., v. ΚΕ', 298-330 and particularly 314-315, footnote 52.

3 On the development of the fortifications from late antiquity until 1480, see Κατερίνα Μανούσου- Ντέλλα, *Η δημιουργία και εξέλιξη της οχυρωμένης πόλης της Ρόδου (7ος αι.- 1480)*, (Θεσσαλονίκη: Εκδόσεις Μπαρμπουνάκη, 2022).

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forms that were initially hostile, came to an eventually harmonic interaction with the existing ones[4], (Figure 1, previous two pages, panoramic view of the town, Francis Bedford, 1862).

This unbroken multicultural chain, which remained unscathed until the Italian occupation of the island in 1912, made the town's architectural appearance unique. During the period of Italian rule (1912-1943), the Italian conquerors engaged in a monumental renovation project[5] in order to promote the place's architectural character. At the same time, they put together the island's cadastre, managing within an admittedly short time span (1922-1930) to make a record of the building stock that they received.

Indexing the 2,432 recorded plots of the historic settlement has shown the existence of a total of 22 quarters[6] spread on the inside of the medieval walls, the sea front, the commercial port, and the mills' pier. The quarters named are: *Giami Chebir, Hanzadè, Enderum, Suleimaniè, Mercato, Hamzà or Hanzà Bey, Tachegì, Sicchinti, Cadi Megit, Demirli, Cavacli, Ebreo, Dolapli, Ibraim Pascia, Pialetin, Alemnach or Olemnach, Abdul Gelil, Bab - Mestut, Regeb Pascia, Hudai, Cismegi and Ilh - Mihrap.*[7]

Following the Turkish conquest, the historical settlement's population makeup was significantly altered. With 4,000-5,000 Rhodians in tow, the Knights left in search of a new base, leaving the town in the hands of Turkish settlers from Anatolia and Rumelia, while the Jews, already residing in the Jewish quarter since the time of the Knights, were given exceptional permission to inhabit the space. The Greek inhabitants of the castle were forbidden to remain inside the fort, a measure that remained in force practically throughout the Turkish rule, until 1912 when the island was occupied by the Italians.[8]

4 On the names of the settlement's mosques and churches see Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, *Ρόδος, (*Αθήναι: Εκδόσεις Έσπερος, 1973), 72-80, Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, *Ιστορία της Ρόδου από τους Προϊστορικούς Χρόνους έως την Ενσωμάτωση της Δωδεκανήσου (1948),* β' έκδοση συμπληρωμένη, (Αθήνα: Δήμος Ρόδου, Στέγη Γραμμάτων και Τεχνών Δωδεκανήσου, 1994), 372-375, 384-385, 421 και 507-509. Also Η. Κόλλιας, *Αναζητώντας τα χαμένα μνημεία της μεσαιωνικής πόλης της Ρόδου στα Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου* (Αθήνα: Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού, Ταμείο Διαχείρισης Πιστώσεων και την Εκτέλεση Αρχαιολογικών Έργων, 2007), v. A', 283-297 and v. B', πίν. 264-276).

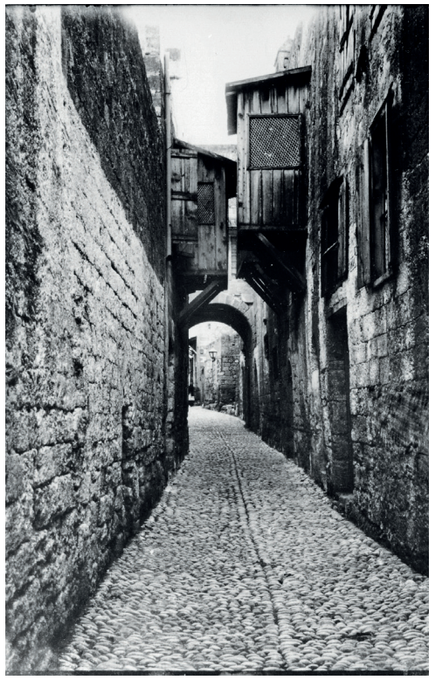
5 On the period of Italian rule see Z. N. Τσιρπανλής, *Ιταλοκρατία στα Δωδεκάνησα 1912-1943 Αλλοτρίωση του ανθρώπου και του περιβάλλοντος*, (Ρόδος: Ταμείο Αρχαιολογικών Πόρων και Απαλλοτριώσεων, 1998) and R. Santoro, *I restauri degli edifici medievali di Rodi*, 211-250 στο *La Presenza Italiana nel Dodecaneso tra il 1912 e il 1948,* La Ricerca archeologica· La conservazione· Le scelte Progettuali, (Catania: Edizioni del Prisma, 1996). Also, Κ. Καρανάσος, *Ρόδος 1912- 1947 Η πολιτική για τον σχεδιασμό του χώρου και τη διαχείριση των μνημείων κατά την ιταλική Κατοχή,* (Αθήνα: Πολιτιστικό Ίδρυμα Ομίλου Πειραιώς, 2023). Concerning the contemporary renovation work on the town's monuments and the restoration projects, see. *Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2011-2016* (Ρόδος: Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού και Αθλητισμού, 2017), *Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2000- 2008* (Ρόδος: Ταμείο Διαχείρισης Πιστώσεων για την Εκτέλεση Αρχαιολογικών Έργων, 2008) and *Μεσαιωνική πόλη Ρόδου*, Έργα αποκατάστασης (1985-2000) (Ρόδος: Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού Ταμείο Διαχείρισης Πιστώσεων για την Εκτέλεση Αρχαιολογικών Έργων, 2001).

6 See Παναγιώτα Ψαρρή, *Ιστορική τεκμηρίωση των συνοικιών της μεσαιωνικής πόλης της Ρόδου κατά την περίοδο της ιταλοκρατίας στα Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά (*Ρόδος: Στέγη Γραμμάτων και Τεχνών Δωδεκανήσου, 2021), τόμ. ΚΘ', 761-802.

7 Translator's Note: these names are Italian attempts at transliterating Ottoman words and, therefore, when reading them one must take into consideration Italian spelling conventions. To the English speaker, the following transliterations might be helpful in pronouncing the words: *Djami* Kabir (i.e. Great Mosque), *Hanzade, Enderum or Enderun, Suleymaniye, Mercato, Hamza Bey, Takkedji, Sickinti, Cadi Mezdjit, Demirli, Kavakli, Ebreo, Dolapli, Ibrahim Pasha, Piyalettin, Alemnac or Olemnac, Abdul Djelil, Bab- Mestut, Redjep Pasha, Hudai, Chizmedji, Ilh Mihrap*. The names *Mercato* and *Ebreo* are Italian translations rather than attempts at recording the pronunciation of the Ottoman names. They mean "Market" and "Jewish" respectively.

8 See Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, *Ιστορία της Ρόδου*, op. cit., 399- 402.

The Turkish residents appropriated the building stock from the time of the rule of the Knights, adapting the buildings to their own needs with the necessary alterations in morphology and structure, Figures 2, 3 and 4.







Figures 2, 3 and 4: Residences in the historic settlement.

The existing churches were converted to mosques through the addition of prayer niches[9] and minarets, and new places of worship and public baths were erected in central spots of the settlement.

The period is characterised by the closed wooden balconies that were added to building facades, the small pointed fanlights, the doubling of the storeys and living space of the dwellings through the construction of attics and the use of internal partitions, and the stone buttresses on the streets. The single-, two- or three- storey homes had verandas, wooden stairs connecting the ground level with the storeys, small hammams for the family's needs, gardens and courtyards with wells, stables, and storage spaces.[10]

Following the Turkish conquest, the few Romaniot Jews already living in the settlement were joined by Sephardi Jews who fled persecution in the Iberian peninsula to find refuge in the Ottoman Empire. In spite of initially tense relations between the two communities, eventually the Sephardis

9 TN: referred to in Turkish and Arabic as *mihrab*.

10 The existing buildings from the period of Turkish rule were recorded and depicted in the early '30s by Italian architect Hermes Balducci. See H. Balducci, *Architettura Turca in Rodi* (Milano: Editore Ulrico Hoepli, 1932). On the buildings of the period of Turkish rule, see also Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, *Ιστορία της Ρόδου*, op. cit., 507-515.

fully assimilated the Romaniots culturally. In the mid 19th century, the Jewish community of Rhodes numbered 2,000-4,000 individuals, whereas by the late 19th century their number had decreased to approximately 3,000 individuals due to the wave of emigration to America and Africa.

Their professional activities were mostly in connection with trade, mainly in products such as foodstuffs, wine, perfumes, textiles, and jewellery, but also stock exchange transactions. Already in the 18th century Jews were working as moneychangers, lenders, and tax collectors, playing an important role in the field of bank processes. The less privileged commonly held manual professions such as shoemakers, blacksmiths, woodcarvers, and milliners, while there were also some community employees such as the cantor and the shochet.[11]

Contrary to the Jews, Greek residents of the castle, having been evicted from their buildings and homes, settled in the suburbs of the town, the so called *marasia*[12], setting up their new lives in the parishes of Ai Giannis, Agioi Anargyri, Agia Anastasia, Mitropoli, Ai Giorgis o pano, Ai Nikolas, Ai Giorgis o Kato.[13, 14]

For public hygiene, the historic settlement had two great baths: *eschi hammam*[15, 16], once found on today's Eudemos sq[17] but no longer surviving; and *yeni hammam*[18] also known as Suleiman's or Mustafa's bath[19], found today on Arion Square[20] but no longer functioning, Figure 5.

One of the most important provincial baths in the Ottoman Empire, the building is first mentioned in a registration firman issued in 1558 by Sultan Selim, Suleiman's successor, and it was constructed in two phases: the male section was completed first, with the female one added later by intervention of Sultan Mustafa III.

11 The presence of Jews on the island is recorded at least as early as the 2nd c. BCE. See Α' Βιβλίο Μακκαβαίων 15, 23. The Jewish community in Rhodes is mentioned in the 12th c by Jewish traveller Benjamin of Tudela. See Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, Ιστορία της Ρόδου, op. cit., 401. On the Jewish presence in Rhodes during the Knights' rule see Ζ. Ν. Τσιρπανλής, Ανέκδοτα έγγραφα για τη Ρόδο και τις Νότιες Σποράδες από το Αρχείο των Ιωαννιτών Ιπποτών 1421-1453 (Ρόδος: Γραφείο Μεσαιωνικής Πόλης Ρόδου - Προγραμματικής Σύμβασης ΥΠΠΟ - ΤΑΠΑ - Δήμου Ρόδου, 1995), 84-88, 232-234, 616-617, 659-662 and Η. Κόλλιας, Μάστορες, πρωτομάστορες και μηχανικοί των μεσαιωνικών οχυρώσεων της Ρόδου, Δελτίον της Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας, 20 (1998-1999), περίοδος Δ' στη μνήμη του Δημητρίου Ι. Πάλλα (1905- 1995) (Αθήνα: Έκδοση Χριστιανικής Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας, 1999), 149-164. On the Jewish community in modern times see Κ. Φ. Σκανδαλίδης, Σελίδες Ιστορίας, Ροδιακά και άλλα (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Θυμέλη, 2002), 240-253. Also, Η Εβραϊκή Κοινότητα της Ρόδου, The Jewish Community of Rhodes. Μια έκθεση του Εβραϊκού Μουσείου Ελλάδος και της Ισραηλιτικής Κοινότητας Ρόδου, An exhibition of the Jewish Museum of Greece and the Jewish Community of Rhodes (Εβραϊκό Μουσείο Ελλάδος, The Jewish Museum of Greece: 2019).

12 TN: from Turkish maraş/marash.

13 See. Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, Ιστορία της Ρόδου, op. cit., 399- 402.

14 TN: respectively St John, Holy Unmercenaries, St. Anastasia, Cathedral, St George the upper, St Nicholas, and St George the lower.

15 For its depiction see H. Balducci, Architettura Turca, op. cit., 42-45, img. 21-23.

16 TN: *Eschi hammam* is the Italian transliteration of *eski hammam*, i.e. the old bath.

17 TN: *platia Evdimou.*

18 TN: the new bath.

19 See Η. Τσίγκρας- Άννα Παρασκευοπούλου- Ν. Ζαρίφης, *Δημοτικά Λουτρά Yeni Hammam στα Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 Χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου*, op. cit., v. Α', 87- 90 and v. Β', table. 62-71. Also , Δημοτικά Λουτρά, *Yeni Hammam* (Ρόδος: Έκδοση Δήμος Ροδίων- ΥΠΠΟ 4Η ΕΒΑ, 2000) Municipal Baths Yeni Hammam (Rhodes: Publication Municipality of Rhodes-M.C.4th EBA, 2000).

20 TN: *Arionos* square.



Figure 5: Suleyman's or Mustafa's hammam.

Inside the settlement there were also small, cute fountains[21], benefactions by Ottoman noblemen whose names were recorded on the inscriptions on their backs, that praised the name of God and his precious commodity, water. Although we do not know the period's water system, it is certain that Mohammedans' and Jews' needs for ritual ablution before participating in worshipping events would have led to a rise in the number of water fountains that would certainly have served not only the need for ritual cleansing of the faithful, but also their everyday needs for clean drinking water. The settlement also included wells and windpumps, while outside it stretched the town's extensive graveyards that were removed during the period of Italian rule, Figure 7.

In spite of the devastation that the settlement suffered in 1856 from the explosion of gunpowder forgotten inside St John's church on today's Panaetius Street[22], the 1863 earthquake, and the fire in the market quarter in 1876[23], the 20th century found the town and its residents still dwelling in the residences of the historical centre and maintaining small gardens, citrus tree orchards, small groves and vegetable gardens stables and barns near the town's entrance gates, workshops and small shops, Figure 6.

21 Concerning all water fountains in Rhodes town see "....Απηλλάγησαν αι συνοικίαι της ξηράς δίψης" Οι ροδίτικες κρήνες "The parishes were rid of the dry thirst" Fountains in the Town of Rhodes (Ρόδος: Τεχνικό Επιμελητήριο Ελλάδος- ΤΜ. Δωδεκανήσου ΥΠΠΟ- 4Η Εφορεία Βυζαντινών Αρχαιοτήτων 3η Εφορεία Νεώτερων Μνημείων Δήμος Ροδίων, 2000)

22 TN: *Panetiou* Street.

23 See Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, Ιστορία της Ρόδου, op. cit., 476-478. Concerning life in Rhodes during the 19th c see Α. Σ. Μαΐλλη- Κ. Ε. Σκανδαλίδης- Κ. Φ. Τσαλαχούρης, Η Ρόδος τον 19ο αιώνα, (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Θυμέλη/ ΤΕΔΚ Δωδεκανήσου, 2002). Also, Σοφία Ηρακλείδου - Ειρήνη Τόλιου, Ένα ταξίδι στα Δωδεκάνησα του 19ου αιώνα μέσα από ιστορικά τεκμήρια & έγγραφα της εποχής Μια πρώτη καταγραφή (Αθήνα: Στέγη Γραμμάτων και Τεχνών Δωδεκανήσου Εκδόσεις Παπαζήση, 2024).



Figure 6: Gardens inside the settlement.

Blacksmiths, carpenters, cobblers, painters, barbers, goldsmiths, quilters, bakers, tailors, clockmakers, printers, tinkers, farriers, clog makers, and saddlers and trunk makers, confectioners, millers, pasta makers and distillers, among others, made up the main professional work force active inside the walls[24]. Their workshops were housed inside dedicated spaces or incorporated into buildings with other uses, mainly commercial. The products produced were probably manufactured on the spot, to then be sold by the manufacturers themselves or their family members in specially configured spaces inside the shops. In the town there were also a few commercial activities related to vending all manner of commercial goods and foodstuffs, as well as services such as banks, restaurants, taverns, coffee shops, confectionaries and hotels.

The 20th century distribution of professional uses of properties in the settlement indicates a clear predominance of commercial and mixed uses, compared to crafts, alimentary, and agricultural uses. The vast majority of these uses were concentrated on and around the settlement's main commercial street, today's Aristotle Street[25], and expanded in continuous zones to the streets named today after Apellas, Agesander, Polydorus, Hermes, Protogenes, Eudemus, Aeolus, Miltiades, Euripides, Democritus, Pythagoras, Plato, Electryone, Dinocrates and Eudoxus, Laches Street[26] and the Street of the Knights, as well as the sea front on the outside of the medieval walls.

Despite the fact that the penetration of commercial uses to the inside of the walled town was weak, it is nonetheless not negligible, for instance on Archbishop Euthimius, Pericles, Dosiadas, Byzantius, Pindarus, Hippodamus, Alcaeus, Constantine of Rhodes, Emmanuel Kisthenios, Homer,

24 Concerning the professional uses of the settlements properties, see Παναγιώτα Ψαρρή, Ιστορική τεκμηρίωση των επαγγελματικών χρήσεων των ακινήτων στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου κατά την περίοδο της ιταλοκρατίας in σοφία αδολος, Τιμητικός τόμος για τον Ιωάννη Χρ. Παπαχριστοδούλου (Ρόδος: Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού και Αθλητισμού Αρχαιολογικό Ινστιτούτο Αιγαιακών Σπουδών, 2014), 439-459.

25 TN: *Aristotelous* Street

26 TN: *Apellou, Agisandrou, Polydorou, Ermou, Protogenous, Evdimou, Eolou, Miltiadou, Evripidou, Dimokritou, Pythagora, Platonos, Ilektrionis, Dinokratous, Evdoxou, Lachitos* streets respectively.

and St Phanourios[27] streets. During the period of the Italian rule, stables and barns mainly occupied buildings on the periphery of the town, such as Simonides, Homer, Timachidas, Aristides, Kimon, Pericles, and Menander streets, as well as Dorieus and Kontis squares[28], while grain processing facilities and bakeries[29] were placed in spots that were immediately accessible to the locals.



Figure 7: Muslim cemetery outside the (St. John) Koskinou Gate.

From the early records in the Italian cadastre it is clear that commercial development in the early 20th century was not confined inside the walled town, but extended along the settlement's coastal zone from today's Freedom gate[30] and Arnaldo's gate to the Marine gate and St Catherine's gate. These were mainly shops, storage spaces, offices, and grain mills.

The Italian conquerors, however, made a crucial intervention through their policy of clearing the medieval fortifications of any foreign influence, in order to make the medieval phase of the settlement's history dominant. In the name of architectural purification of the historical nucleus of the town, all the buildings from the period of Turkish rule that were outside the medieval walls on the coastal zone along the port were torn down, while at the same time the Muslim and Jewish cemeteries around it were removed in their entirety.

Even though the lush environment around the medieval walls, with the groves and parks of the *zona monumentale,* the monumental zone established by the Italians in 1920, acted as a protective shield for the settlement and contributed to its improved image, the narrow serpentine alleys of the historical nucleus must have presented a less charming atmosphere. The dispersion of stables and

27 TN: *Archiepiskopou Efhtymiou, Perikleous, Dosiadou, Vyzantiou, Pindarou, Ippodamou, Alkeou, Konstantinou Rodiou, Kisthiniou, Omirou, and Agiou Fanouriou* streets respectively.

28 TN: respectively *odos Simonidou, Omirou, Timachida, Aristidou, Kimonos, Perikleous,* and *Menandrou* streets and *Dorieos,* and *Konti* squares respectively.

29 TN: The Italian word used is *forno*.

30 TN: *Pyli Eleftherias*

barns, even in the settlement's most remote spots, but also the functional coexistence of workshops, commercial, alimentary and domestic uses within the same building or in neighbouring ones, must certainly have composed a rather unique picture. In many cases the cadastral records describe cesspits and external toilets within the plots, while also mentioning open markets with perishable goods such as fish, but also verandas for drying pasta products, while there are also mentions of huts or makeshift shelters made of wood or sheet metal to serve the customer's needs. After all, the presence of the various cobbler's, quilt maker's, painter's, printer's, blacksmith's and woodcutter's workshops would certainly have weighed negatively on the quality of life.





Figure 8: The Grand Master's Palace before the restoration by the Italians (above).

Figure 9: Hanzade Mosque (The Church of the Holy Trinity/ Agia Triada) on the Socratous Street (left).

Figure 10: The Archaeological Museum during the restoration work by the Italians (below).



Among the various polluting installations, the presence of a coal storehouse must be noted, which didn't leave the built-up environment around it unaffected, placed as it was on the coastal zone outside the medieval walls, close to St Catherine's gate.

Finally, the lack of any means of effective prevention and control of natural or other types of disasters must be blamed for the total destruction of 22 buildings inside the historic settlement in the fire of 18 July 1924, in the space now occupied by Hippocrates sq.[31] The 1928 cadastral update indicates that these lots were cancelled, having been designated *brucciate,* that is to say 'burnt'.

In the early 20th century, the first quarter inside the historic nucleus that gets mentioned in the Italian cadastre is *Giami Chebir,* which was located in the northern part of the town, in between the medieval walls, the Grand Master's Palace, and today's Orpheus, Panaetius, Posidonius, Hipparchus, Chares and Theophiliscus Streets.[32] The quarter was named after the Great Mosque, the former Hospitaller convent church of St John[33], which was converted into a Muslim place of worship when the town was conquered, and was finally destroyed in the 1856 explosion caused by gunpowder forgotten inside it. In its place the Turkish school was built, initially a two storey building that was later destroyed by fire or earthquake, only to be replaced in 1898 by a larger, single-storey neoclassical building.[34] The vast majority of buildings in the area were of domestic use, and only a few had commercial, agricultural or mixed uses. Registered as an incarceration space, the Grand Master's Palace[35] complex was an exception, Figure 8, as was a two-storey neoclassical building on Thephiliscus Street, built in 1907 during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1909), which functioned as a courthouse and the residence of the Kadi.

East of the *Giami Chebir* quarter stretched the *Hanzadè* quarter, which extended along the historic Street of the Knights, but also the smaller Laches, Chares, Hipparchus, and Theophiliscus streets.[36] The quarter was named after *Han Zade* mosque on the Street of the Knights, which had resulted from

31 TN: *Ippokratous square*

32 TN: respectively *Orfeos, Panetiou, Posidoniou, Iparchou, Charitos,* and *Theofiliskou Street.*

33 See Η. Κόλλιας, Αναζητώντας τα χαμένα μνημεία της μεσαιωνικής πόλης της Ρόδου στα Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου, op. cit., v. Α', 284. Also Γ. Ντέλλας, Οι μεγάλες ιπποτικές εκκλησίες της Ρόδου. Παναγία του Κάστρου, Άγιος Ιωάννης του Κολλάκιου, Παναγία του Μπούργκου στα Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου, op. cit., v. Α', 370-395, v. Β' πίν. 325- 354

34 See Σ. Μ. Δοντάς, Ρόδος Εκατό Χρόνια Φωτογραφίας 1850-1950 (Θεσσαλονίκη: Εκδόσεις Ζήτη, 2012), 55. On the building's restoration see Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2000- 2008 (Ρόδος: Ταμείο Διαχείρισης Πιστώσεων για την Εκτέλεση Αρχαιολογικών Έργων, 2008), 17-27. Also, Αρχαιολογικά Έργα στα νησιά του Αιγαίου- Γ' ΚΠΣ, ΕΣΠΑ Archaeological projects in the Aegean islands 3rd CSF, NSRF (Σύρος- Ρόδος/ Syros-Rhodes Ενδιάμεση Διαχειριστική Αρχή Περιφέρειας Νοτίου Αιγαίου Αρχαιολογικό Ινστιτούτο Αιγαιακών Σπουδών Intermediary Managing Authority of South Aegean Region Archeological Institute of Aegean Studies, 2013), 168-169.

35 On the Grand Master's Palace see. Κατερίνα Μανούσου-Ντέλλα - Γ. Ντέλλας, Η οικοδομική εξέλιξη του Παλατιού του Μεγάλου Μαγίστρου της Ρόδου στο Χάρις Χαίρε, Μελέτες στη μνήμη της Χάρης Κάντζια (Αθήνα: Αρχαιολογικό Ινστιτούτο Αιγαιακών Σπουδών, 2004), τόμ. Β', 237-264. Also Η. Κόλλιας, Οι Ιππότες της Ρόδου Το Παλάτι και η Πόλη (Αθήνα: Εκδοτική Αθηνών Α.Ε., 2003). Του ίδιου, Η Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου και το Παλάτι του Μεγάλου Μαγίστρου (Αθήνα: Ταμείο Αρχαιολογικών Πόρων, 1994). On more recent renovation efforts in the wider complex see Αρχαιολογικά Έργα στα νησιά του Αιγαίου- Γ' ΚΠΣ, ΕΣΠΑ Archaeological projects in the Aegean islands 3rd CSF, NSRF, op. cit., 148-153, Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2011-2016, op. cit., 63-93 and Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2000-2008, op. cit., 161-187.

36 TN: *Lachitos, Charitos, Iparchou* and *Theofiliskou* streets respectively.

the conversion of the medieval Holy Trinity church, Figure 9, into a Muslim place of worship.[37] The Knights' Hospital[38], Figure 10, is recorded among the quarter's buildings, which were mainly homes, but also hosted commercial, agricultural, alimentary, and mixed uses, such as the pasta factory *Girasole & C.* on Laches Street. Research among the neighbourhood's index cards further revealed the name of *Zizin* street, the alley that led from the house on the Street of the Knights where exiled Ottoman prince *Djem*[39] had lived, Figure 11, heading west and north to today's Theophiliscus and Panaetius streets.



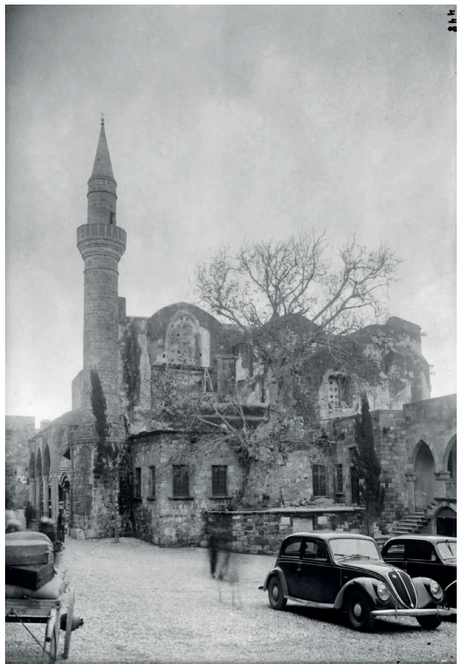


Figure 11: The historic Street of the Knights (left). **Figure 12:** The Church of Our Lady of the Castle (Panagia tou Kastrou, Santa Maria del Castello, Canduri Mosque, Enderun Mosque) before the restoration work by the Italians.

37 See H. Balducci, *Architettura Turca*, op. cit., 71 and Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, Ρόδος, op. cit., 67-68.

38 On the building of the Knights' Hospital, see Φωτεινή Καρασάββα- Τσιλιγγίρη, Το νοσοκομείο του 15ου αιώνα στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου: Χρονολογικές παρατηρήσεις στα Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 Χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου, op. cit., v. A', 322-330. Also, Γρηγ. Κωνσταντινόπουλου, Μουσεία της Ρόδου Ι Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο (Αθήνα: Εκδόσεις Απόλλων, 1977) and Η. Κόλλιας, Οι Ιππότες της Ρόδου Το Παλάτι και η Πόλη, op. cit., 120-126, img. 99-103.

39 Concerning the restoration of Djem's house from the period of the Knights see Μαρία-Χριστίνα Γεωργαλλή, *Η αρχιτεκτονική πρόταση διαμόρφωσης των θόλων της ιπποτικής οικίας Τζεμ ως παράδειγμα εφαρμογής των αρχών διατήρησης της διαχρονικότητας-οικουμενικότητας της μεσαιωνικής πόλης της Ρόδου στα Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά*, op. cit., v. ΚΕ', 298-330 and Μαρία-Χριστίνα Γεωργαλλή - *Φερενίκη Βαρδέλλη, Αρχές για την αποκατάσταση της ιπποτικής οικίας Djem στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου στα Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 Χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου*, op. cit., v. A', 120-128 and v. B΄, table 119-132.

West of the *Hanzade* quarter stretched the *Enderun* quarter, which extended over the northeastern part of the town between the medieval wall and today's Symi, Argyrokastro and Alexander the Great squares.[40] The area derived its name from the *Enderun* or *Canduri* mosque, a Byzantine cross-in-square church of Our Lady of the Castle and later the latin cathedral of the Knights, that during the period of the Turkish conquest had been converted into a Muslim place of worship with the addition of a minaret and portico, Figure 12, that were removed during the period of the Italian rule.[41]

Among other buildings recorded in the quarter, one finds the auberge of the "Tongue" of Auvergne Figure 13; the *Fert* Archaeological Institute; the Bank of Sicily[42]; the Central Electric Station[43] which was housed in the *Hasan Bey* manor from the Turkish rule Figure 14; shops, warehouses, offices, and mixed-use buildings. Research in the index cards has revealed the original name of today's *Freedom Gate,* Figure 15, the Italian *Porta Nuova*[44], as well as that of the Lion's Square, Figure 16, the *piazza del Leone*, which was to be found in the space between the Auberge of Auvergne and the church of our Our lady of the Castle.[45]



Figure 13: The Auberge of Auvergne before its restauration by the Italians.



Figure 14: The Hasan Bey manor on the left.

40 TN: *Simis, Argyrokastrou* and *Megalou Alexandrou* squares.

41 See. H. Balducci, Architettura Turca, op. cit., 71-73. Also Σ. Μ. Δοντάς, Ρόδος Εκατό Χρόνια Φωτογραφίας 1850-1950, op. cit., 90. Concerning the architectural style of the monument see Μ. Κάππας, Οι σταυροειδείς εγγεγραμμένοι ναοί της μεσαιωνικής πόλης της Ρόδου στα Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 Χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου, op. cit., v. A', 341-352 and v. B', table 305, 308 α-γ and 309β. On the more recent restoration work see Αρχαιολογικά Έργα στα Νησιά του Αιγαίου - Γ' ΚΠΣ, ΕΣΠΑ, Archaeological projects in the Aegean islands 3rd CSF, NSRF, op. cit., 164-167.

42 According to the research data, there were five banks in Rhodes in 1922. One Italian, the Banco di Roma, one from the Ottoman Empire and three Jewish ones: Salomon Alhadeff sons, the Notrica-Menascé bank, and the one belonging to Isaac Alhadeff. The Banca d' Italia branch was designed and built in 1926-30. See Z. N. Τσιρπανλής, Ιταλοκρατία στα Δωδεκάνησα, op. cit., 197-200.

43 See H. Balducci, Architettura Turca, op. cit., 28-29, img. 10-11.

44 TN: this gate was opened by the Italians and did not exist in Medieval or Ottoman times.

45 The square was named after a lion-shaped funerary sculpture in lartian stone (TN: a type of marble found in the southeast of Rhodes) that had been placed at the entrance to the space for decorative reasons. Today it is found inside the courtyard of the Archaeological museum. See. Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, Ρόδος, op. cit., 61, Η. Κόλλιας, Η Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου και το Παλάτι του Μεγάλου Μαγίστρου, op. cit., 62, img. 25 and Γρηγ. Κωνσταντινόπουλου, op. cit., 9-10, img. 4.



Figure 15: The Freedom Gate.

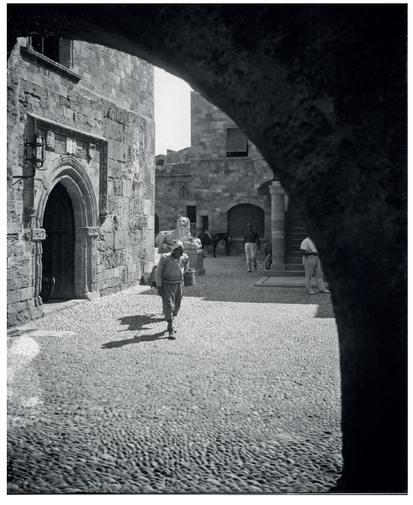


Figure 16: The Lion's Square

In the northwestern end of the settlement, in the area between the medieval walls and Orpheus, Hierocles, Menander, Apolloniuses, Emmanuel Kountis, Timocreon, Hippodamus, and Panaetius[46] streets, the *Suleimaniè* quarter was located. It included buildings used for commerce, storage, and agriculture. The mosque of Suleiman the Magnificent, built in the 16th century, Figure 17, and renovated in 1808[47], loomed over this area, which also included the foodbank, the *Hafiz Ahmet*[48] library built in 1794, and the Clock Tower[49] built in 1852 on top of the devastated *Guardia*[50] tower from the period of the Knights' rule.

46 TN: respectively *Orfeos, Ierokleous, Menandrou, APollonion, Emmmanuil Kounti, TImokreontos, Ippodamou,* and *Panetiou.*

47 On Suleiman's mosque see Mohamed Abd el- wadood Abd el- azim Abd el-wahab, *The Ottoman Mosques in the Old Town of Rhodes Island (Sultan Suleiman Mosque, Murad Reis Mosque, Sultan Mustafa Mosque, Mehmet Aga Mosque),* Thesis, National & Kapodistrian Univeristy of Athens, Department of Archeology and the History of Art (Athens: ΕΑΔΔ ΕΚΤ, 2010), 23-50 and H. Balducci, *Architettura Turca,* op. cit., 126-138. Concerning its restoration see Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2000- 2008, op. cit., 17-27 and Σ. Βογιατζής, Το τέμενος του Σουλεϊμάν στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου στα Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 Χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου, op. cit., v. Α', 396-406 and v. Β' table. 355-362.

48 See Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, *Ρόδος,* op. cit., 73. Also J. R. Barnes, *Reflections on an Ottoman Library: the Hafiz Ağa Library in the Old Town of Rhodes: Part II Σχολιασμός μιας Οθωμανικής Βιβλιοθήκης- Η Βιβλιοθήκη του Χαφίζ Αχμέτ Αγά στην Παλιά Πόλη της Ρόδου: Μέρος ΙΙ* in Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά, v. ΚΖ' (Ρόδος: Στέγη Γραμμάτων και Τεχνών Δωδεκανήσου, 2017), 963- 1043. The same author, *Reflections on an Ottoman Library: the Hafiz Ağa Library in the Old Town of Rhodes (Σχολιασμός μιας Οθωμανικής Βιβλιοθήκης- Η Βιβλιοθήκη του Χαφίζ Αχμέτ Αγά στην Παλιά Πόλη της Ρόδου)* in Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά (Ρόδος: Στέγη Γραμμάτων και Τεχνών Δωδεκανήσου, 2014), v. ΚΣΤ', 333-390. Also of the same author, *The Hafiz Ağa Library on Rhodes. A Problem of Methodology in Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου* 15 Χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου, op. cit., v. Α', 298- 307 and v. Β', table 277-281.

49 See Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, Ιστορία της Ρόδου, op. cit., 423-424.

50 See Η. Κόλλιας, Τοπογραφικά προβλήματα της μεσαιωνικής αγοράς της Ρόδου και του νοτίου τείχους του Κολλάκιου, "Versus Civitatem" στο Ιστορία και προβλήματα συντήρησης της μεσαιωνικής πόλης της Ρόδου, Επιστημονική Συνάντηση 27-29 Νοεμβρίου 1986 Πρακτικά (Αθήνα: Ταμείο Αρχαιολογικών Πόρων και Απαλλοτριώσεων, 1992), 84-90 and img 2-3.



Figure 17: Suleymaniye Mosque.

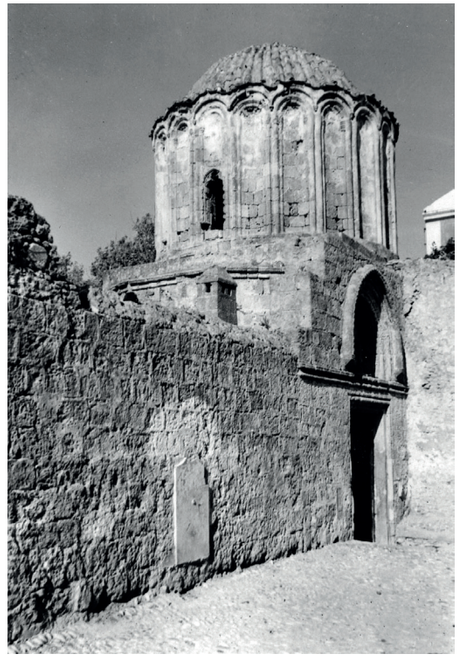


Figure 18: St. George, Hurmali Medrese.

The records for this quarter also include the *Saari Celebi*[51] mosque on today's Menander str, which used to be a church from the period of the Knights, built in a cruciform shape in the 14th century and dedicated to St Mark; the *Hurmali medrese*[52] on Apolloniuses str, a cloister complex from the 14th or early 15th century dedicated to St George, Figure 18; as well as the girl school that was housed in the eastern wing of the *medrese*. Thanks to the research in this area's index cards we were able to locate the name of a square dedicated to Suleiman on today's Orpheus str, as well as references to the previous names of Hierocles and Apolloniuses streets, respectively dedicated to *Jacopo da Canelli* and *Pietro dal Ponte.*[53]

51 TN: Chelebi in English transliteration.

52 See H. Balducci, Architettura Turca, op. cit., 146-148 and Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2000- 2008, op. cit., 37- 43.

53 No information on Jacopo da Canelli was found, other than his origins in the community of the same name in *Asti* province in *Piemonte,* Italy. Of Grand Master Pietro dal Ponte (1534-1535), who also hailed from Asti, we know that he arrived in Rhodes in 1503 and was appointed commander of the tower and fortress of St Nicholas. Having received the title of seneschal of the Order, he became governor of the island of Kos, where he remained until 1534 when he succeeded Grand Master Philippe Villiers del'Isle-Adam. He died in November 1535 and was interred in the Capella di Nostra Signora della Vittoria, in Sant' Angelo fort in Birgu, Malta, while his remains were later transferred to the crypt of the Concattedrale of San Giovanni in Valetta.

East of the *Suleimaniè* quarter, almost at the centre of the settlement and along today's Socratous, Theophiliscus, Laches, Polydorus, Agesander, Apellas, Protogenes, Aristomenes, Aeolus, Euripides, Miltiades, Plato, Democritus, Themistocles, Lysippos, Minos, Aristoteles, and Constantine of Rhodes[54] streets, was the location of the Market quarter, recorded as *quartiere Mercato*, one of the most extensive quarters of the town. Within its boundaries, which extended outside the medieval fortifications to the arches across from the commercial port and the Kolona area[55], the buildings recorded consisted mainly of shops, workshops, offices, and alimentary businesses, Figure 19.



Figure 19: The sea front during the Italian purifications.

Except for Market street (today's Socratous Street), other streets mentioned include *via Capan Onù* (Hermes str), butchers' street (Apellas str), painters' street (Protogenes str), *via dei Duchi di Savoia* (Aeolus str), *Carlo III* square (Hippocrates sq), *via Gran Maestro Caracciolo*[56] (Apellas str), *Porta Musluch*[57] (Marine gate) and Carlo di Ventimiglia[58] street (Agesander or Polydorus str).

54 TN: respectively Socratous, Theofyliskou, Lachitos, Polydorou, Agisandrou, Apellou, Protogenous, Aristomenous, Eolou, Evrippidou, Miltiadou, Platonos, Dimokritou, Themistokleous, Lysippou, Minoos, Aristotelous, and Konstantinou Rodiou.

55 Demolished as part of the purification carried out during the period of Italian rule.

56 Riccardo Caracciolo was born in the first half of the 14th c, probably in Naples, and died in 1395 in Rome. He entered the Order of the Knights of St John at a very young age, at the time of the Great Occidental Schism. He was appointed Prior of Capua in 1378, and in 1383 Pope Urban VI appointed him Grand Master of the Order, ousting Grand Master Juan Fernández de Heredia who was a supporter of the heretic Pope of Avignon Clement VII. Although an officially appointed Grand Master (1383-1395), Caracciolo has become known as an anti-Master and was of little consequence to the history of the Order whose administration remained in the hands of Heredia, until his death in 1396.

57 Musluk is the name by which the leader of the Janissary plot is known, which was organised in 1730 against Sultan Ahmed III (1673-1736). (TN: *Musluk* also means "water tap" in Turkish)

58 Carlo di Ventimiglia was born in Palermo in 1539 and died in Messina in 1583. He was the count of Nasso, baron of Regiovanni, and a nobleman in the court of Felipe II of Spain. He was active in timber and coal trading as well as in sugar production, among other things.

The properties found in this quarter included important buildings in the Ottoman architectural style, such as the *Mehmet Aga* mosque[59] on Socratous Street, built on a storey in 1820 and repaired in 1875, probably from damage sustained during the 1863 earthquake; and the *Shadirvan* mosque on Aristomenes Street, also raised on a storey. The inscription still visible on the stairs that lead up to it informs us that it was built in 1888 by Rhodes notables *Faralyali Zaade Hadji Hafiz Husein Efendi* and *Osmandjik Zaade Hadji Mehmet Aga,* and it replaced an older building built by *Sinan Bey*, which burnt down in the fire of the market in 1876.[60]

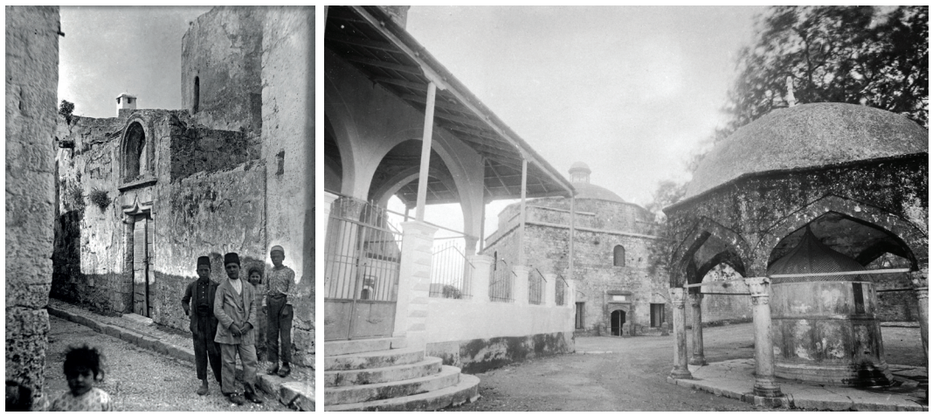


Figure 20: The church of Ag. Paraskevi (left). **Figure 21:** Sultan Mustafa's Mosque, the ablution fountain, and the Yeni Hammam or Suleiman's or Mustafa's bath

Immediately to the west of the Market quarter, between the medieval walls and Timocreon, Alexandrides, and Xenophon streets[61], the *Hamzà* or *Hanzà Bey* quarter was located, including mostly homes, among which the local Imam's dwelling. The mosque of the same name, found on today's Alexandrides str[62], had pride of place in the neighbourhood, while the index cards confirmed the old name of Timocreon str, which bore the name of Hospitaller Knight *Paolo Simeoni.*[63]

59 See Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2000- 2008, op. cit., 91- 96 and Ρεγγίνα Οικονομίδου, Τέμενος Μεχμέτ Αγά. Ιστορική και αρχιτεκτονική τεκμηρίωση in Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 Χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου, op. cit., v. A', 140-144, v. B', table 147-162 and Σ. Μ. Δοντάς, Ρόδος Εκατό Χρόνια Φωτογραφίας 1850-1950, op. cit., 89. Also Mohamed Abd el- wadood Abd el- azim Abd el-wahab, The Ottoman Mosques in the Old Town of Rhodes Island (Sultan Suleiman Mosque, Murad Reis Mosque, Sultan Mustafa Mosque, Mehmet Aga Mosque), op. cit., 91-113.

60 See H. Balducci, Architettura Turca, op. cit., 73- 76. On its restoration see Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2011- 2016, op. cit., 57-58, img. 28- 29, Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2000- 2008, op. cit., 97-100.

61 TN: *Timokreontos, Alexandridou,* and *Xenofontos* respectively

62 On the restoration of the mosque see Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2000- 2008, op. cit., 85-90.

63 Simeoni (1488-1556) served as Prior of Lombardy and Barletta, and in 1506 he is supposed to have participated in the defence of the castle of Leros, where he averted Turkish pirate Camali (TN: One of the variant names by which Kemal Reis was known in the West) with the help of the inhabitants, and a small number of Knights and soldiers.

The Tachiegi' quarter, immediately to the east and extending in the area between *Hippodamus, Timocreon, Archelaus, Xenophon, Alcaeus,* and *Andronicus* streets[64], comprised mostly domestic buildings and was dominated by the mosque of the same name, also known as the mosque of *Skoufas*[65, 66], on today's Hippodamus str; this was simply the pre-existing Hospitaller church of St Paraskevi, Figure 20, built in cruciform shape in the late 15th and early 16th centuries.

Farther east yet was the *Sicchinti'* quarter, which developed around today's Arion sq and the area delineated by Menecles, Ergias, Zeno, and Antiotheus streets[67]. The *Cadi Mesgit*[68] space of worship held a special place in the neighbourhood, standing in the place of an older church which is today dedicated to the veneration of St Artemius; as well as the *Sultan Mustafa* mosque[69], Figure 21, built in 1764-1765; and the new bath complex from the 16th century, known as *Yeni Hammam* or *Suleiman's bath* or *Mustafa's bath.*[70]



Figure 22: The Church of Saints Constantine and Helen.

To the north was the *Cadi Mesgit* quarter with the *Mesgidi* mosque, which was the result of the conversion into a Muslim place of worship, by the addition of two prayer niches, of an earlier three-aisled Basilica with vaulted roof from the period of the Knight's rule, which today is dedicated to the Saints Constantine and Helen, Figure 22. Immediately to the east, the area between Eudoxus, Dinocrates, Plato, Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Simonides, Diocles, and Thucydides streets, and Athena square[71] marked the *Demirli* quarter, named after the mosque of the same name, the *mosque with iron grating.*[72] Lying in ruins today, following the WWII bombings, the mosque was originally the church of Archangel Michael, built in the 14th century on the ruins of a three-aisled early Christian basilica.[73]

Records from the area also include workshops, storage spaces, vegetable gardens, stables, and mixed use buildings, while the details of the neighbourhood's properties' index cards revealed the older name of today's Aristophanes Street, named in honour of Catalan Grand Master *Pedro Raimondo Zacosta*.

To the west of *Demirli* quarter, in the area defined by St Phanourios, Andronicus, Zeno, Ergias, Eudoxus, Thucydides, Aristophanes, Diocles, and Aeschylus streets[74], extended the *Cavacli'* quarter, thus named after the Turkish word *kavak* due to the presence of a poplar tree in the area. The *Cavacli' mosque* loomed over the mainly residential area, having started out as the church of St Spyridon and having gone through numerous construction phases, from the early Christian years through to the period of Turkish rule when it was converted into a Muslim place of worship with the addition of two prayer niches and a minaret.

The second most populous quarter of the town, after the Market area, was the *Jewish* quarter at the southeastern part of the settlement[75]. In the early 20th century, the *quartiere ebreo* covered a large portion of the historical centre, defined by today's Constantine of Rhodes, Aristotle, Jewish Martyrs, Democritus, Themistocles, Lysippus, Demosthenes, Cercaphus, Pericles, Dosiadas, Icarus, Cleobulina, Tlepolemus, Archbishop Euthymius, Erinna, Taursicus, Gabalas, Phidias, Dionysius, Byzantius, Alhadeff, Pindar, and Kisthenios streets and Jewish Martyrs, Nausicaa, Hecaton, Nicasylus, Dioynsius, St Panteleimon, and Peisidoros squares.[76]

The quarter's boundaries were not limited within the town's fortifications, but also extended beyond them to the windmills' quay and the commercial port, with its plots numbering more than 400 in the records and their positions determined in relation to the area's main and secondary streets and its squares. Among them, the Grand Northern Street is mentioned, which today is

64 TN: *Ippodamou, Timokreontos, Archelaou, Xenofontos, Alkeou*, and *Andronikou* respectively.

65 Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, Ρόδος, op. cit., 74 and Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, Ιστορία της Ρόδου, op. cit., 508.

66 TN: the Greek name Skoufas appears to be a direct translation of the Ottoman name. Skoufas means someone wearing a cap of some sort; the Ottoman name, pronounced *Tackedji* (and spelt *Takkeci* in modern Turkish), means someone wearing the traditional Muslim head cap *taqiyah*, or *takke*.

67 TN: *Menekleous, Ergiou, Zinonos*, and *Antiothiou* respectively.

68 Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, Ιστορία της Ρόδου, op. cit., 510.

69 See Mohamed Abd el- wadood Abd el- azim Abd el-wahab, Mohamed Abd el- wadood Abd el- azim Abd el-wahab, The Ottoman Mosques in the Old Town of Rhodes Island (Sultan Suleiman Mosque, Murad Reis Mosque, Sultan Mustafa Mosque, Mehmet Aga Mosque), op. cit., 68-90. Also, H. Balducci, Architettura Turca, op. cit., 115- 125

70 See Η. Τσίγκρας- Άννα Παρασκευοπούλου- Ν. Ζαρίφης, Δημοτικά Λουτρά Yeni Hammam in Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 Χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου, op. cit., v. Α', 87- 90 και v. Β', table 62-71. Also, Δημοτικά Λουτρά Yeni Hammam, op. cit.

71 TN: *Evdoxou, Dinokratous, Platonos, Eschylou, Aristofanous, Simonidou, Diokleous, Thoukydidou* streets. and *Athinas* Square.

72 See Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, Ρόδος, ό.π., 75-76 and Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, Ιστορία της Ρόδου, op. cit., 384 and 508.

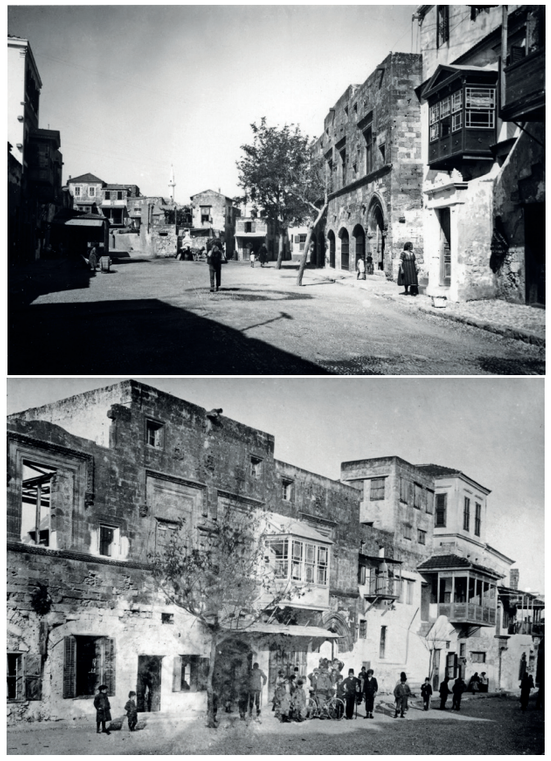
73 See E. Papavassiliou - Th. Archontopoulos, Nouveaux éléments historiques et archéologiques de Rhodes à travers des fouilles dans la ville médiévale στο XXXVIII Corso di Cultura sull' Arte Ravennate e Bizantina, Ravenna, 15/20 Marzo 1991 (Ravenna: Edizioni del Girasole, 1991), 333-337. Also Μ. Κάππας, Οι σταυροειδείς εγγεγραμμένοι ναοί της μεσαιωνικής πόλης της Ρόδου στα Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 Χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου, op. cit., τόμ. Α' , 341 και τόμ. Β, πίν. 306, 310α και 311β.

74 TN: Agiou Fanouriou, Andronikou, Zinonos, Ergiou, Evdoxou, Thoukididou, Aristofanous, Diokleous, and Eschylou respectively.

75 See Z. N. Τσιρπανλής, Ανέκδοτα έγγραφα για τη Ρόδο και τις Νότιες Σποράδες από το Αρχείο των Ιωαννιτών Ιπποτών 1421-1453, op. cit., 84-88, 232-234, 616-617, 659-662 and Η. Κόλλιας, Μάστορες, πρωτομάστορες και μηχανικοί των μεσαιωνικών οχυρώσεων της Ρόδου, op. cit., 149-164.

76 TN: *Konstantinou Rodiou, Aristotelous, Evreon Martyron, Dimokrotou, Themistokleous, Lysippou, Dimosthenous, Kerkafou, Perikleous, Dosiadou, Ikarou, Kleovoulinis, Tlipolemou, Archiepiskopou Eftyhymiou, Irinas, Tavriskou, Gavala, Fidiou, Dionysiou, Vyzantiou, Alchadef, Pindarou*, and *Kisthiniou* streets, and *Evreon Martyron, Nafsikas, Ekatonos, Nikasylou, Dionysiou, Agiou Panteleimonos*, and *Pisidorou* squares respectively

Aristotle Street, as well as the *Alleanze*[77] schools on Kisthenios Street; the *Notrica*[78] foundation on Kisthenios Street and Pisidorou Square; the Grand Synagogue and *Schalom* Synagogue streets; but also the garden of the prominent Alhadeff[79] family of Jewish bankers; the Israelite square; and the small *Engoli* or *Yeni masjid*[80] on the medieval St Sebastian Square, which was destroyed in the WWII bombings, Figure 23-24.



Figures 23-24: The Jewish Martyrs square

77 In mid 19th century Rhodes there were three Jewish schools, but they were only for boys. In early 1900, with the support of the *Alliance Israète Universelle*, and funding from baron Rothschild, a Boys' school and a Girls' school were founded. In the 1910s there were also two nursery schools. In 1923 the *Alliance Israète Universelle* school came under the control of the Italian government, and as a result more emphasis was placed on teaching the Italian language. With the Italian government's approval, the Rabbinic College of Rhodes was founded in 1928 to train rabbis, cantors and shechita, but it ceased activities in 1938 as a result of the Italian fascist and racist laws. See Η Εβραϊκή Κοινότητα της Ρόδου, *The Jewish Community of Rhodes*. Μια έκθεση του Εβραϊκού Μουσείου Ελλάδος και της Ισραηλιτικής Κοινότητας Ρόδου, op. cit.

78 Z. Tsirpanlis mentions the Notrica-Menascé bank as one of the three Jewish banks in Rhodes in 1922. Like the other two banks belonging to Solomon Alhadeff and Isaac Alhadeff, it was closed in 1938 due to the Italian racist law. See Z. N. Τσιρπανλής, Ιταλοκρατία στα Δωδεκάνησα, op. cit., 197-200.

79 Ibid. Ιταλοκρατία στα Δωδεκάνησα, op. cit., 197-200.

80 Σ. Μ. Δοντάς, Ρόδος Εκατό Χρ. Φωτογραφίας 1850-1950, op. cit., 47 and Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, Ρόδος, op. cit., 78.

Lesser streets in the quarter included the *via stretta* (Tlepolemos and Icarus streets), the *via della Turcheria*[81] (Pericles str), *via Elia del Bosco* (Kisthenios str), *via Chinan* (Phidias Street), *via Benvenuto San Giorgio*[82] (Dosiadas, Pericles, and Byzantius streets), *via per casa Rabino* (Icarus Street), *via Talmudtorà* (Byzantius Street), and *via Sigismondo Malatesta*[83]. The cadastral plot that included the *via Venezia, piazza Principe*, and *via Giovanni da Rivara*[84] faced today's Jewish Martyrs and Constantine of Rhodes streets, and to the east it bordered the Prince's Square which no longer exists.

The Grand Synagogue and the Shalom Synagogue stood out in the quarter[85]. The first refers to the romaniot style *Kahal Kadosh Gadol*[86] synagogue on Theseus Street next to the Hospitaller St Catherine's lodge, which was ruined by the allied bombings; the second, known as *Kahal Kadosh Shalom*[87], is on Simmias Street. The restoration of the Sephardi style *Kahal Kadosh Shalom* synagogue brought to light elements of a previous construction phase from 1577, while the pebble mosaic floors in the courtyards retained inscriptions from 1841 and 1888, allowing the dating of the current phase of the building to the mid 19th century.

West of the *jewish quarter* extended the *Dolapli'* quarter, named after the mosque of the same name with the *well winch*[88], formerly the cruciform Hospitaller church of the Holy Trinity[89] from the late 15th and early 16th centuries which had been converted to a Muslim place of worship. The quarter covered the area which today is defined by Pythagoras, Minos, Demosthenes, Cleobulina,

Praxiteles, and Laocoon streets, and Leonidas of Rhodes square[90], while plots belonging to it had also been recorded on Sophocles and Simonides streets. It mainly included domestic buildings, with the occasional workshop or buildings used for things such as storage, commerce, agriculture or mixed uses. The buildings' location within the neighbourhood is determined in relation to streets and alleys of the *Turkish neighbourhood*, the Craftsmen's street (*via degli Artefici*), which was identified

81 TN: in the Ladino language of the Sephardic Jews, the Jewish quarter (mentioned in this article by its Italian name, *quartiere Ebreo*) was called *Juderia*, and the Turkish quarter was called *Turkeria*. In other words, the street in question was called "the street of the Turkish quarter".

82 Benvenuto San Giorgio (1450-1527) was a scholar, jurist, and historian. He was born in Casale, Italy and was the count of Biandrate.

83 Sigismondo Malatesta (1498- 1553) descended from one of the most prominent families in 14th and 15th century Italy, and was considered the model of the Italian renaissance prince. He bore the title of *condottiero*, ie leader of the mercenary forces, and was renowned as a patron of the letters and arts. In 1432 he was appointed papal bishop in charge of governing Rimini, Fano, and Cesena. He was a brave and able soldier and was considered the best commander in Italy.

84 Giovanni da Rivara was born in Genoa in 1848, an heir to the Ditta Rivara textile trading family business founded in 1802. He served as head of the Banca d'Italia board of directors, and in 1873 he co-founded the Il Cittadino newspaper with architect Maurizio Dufour. He died in Genoa in 1901.

85 Beside these two, there are records of two more synagogues that have been lost. They are the Kahal Kadosh Kamondo synagogue from 1865, and the Kahal Kadosh Tikkun Hatzot or Kal de los Ricos, ie the Synagogue of the Rich, from the 19th century. See Η Εβραϊκή Κοινότητα της Ρόδου, The Jewish Community of Rhodes. Μια έκθεση του Εβραϊκού Μουσείου Ελλάδος και της Ισραηλιτικής Κοινότητας Ρόδου, op. cit.

86 Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2000- 2008, op. cit., 113-114.

87 Α. Σ. Μαΐλης- Κ. Ε. Σκανδαλίδης- Κ. Φ. Τσαλαχούρης, Η Ρόδος τον 19ο αιώνα, op. cit., 58-121.

88 Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, Ιστορία της Ρόδου, op. cit, 508.

89 Η. Κόλλιας, Η Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου και το Παλάτι του Μεγάλου Μαγίστρου, op. cit., 123-131.

90 TN: *Pythagora, Minoos, Dimosthenous, Kleovoulinis, Praxitelous, Laokoontos* streets, and *Leonidou Rodiou* square respectively.

as today's Pythagoras Street, Figure 25, the *Dolapli'* mosque and *Hagi Chalil's* House[91], known to the locals as the "Seray" on Pythagoras Street.



Figure 25: Hagi Chalil's House, "Saray" on Pythagoras Street

Immediately to its west, in the area defined by today's Plato, Pythagoras, Aegeas, Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Electryone streets[92], the mainly residential *Ibraim Pascià* quarter was to be found, which also included some properties with commercial, agricultural, and storage uses, as well as workshops. The area owed its name to the mosque of the same name on Sophocles str, which, according the inscription that can still be seen above its entrance, was erected in 1540 by Suleiman the Magnificent with the wish that God shelter him, and all those who enter, from all harm.[93]

91 The Italian record provides the name "*Casa Magnatizia"*, ie the house of a "magnate", which, similar to the word's English meaning, refers to an illustrious citizen or dignitary in whose person outstanding political or financial power has been concentrated. According to the plot's index card, the owners during the time of recording were the heirs of Hagì Chalil Effendi Faraglialì, his widow Macbulè Cecechgì di Bechcet (TN: these Italian transliterations should be pronounced: *Hadji Halil Efendi Faralyali* and *Makbule Chechekdji* of [probably meaning daughter of] *Bekchet*) and their children *Ihsan, Osman, Muhein, Hussein, Sadrettin, Selahettin, Nefissè* and *Sezà*. See Παναγιώτα Ψαρρή, Ιστορικά διατηρητέα μνημεία με χρήση κατοικίας στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου στα Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά (Ρόδος: Στέγη Γραμμάτων και Τεχνών Δωδεκανήσου, 2018), vol. ΚΗ', 332.

92 TN: *Platonos, Pythagora, Egeos, Sofokleous, Eschylou*, and *Ilektrionis* streets, respectively.

93 Even though the mosque bears the name of Pargali Ibrahim Pasha (1493-1536), a favourite of the Sultan, this is not mentioned in the inscription since, although ordered by Ibrahim himself when passing through Rhodes en route to Egypt in 1525, the project was only completed four years after his execution. See H. Balducci, Architettura Turca, op. cit., 93-99.

Farther to the south, in the area today defined by Sophocles, Philetas, Homer, Antisthenes, Aristides, and Cleisthenes streets[94], the *Hudai* quarter was located. The neighbourhood included, among other things, records of the hodja's residence, two mills and as many ovens, storehouses, stables, buildings with commercial and mixed uses, and two mosques. The first mosque was the *Hudai* mosque[95], a small single-aisled church from the knights' time that is currently dedicated to the Saints Theodore, whereas the second corresponded to the small, single-roomed hospitaller church of St Kyriaki located on a side street of Homer str, next to the medieval walls, and dating from the second half of the 15th and the early 16th centuries. During the conversion of the church to a place of prayer, the mosque was named *Alagia Tekkia* or *Tecche* and it was later renamed *Borasani Mesgid*, ie the bugler's place of prayer. According to an 1870 inscription still visible above its entrance, it appears to have been restored by Ahmed pasha, probably following damage sustained in the 1851 or 1863 earthquakes.[96]

In the southwestern part of the settlement, the medieval walls and Hippodamus, Antiphanes, Callixenus, Homer, Andronicus, Antiotheus, and Zeno streets[97] determined the location of the *Abdul Gelil* quarter with the mosque of the same name, also known as *chukur djami,* ie the sunken mosque, due to its location relative to the road's level. The mosque owed its name to its founder and commander of Rhodes, *Abdul Gelil* [98, 99], and had resulted from the conversion of the 15th-16th century St Nicholas - St Bernardine hospitaller convent complex into a Muslim place of worship. It included a courtyard with a well, in addition to the main worshipping space of the older double-aisled church, to which a minaret and a prayer niche had been added, Figures 26-27.

The index cards for this quarter's properties, including mainly residences and a few agricultural and storage plots, mention three streets bearing the names of Venetian Doge *Andrea Verdramini*, Genoese knight *Corradino Grimaldi*, and *Gabriel Martinengo*, an engineer from the time of the Knights.[100] These streets were identified as today's Antiphanes, Andronicus, and Hippodamus streets respectively.

South of the *Abdul Gelil* quarter and adjacent to the medieval walls, in the area surrounded by Hippodamus, Homer, Herodotus, Epicharmus, Hephaestus, Peisander, and Timachidas streets, the *Bab-Mestut* quarter was located, with the mosque of the same name, also known as the *mosque of the walled-up gate*. Dedicated today to St Athanasius, this used to be a small early 16th century single-roomed chapel adjacent to the medieval fortifications[101], where the coat of arms of Grand Master *Fabrizio dell Carretto* is still on display.[102] Besides the mosque building, the records for this quarter also included houses and properties for storage or agricultural use.

94 TN: *Sofokleous, Filita, Omirou, Antisthenous, Aristidou*, and *Klisthenous* streets, respectively.

95 Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, Ιστορία της Ρόδου, op. cit., 508 and Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, Ρόδος, op. cit, 76.

96 Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2000- 2008, op. cit., 73-78 and Ν. Πιτσινός, Το συγκρότημα της Αγίας Κυριακής στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου στα Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 Χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου, op. cit., vol. Α', 128-139 and vol. Β', table 132-145.

97 TN: *Ippodamou, Antifanous, Kallixenous, Omirou, Andronikou, Antiothiou*, and *Zinonos* streets respectively.

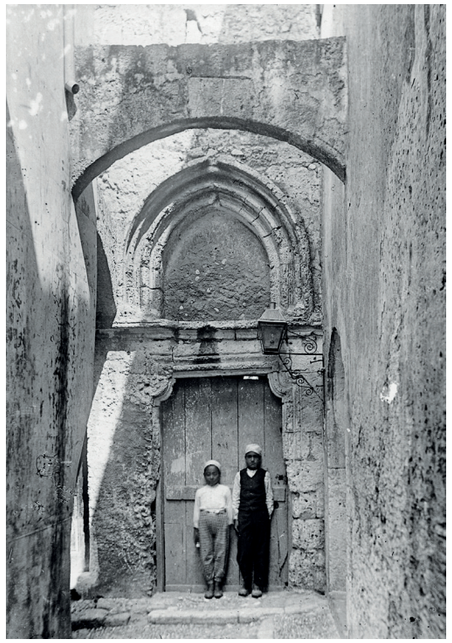
98 Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, Ρόδος, op. cit., 74.

99 TN: pronounced *Abdul Djelil.*

100 On Gabriel Martinengo and his contribution to the renovation of the walls of Rhodes town, see Η. Κόλλιας, Μάστορες, πρωτομάστορες και μηχανικοί των μεσαιωνικών οχυρώσεων της Ρόδου, op. cit., 162.

101 Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, Ρόδος, op. cit., 75.

102 According to tradition, the mosque owed its name to Suleiman the Magnificent, who immediately upon conquering the town reputedly ordered the gate at the specific spot in the fortifications to be walled up, not to allow any other conqueror to enter.





Figures 26-27: The Church of Saint Nicholas - Saint Bernardine

The *Pialetin* quarter stretched to its north, with the small *Peyal-el-din* mosque[103] which had resulted from the conversion of the Byzantine church of St Phanourios[104] into a Muslim place of worship[105]. The neighbourhood, which occupied the streets known today as Homer, St Phanourios, and Andronicus streets, included mainly records of domestic buildings and a few used for agriculture or storage.

To its south, adjacent to the medieval walls and within the area outlined by current Homer, Antisthenes, and Aristides streets, lay the *Alemnach* or *Olemnach* quarter with the mosque of the same name, founded by Suleiman's standard bearer, according to tradition[106]. This was essentially a small hospitaller church converted into a Muslim place of worship, which today is dedicated to Archangel Michael.

103 Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, Ιστορία της Ρόδου, op. cit., 508 and Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, Ρόδος, op.cit., 75.

104 Concerning the mural decoration of the church see † Θ. Αρχοντόπουλος - Αγγελική Κατσιώτη, Η ζωγραφική στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου από τον 11ο αιώνα μέχρι την κατάληψή της από τους Τούρκους (1522): Μία εκτίμηση των δεδομένων στα Πρακτικά του Διεθνούς Επιστημονικού Συνεδρίου 15 Χρόνια έργων αποκατάστασης στη Μεσαιωνική Πόλη της Ρόδου, op. cit., vol. Α', 454-466, vol. Β', table 392α and 395α.

105 Although the building is from the Byzantine period, its current name is a more recent conventional dedication, in fact from the period after the incorporation of the Dodecanese into the Greek state. See Αγγελική Κατσιώτη, Παρατηρήσεις στην τοπική λατρεία αγίων στα Δωδεκάνησα, Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά, op. cit., vol. ΚΕ', 664-674 and Η. Ε. Κόλλιας, Άγιος Φανούριος: ένας μεταλλαγμένος άγιος στο Χάρις Χαίρε, op. cit., vol. Β', 285-305.

106 Χρ. Ι. Καρούζου, Ρόδος, op. cit., 75 and Χ. Ι. Παπαχριστοδούλου, Ιστορία της Ρόδου, op. cit., 508.

Immediately to the north, in the area demarcated by Homer, St Phanourios, Antheas, Aristophanes, Philetas streets, and Dorieus square[107], was the location of the *Regeb Pascià* quarter, including homes, commercial, agricultural, and storage buildings, and centred around its namesake mosque, Figure 28, which was built in 1588 and is considered one of the most important examples of Ottoman architecture in Rhodes[108].



Figure 28: The Redjep Pasha Mosque - Alinari archive

To its southeast , in the area between Pythagoras, Archbishop Euthymios, Cleisthenes, Kimon, Praxiteles, and Laocoon streets, extended the *Cismegi'* quarter with the corresponding mosque, which was the result of the conversion of the hospitaller church of St John into a Muslim place of worship, but also with homes, shops, workshops, and storehouses.

The final quarter mentioned in the Italian cadastre is the *Ilh-Mihrap* neighbourhood, located to the northeast of the *Cismegi'* quarter, in the area outlined by the streets known today as Nicias, Archbishops Euthymios, Demosthenes, Pericles, Cleobulina, and Erinna streets. The quarter's records are mostly of domestic buildings, their location identified in relation to the main streets

107 TN: *Omirou, Agiou Fanouriou, Anthea, Aristofanous,* and *FIlita* streets and *Dorieos* square, respectively.

108 See H. Balducci, Architettura Turca, op. cit., 99-114. Regarding the building's restoration see Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2011-2016, op. cit., 170-214.

of the Turkish neighbourhood, the *Dolapli'* mosque, and the Koskinou gate. The records brought to light the earlier name of Pericles str, the *"long street"* of the Turkish neighbourhood, while the *"middle road"* is today referred to as Cleobulina str. Among the area's mainly domestic properties, there was mention of the *Ilh-Mihrap*[109] mosque, in other words the first prayer niche, the first church where, according to tradition, Suleiman prayed after seizing the town[110] Figure 29.



Figure 29: The Church of Saint Catherine - Alinari archive

After the period of Italian rule, the town passed into the hands of the Germans (1943-1944) and subsequently the English (1945-1947), while it had already sustained considerable damage from the allied bombings in 1944. The Incorporation of the Dodecanese into Greece in 1948, marked the end of a long period of slavery and subjugation from which the local populace wished to emotionally detach themselves. This was, after all, the reason that the modern nomenclature departed completely from that of previous periods, the streets of the historic settlement receiving names of important figures of the ancient Greek world. The names from the period of the Knights and the Turkish rule were thus lost from living memory, with only few exceptions concerning mainly religious or secular public buildings.

109 TN: the name, as explained in the text, means first mosque/prayer niche. At least in modern Turkish, "first" is written *ilk*. The Italians may have recorded it as *ilh* by mistake or it may reflect some local variant pronunciation, the Italians simply recording names as they heard them.

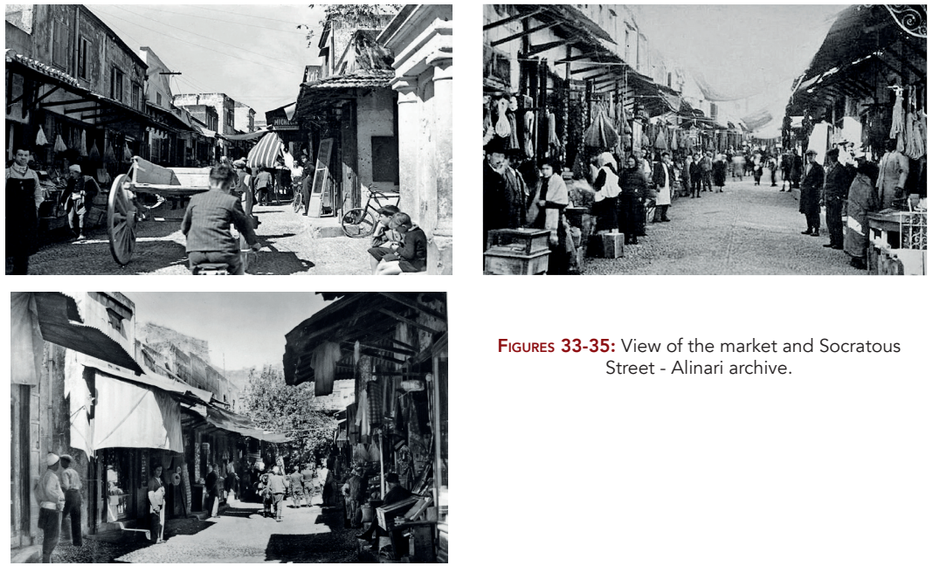
110 The current name of the church, dedicated to St Catherine, is considerably more recent, and was given to the monument in the '90s, following the discovery of the saint's iconographic cycle that was dated to the 15th century. See Θ. Αρχοντόπουλος, Ο εικονογραφικός κύκλος της Αγίας Αικατερίνης στην ομώνυμη εκκλησία της μεσαιωνικής πόλης της Ρόδου in Αρχαιολογικό Δελτίο 41 (1986) Μέρος Α' – Μελέτες (Αθήνα: Ταμείο Αρχαιολογικών Πόρων και Απαλλοτριώσεων 1991), 85-100, fig. 1, table 21-28. Also, Μεσαιωνική Πόλη Ρόδου Έργα Αποκατάστασης 2000- 2008, op. cit., 67-71.

Even though the violent historic events and natural disasters that the settlement witnessed during the past two centuries are now in the past, the town continues to face new economic, political, moral, and social challenges that test the endurance of its residents and its monuments. Its quarters, as recorded in the Italian cadastre and the contemporary photographic lens, with their busy residents, the traditional craftsmen, and the traders and hawkers of all sorts Figures 30-33, belong to a bygone world.

The town, having resisted for centuries the sweeping shifts that were imposed on it by external factors, has now passed the baton to the domination of tourism, finding itself in danger of permanently losing its authenticity and uniqueness.



Figures 30-32: View of the market



Figures 33-35: View of the market and Socratous Street - Alinari archive.

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He has published extensively on Ottoman history, including his landmark book, *An Introduction to Religious Foundations in the Ottoman Empire* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986); "Murad Reis Tekkesi (Rodos)," in Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, ed., *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf ve Sufiler*, 2nd ed. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014), pp. 375–408 [1st ed. 2005]; "Some Cases of Mistaken Identity in the Ottoman Epigraphy of Murad Reis on Rhodes," in *σοφία άδολος*: Studies in Honor of Ioannis Papachristodoulou (Archaeological Institute of Aegean Studies, Rhodes, 2014), pp. 233–57; and 'Σχόλια γύρω από την ιστορία του Καστελλορίζου με αφορμή την Οθωμανική *Ιστορία της Νήσου Μέις* του Χαμπιμπζαντέ Αχμέντ Κεμάλ' [Comments on the History of Kastellorizo in Light of *A History of the Island of Meis* by Habibzade Ahmed Kemal], *Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά*, vol. 23 (Rhodes, 2010), pp. 62–84.

"My association with the Hafiz Ahmed Ağa Library began in 1997, when Elias Kollias, then director of the Ephorate of Antiquities, invited me to translate its original catalogue from Ottoman Turkish into English. At the time, Dr. Kollias imagined that the task would require no more than a month. Were he alive today, he would, I suspect, be surprised—if not appaled—to learn that the project has now extended over three decades.

The reasons for this protracted endeavor lie in the nature of the original catalogue itself. Abbreviations are frequently used for the names of authors and titles of works, but these are of little help in securely identifying either. Moreover, the catalogue provides no account of the twenty-five classificatory headings, most of them being Islamic sciences, into which the library's holdings are divided, nor does it offer biographical information on the scholars whose works defined the sciences. It soon became clear that the project could not remain a mere inventory of books. Rather, it had to evolve into a broader undertaking: a historical survey of the Islamic sciences, a biographical study of their authors, and a contextual discussion of the Prophet Muhammad, the Kur'ān, and the formative period of Islam.

In this light, an almost thirty-year effort for what was once thought to be a one-month task is perhaps not as implausible as it may seem. The British historian Arnold Toynbee confronted a similar experience: what began as a modest set of notes eventually grew into his monumental 'A Study of History', a multi-volume work that took him three decades to complete and expanded into nothing less than a history of the world.

At the close of my own study of the library, I was fortunate enough to be introduced to Tarık Tüten, the representative (mütevelli vekili) of the administrator (mütevelli) of the library's pious foundation. Tarık has been an unfailing source of patience and support, particularly as I have contended with a debilitating illness. His encouragement has extended well beyond friendship: he has been an ardent advocate of my research on the library and on the history of Ottoman Rhodes, and he has shown himself to be a first-rate scholar through his involvement in the field of Ottoman studies and in the publication of this volume."

John Robert Barnes

Gunpowder and the Explosion in 1856
of the former Church of St. John in the Medieval Town of Rhodes

On 6 November 1856, after a drought of some eight months, Rhodes experienced its first rainfall, which was accompanied by dark thunderclouds and multiple flashes of lightning. One lightning bolt struck a large powder magazine in the Old Town of Rhodes in the vicinity of the *Cami-i kebir*, the former conventual Church of St. John the Baptist of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John, which had been converted into a mosque upon the Ottoman conquest of Rhodes in 1522. The explosion of the gunpowder, estimated to have been between one hundred and fifty to three hundred tons, obliterated the former Church of St. John.[1] In addition to destroying part of the *Dizdar Konağı*, the former Palace of the Grand Masters, the blast sheared off the top part of the western-style clock tower which had been built by Ahmed Fethi Paşa only four years previously and hollowed out numerous shops and homes in the Turkish quarter of the Old Town, including residences located in the upper half of the Street of the Knights. The detonation also did considerable damage to the wall of the Old Town around the Amboise Gate. It has been estimated that the explosion killed over eight hundred people; later reports that the blast killed over 4,000 have been based on rumor and are apocryphal.

The cause of the catastrophe ostensibly was not hard to divine. Lightning had entered through one of the windows of the campanile of the church and struck the powder magazine in one of the vaults below. The gunpowder cache had been secreted in the underground crypt of the former Church of St. John during the siege of Rhodes in 1522, and left there for centuries. Either over a period of three centuries the Ottoman authorities had failed to discover it at all, or they had only recently located the explosives, but chose to do nothing about it. Another explanation excluded any role the Knights had in the affair, and claimed that Ottoman officials were the ones responsible for placing the gunpowder in the vaults.[2] According to this report, a rational explanation for Ottoman officials using the former church as a gunpoweder depository was that they regarded the crypt as a safe place since the entire structure above and below ground was made of stone and therefore not liable to catch fire.[3] The assumption was logical as the Ottomans were known to have stored explosives in ancient stone structures, such as the Parthenon and the theatre at Aspendos near the Mediterranean coast of modern-day Turkey.

While the story of gunpowder being stored in the subterranean vaults of the church has had the widest circulation, there is another account closely related to it that dates the storage of the explosives to the last period of the Ottoman siege. According to this story, from the time that he had failed to be elected Grand Master of the Knights Hospitallers of Rhodes by only a few votes, Grand Chancellor Andrea d'Amaral habored a hatred toward Philippe Villiers de l'Isle Adam of Auvergne who had won the election. His animosity toward the newly-elected Grand Master was great enough for him to envision treason by abetting the enemy at the height of the Ottoman siege of Rhodes in November 1522. He attempted to accomplish this by ordering one of his trusted servants to fire arrows into the Ottoman camp with the message that the defenders could not hold out much longer

1 Hedenborg 1856, 521.
2 *Illustrated London News* 1857.
3 Ibid.

due to a loss of manpower, ammunition, and supplies. In addition, in order to create a munitions shortage, d'Amaral hid a large cache of gunpowder in the crypt of the Church of St. John. Under torture his servant Blaise Dias, a Jewish convert, confessed that the idea of firing messages into the enemy camp was d'Amaral's, not his, and that he was only following his orders. For his treason, Dias was beheaded and quartered, and after being convicted of being a traitor, d'Amaral met the same fate as well.

The story of d'Amaral's treason and his responsibility for hiding the gunpowder in the Church of St. John was accepted by Johan Hedenborg, a Swedish physician who was a longtime resident on Rhodes and an eyewitness to the explosion of 6 November 1856 and the disastrous earthquake that preceded it a month before on 12 October. He was an eyewitness in the sense that his home in the New Town of Rhodes sustained serious damage in the earthquake and the explosion, and he gave a detailed report of conditions in the aftermath of both catastrophic events. He recorded his observations in the appendix of his manuscript entitled "Geschichte der Insel Rhodos." The work was never published due to its being incomplete in spite of its large size, and because it was written in faulty German, a language which was not the author's native tongue and cosequently one which he wrote imperfectly. Nevertheless, the description of the disasters to which he had been a witness is of value in describing the extensive carnage and destruction they caused.

For Hedenborg, that lightning entered through a window in the campanile and ignited a massive gunpowder cache in the crypt below was a given fact, as was the story about d'Amaral's hand in hiding the explosives in the subterranean vaults of the church.[4] These reputed facts are briefly stated as being taken for granted and generally understood. In Hedenborg's history of Rhodes they are not elaborated upon as something to be explained or proven, and much of his discourse on the two events deals with his firsthand observations after the two catastrophes occurred. It remains an open question, however, where he derived these stories from—and how long they had been in circulationon on Rhodes.

One answer to the question is that Hedenborg's eyewitness of the destruction in the aftermath of the explosion gave rise to these stories. For the author, the location of the blast was beyond dispute. It was the Cami-i kebir, the former Church of St. John, and specifically its campanile, both of which had been virtually effaced. No other edifice was so completely obliterated. The Palace of the Grand Masters adjacent to the former church also received considerable damage, as well as hundreds of dwellings in the vicinity, above all those at the top of the Street of the Knights. As described by the author, the hollowed-out site of the campanile resembled the smoking crater of a volcano. For Hedenborg it was clearly apparent from a personal inspection of the site of the former bell tower and of the vault below that this was the origin of the terrific explosion.

The question then arose as to who was responsible for putting such an enormous cache of gunpowder there in the first place. While Ottoman officials could be blamed, the notion was probably dismissed by Hedenborg as fantastical as soon as it was entertained, primarily because it lacked motivation. As the former church had been a mosque since 1522, it is doubtful if the Ottomans would have desecrated a venerable house of prayer by putting it to such dangerous and pedestrian use. It was more plausible to make the association with the treachery of the Grand Chancellor, above all his message to the Ottoman besiegers that the defenders were low on ammunition. It is known that d'Amaral was in charge of munitions and of the arsenal of the Knights during the siege; he was, therefore, in a position to create a shortage of gunpowder, which once discovered would have seriously lowered the Knights' will to resist. It is worthy of note, however, that the charge that d'Amaral hid a massive amount of gunpowder in the crypt of the former church never materialized during his trial.[5] Further, d'Amaral was not the only one responsible for munitions; that duty was entrusted to a commission of three knights, of which d'Amaral was only one. Apart from d'Amaral, the commission comprised Turcopolier John Bouch and Gabriel de Pomeroys. It would have been impossible therefore for him to deplete the Knights' store of explosives unnoticed, and it is unimaginable that in the event this had happened, Grand Master de l'Isle Adam would not have investigated the matter.[6]

Given the eyewitness account of Hedenborg and similar reports that followed within a year or two of the explosion, it would seem that there is conclusive proof of the cause of the detonation and a convincing explanation of how the gunpowder came to be stored in the crypt of the former church in the first place. Accounts of the catastrophe that were published soon after the incident corroborated the story of Hedenborg, and it became the only plausible cause of the explosion that was offered. Two months after the disastrous incident, an article that appeared in the *Illustrated London News* of 3 January 1857 attributed lightning striking a gunpowder cache in the church of St. John as the cause of the conflagration.[7] The report in the *Illustrated London News* is the only article that blames the Ottoman administration for placing the explosives in the subterranean vaults of the former church. In 1889 in an article for the *Philosophical Magazine* entitled "On Lightning and Gunpowder Magazines," Charles Tomlinson ascribed the origin of the explosion to gunpowder placed in the vaults of the former church of St. John.[8] In the following year in a work entitled *Lightning, Thunder and Lightning Conductors,* Gerald Molloy directly attributed the explosion of the church of St. John as the cause of so many inhabitants of Rhodes being killed.[9] Fifteen years later, in a work entitled *Thunder and Lightning* published in 1905, the French meteorologist Camille Flammarion wrote that the cause of the explosion on Rhodes on 6 November 1856 was due to lightning that "penetrated the vaults of the Church of St. John, at Rhodes, setting fire to an enormous quantity of powder."[10] Flammarion added that "four or five thousand people lost their lives in the catastrophe,"[11] as opposed to the actual estimate which was closer to eight hundred. In a work published as recently as 2016 under the title *Storm: Nature and Culture*, John Withington wrote "…but the deadliest ever explosion sparked by lightning was probably the one at the church of St John on the island of Rhodes on 6 November 1856. This ancient cathedral of the knights of Rhodes had a large collection of gunpowder in its vaults, and the explosion destroyed a large portion of the town, causing a death toll estimated at 4,000."[12] Then there is the article produced by nineteen scholars associated with the study of meteorology that was published online on 31 May 2017 entitled "WMO (World Meteorological Organization) Assessment of Weather and Climate Mortality Extremes: Lightning, Tropical Cyclones, Tornadoes, and Hail" that was headed by corresponding author Randall Cerveny. The article provides a summary of reports on the explosion of 1856 on Rhodes and concludes with the general findings that lightning striking a gunpowder cache in the vaults of the cathedral church of St. John the Baptist had caused the explosion.

4 Gelhoff-Volanaki 1982, 56.

5 Torr 2003, 73-74.
6 Ibid.
7 *Illustrated London News* 1857.
8 Tomlinson 1889, 368-75.
9 Molloy, 1890.
10 Flammarion 1905, 224-225.
11 Ibid.
12 Withington 2016.

More than a century after the event, the story was still being presented as being the one true version how the catastrophe originated. Mr. Rauf Kalaycıoğlu was a former instructor in the *Süleymaniye Medresesi* on Rhodes and sometime secretary to Şeyh Süleyman Kaşlıoğlu, the last Müfti of Rhodes and the last shaikh of the Murad Reis tekye. In the 1980s, Mr. Kalaycıoğlu was commissioned by the Fourth Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities to transcribe, transliterate, and translate into Greek and modern Turkish the Ottoman inscriptions on the grave steles in the cemetery of Murad Reis. In his recording of the epitaphs, he transcribed, transliterated and translated the inscriptions on the grave steles of three women who lost their lives in the explosion of 1856. According to Mr. Kalaycıoğlu the women were killed from the detonation by lightning of a munitions magazine that was located below the Cami-i kebir, the former conventual Church of St. John the Baptist.[13] In 1982 Dr. Maria Gelhoff-Volanaki translated passages in Johan Hedenborg's History of Rhodes in the periodical *O Dromos*. In the introduction to a translation from German into Greek of the relevant pages of Hedenborg's "Geschichte der Insel Rhodos" describing the earthquake and explosion of 1856, Dr Gelhoff-Volanaki depicts the second catastrophe as being directly due to lightning igniting a large store of gunpowder which had been kept hidden below ground in the church of Saint John of the Order of the Knights.[14] In spite of this singular and long-held understanding of the origin of the explosion, there is, nevertheless, another explanation.

In the cemetery of Murad Reis there is a group of three grave steles. They are mounted on sarcophagus-like cenotaphs made of cement which have been placed on a low cement platform. The cenotaphs and their base are not original—nor are the grave steles, for pieces of the original grave stones have been found scattered throughout the cemetery. It may be further added that the use of cement in construction was introduced into Rhodes only with the Italian occupation beginning in 1912; cement would not then have been employed in creating cenotaphs dating from the mid-nineteenth century. The first location of the graves was not on an open-air platform in the center of the graveyard, as it is now, but in a *türbe*, a small square mausoleum with a dome that abutted onto the street near the mosque of Ebu Bekr Paşa and extended beyond the fenced cemetery compound.[15] Photographs of the mausoleum taken before the Second World War show the exact location. This structure was obliterated as a result of Allied bombing during World War II, which must have occurred between January of 1944 and April 1945 when the British flew more than 400 missions over Rhodes. Not only was the Old Town subject to repeated bombing, but so was the New Town as well. Located on the edge of the New Town, the cemetery of Murad Reis experienced aerial bombardment, and during one of these sorties, the tomb of the family of Pertev Efendi received a direct hit. This incident caused the Turkish translator Kalaycıoğlu to exclaim "What a thought-provoking event...! To be blown up twice within the space of a hundred years!"[16] The cement monument that visitors see today was constructed sometime after the war, and either enough pieces of the original grave steles were found and put together to record the original epitaphs on new gravestones, or a record was found that had been kept of the dedications, which, in either case, allowed for a reconstruction of the epitaphs.[17]

13 Kalaycıoğlu, 76..
14 Gelhoff-Volanaki 1982, 52-59.
15 Balducci 1932, fig. 129.
16 Kalaycıoğlu, entry 76..
17 Note. During his recording of the epigraphy in the cemetery of Murad Reis, the author came across a fragment of one of the original grave steles.

The inscriptions, written in Ottoman in the Arabic script, are the obituaries of three women, Rukiye, 'Iffet and Mihriban, the mother, daughter and wife of Defterdar Pertev Efendi, the director at the time of the financial administration of the Province of the Archipelago (*Eyalet-i Bahr-ı Sefid Defterdarı*). The epitaphs state that all three women were victims of the explosion that occurred on the afternoon of 6 November 1856. By way of example, the epitaph of Pertev Efendi's wife, Mihriban, is as follows:

هوالباقی

هجرتگ یتمش اوچنده آسمنی بربلا

قلعه نگ جبخانه سندن چیقدی پگ دهشت فزای

اول زمانده زوجه پرتو ایکن بو مهربان

ناکهانی دار خدی ایتدی اول پاکیزه جای

جسم روحیله سمای رحمة چیقدی همان

ایلدی یا رب عزتنده جبه سای

دود آهندن چیقارعرشه بو تاریخ کهر

مرمر بانی قیلدی فردوس آشیان جبخانه وای

رضاءً لله الفاتحه

فی را ۸ سنه ۱۲۷۳

Mihriban, wife of Pertev Efendi, Director of the Financial Administration of the Province of the Archipelago, d. 8 rebiyülevvel 1273/Thursday, 6 November 1856.

Transliteration

Hüve'l-baki.
Hicretin yetmiş üçünde asmanî bir bela
Kalenin cebhanesinden çıkdı pek dehşet fezay
Ol zamanda zevce-i Pertev iken bu Mihriban
Nâgehanî dar-ı huldı etdi ol pakize cay
Cisim ruhile esma-yı rahmete çıkdı heman
Eyle ya Rabb 'izzetinde cebhe-yi say
Dud-ı ahından çıkar arşa bu tarih güher
Mihribanı kildı ferdevs aşiyan cebhane vay.
Rızaenlillâh Elfatiha.
Fî rebiyülevvel 8 sene 1273.

Translation

Only He is eternal.
In the year one thousand two hundred and seventy-three of the hegira a cosmic calamity of terrifying proportions occurred in the Arsenal of the Fortified Town. At that moment Mihriban, the wife of Pertev, this innocent one, suddenly made her station the abode of eternity. Her body and soul at once ascended to the heaven of God's compassion.
Grant, O Lord, in Your majesty an entreaty: That this chronogram born from a heaving sigh may be a gem for the throne of God.
Alas, the Arsenal made Mihriban one who dwells in Paradise.
For the love of God, (say) the Fatiha (for her soul).
Thursday, 6 November 1856.

While the language used is much the same for all three epitaphs, what is interesting about them is that Pertev Efendi attributed their deaths to the explosion of the *cebhane*, an Ottoman term meaning arsenal. More specifically, he blamed their deaths on the detonation of the *kalenin cebhanesi* the arsenal of the fortified town. An arsenal by definition is a place for storing ordnance, and specifically munitions; naturally, then, it is a place consciously chosen for storing munitions. The term "arsenal" was never used for the gunpowder cache that was presumably hidden in a subterranean vault area beneath the bell tower of the former Church of St. John. In the principal account that has been given, the large deposit of gunpowder was unknown to Ottoman officials—either at all, or it was discovered only a short time before the explosion. In either case it could not have been considered a primary arsenal used by the Ottoman military administration on Rhodes.

There is a telling piece of evidence regarding the location of the Ottoman arsenal in the Old Town of Rhodes. According to a map of the fortified Old Town drawn in November 1847 by staff members from the Ottoman Imperial School of Engineering, the Ottoman arsenal was located directly in front of the former Church of St. John, that is, before the front of the edifice and the campanile. A rectangular structure in outline is identified as a *Cebhane* (Arsenal) in the drawing.

But the most decisive confirmation that it was an Ottoman arsenal that was blown up by lightning comes from a dedicatory inscription for a new arsenal inscribed on a large stone preserved in the garden of Diomède de Villaragut on the grounds of the Archaeological Museum, the former New Hospital of the Knights of St. John.* It reads as follows:

خان عبد المجید اول ساه جهانبان که ایدر امر تحکیم قلاع اوزره زه
بذل هممبو جته خانه یی اولکیدن اعلی یاپدی از قضا صاعقه ایتمشدی
اصابت اصابت اقدم اول شهگ حفظ ایده آسیب و ضرردن دائم بحر و برده اولان
اولکاسنی ربّ الکرمایلیوب خیر دعا سویلدی زیور تاریخ شاه عالم بو جبه خانه
یاپدی محکم سنه ١٢٧٦

Transliteration

Han Abdülmecid-i evvel şah-i cihanban ki eder
Emr-i tahkim-i kala üzerinde zihi bezl-i himem.
Bu cebehane'yi evvelkiden a'lâ yapdı.
Ez kaza saika etmişdi isabet akdem.
Ol şahın hıfz ede asib ve zarardan daim
Bahr u berde olan ülkesini Rabbü'l-kerim
Eyleyüb hayr dua söyledi Ziver tarih
Şah-ı âlem bu cebehane'yi yapdı muhkem.
Sene 1276.

Translation

Sultan Abdülmecid Khan, as a world-protecting sovereign,
is to be congratulated on a job well done in the effort he
has expended in ordering that the fortresses be strengthened.
He had made this Arsenal excellent once before;
but in the past by chance a bolt of lightning struck it.
May the Merciful Lord bless this Şah's country
that is on land and sea and protect it always
from misfortune and harm. Ziver has written the chronogram.
The ruler of the world has made this Arsenal sound.
1859-60.

What is significant about this inscription is the statement that Sultan Abdülmecid had previously constructed an arsenal,—probably sometime in the early 1840s, and that lightning had struck it;—that is, lightning had hit the structure of the arsenal that he built, and not some long-forgotten powder magazine left in the crypt of the former Church of St. John. The inscription is the dedication of a new arsenal that the Sultan built in 1859-60 to replace the one that had been destroyed. The smoldering cavernous pit on the site of the campanile that Hedenborg regarded as decisive evidence for the location of the explosion was not the result of ignition of the gunpowder below, but due to the exposure of the underground vault that was revealed after the blast had destroyed the bell tower. As to the Arsenal, needless to say, there would have been nothing left of the munitions depot itself.

The explosion that occurred in the late afternoon of 6 November 1856 is an important part of the history of Rhodes because of the tremendous loss of life and the great damage that it caused not only throughout the Old Town but even throughout Neo Chori, the New Town as well. But the story that has been presented about its origin until now is not history, and it has not been written by historians. The business of History is inquiry; specifically it is critically enquiring about the past. The most reliable form of this inquiry is to consult the epigraphic evidence, whether from written official documents, letters, books, funerary inscriptions, the record left in numismatics, and the like. The writing of history should not, therefore, be left to rumor, herarsay, recollection or, as in the case of Hedenborg, fallible eyewitness impressions. What has not been done thus far is to investigate the Ottoman epigraphic evidence regarding the explosion of 1856 about which both Ottoman officials and subjects were well-informed. In view of the evidence that has now been brought to light, it is time to consider revising the notion that has been thus far persistently presented. While it may take some time for scholars writing on the explosion of 1856 to become aware of the present essay, one way to avoid the pitfall of repeating the same mistake of virtually every author dealing with the subject is to ensure that touristic guidebooks of Rhodes state what is now known to be the true nature of the explosion. It is possible that this may be the best way for scholars to become readily acquainted with a fundamental change in thıs part of Rhodes' historical narrative. This need not involve doing away altogether with the account of gunpowder hidden in the crypt of the former Church of St. John during the Ottoman siege, or d'Amaral's hand in the affair, as it makes for a colorful story—so long as it is presented as simply that, as a traditionally-held and entertaining tale that is a prologue to the actual story of what happened.

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Ottoman map of the Old Town 1847: İrade-i seniyye 1847. Ba İrade-i seniyye Mühendishane-i âmire canibinden memur buyurulduğum Bahr-ı Sefid'de bulunan Rodos Kalesinin Resm-i Musattahı fî 14 Z sene 1263/23 Kasım 1847 ("A One-Dimensional Drawing of the Castle (here meaning the Fortified Walled Town) of Rhodes in the Aegean Sea that I, the Sultan (Abdülmecid), ordered to be done by Imperial Decree by staff members of the Ottoman Imperial School of Engineering, dated 14 Zilhicce 1263/Tuesday, 23 November 1847.") Archives of the Prime Ministry, Istanbul. A copy of the map is now on display in the Reading Room (*Tedkik odası*) of the Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library in the Old Town of Rhodes, a gift of Mr. Ahmed Arda, former Turkish Consul of Rhodes.

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* Dedicatory inscription of the new arsenal for the town of Rhodes commissioned by Sultan Abdülmecid in the year 1276/1860-1
Archeological Museum of Rhodes
Photo: T. Tuten

Next two pages
Ivan Aivazovsky (1817-1900)
View of Rhodes, 1861
Oil on canvas
Courtesy of Feodosia I. K. Aivazovsky Gallery,
Feodosia Urban District of the Republic of Crimea.



Debbie Challis FRHistS is Creative Producer of the Portico Library Manchester (UK) and a cultural historian with an expertise on the reception of classical antiquity in the nineteenth century and the emotional impact of working with historical archives and objects. She has an MA in Critical Theory, Goldsmiths College and a PhD in History of Art, Birkbeck College, University of London. Dr Challis has worked in archives and museums, including the National Portrait Gallery, the BBC Archives, the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology at UCL and the Library of the London School of Economics (LSE). She is an Honorary Fellow at the University of Liverpool (Milesian Tales) and Fellow of the Royal History Society. She has published widely on the history of archaeology, including two books *From the Harpy Tomb to the Wonders of Ephesos: British Archaeologists in the Ottoman Empire 1840-1880* (2008) and *The Archaeology of Race: the Eugenic Ideas of Francis Galton and Flinders Petrie* (2013). She is currently researching and writing about the life of Victorian artist Mary Severn Newton and co-editing a book on the life and work of Charles Thomas Newton for UCL Press. She is resident expert on Alex Andreou's Podyssey, a podcast about the myths and complex legacy of Ancient Greece. Much of the research for this chapter was funded by Arts Council England as part of a Developing Your Creative Practice grant.

"Visiting the Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library was an unexpected highlight of my holiday and research visit in Rhodes in 2025. I have been working on material related to this chapter since starting my PhD 25 years ago and still find there is so much to learn about the intercultural connections and legacies in the 'Levant'. I also work in a library that is similarly having a conversation with many people about its past to build for the future. Manchester made its profits from enslaved people and underpaid workers and was the motor of the industrial revolution (and so climate change). The Portico Library was built from those profits and opened in 1806. It was founded to be a tolerant institution of learning and sharing of knowledge, but only for those male and wealthy enough to join it. Libraries are not silent places but hold the voices of those who have used them and those that couldn't use them. By listening to both sets of voices and trying to understand them, I believe we can make libraries usable for all people. I hope that by contributing to this book, at the kind invitation of Tarık Tüten, I am promoting that belief and contributing to this ***Conversation****."*

Debbie Challis

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Photos: Debbie Challis, 2024

Portraying People and Rhodes

Mary Severn Newton and Gertrude Jekyll on holiday in 1863

'It was such a pleasure to me to sit out in the open garden and paint.'
Mary Severn Newton to Claudia Gale, Letter, 24 November 1863[1]

The skyline of Rhodes Town in Greece has domes of Ottoman (Turkish) mosques and minarets poking out from behind the medieval walls of the Frankish (Western European) Knights of St John. The snow topped mountains of Karia and Lycia in Turkey can be seen clearly across the sea from this Greek island in the East Aegean. Looking at the skyline of the Old Town and then out over the sea in April 2025, the views reminded me that the formation of national boundaries is complex and that people, with their own complex lives, are often caught by geopolitical tensions. I was visiting Rhodes with my family, both for a holiday and for research as I was on the trail of two female artists and an archaeologist, who had themselves holidayed in the island for two weeks in November 1863. On the surface the fortified town has changed little since the fifteenth century, but for the occasional minaret and monument. This superficial air of unchanging history is why so many tourists, such as myself and my family, visit and enormous cruise ships park in the harbour, from which hundreds disembark daily to gaze at the town for a few hours. Yet, thinking about the different names, changing empires and nation states needed to contextualise that view underlines how different visiting the island is in 2025 compared to visiting in 1863.

In 1863 Rhodes was part of the Ottoman Empire and had been so since 1522, when the Ottomans conquered the Western European Catholic Knights of the St John, who had used the island as a fortress to support the later crusades and enable pilgrims to get to Jerusalem. They also used it as a place from which to raid for Muslim slaves. The archaeologist Charles Thomas Newton, the artists Mary Severn Newton and Gertrude Jekyll crossed from Smyrna [Izmir] now in Turkey to Rhodes, now in Greece, and back again before moving onto Constantinople [Istanbul] – all part of the Ottoman Empire.[2] The Island of Rhodes was (and is) very much part of the 'imagined political (and literary) space' of the Levant, which, though there is general agreement that it stretches across the Eastern Mediterranean, is hard to physically quantify.[3] Newton's book *Travels and Discoveries in the Levant* (1865) uses the Levant to describe his time as vice-consul in Mitylene on Lesvos, acting consul on Rhodes and his time excavating in Bodrom, towards Didyma and Knidos. This elastic term is historical but leaves a legacy of contested pasts, presents and futures today.[4]

In 1863 Newton was Keeper of the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities at the British Museum and returned to the Eastern Mediterranean to inspect excavations in Ephesus and elsewhere, though he also added details into the first volume of his travel journal. Accompanying

1 Birkenhead Collection – Severn Family Archive: Private Collections. With thanks to the descendants of Eleanor Furneaux.

2 The names used will be Newton for Charles Thomas Newton, Severn Newton for Ann Mary Severn Newton (she is known by a mixture of all those names) and Jekyll for Gertrude Jekyll. I will use the place names used by these nineteenth-century British travellers with the modern name in [] on first use.

3 John Darwin (2016), 'The Levant as a Middle Ground', in A. Yiangou, G. Kazamias & R. Holland (eds.) (2016), *The Greeks and the British in the Levant, 1800 – 1960. Between Empires and Nations,* Abington: Routledge, 11 – 24: 11

4 Robert Holland (2016), 'Why the Levant?'. Yiangou et al., 25-38: 36-37.

him was his wife Mary Severn Newton, who was an accomplished professional artist and part of a family of artists – her father was John Severn, who is best known today for being with the poet John Keats when he died in Rome. They had met in 1859 when Newton commissioned her to draw the sculptures he had excavated at the British Museum and married in May 1861. The couple were part of a well-connected group of middle-class professionals working in the arts and (what we might call today) heritage. Severn Newton was friends with Gertrude Jekyll, who later became a garden designer and botanist but at that point was studying at the National School of Art in South Kensington. Newton was an 'old friend of her father' and Severn Newton asked Jekyll to accompany her and Newton to the Levant to be her companion. Jekyll accepted as Severn Newton was 'one of the best and kindest friends I ever had' and they kept a journal 'illustrated by the two friends'.[5] Social commonplace books and journals were a typical way of organising knowledge and solidifying friendships during the Victorian period.[6]

Journaling the Journey: Image and Words

Jekyll's travel journal was reprinted in her nephew Francis' posthumous memoir of her, published in 1934, which used some of Mary's sketches as illustrations. However, I found a fuller account of the journal in the Severn Family Archive (Birkenhead Collection) as well as a letter on her time in Rhodes from Severn Newton to her older sister Claudia Gale as well as many sketches of their travels (Figure 1). The sketches Mary made of the travel were not landscapes or 'typical' oriental scenes but, reflecting her background as a portrait artist, of the party travelling, the people around them and domestic scenes. The drawings she made for her husband's book were of antiquities, mainly drawn in the British Museum where they met, and one portrait. While scenes of Rhodes Town were etched for Newton's book by her brothers Walter Severn and Arthur Severn from photographs by Dominic Ellis Colnaghi, who had accompanied Newton to Lesvos and Rhodes in the 1850s. Colnaghi was a pioneering photographer and the son of the art dealer Paul Colnaghi, who had commissioned Mary to copy pictures from 1853 onwards. This account of a holiday to Rhodes is therefore comprised from Jekyll's journal, Severn Newton's letter and sketches with an occasional reference to Newton's book. This combination shows the differences in what the two women did and where they could go, in comparison to Newton and his male diplomatic and archaeological colleagues.

Travel writing has become notable as a 'way of seeing' with the stress on visual descriptions in what is a multi-sensory experience.[7] I had this in mind when putting together Severn Newton's words and images with Jekyll's journal in my exhibition *Holiday Sketches: Two artists and an archaeologist go on holiday in 1863*, which was displayed at the Combined Classics Library, Senate House, University of London and then the Portico Library in Manchester in 2025, as well as a zine of their travels. I attempted to create a multi-sensory experience which on the one hand reflects the humorous domesticity of their travel and the other an act of cultural survival. Women's travel writing 'is not as rare as once thought' but what is rare here and has survived is that personal details are kept and jokes about themselves and their fellow travellers included.[8] The direct voices of the Greek and Turkish people are absent, but Jekyll's account and Severn Newton's drawings put them back in the narrative, albeit indirectly and through the observation of two British female artists – a survival of sorts.

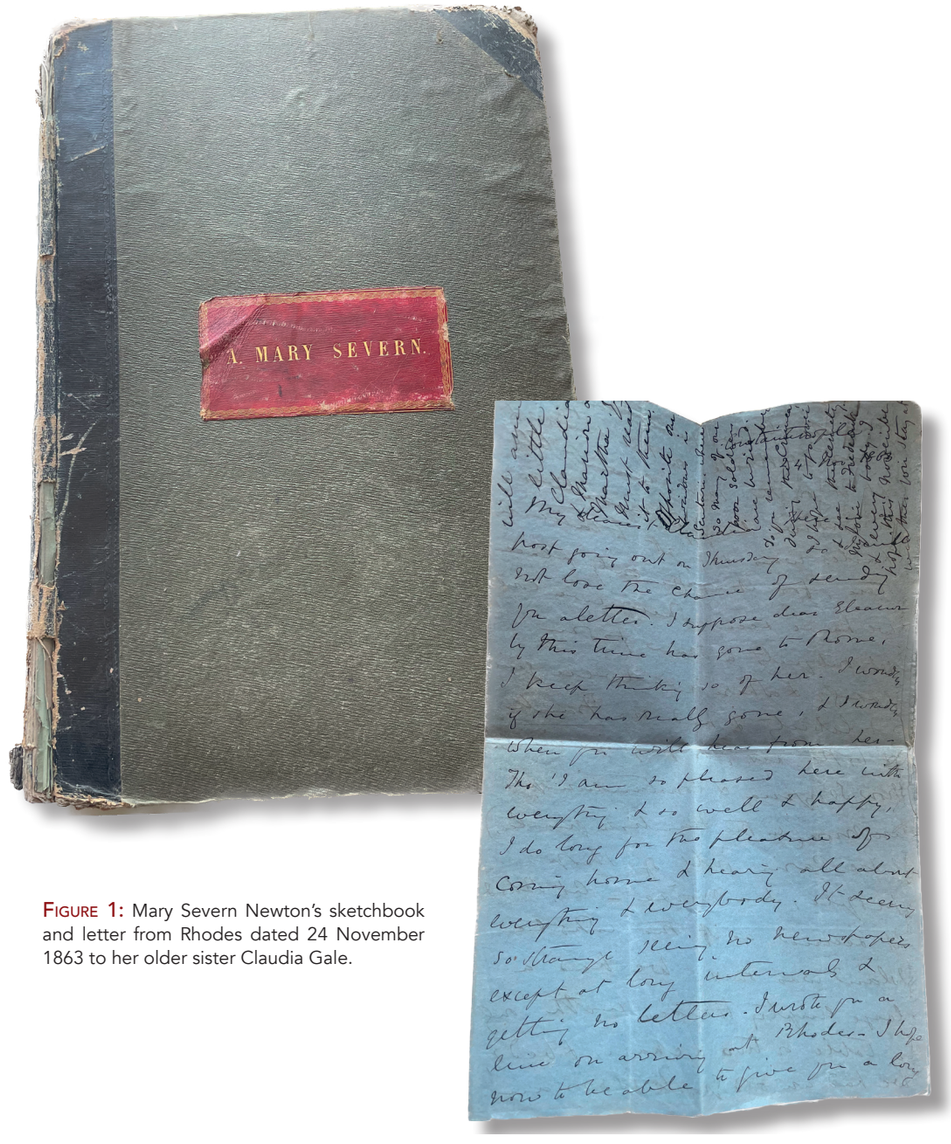


Figure 1: Mary Severn Newton's sketchbook and letter from Rhodes dated 24 November 1863 to her older sister Claudia Gale.

5 Jekyll, Francis (1934), *Gertrude Jekyll. A Memoir,* London.

6 Hess, J.M. (2022), *How Romantics and Victorians Organized Information: Commonplace Books, Scrapbooks, and Albums*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

7 Alù, G., & Hill, S. P. (2018). The travelling eye: reading the visual in travel narratives. *Studies in Travel Writing*, *22*(1), 1–15.

8 Mills, S. (1993). *Discourses of difference: an analysis of women's travel writing and colonialism,* Abingdon: Routledge, 32.

Jekyll's account, unlike Newton's book, was not meant for publication. Neither were Mary's sketches or letters – the overall sketchbook in the archive shows a strong family and personal tradition of making sketches and sharing them as accounts together. There is a sense of immediacy in both the diary and the sketches as well as of domesticity – we don't have observations on the history of the places visited for example. What we do have is a sense of the nature of travel, which was rapidly changing, as they get on cramped train carriages through Germany and Italy. They left London on 13 October 1863 travelling via train through Paris, Stuttgart, Munich and Vienna reaching Trieste via the Semmering Pass on 20 October. Newton was tall and Mary's drawings of their travels via train captured the cramped conditions and his long legs, that had nowhere to go (Figure 2). The rapid expansion of railways in Europe and steamers through the Levant from Italy and France meant that the party benefitted from the mid-century growth of tourism.[9]



Figure 2: Charles Newton and Mary Severn on the train from London to Trieste on October 1863. Drawing by Mary Severn Newton.

They travelled with a steamer from the Austro-Hungarian shipping company. Jekyll recalls passing through Corfu as English troops are preparing to leave after a vote of unification with the Hellenic state by the Greek people. The islands had been under British occupation since the defeat of the French in 1815 and joined Greece in 1864. The party then boarded another steamer to Smyrna on 24 October and spent their time drawing – for example, on 29 October 1863 (Figure 3):

> After breakfast the Captain got a group of Cretans to sit to us; they sat quite still and seemed to think it good fun. Early in the afternoon we got to Smyrna. The approach is beautiful, up a great arm of the sea, the southern shore especially fine – bold mountains plunging straight down into the sea.[10]

9 Pemble, John. (1987). *The Mediterranean passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South*. Clarendon Press, 48
10 Jekyll (1863).



Figure 3: On the steamer to Smyrna drawing Cretans, October 1863.

The development of steamships 'revolutionised travel on the Mediterranean and the construction of railroad lines between oriental cities' for western European travellers leading to greater travel.[11] In fact, the women jointly recorded that this form of travel is changing the western edges of the Ottoman Empire:

> There is a railway just opened from Smyrna to Aidin and worked by an English company. At the station we had a light breakfast of coffee and bread sprinkled with sesame. Two stations on we were joined by Mr. Wood, who is conducting some excavations at Ephesus. The plain where he is at work is two miles from the station and is so unhealthy that no one can live there. It is rather a shock when an English porter opens the carriage door and says 'Ephesus' (Figure 5).[12]

The well-known concept of 'contact zones' (in part) describes the way in which the observations made by travellers always tell us more about the travellers than those observed.[13] Their observations on Jewish people in Smyrna and the tensions with Christians in Rhodes came during a time of great transition in the Ottoman Empire – the reforming Tanzimat period – with a focus and western European scrutiny on the rights of religious and ethnic minorities (or in the case of Rhodes, majorities as the Greek Orthodox population was a majority). During a few days in Smryna, Severn Newton draws Jekyll being 'escorted through Smyrna by a poor relation of the Rothchild family' (Figure 4).

11 Behdad, A. (1994). *Belated travelers. Orientalism in the age of colonial dissolution* Duke University Press, 35-36.
12 Jekyll (1863).
13 Pratt, M. L. (2003). *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (2nd Edition). Taylor and Francis, 4.



Figure 4: Gertrude Jekyll in Smyrna, October 1863.
Drawing by Severn Newton.

This reference to the Jewish banking family denotes the man as Jewish and the picture shows him trying to sell fabric. The Anti-Semitic inference is that all Jewish people are the same, whether rich bankers or impoverished traders, whether in London or Smyrna. This gives us an insight into Severn Newton's view of Jewish people, not of those in the Ottoman Empire. Attitudes are shaped, as Aslı Çırakman puts it, 'by the immediate reality of the authors and travellers, the events of their time and different sorts of encounters with the Orient'.[14] The thriving trade port city of Smyrna had the largest non-Muslim population in Turkey with quarters for Orthodox Christians, Armenians and Jews.

14 Çırakman, A. (2002). *From the "terror of the world" to the "sick man of Europe" : European images of Ottoman empire and society from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth,* P. Lang, 31.



Figure 5: Ephesus, October 1863.
Drawing by Severn Newton.

A Holiday in Rhodes

On 31 October 1863, the party left Smyrna for Rhodes, after purchasing all they needed 'as it is difficult to get anything in Rhodes' and arrived the next day. While on the boat they received 'an invitation from the Pasha's daughter to make drawings in their enclosure', the two female artists went and found the Turkish women 'lying about on mattresses' with the daughter 'in her finest clothes'.[15] Severn Newton wrote to her sister that:

> I cannot tell you how we enjoyed ourselves. . . Charles was so right to take us there [Rhodes] for it was the only place we have been where we could get subjects to draw from easily & where we were quite at liberty and had no Franks to bother us, or pay us visits. Now Smyrna and Constantinople are more (in the Frankish quarters) like Paris, full of shops, people and noise. At Rhodes, it seemed as if the whole island was ours.[16]

Severn Newton, Newton and Jekyll stayed in the former Swedish Consulate in the Old Town of Rhodes in 1863. Gertrude describes walking around the fortifications and meeting a 'Bimbashi' – a senior military commander – who showed them inside some of the stores. The presence of military denotes an occupation, though a lengthy one that had been in place since 1522. The Bimbashi (Binbaşı or Major), who showed the artists around, was *Topçu Miralayı* (Colonel) Süleyman Bey who had spent time in England before taking the position in Rhodes.[17] He was in charge in Rhodes in 1863 under the Ottoman Governor (and historian) Tayyarzâde Atâ.

15 Jekyll (1863)
16 Mary Severn Newton to Claudia Gale, Letter, 24 November 1863,
17 With thanks to Tarik Tuten for this information.



Figure 6: Mary Severn Newton and Gertrude Jekyll in Rhodes port with earthquake stricken de Naillac Tower on the right, November 1863.

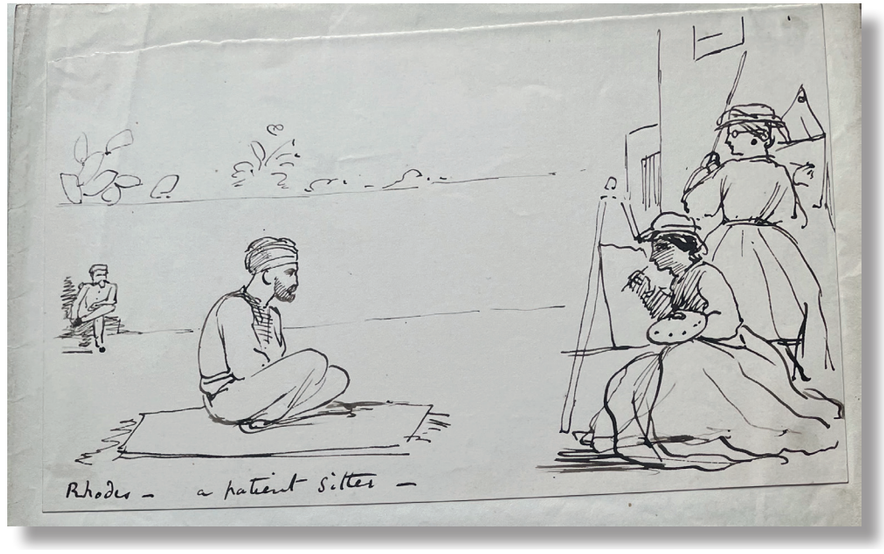


Figure 7: Mary Severn Newton and Gertrude Jekyll drawing a patient sitter in the garden, November 1863.

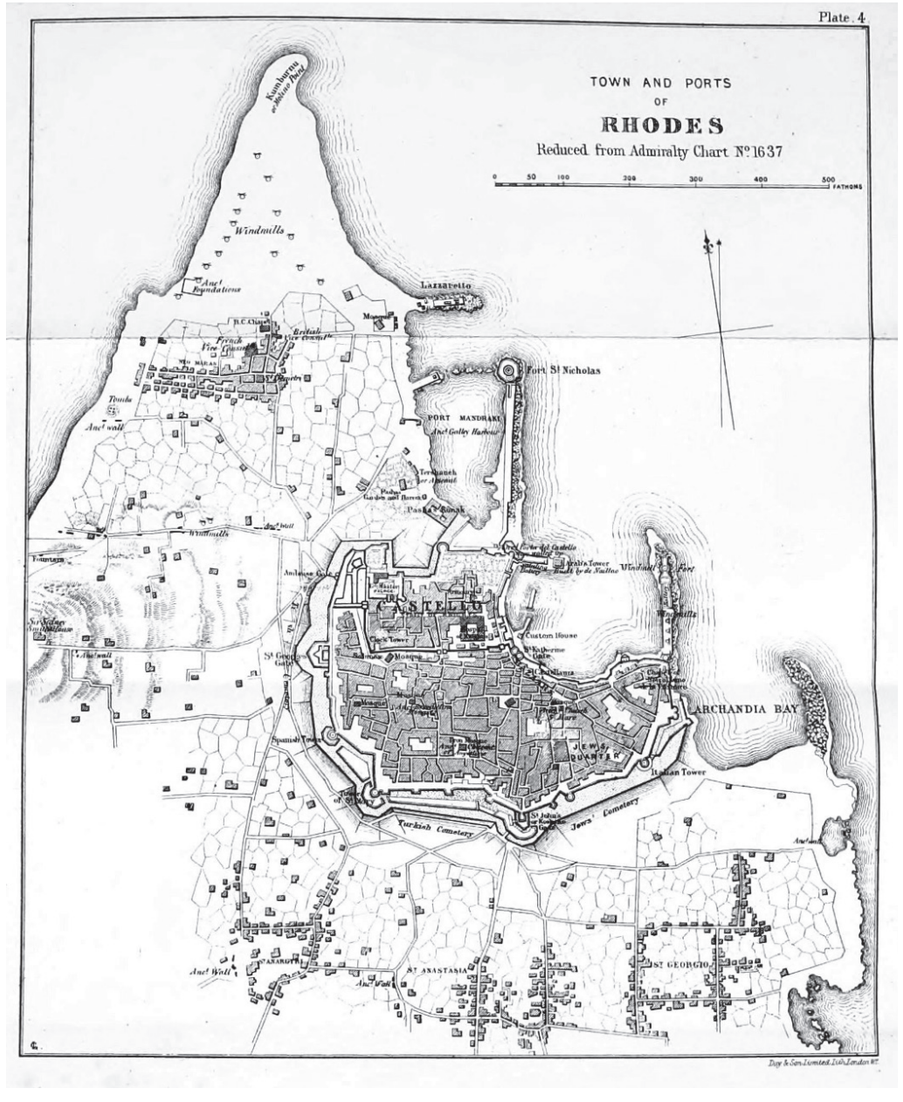


Figure 8: Map of RhodesTown, Plate 4 from *Travels & Discoveries in the Levant* by C. T. Newton, Day & Son, London, 1865

Severn Newton and Jekyll drew many different people, though they tended to socialise with the Turkish elite and the British Consul Alfred Biliotti and his family. Severn Newton wrote:

> We sat in the open air all day, in the shade for the sun was very hot and we had to wear muslin scarf over our hats for our heat. In his [Panni] garden we painted Arabs, Turks, Turkish ladies, priests . . . It was such a pleasure to me to sit out in the open garden and paint.[18]

An Ottoman census carried out in 1884-6 records a population of 30,000 on Rhodes, with 20,711 Christians, 6,487 Muslims, 2690 Jews and 738 foreigners.[19] The sorting of people by religion is historically linked to the rights accorded to different religious communities and the millet system, under which different religious groups organised their own laws. After the Ottoman conquest, the Turks took control of the main city, the Greeks lived outside the walls and the Jewish population lived in a quarter of the Old Town on the East. There had been Jewish people in Rhodes since the Roman period, though many of these left the Catholic controlled island after 1502 due to the persecution by the Iberian Inquisition. The inquisition led to many Spanish and Portugese Jews (Sephardic) leaving for the Ottoman Empire and the relative freedom and autonomy they had there. After 1522 they were encouraged to settle in Rhodes and became a vital part of the community. The map (Figure 8) - Plate 4 in Newton's *Travels and Discoveries* (1865) - shows Rhodes Town with the different millet areas marked.

Signor Panni was an Italian artisan who had been a soldier in the Bersaglieri Corps, so it is likely he had fought in the war for the Italian unification. By 1863 he lived in the former consulate and looked after them by finding them sitters and servants. Mary wrote to her sister Claudia that:

> We had an old Greek woman to cook for us and a Jew man servant belonging to Signor Panni who waited on us. This good Jew Mordecai was perfect and Signor Panni, an old friend of Charles, gave up his whole time to us. He went with us to buy things and found people to sit to us. He was everything to us and Rhodes without Panni would be nothing.[20] (Figure 9)

Jekyll recorded the petty feuds between Maria, their Greek servant, and Mordecai – observing that Maria called him 'that Hebrew'. There was tension between Greek and Jewish people, in part as the Jewish community got enhanced privileges, and in part due to Anti-Semitism. Generally, tensions were minor, but a 'blood libel' in 1840 led to a severe risk of violence against the Jewish community as a Greek boy went missing on the island. There were rumours that his blood had been drunk in a ceremony - the so-called 'Blood Libel'.[21] A serious uprising in Damascus had occurred at the same time over the same Anti-Semitic rumours but in the case of Rhodes both the Ottoman Government and Chief Rabbi in Constantinople intervened before extensive violence took hold. Their trusted servant Mordecai was Sephardic and spoke Spanish/Hebrew – Ladino. Jekyll recorded the family as having red hair and Mordecai and his family sat to be drawn for both artists.

18 Severn Newton (1863).

19 Kaurinkoski, Kira (2012), 'The Muslim Communities in Kos and Rhodes: Reflections on Social Organization and Collective Identities in Contemporary Greece', Slavica Helingiensia 41, Jouko Lindstedt & Max Wahlstrom (eds.), *Balkan Encounters - Old and New Identities in South-Eastern Europe*, Helsinki.

20 Severn Newton (1863).

21 Borovaya, O. (2021) 'The Rhodes Blood Libel of 1840: Episode in the History of Ottoman Reforms', *Jewish Social Studies*, 26 (3), 35–63. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2979/JEWISOCISTUD.26.3.02.



Figure 9: Mary Severn Newton and Gertrude Jekyll at dinner at the Swedish Consulate in Rhodes with Maria, the Greek cook and Mordecai, the Jewish servant, November 1863.

Jekyll and Severn Newton had access to domestic spaces on the edges of the Ottoman Empire that men did not, notably the women's quarters or harem. For example, on 3 November they play a visit 'to a native family who are our near neighbours; a mother with three pretty daughters, Ermine, Zuleika and Fatma. Their faces are much painted, the eyebrows painted to meet between the eyes and their nails and finger tips stained red with henna.' (Figure 10)[22]



Figure 10: Visit to a local Turkish family in Rhodes Town, 3 November 1863

22 Jekyll (1863).



Figure 11: Mary Severn Newton, Gertrude Jekyll and C. T. Newton visiting Hadji Hafız' house in Rhodes Town. Women's quarter (*Harem*), above, with Ottoman architectural features that can still be seen in mansions like Topçubaşı and Hasan Paşa in Rhodes today, and Newton smoking with the Hadji, below.

These visits to the women's part of the houses are not eroticised encounters but cultural ones. On 11 November they visit 'the house of a rich Turk, Hadji Hafiz, while Mr. Newton sat and smoked with him, Mary and I visited his wife.' Jekyll described the women's quarter, where at one end some women were 'grinding corn and cooking', and at the other there was a divan with a wooden partition looking into a garden of orange trees (Figures 6-7). The way she describes their activities (or lack of them) contrasts the work and relative freedom to travel of Severn Newton and herself with their 'idleness' and position in the house. This indicated the tension between the supposed freedoms of European women and the pre-existing stereotypes about women in the Orient:[23]

> One must pity these poor women. They have no education and are perfectly idle; they do nothing but eat and chatter, dress and undress themselves, and paint their faces. They have no furniture except the divan. A small room at the side used for sleeping has also no furniture, only a pile of mattresses and quilts that are unrolled at night.[24]

The women's quarter is segregated and the contrast between the ideal romantic monogamy of male-female couples, arguably at its height in the 1860s in Victorian Britain, clear. Erturkman-Aksay describes similar reactions from the visits of royals to harems in Istanbul in 1869:

> European women approached the local women as victims who lead a life imprisoned in the harems and who have no daily activities other than lying and smoking on the sofas with their Oriental clothes.[25]

Jekyll's journal is not a sexualised description, such as those often found in accounts by men or visual depictions, but a domestic one. The image shows the two artists sketching with another two women in European clothes, presumably the wives of the Biliotti brothers, talking to the Turkish women. Yet, the women, even elite women, were not idle as both Greek and Turkish women would be responsible for the clothes and textiles of their family.[26] The different styles of embroidery that varied from island to island and even town to town fascinated both the women. Severn-Newton describes being on the boat to Constantinople from Smyrna and doing embroidery:

> On board our steamers we often have found Turkish Harems & I like the people. [. . .] They saw me working & I let them try the stitch & I was surprised to see how easily they learnt. They sat on their heels all around me. You would have laughed to have seen me teaching them how to do my slippers. I gave them needles and silk & they said they would try to do some like mine at Constantinople.[27]

Jekyll described Madame Biliotti bringing 'a Greek peasant women' to show them how they made the silk lace from raw silk.

23 Graham-Brown (1988) 4.

24 Jekyll (1863).

25 B. S. Ertürkmen-Aksoy (2023). European women's gaze on both Ottoman Istanbul and the(ir) other. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*: 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2023.2232562

26 Helen Angelomatis-Tsougarakis (2016), 'Maidens and matrons, ladies and labourers: tradition and innovation in Greek women's lives in the Longue Durée', Anastasia Yiangou, George Kazamias and Robert Holland (eds.), The Greeks and the British in the Levant, 1800-1960s: between empires and nations, 63-79: 66.

27 Severn Newton (1863).

On 13 November the Archimandrite Nikandros, who was an old friend of Newton's, visited the holiday party in Rhodes Old Town. The drawing Severn Newton made of him is the only portrait included in her husband's *Travels and Researches* – Volume 1, Plate 12. In the book, Newton recorded going to visit the monastery on 4 May 1853, where he found him to be educated man, persecuted for trying to teach, writing that:

> The classical purity of his Greek forms a striking contrast with the patois of the peasants round him. He has a small library of ancient authors, with which he appeared to be well acquainted.[28]

Newton's contrast between the peasants and the educated priest is typical of his writing and owed much to his own class and religious bias. Severn Newton made a sketch of her drawing the Archimandrite with Newton earnestly speaking to him which, unlike Newton's book, placed them all in Rhodes in 1863 (Figure 12).

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Figure 12: Newton talking to Archimandrite Nikandros while Severn Newton and Jekyll are drawing, 13 November 1863.

On 14 November they draw Mr Biliotti's Turkish canvass, then a 'young Negro' who had asked Biliotti (the English Consul) for 600 piastres 'to buy his freedom' so would do him favours, including being drawn by the two women. They were visited by the Pasha (Tayyarzâde Atâ) a few days later, who asked that they draw some of his entourage. This was their last full day on Rhodes and Gertrude got up 'the root of some kind of Iris' in the cemetery: It shall go home with me and I shall hope to make it grow. Jekyll is best known today for becoming a professional garden designer and botanist, who used plants found and observed on her travels – she later travelled a great deal to France, Italy and Algeria. On 19 November they returned to Smyrna and Mary wrote:

> We were sorry to leave Rhodes but Charles' holidays would not let us stay any longer.

From Smyrna they went to Constantinople, now Istanbul, where Newton carried out work and research for the British Museum, then to Athens, where they visited the former philhellenic fighter and historian George Finlay. Finlay wrote an account of the modern history of Greece and included an account of the conquest of Rhodes, in which he was sympathetic to the Ottoman colonisation of the island due to the slave raids of the Knights of St John. He had visited Newton when he was on Rhodes in 1855. They returned to Britain on a steamer via Messina in Sicily then to Marseilles in France and from there to Paris by train and boat and train to London on 26 December 1863.



Figure 13: Greek man in Rhodes, watercolour, Mary Severn Newton, November 1863

Severn-Newton died in January 1866 and very little of her work is in public galleries. There has been an often-cited assumption that she gave up her work as an artist on marriage and took to copying antiquities for her husband.[29] This could be because most of her work that is accessible is in her husband's book as her portraits before her marriage were for private clients or copying art works for studios. Only a month after her death, two of her watercolour sketches of a "Levantine Lady' and a 'Jewess of Smyrna' made during this 1863 trip were displayed among 676 watercolours at the Dudley Gallery in the Egyptian Hall London. The Dudley Gallery had been founded in 1865 for the purpose of displaying watercolours and Severn Newton's elder brother Walter Severn was the secretary.[30] It is clear that her work was going in a different direction. A tantalising glimpse of Severn Newton's work can be seen in her husband's Will, which he made in 1888 and updated a year later. There are many from the 1863 trip, as well as from visits to Rome and Naples and elsewhere

28 Newton, C. T. (1865), *Travels and Discoveries in the Levant*, London: Day & Son Limited, 152.

29 Nunn, P. Gerrish. (1987). *Victorian women artists*. Women's Press, 36.

30 Hopkinson, M. (2014). Drawings in the Dudley Gallery' "Black and white" exhibitions. *The British Art Journal, 15*, 16–24.

that they made in their short-married life together. One of which from Rhodes – their Jewish servant Mordecai and his family – is recorded as being in Newton's front drawing room. Others from Rhodes include a 'bearded Turk in Rhodes', Tower of de Naillac after the earthquake, the mountains of Lycia from Rhodes, Three Turkish women, The Town Crier (formerly Executioner at Algiers), A Jewess, sketch in oil of three Turkish women in Cemetery and sketch in oil Greek women seated among Cypress Trees. The only colour picture I have so far seen, which happens to be a watercolour is this one from Rhodes, which is in a sketchbook in the family archive (Figure 13)

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Tracing the 1863 holiday to Rhodes during a holiday in 2025

I decided last year that our family holiday would be in Rhodes so I could combine research with sunshine and relaxation. Last year my son and daughter requested to go to Athens to see why I loved the Eastern Mediterranean so much. Fortunately, they liked the city (and the nearby beaches) and wanted to see more of Greece and Turkey, as long as beaches and stopping for long breaks at laid back cafes was involved. I could promise all that at Rhodes and the snorkelling gear took up far more room in the suitcase than my books did. My intention was not just to go to the places that the 1863 tourists did but to trace the different communities of people in the architectural fabric and things they left behind. I was aware that Rhodes had been part of a different Empire before becoming part of Greece in 1947. The geopolitics of changing Empires and States as well as two world wars and their aftermath obviously had an impact on the people who lived there. Despite Rhodes being majority Greek in terms of population, Severn Newton and Jekyll mainly wrote about the Jewish and Turkish people they met, mainly as they were staying in the Old Town where those communities lived. The vulnerability of minorities associated with the old colonial power of the Ottoman Empire is clearly seen in Rhodes and no community was more vulnerable than the Jewish people in the 1930s and 40s.[31]

Rhodes remained part of the Ottoman Empire until 1912, when the Italians occupied the Dodecanese during the Italian-Ottoman War 1911-12 and added these islands to the Italian Empire. This occupation was only internationally ratified in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, in part as the Italians fought alongside the winning Allies in World War One (1914-18). The Art Deco buildings around the 'new town' of Rhodes and near Mandraki harbour are evidence of this occupation – the aquarian is perhaps the prettiest and most colourful. Under the fascist regime of Benito Mussolini (dictator of Italy 1922-43), the Italian occupation of the island gradually became a serious problem for the Jewish community. In 1938 Racial Laws, based on those in Germany, stripped Jews of their assets, banned them from working in most professions and prohibited sexual relations with non-Jewish people. The arrival of Cesare Mariade de Vecchi, a hardline fascist and friend of Mussolini, as governor in 1936 meant increased persecution of Jewish people on the island, including the removal of Jewish gravestones from mixed cemeteries. Less seriously, de Vecchi also rebuilt the Grand Master's Palace with Roman mosaics from neighbouring Kos and crude grandiose architecture and furnishings for a visit by Mussolini that never happened.

Italy entered the Second World War in 1940 on the side of Germany and invaded Greece. After Italian surrender to the Allies in 1943, Germans and hardline Italian fascists occupied Rhodes and won a vicious war against the Italian army in the Battle of Rhodes. On 23 July 1944, the SS rounded Jewish people up in a square on the edge of the former Jewish quarter of the Old Town and deported them to Athens and from there to Auschwitz. Of the 1,604 people deported, only 150 survived.[32] The square is now called the Square of the Hebrew Martyrs and a sombre black memorial inscribed in different languages stands under the shade of gnarled trees that seem knotted together. In the last remaining synagogue in use on Rhodes, the Kahal Shalom Synagogue, a memorial lists the names of all those deported – entire families and all ages. I did not know their servant Mordecai's second name so could not trace whether descendants of his family, whom Severn Newton had painted, were among those deported or whether, like many others, they had emigrated. The adjoining museum did give me a sense of Mordecai's life in Rhodes through a well interpreted display of clothes, objects and papers relating to Jewish people.

The formation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 meant many Muslim Turkish people emigrated from Rhodes to the neighbouring mainland of Turkey during the Italian occupation of the island. A monument to the Allied troops who fought the occupying German army stands in Mandraki, near to the Greek Orthodox Cathedral. The German occupation of Rhodes in 1944-45 was brutal: the civilian population was starved and the island was used to house Italian (and other) Prisoners of War. Glimpses of the plight of the starving people on Rhodes are found in Lawrence Durrell's *Reflections of a Marine Venus* (1953/1960), an account of his time in Rhodes as part of the British army in 1945-47 and his life in Villa Cleobolus, a picturesque yellow villa opposite an Ottoman cemetery. The British governed the island after World War Two until 1947, when Rhodes became part of the Greek State. The conflict in Cyprus in 1974 and various incidents between Greece and Turkey since 1948 have added to further emigration by Muslim Turks from Rhodes. However, there is still a significant Muslim population, which has been added to by refugees from the Syrian conflict as well as a rise in tourism and foreign residents.

There are many obvious traces of the Ottomans around Rhodes Old Town, whether mosques, baths, houses or additional fortifications on the walls. However, it was a recent (in terms of the Ottoman Empire) building that caught my attention. The Hafiz Ahmed Aga Library is opposite the Suleiman Mosque and had been opened in 1793, roughly 10 years before my current place of work the Portico Library in Manchester. This closeness in dates struck me as the way in which historic libraries – particularly those from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – are often described in Britain as a Western European expression of the Enlightenment with their role in gathering and sharing of knowledge. My children were more interested in the fluffy black and white cat, who was guarding the entrance of this ripe peach coloured building. We visited on our last day in Rhodes and found a fruitful oasis of greenery and calm, filled with loquat, lemon, orange, mandarin, banana and date trees. The similarity between stepping away from the busy streets of Rhodes with entering the calmness of the Portico amid the bustling streets of Manchester also struck me.

The main building houses a cool white study room with a dome, decorated by yellow stars on white with sky blue in the centre. Ottoman maps of Rhodes are displayed on the walls and behind the glass at the back are the 1256 books of Islamic learning, hand-written in Arabic and bound in with gorgeous calligraphy on the covers. A fountain is inscribed to the founder Hafiz Ahmed Aga, who was born in Rhodes and became a senior official in the Ottoman Empire. He established the library for use by those who could read Arabic as well as for classes teaching Muslim Turkish children and adults Arabic. The library has a great many religious texts, unlike the Portico, but also

31 Yiangou, A., Kazamias, G., & Holland, R. (2016), 'Introduction', in A. Yiangou, G. Kazamias & R. Holland, R. (eds.) (2016), *The Greeks and the British in the Levant, 1800 – 1960. Between Empires and Nations*, Abington: Routledge, 1-7.

32 This matches the awful statistic that 90 % of all Jewish people from Greece were murdered, with the vast majority sent to the Gas Chambers on arrival. Mazower, M. (1993), *Inside Hitler's Greece: the experience of occupation, 1941-44,* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Arabic texts of science and literature. Like the Portico, this library also had a connection to slavery but rather than being funded by the profits of enslaved labour, the founder left money for the rescue and purchase of Muslim people who were enslaved by the Knights of St John on Malta. (The Knights made money from selling people or using their labour and took them in raids on North Africa.) The Ottoman Empire did, of course, have and use enslaved people but they were not allowed to enslave people who were (already) Muslim.



Figure 14: Hafız Ahmed Agha Library, the family enjoying the shade of the original class room, loquat tree and the water well while patiently waiting for the author, April 2025.

Returning to Manchester, I looked at the books I had chosen for the new version of my exhibition Holiday Sketches that I was updating for display at the Portico Library, which was to be informed by my holiday to Rhodes. There are many books about the Ottoman Empire in the Portico – no surprise given the political and economic interest in the Levant during the long nineteenth century. Manchester grew its cotton exports to Smyrna threefold from 1800 to 1830. Newton's own book *Travels and Researches* is in the collection, as are all those on Greek and Ottoman history by his friend George Finlay. My favourite, though, is one on women in the Ottoman empire by Lucy Garnett and John Stuart-Glennie (1891), *The women of Turkey and their Folklore: with concluding chapters on the origins of matriarchy; the Jewish and Moslem women*. Lucy Mary Jane Garnett was a folklorist and expert on the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire, and travelled across the Middle East and Greece, sometimes with Scottish folklorist John Stuart-Glennie. Like Mary and Gertrude, almost thirty years earlier, Garnett took advantage of her access as a woman to female only spaces and recorded how Turkish, Jewish, Kurdish and traveller women lived. She observed that for most travellers in the Ottoman Empire, 'women seem not to have existed'. Displaying this book with Severn Newton's images and Jekyll's text puts the women back into existence.



Figure 15: Turkish women in Rhodes, Mary Severn Newton, November 1863

Reflecting on this use of books and the similarities (and differences) between the Portico Library and that of the Hafiz Ahmed Aga Library makes me value the conversations we can have across libraries. Conversations in the library are important and so are those between them as these are where connections between different ways of thinking, cultures and people are made and can lead to greater understanding and empathy.

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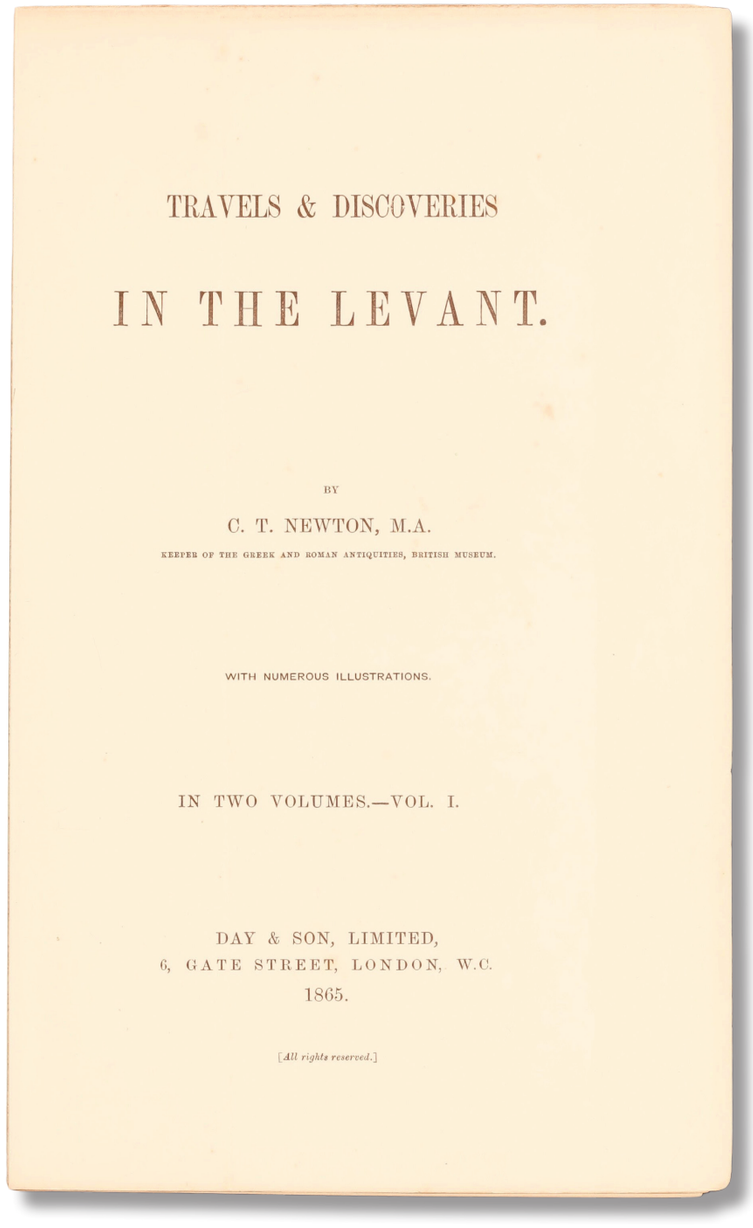
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TRAVELS & DISCOVERIES

IN THE LEVANT.

BY

C. T. NEWTON, M.A.

KEEPER OF THE GREEK AND ROMAN ANTIQUITIES, BRITISH MUSEUM.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

DAY & SON, LIMITED,
6, GATE STREET, LONDON, W.C.
1865.

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Figure 16: Cover of Charles Thomas Newton's 1865 book in two volumes, *Travels & Discoveries in the Levant*, published by Day & Son in London.

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Abidin Pasha in Ottoman Rhodes (1894-1906)

Introduction

During the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), Ottoman Rhodes was widely regarded as an undesirable post for bureaucrats; a place of exile, where officials who had fallen out of favour in Istanbul were sent. The bureaucratic environment on the island was rife with distrust, as officials sought transfers and often reported on one another to curry favour with the Yıldız Palace in Istanbul. Additionally, governing Rhodes posed significant challenges due to its complex international and local dynamics, particularly Greece's interest in the island with its Orthodox Christian majority. This article explores these themes through the career of Abidin Pasha (1839-1906), who served as governor in Rhodes for over twelve years at the turn of the century.

Rhodes became an administrative centre in 1849 when it was designated the capital of the newly established *Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid Eyaleti*, a province uniting the Ottoman Mediterranean islands, the Aegean Archipelago. However, this administrative structure underwent frequent changes. In 1862, the province was reorganized into a subprovince (*mutasarrıflık*) under Mytilene. Five years later, the islands were incorporated into a *vilayet* governed from Kala-i Sultaniye (modern-day Çanakkale). In 1877, the capital moved to Rhodes, only to shift again to Chios in 1880. Finally, in 1887, Rhodes regained its status as the provincial capital, a designation it retained until 1912.[1] Abidin Pasha, a Muslim Albanian and a distinguished Ottoman statesman, played a defining role in this last phase, serving as the longest-tenured governor-general (*vali*) of the province from January 1894 to April 1906. More than a loyal servant of Abdülhamid II, Abidin Pasha was also a Sufi, a scholar (*âlim*), and an intellectual who authored numerous works during his time on the island.

The late Ottoman Empire experienced significant administrative transformations under Abdülhamid II, characterized by increasing centralization, heightened surveillance, and prolonged gubernatorial appointments. The 1890s marked an era of exceptionally long tenures for provincial governors, and Abidin Pasha exemplified this trend. He belonged to the generation of Hamidian bureaucrats whose careers were shaped by the educational and bureaucratic structures of the period. By the late nineteenth century, the older cadre of officials who had risen during the Tanzimat era—a time of extensive state reorganization and the rise of the bureaucratic elite—had largely retired or passed away.[2] Consequently, officials like Abidin Pasha, whose influential appointments were granted under Abdülhamid II, formed the core of the empire's provincial administration.

Abidin ascended rapidly through the Ottoman bureaucracy, embodying the increasing professionalisation of the state's modernising apparatus. According to his personnel register, Zeynelabidin, as his full name was, was born on the 11th of April 1843 in Preveza (in modern-day

1 For more on the provincial organization of Rhodes, see Ali Fuat Örenç, *Yakın Dönem Tarihimizde Rodos ve Oniki Ada*, Istanbul, 2006; Neval Konuk, "Tanzimat Sonrası Şekillenen Cezâir-i Bahr-ı Sefid Vilâyet Merkezi Rodos Hükümet Konağı," *Art-Sanat Dergisi* 9 (2018): 193-213.

2 Abdulhamit Kırmızı, *Abdülhamid'in Valileri: Osmanlı Vilayet İdaresi 1895-1908* (Klasik, 2007).

9-13.

Greece). A polyglot fluent in Turkish, Greek, French, Arabic, Persian, Italian, and Albanian,[3] he epitomised the cosmopolitan nature of the empire's ruling elite. His career began in February 1864 with a three-year tenure among the imperial riflemen at the Sultan's palace. He then transitioned to provincial administration, serving as district governor (*kaymakam*) in Preveza and Narta, followed by postings as governor (*mutasarrıf*) in Erbaa, Tekfurdağı, and Varna. In early 1874, he was appointed as the first Commissioner of the Stock Exchange in Istanbul, with brief additional assignments before his first major provincial appointment in 1879. He served as an Imperial Reform Commissioner in Diyarbekir, Mamuretülaziz, and later Sivas, where he was appointed as governor-general (*vali*). His governorship in Sivas lasted only five months before he was transferred to Salonica in February 1880. His administrative career was briefly interrupted by a short tenure as Foreign Minister (June-September 1880) before he resumed provincial governorships in Adana, Sivas (for a second term), Ankara, and finally, the Mediterranean Islands. He died on the 19th of April 1906, shortly after arriving in Istanbul from Rhodes to attend a meeting of the Imperial Reform Commission on Yemen at the Yıldız Palace.

Abidin Pasha's tenure as governor of the Mediterranean Islands, with Rhodes as its centre, coincided with the peak of Abdülhamid II's centralization efforts. Despite the relative insignificance of the islands in the broader Ottoman administrative structure, Rhodes played a crucial role in the empire's surveillance network. Several challenges marked his governorship. First, he deeply resented his assignment to Rhodes, which kept him far from his family members, social circles, and central politics in Istanbul. Second, he faced relentless scrutiny, as his subordinates frequently reported on him to the palace in the hopes of securing better positions. Lastly, he had to navigate the island's intricate ethno-religious landscape, managing tensions among its diverse population. While doing his job, he used his intellectual depth and expanded it in the cosmopolitan world of the island. Abidin Pasha is also known for his scholarly works reflecting his academic breadth. Remarkable is his translation of and commentary on Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi's world-renowned *Masnawi* from Persian, and the *Qasida al-Burda*, a famous ode in praise of the Prophet Muhammad, from Arabic.[4]

I will examine Abidin Pasha's governance of Rhodes in the context of Ottoman provincial administration under Abdülhamid II, highlighting the complexities of his tenure, the bureaucratic rivalries he endured, and his role in the broader structure of Hamidian rule.

1. Rhodes as Exile

The British Consul in Ankara, Cumberbatch, reported to Sir Nicholson, the British Ambassador in Istanbul, on the 16th of December 1893, that the dismissal of Ankara Governor Abidin Pasha, although he had been appointed as the Governor of the Archipelago, with its centre in Rhodes, is nevertheless an event confirming that the Sultan is not pleased with him. The Armenian uprising in Yozgat has aroused considerable suspicion, as the matter is not merely the dismissal of him but also the immediate dispatch of an investigative commission to the region.[5] The decision to send Abidin Pasha from Ankara to the governorship of the Mediterranean Islands was put quite differently in the official narrative, which hid the royal scorn. Accordingly, his transfer was a routine administrative change, with his predecessor Akif Pasha retiring due to old age.[6] This dual narrative reflects a key pattern in late Ottoman bureaucratic politics: outwardly, provincial appointments were framed as orderly and strategic, but in reality, they were often punitive measures cloaked in bureaucratic language.

Akif Pasha died quite soon in the last days of 1893 in Istanbul shortly after leaving the island and was buried in the cemetery of the Fatih Mosque; a fate that will be shared by his successor Abidin. The governor-general of Sivas, Memduh Bey (later Pasha, Minister of the Interior, 1895-1908), replaced him in Ankara.[7]

Abidin Pasha tried hard to prevent his removal by sending a detailed report not only to show his endeavours during the Yozgad events but also his general achievements in the Ankara province he served for almost nine years.[8] His reluctance to move to Rhodes was obvious from the beginning. His appointment happened on the 13th of December 1893. In a telegram he sent on the evening of the 16th, he confirmed his departure from Ankara (*şimdi hareket eden trenle azîmet eyledim*).[9] On Tuesday the 19th, he went to the Sultan's Chamber to ask to be allowed to leave for his place of duty next Thursday - and a raise in payment for him and his son,[10] trying to turn his reluctance to move to Rhodes into an opportunity. However, he was still in Istanbul on the last day of the year. On the 31st of December, the Sultan's Chamber had requested to promptly proceed to his place of duty, "as it is not appropriate for the province to remain without a governor for an extended period, and it was even reported that foreign navies were on the move there." He was also asked to see the Sultan before leaving Istanbul.[11] So, he arrived in Rhodes the new year, early in 1894.

At his audience, he must have politely made his reluctance felt by the Sultan, as a royal decree was issued on the 8th of March 1894, the first day of the holy Ramadan, ordering that the sum of 5.000 Piastres, which had been allocated in addition to his principal salary of 17.000 Piastres while serving as governor-general of Ankara province, be paid as before.[12] This favour silenced him for a while regarding demands for a salary increase. However, he will break his silence on that theme at the turn of the century. In a letter he wrote from Rhodes on the 4th of January 1900, he listed the services rendered by his ancestors and himself to the Ottoman State and added that,

3 "Türkçe ve Yunanca ve Fransızca ve Arabî ve Farisî ve İtalyan lisanlarında derece derece tekellüm ve ekserinde kitabet edebiliyor ve Arnavudca dahi söyler," BOA, DH.SAİDd. 1/252. The personnel file, which leans on a questionnaire filled by himself, explicitly uses "Yunanca" instead of "Rumca" for his Greek language. Moreover, it mentions he wrote poems in this language: "Yunanca bazı eş'ârı vardır."

4 His other works will be mentioned later on. On his portrait as a Muslim scholar, see Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri* 1299-1915, eds. A. Fikri Yavuz and İsmail Özen, Istanbul 1972, Vol. 2, 47; Abidin Paşa, "*Şarih* ve Mütercim-i Kitab Abidin Paşa'nın Muhtasar Tercüme-i Hali", *Tercüme ve Şerh-i Mesnevi-i Şerif* (İstanbul: 1324), Vol.I, 4-6; Abdülkadir Gölpınarlı, *Mevlana'dan Sonra Mevlevilik* (İstanbul: İnkılap ve Aka, 1983), 143-145; Kemal Yavuz, "Mesnevi-i Şerif ile Alakalı Olarak Cevdet Paşa'nın Abidin Paşa'ya Yazdığı Mektup", *TDED*, XXIV-XXV, 441-454.

5 *Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler Cilt 16 (25 Ekim 1893-19 Aralık 1893)*, Başbakanlık Arşiv Araştırma Kurulu Seri I-No.16, Istanbul 1989, p. XVIII. For a thick archival file on the process leading to Abidin Pasha's dismissal, see Y.PRK.BŞK 34/70, 28 C 1311.

6 "Cezâir-i Bahr-i Sefîd Valisi Akif Paşa hazretleri zaten şeyhûhatından bahisle Dersaâdet'e celbi hakkında isti'tâfta bulunmakta olduğundan müşârün-ileyhin ileride tekâüd maaşı dahi tahsisiyle sâye- i merâhim-vâye-i hazret-i padişahîde istirahat etmek üzere Dersaâdet'e celbiyle Ankara Valisi devletlü Âbidin Paşa hazretlerinin dahi Cezâir-i Bahr-i Sefîd vilayeti valiliklerine icrâ-yı memuriyetleri," BOA, İ. DH. 1310/10, 1311 C 4.

7 İbid, and BOA, İ.HUS 19/17, 1311 C 6.

8 BOA, Y.MTV 88/20, 1311 C 3.

9 BOA, Y.MTV 88/63, 1311 C 7.

10 BOA, Y.PRK.BŞK 34/41, 1311 C 10.

11 BOA, İ.HUS 19/61, 1311 C 22.

12 His total salary of 22.000 Piastres (*Kuruş*) was reduced to 19.800 Piastres in March 1897, but increased end of 1900 to 30.000 Piastres, and in October 1903 to 40.000 Piastres. BOA, DH.SAİDd. 1/252.

> In the most important offices where I have continuously served for thirty-eight years, my humble actions in matters of public works, education, and other affairs are substantiated by my deeds and official documents. During the last Greco-Ottoman War, when we were unable to find imperial ships in the Aegean islands, the measures I took and my personal journey to the most perilous locations at the time ensured the security of this province under the auspices of His Majesty the Sultan. This requires no further explanation. As for my intellectual contributions, my numerous published works suffice as evidence of my service. Despite enduring various hardships for many years due to the intrigues of my enemies, not a single word contrary to loyalty and devotion has ever been uttered by my humble pen or tongue, which possess proficiency in several languages. After the warming up introduction counting his services, he comes to the main point, his demands of decorations and salary increase:
>
> Many individuals who once served under my command now adorn their chests with decorated Orders of *Murassa Osmânî*, other decorations, and gold medals, while I have been left with only a Silver Medal. When I was Minister of Foreign Affairs, individuals were holding the position of *mutasarrıf* who earned a salary of six thousand piastres; now, they have been appointed as *vâlîs* and receive more than thirty thousand piastres. Yet, despite having a large family, I, in my humble state, receive only eighteen thousand piastres as salary.[13]

The last number was impossible, but it seems that he did not hesitate to play with the numbers, as it is known from his personnel register that his monthly salary was already 30.000 Piastres for a year. However, his insisted efforts in the next two years will work out as his salary increased to 40.000 in October 1903. But in the short term, he used many tactics to persuade the Sultan, in vain. A week after the complaint above, on the 13th of January 1900, he expressed his desire to return to Istanbul or its vicinity. He wanted either to be transferred to Bursa, or the Imperial State Council, or to retire and live with his family in İstanbul.[14]

Throughout his tenure, Abidin Pasha sought transfer to more prestigious posts or retirement, citing insufficient salary and challenging living conditions. He continuously complained about inflation in prices, which made it hard for him to live with the same salary. For example, in a letter written from Rhodes in October 1901, he lamented once again that his salary had not kept pace with inflation. This time he added the problem of delays in salary payment:

> Under the auspices of His Majesty the Sultan, those who served as *mutasarrıfs* with a salary of five to six thousand piastres while I was Minister of Foreign Affairs, now receive more than twenty-five to thirty thousand piastres. In contrast, after the deferral [of payments of salary portions], I have remained with a salary of only eighteen thousand piastres. Everything is expensive in the Archipelago, and since my family is large, my salary is insufficient to cover my humble expenses. If I were in the imperial capital and solely engaged in my own affairs, there is no doubt that I could earn enough money each month to sustain myself. Therefore, in light of my previous petitions, I humbly request either my appointment as a member of the Council of State or my retirement. If neither of these options is granted, then, out of necessity, I respectfully plead for an increase in my salary so that I may properly manage my affairs.[15]

All officials faced financial difficulties. Their salaries went unpaid for months. Abidin Pasha, observing that the officials had not received their salaries for months, inquired about the possibility of a payment in honour of the imperial enthronement celebration.[16] Requests for funds can be viewed as an ironic element of the enthronement celebrations.

Another trump that Abidin Pasha used was his age and health conditions. In a telegram to the Sultan's office in February 1899, he complains about his health, and asked to live his remaining years with his family in Istanbul. When not answered, a couple of days later, he sends another telegram. This time he spoke of his fatigue and rheumatic pains resulting from 38 years of state service. He complained about the humidity in Rhodes and that it is exacerbating his suffering from discomfort, with swollen feet for several months, and experiencing aches and pains throughout various parts of his body. He expressed that he could not perform even the simplest duties, let alone governorship, and that since he was unable to work, both the state suffered losses, leaving him feeling guilty about his inability to fulfil his obligations. He stated that if he returned to Istanbul, he would not meet with anyone, local or foreign, and would devote himself solely to worship. In a telegram sent ten days later, he mentioned that a medical report had determined a four-centimetre swelling in his right foot. The doctors advised Abidin Pasha to visit a hot spring. For this reason, he requested a meeting with Halil Bey, the governor of Bursa, who was 'famous for its hot springs." He stated that if his request were granted, he would go directly to Bursa via Ayvalık without delay.[17] On another occasion, he pleaded for a pension due to the illness of his eyes.[18]

> "Due to having served for thirty-eight uninterrupted years under the auspicious shadow of His Majesty the Sultan in numerous arduous and demanding official positions, both my mind and body have naturally become weary (akıl ve beden yoruldu),"

he uttered in a telegram he wrote in November,

13 BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 49/45, 1317 N 3.

14 "Ya Hüdavendigar valiliğine ya Şura-yı Devlet azalığına tayin-i acizanemin veya evlad u ahfadımla beraber Deraliyye'de bulunub deavat-ı hayriyyet-ayat-ı hazret-i padişahî ile meşgul olmak üzere tekaüdlüğümün icrası zımnında, bugün Mâbeyn-i Hümayun Başkitabet-i celilesiyle Bâbıâlî'ye takdim eylediğim telgrafname-i acizanemin is'afını merhamet-i bî-nihayet-i hilafetpenâhîden hassaten tazarru eylerim", BOA, Y.PRK.UM 49/50, 1317 N 13.

15 "Rodos'tan Şifre: Sâye-i hazret-i padişahîde çâkerleri Hariciye Nazırı iken beş altı bin kuruş maaş ile mutasarrıflıkda bulunmuş olanlar şimdi yirmi beş otuz bin kuruşdan ziyade maaş alub çakerleri tecilatdan sonra on sekiz bin kuruş maaşla kaldım. Cezayirde [Adalarda] her şey bahalı, ailem kesîr olduğundan, maaşım masârif-i acizaneme kifayet etmiyor. Deraliyye'de bulunub kendi işlerimle münhasıran meşgul olacak olsam ayda idareme kafi akça kazanacağım çâkerlerince şübhesizdir. Binaenaleyh bâ-maruzat-ı sâbıka-i acizanem vechile, Şura-yı Devlet Azalığı'na tayinimin veya tekaüdlüğümün icrası ve bu iki surete müsaade buyurulmadığı takdirde idare edecek yolda maaşımın tezyîdi hasbezzarure müsterhamdır", BOA, Y.PRK.UM 57/48, 1319 C 25.

16 BOA, Y.PRK.UM 55/78, 1319 CA 23.

17 BOA, Y.PRK.UM 45/8 BAK, 16 L 1316

18 BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 59/64, 1320 CA 9.

> "Therefore, I humbly request, like my peers, to be appointed to a suitable position with an appropriate salary as a member of the Council of State.[19]

Abidin Pasha did not give up for years. He requested at different times to be taken from the islands with different excuses. He asked to be appointed to Salonica.[20] He repeated his demand for retirement in a kindly manner, years after, in October 1904.[21]

When after all these fluttering he did not get even permission to visit Istanbul, he asked for his son to come to the islands. Such wishes seem to be mostly rejected. In his first months in Rhodes, he asked for permission for his son, Rasih Bey, then a member of the Imperial Customs Council, to come to the island for three months to see his unwell mother, which got no allowance.[22] But a dozen years later, Rasih got the allowance because mother's illness got serious. This is known from a communication dated the 27th of March 1904:

> As my wife, whose illness is well known, has become bedridden and, according to the doctors here, is not expected to live more than forty days, and as her severe suffering deeply distresses us all, we are plunged into a state of helpless sorrow. Moreover, my son, Rasih Bey, is also in poor health. Despite his own condition, he has not left his ailing mother's bedside for a single moment. However, as we all consider it the greatest honor to sacrifice ourselves for the execution of the imperial decree and to demonstrate our loyalty and service, he will set out for the Imperial Capital in four days by boarding the postal steamer that will stop at Rhodes, in full compliance with the sovereign will, despite both his mother's critical condition and his own frail health.[23]

Writing from Mytilene on the 9th of September 1904, Abidin Pasha wishes Rasih back in the islands, probably after the death of his wife:

> "Since I am staying in the countryside (taşra), leaving my children and grandchildren behind, I beg you to please allow my son Rasih Bey, who is my regular guest (ber-mu'tad), to come here with permission, to be with me for at least a while. I beg you to please ease the pain of my humble heart."[24]

When Galib Pasha, the governor (*mutasarrıf*) of Mytilene, was afflicted with cancer and departed for Istanbul for treatment, it became clear, given his health condition, that he had no intention of returning. Abidin sought to take advantage of this situation and proposed his son for the position on the 23rd of April 1905:

> My devoted son, Rasih Bey, with his exceptional intelligence, competence, and extraordinary ability, as well as his meritorious service of fifteen years as a member of the Board of Revenues, his status among the high-ranking officials, and above all, his unwavering loyalty to His Imperial Majesty, has earned the right, like his peers, to be appointed as a governor under the auspicious patronage of the Sultan. However, as he wishes to remain close to me and to be honored with the opportunity to serve His Majesty on a broader scale, he has agreed to accept the position of Mutasarrıf of Mytilene. Therefore, if Rasih Bey were to be appointed in place of Galib Pasha to the governorship of Mytilene, this would not only restore order in the region but also ensure that Rasih Bey, being well-versed in Turkish, Greek, and French, would render exceptional services in such an important location as Mytilene. I personally vouch, beyond my position, for his ability to fulfil this responsibility with great distinction.[25]

However, his move did not echo in Istanbul.

His correspondence with Istanbul was always aimed at winning the Sultan's favour so that he could return to the main stage of politics in Istanbul. This is why he wrote about general political or international issues not specifically related to his province. At the end of 1903, he submitted urgently requested reports, pages long, on the Balkan Question and the politics of the Great Powers in Ottoman Europe.

Since he was unable to secure a transfer elsewhere, his last resort was to try to make Chios or Lesbos the provincial capital instead of Rhodes. Abidin Pasha constantly sought opportunities to leave Rhodes and found various reasons to justify his departures. Two months after he arrived in Rhodes, Abidin uttered about security issues in the province, assuring on the one hand the Sultan that he works "day and night to make sure nothing bad happens." However, he needs to going round and inspect the islands for which he needs at least two fast steamers. One, named Hanya, he provided from the Navy, and asks for an additional one.[26] From the times and places of his reports, one can say that Abidin was often away, in Chios or Mytilene, mostly from early April to mid-September.[27] But he seems not using the mentioned steamer(s) for longer stays, at least not on his way back to Rhodes. From his report on the 22nd of August 1895, we learn that he was in Mytilene and that "a postal steamer stops at Rhodes from Mytilene every 15 days. But after this season, due to adverse weather conditions, weeks may pass without a steamer arriving. Therefore, I will return to the provincial capital tomorrow with the postal steamer that will stop here."[28] In the same report, he states that British Navy Vice Admiral Vanvil [Walwyn] visited the government office and visited him. A while later, he and the district governor of Mytilene went to the admiral's ship to return the visit.

In his last years, he exaggerated his stays in Mytilene. He seems not to bother himself anymore

19 "[A]kranım misillü münasip maaşla Şûrâ-yı Devlet azalığına tayin-i âcizânem," BOA, YA.HUS, 401/39, 14 B 1317

20 BOA, Y.PRK.UM 62/2, 1320 ZA 20.

21 "Tekaüdlüğüm icra buyrulduğı halde, mütebaki ömrümü müftehiran de'avât-ı hayriyet-ayât-ı cenab-ı hilafetpenâhî ile ikmal etmiş olurum", BOA, Y.PRK.UM 71/97, 1322 Ş 8.

22 "Keyifsiz bulunan validesini görmek üzere...", YA.HUS 293/21, 6.10.1311.

23 "Harem-i çakeranemin malum olan illetinden esir-i firaş olması ve kırk günden ziyade yaşaması ğayr-i mümkin bulunduğu burada bulunan etibba tarafından tahmin edilmesi," BOA, Y.PRK.UM 69/52, 1322 M 21.

24 "Çâkerleri evlad u ahfadımdan dur olarak taşrada kaldığımdan, hiç olmazsa mahdum-ı acizanem Rasih Bey kulları bir müddet nezd-i çâgerânemde bulunmak içün, ber-mu'tad müşarünileyh Rasih Bey'in mezunen buraya gelmesine müsaade ile kalb-i mahzun-ı acizanemin bu suretle tesririni istirham eylerim", BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 70/117, 1322 C 28.

25 BOA, Y.PRK. UM 75/26, 1323 S 17.

26 "[H]iç bir fenalık çıkmamak içün çâkerleri leyl ü nehâr çalışmakdayım. Bu vilayetde ara sıra adaları geşt ü güzâr içün ekalli iki seri' vapurun vücudu muktezî olub," BOA, Y. MTV 92/11, 1311 N 3.

27 BOA, Y.PRK.UM 69/52, No. 2 and 3, 1322 M 21.

28 BOA, Y.PRK.UM 32/91, 1313 RA 1.

with directions from Istanbul. On the 17th of September 1904, the Ministry of the Interior asked him to return to Rhodes after a long stay in Mytilene: "Since Your Excellency has been residing in Mytilene for the past five or six months, and as it is not appropriate for the provincial centre to remain vacant for such an extended period if there is no reason necessitating your continued stay there, it is required that you indicate when you intend to return to the centre."[29] At first he answered the next day, a Sunday, that "if the Austrian Postal Steamer operating to Rhodes stops by Mytilene next Tuesday, I will return to the provincial centre." But then on Monday, he decided not to:

> There is intelligence that some Greek agitators will enter Mytilene illegally. Given the significance of this intelligence and the fact that, as confirmed by the shipping agencies yesterday, there will be no steamer to Rhodes for another ten days, and since there are currently no urgent matters at the provincial center, it has been deemed necessary, as a matter of expediency, that I extend my stay in Mytilene a little longer, as I hereby report.[30]

Only one month later, on Tuesday, the 18th of October 1904, he left for Rhodes. His message to the palace brought up old themes like mentioning enemy intrigues (what makes him look more paranoid), his years of service (forty-two by now) and asking for retirement:

> I have now boarded the steamer and set out towards the provincial center. Although, in proportion to my great loyalty and devotion to our most exalted and sacred benefactor, I become the target of the pursuits and intrigues of enemies and malicious individuals, I entrust my thoughts to the Almighty God and the justice of my most exalted benefactor. Moreover, due to my service of forty-two years to the Eternal and Everlasting Ottoman State, and the distinguished favors I have previously received from His Highness, the Shadow of the Caliphate, I find solace and peace of mind.
>
> Nevertheless, if the statements, exaggerations, and insinuations of my enemies become so excessive as to disturb His Sacred Highness, then rather than allowing my most exalted benefactor to be troubled on my account, I would prefer that my retirement be enacted. In that case, I would complete the remainder of my life with pride, offering prayers and blessings for the well-being of His Highness, the Shadow of the Caliphate.
>
> However, my enemies have not been satisfied with the intrigues they orchestrated in Istanbul. According to the reliable information I have now received, they have sought, through deceitful and scheming individuals aligned with their temperament in Rhodes, to arrange the composition of a slanderous denunciation. They have presumed that this will serve as a pretext for my humble return to Rhodes and cause harm to my person.[31]

2. Under Constant Surveillance: The Politics of *Jurnal*s

The increasing pressure of surveillance and intimidation made the governors uneasy in their provinces. They could not afford to make mistakes, and when they did, they could not afford to let the informants know, as they forwarded any such information to the court. Any movement of the governors was immediately informed to the palace, even by the pettiest officials.[32] Those governors who were ex-ministers and sent to governorships to be removed from İstanbul, were especially observed and denounced to the palace through *jurnal*s, the written reports of informants. These *jurnal*s reflected the precariousness of governance under Abdülhamid II's regime, where personal loyalties and rivalries often shaped bureaucratic relations. Denouncers engaging him in financial matters included the harbour master of İstanbul who once reported that Rasih Bey was buying the steamer "Sakız" for six thousand liras. If the steamer was in fact bought by his father it was a mystery to be solved and reported later.[33]

Like many provincial governors, Abidin Pasha also faced persistent scrutiny. His assistant governor, Sururi Bey, acted as an informant on him, forwarding numerous complaints and allegations to the palace. When his efforts to get rid of him by dismissal did not come to a result, the governor changed his tactics. On the 3rd of October 1896, he reported to the palace that the English and Greek consuls were trying to manipulate the local Greeks to demand a Christian assistant governor. Abidin Pasha advised İstanbul either to abolish the assistantship of this province or to appoint a Christian assistant-governor and change the present assistant's office to another vilayet.[34] Indeed, Istanbul will use this argument to dismiss Sururi. Abidin triumphed over his assistant on the 9th of December 1896 when, "As part of the reforms whose implementation had been decided, the appointment of non-Muslim officials as deputy governors in certain provinces became necessary, and since the aforementioned individual had already been designated for employment in a district governorship, he was dismissed from the said deputy governorship."[35]

However, in the two months until his dismissal, Sururi became a big headache for Abidin. End of November, Abidin Pasha wrote to the palace that his assistant, in connection with exiled officials, prepared a letter of complaint with fake seals, describing this act as "one of his endless tricks."[36] Sururi, as predicted by the governor, reported two weeks later that the French dragoman wanted his dismissal and it would be seen as a failure to act on the wishes of a foreigner. A friend of Sururi heard this and surprisedly told that there was not such a plot. Sururi supposedly answered, "I did not write

29 "Zat-ı asafanelerinin beş altı aydan beri Midillü'de ikamet buyurmalarından ve merkez-i vilayetin tul müddet hali kalması maslahaten muvafık olmamasından naşi orada ikameti mucib esbab bulunmadığı surette ne vakit merkeze avdet buyuralacağının iş'arı," BOA, Y.PRK. UM 71/11, 1322 B 9.

30 "İstihbarat-ı mebhusenin ehemmiyetine ve zaten on günden evvel Rodos'a vapur olmadığı dün acentalardan bittahkik anlaşıldığı gibi, merkez-i vilayette şimdilik hiçbir müstacel iş olmadığına binaen biraz daha Midilli'de temdid-i ikamet-i çâkerânem hasbe'l-maslahat zaruri görülmüş olduğu maruzdur," ibid.

31 BOA, Y.PRK.UM 71/97, 1322

32 "Elyevm hareket eden Nemçe'nin Apollo vapuruyla zat-ı vilayetpenâhînin Lazistan'a azimet etdiği maruzdur, ferman 25 Mayıs 1321 Trabzon İskele memuru Kolağası Necib", BOA, Y.PRK. ASK 230/2, 1323 R 1.

33 "Reji İdaresi'nin elyevm Çeşme'de bulunan Sakız vapurunun Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid valisi Abidin Paşa'nın mahdumu Cemiyet-i Rusumiye Azasından Rasih Bey tarafından altıbin liraya satın alınmak üzere bulunduğu", BOA, Y.PRK.ASK. 169/88, 1319 S 3.

34 "İlerude mucib-i tasaddî'ât olmamak ve saye-i asayişvâye-i cenab-ı cihanbanide cari olan itaate halel gelmemek ve ahaliyi şikayâta alışdırmamak içün işlerin zaten sıhhati hasebiyle ya vali muavinliğinin bu vilayetde lağvi veya kîl'üş-şikaye bu vilayete bir Hristiyan muavinin ve burada bulunan muavinin dahi başka mahalle tayini mukteza-yı hikmet ve maslahatdan olduğu," BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 35/108, 1314 R 25.

35 Only on 21 April 1898, Sururi got a new appointment, this time as the Governor of Hama (Hama Sancağı Mutasarrıflığı'na), BOA, DH.SAİDd. 76/199.

36 "Muavin Sururi Bey'in nihayetsiz olan manevralarından biri", BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 36/41, 1314 C 23.

the truth, but I write things to cause an impression on the Imperial Chamber."[37] Some days later, the governor denounced his *muavin* with other intrigues: Sururi claimed that the governor gave a certain political fugitive, "Firârî" Ahmed Bey, now an exile in Rhodes, a book as present, with a dedication "a souvenir from the Governor Pasha" (*Vali Paşa'nın yâdigârıdır*). However, the inspector determined that the dedication was written by a senior clerk in Rhodes, the *Mektubi Mümeyyizi* Tahir Bey. The governor also denied denouncements of Sururi, i.e. that he bought all his necessities from Paris, or that he had a conversation with the exiled Redif Pasha. He made a counterattack, claiming Sururi's correspondence with and help in the escape of the exiles.[38]

Abidin seems to have been obsessed with his assistant governor and did not stop sending reports on him. Three days after the dismissal, on the 12th of December 1896, he wrote that after new findings of further investigations of the inspector on Sururi's case, the latter was now close to being sentenced. He supposedly told some consuls and other foreigners that he was employed by the palace and killed two Armenians during former uprisings in İstanbul. Abidin Pasha, added that though Sururi shocked these people with his fabricated slander to the Sultan's Chamber, he luckily convinced the French consul's dragoman, who forwarded him this "treacherous expression," that his assistant had mental health issues, and was sometimes not able to control his speech. On his request, the consul gave his word, that he would not talk or write to anyone on this matter. [39]

Abidin Pasha's trouble with Sururi did not come to an end even after he achieved his dismissal.[40] Supposedly, his ex-assistant provoked a certain Salih Efendi, who was dismissed by Abidin from the post office in Rhodes, to bribe the governor. Salih Efendi, with a signature as director of an oppositional newspaper in Egypt, the *Kanun-i Esasi*, declared that he is about to publish a treatise praising him, denigrating and slandering Sururi Bey, and speaking against the state dignitaries, and that "if I do not send Fifty Liras within fifteen days, he will publish the treatise against me."[41] Rhodes was quite often receiving such letters from Egypt. A letter recently arrived by post, on the 7th of July 1902, bearing a Cairo postmark and addressed to his name. Inside, a postcard was found featuring an image, purportedly of the Sultan. Beneath the image, a caption was inscribed, and on the reverse side, there was a curse written in the name of the Sultan, with what was falsely claimed to be his signature.[42]

Such a universe of distrust prompted governors to seek trustworthy subofficials they knew from previous posts. This trend also reflects their dependence on personal relationships, loyalties, and connections, as well as a lack of adequately trained personnel. For instance, upon arriving in Rhodes, Abidin's successor requested Captain Zekeriyya Efendi from the Syrian gendarmerie regiment.[43] Abidin himself asked for the change of some of his subordinates, including the governors of Chios and Limnos, as soon as he arrived in Rhodes.[44]

3. Local Dynamics and Ethno-religious relations

The Mediterranean Islands' diverse population required careful navigation of intercommunal tensions. Local dynamics and ethno-religious relations bothered Abidin Pasha. Reports suggest that foreign consuls exerted influence on local governance in favour of the Christian majority, complicating the administration's efforts to maintain imperial authority in many ways.

The Ottoman government had to show off its muscles in state architecture, at least: the construction of a modern government building beginning in 1888 was only completed during Abidin Pasha's term.[45] The first thing as governor he did after taking office was to move the Muslim cemeteries next to the churches and build more structures than ever before: Turkish schools, military hospital, warehouses in the port and his residence, etc.[46] On the other hand, the Muslim population was shrinking. Once Abidin Pasha requested that the Muslim population, who were once settled in the villages of the island, be temporarily exempted from military service, on the grounds that they were apostatizing in order to escape military service. Because of the diminishing Muslim population, he found it necessary to settle about a hundred households of Rumelian immigrants in villages here.[47]

During the war with Greece (February to December 1897) Abidin Pasha was mainly in Chios, where he landed on 31 March. The governor-general provided intelligence for Istanbul from the Archipelago. He reported, for example, on the 26th of April 1897, that "It is understood from the content of a telegram, received and copied yesterday at alafranga 6:45 PM via Vienna from Athens, that the Greeks (*Yunânîler*) have decided to retreat and regroup at the location of Farsala." He was sure about the "complete destruction and dispersal of the Greek forces, preventing them from regrouping in a fortified position, as they are already defeated and scattered everywhere."[48] The same war caused Muslim immigration from Crete whose burden of housing and care landed on his shoulders as well.[49]

In his extensive report dated the 22nd of August 1902 on the reform efforts in the province, he begins by stating, "During my ten and a half years as governor of this province, I have worked with the utmost sincerity and devotion." He had compiled and submitted a concise summary of the progress achieved as a result of his continuous efforts and reported that within the province, he

37 "Ben hakikati değil, Mâbeyn-i Hümayun'a tesir edecek şeyleri yazdım demiş olduğu bera-yı malumat arz olunur, li 20 Teşrinisani 1312, Abidin", BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 36/50, 1314 B 7.

38 "[F]irarilerin firarı keyfiyetinde Surûrî Beyin desayis ve ledünniyatı meydana çıkacağı şübhesiz olduğu maruzdur," BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 36/50-2, 1314 B 7.

39 "Hilmi Bey'in muavin Surûrî Bey'e bu defa vaki olan sualleri üzerine tezahür eden seyyiatı hasebiyle Surûrî Bey tecessün edecek bir raddeye gelmişdir. Firariler işinde olan seyyiat-ı elîmesinden fazla olarak Hilmi Bey'e vaki olan bir ihbara binaen hafiyyen icra-yı tahkikat olundukda…", BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 36/55, 1314 B 13.

40 Sururi Bey did not cease spying on his superiors in future positions. He attempted to denounce the governor-general of Aleppo, where he was later assigned. At the end of May 1902, he implored the Sultan for intervention so that Enis Pasha would not dispatch him to Urfa to collect the tithe. He asserted that the vali was sending him to obstruct his direct correspondence with the palace. His absence from the vilayet centre would hinder the Sultan's access to information regarding the province. "Ber-mukteza-yı sadakat ve ubudiyet buranın ahvalinden arz-ı malumat etmekde olduğumdan huylanıldığı cihetle…", BOA, Y.PRK.UM 58/77, 1320 S 21.

41 BOA, Y.PRK.UM. 42/105, 1316 Ra 4.

42 BOA, Y.PRK.UM 59/34, 1320 Ra 29.

43 BOA, Y.PRK.UM 78/112, 1324 Ra 24.

44 BOA, Y. MTV 92/11, 1311 N 3.

45 Konuk 203.

46 Konuk, ibid.

47 BOA, DH.MKT. 219/15, 1311 N 15 and BEO 388/29069, 1311 L 15.

48 BOA, YEE 145/12, 1314 ZA 24. For his other wartime correspondence, see BOA, 110-9-1-4, 18/46/37, 16.5.1897; 18/46/42, 30.6.1897; 18/46/43, 1.9.1997.

49 "Ahali-yi İslamiyyenin Girid'den öteye berüye hicret etdikleri sırada Rodos'a dahi sekiz-dokuz yüz nüfus gelmişdi." BOA, A.MKT.MHM 510/26, 1318 CA 16.

constructed 342,000 metres of new roads, 326 bridges, 3,065 culverts, and 526,000 metres of retaining walls, in addition to repairing 264,500 metres of roads and 53 bridges. Regarding finances, he boasted about what he has accomplished, with comparisons: "Such extensive revenue collection has not been recorded in any other part of the empire, as confirmed by financial records. In neighbouring Izmir, collecting the Greek subjects' income (*temettü*) tax has led to numerous difficulties and complaints. However, thanks to the measures I implemented, this tax was collected from the Greek subjects in this province without any disturbance." Concerning political matters, he states that "the interference of consuls, to which they had become accustomed under my predecessors, has been entirely prevented." Additionally, he reports that "Thousands of Greeks who claimed a Greek identity were reinstated to their original Ottoman nationality."[50]

Here, we may also count Abidin Pasha's notable contributions to Ottoman literature and intellectual culture in Rhodes. Upon his arrival in Rhodes, Abidin Pasha had the sanjak printing house in Chios, which had previously been purchased from Brussels, transferred to Rhodes and began publishing a bilingual newspaper in Turkish and Greek. One side of this newspaper was published in Turkish under the name *Bahri Sefid*, and the other side was published in Greek under the name *Egeon* (Aegean).[51]

As a highly prolific author, Abidin Pasha experienced his most productive years regarding intellectual output on the island of Rhodes, where he produced or published several of his works. An Arabic grammar book with a new method, titled *Ber Tarz-ı Nevîn Nahv-i Arabî,* was written during his tenure as the governor here and published in 1894 by the Rhodes Provincial Press as a 61-page work. *Saâdet-i Dünya*, also composed during his governorship, is a piece of advice, ethics, and reflection. It was published twice: firstly by the Rhodes Provincial Press in 1894 and later by Kitapçı Arakel in Istanbul in 1899. *Meâlî-i İslamiyye* (The Glories of Islam, 1900) is a partial exegesis (*tafsir*), interpreting 236 verses selected from 61 different Qur'anic sûrahs.[52] He also authored a refutation, *Alem-i İslâmiyet: Müdâfaʿa* (The Islamic World: A Defence, 1897), against a priest in Egypt. Both the last two works were published at the *Tahir Bey Matbaası* in Istanbul.

The well-known artist and pioneer of modern Turkish painting Abidin Dino (d. 1993), the Pasha's grandson, interpreted his grandfather's years as governor of the Mediterranean Islands as follows:

> The deep blue beauty of the Mediterranean distracted the governor Pasha a little. True, he was living far from Istanbul—this governorship was even considered a form of exile. Yet, among the ruins of ancient times, accompanied by his entourage and family, he would occasionally interpret the Masnavi facing the sea, passionately recite Greek love poems to the island ladies he was so fond of, and read Voltaire.[53]

50 "Yunanlılık iddiasında bulunan binlerce Rumları tabiiyyet-i asliyeleri olan Osmanlılığa irca'," BOA, Y.PRK. UM 66/32, 1321 CA 28.

51 Konuk, 203; Sadi Nasuhoğlu, *Rodos (Anılar ve Tarihçe*), Muğla 2008, 44.

52 Orhan *Güvel,* "Âbidin Paşa'nın Meʿâlî-i İslâmiyye Adlı Tefsirinin Yazım ve Yayım Serüveni, Muhtevası ve Hakkındaki Literatür," *Tefsir Araştırmaları Dergisi* 8/1 (April, 2024), 80-102.

53 Fulya İbanoğlu, "Abidin Paşa'da Terakki ve Saadet Tasavvuru," *Divan: Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi* 29.56 (2024): 90.

Conclusion

Rhodes, like many provincial posts in the Ottoman Empire, functioned as a bureaucratic exile for those who had fallen out of favor with the Sultan. Abidin Pasha's appointment to Rhodes was a demotion rather than a reward. Despite his personal reluctance, Abidin Pasha held onto his post for over a decade, marking one of the longest gubernatorial tenures of the period. His survival was not passive; he employed numerous strategies to navigate the intricate web of court politics and bureaucratic surveillance.

A defining characteristic of Abdülhamid II's administration was its surveillance system. Governors, particularly those exiled from Istanbul, were under constant scrutiny through a vast network of informants. Even minor officials in Rhodes had the ability to report directly to the palace, often bypassing their superiors. Abidin Pasha was a frequent target of these reports, facing allegations from his own subordinates, particularly his assistant governor, Sururi Bey. Abidin Pasha, in turn, sought to undermine Sururi, accusing him of fabricating complaints, colluding with exiles, and even forging documents. The Sultan eventually dismissed Sururi, but the incident underscores how Ottoman provincial rule was increasingly shaped by internal surveillance and bureaucratic rivalries rather than governance efficiency. The intense surveillance culture created an environment of paranoia and instability among provincial governors. Any misstep—real or imagined—could result in dismissal or worse. The fear of denunciation contributed to the reluctance of governors like Abidin Pasha to make decisive policy moves, further complicating provincial administration.

The Mediterranean Islands' diverse population required careful navigation of intercommunal tensions. The island's Orthodox Christian majority had close ties with Greece, while European consuls often acted as unofficial protectors of local Christian populations.

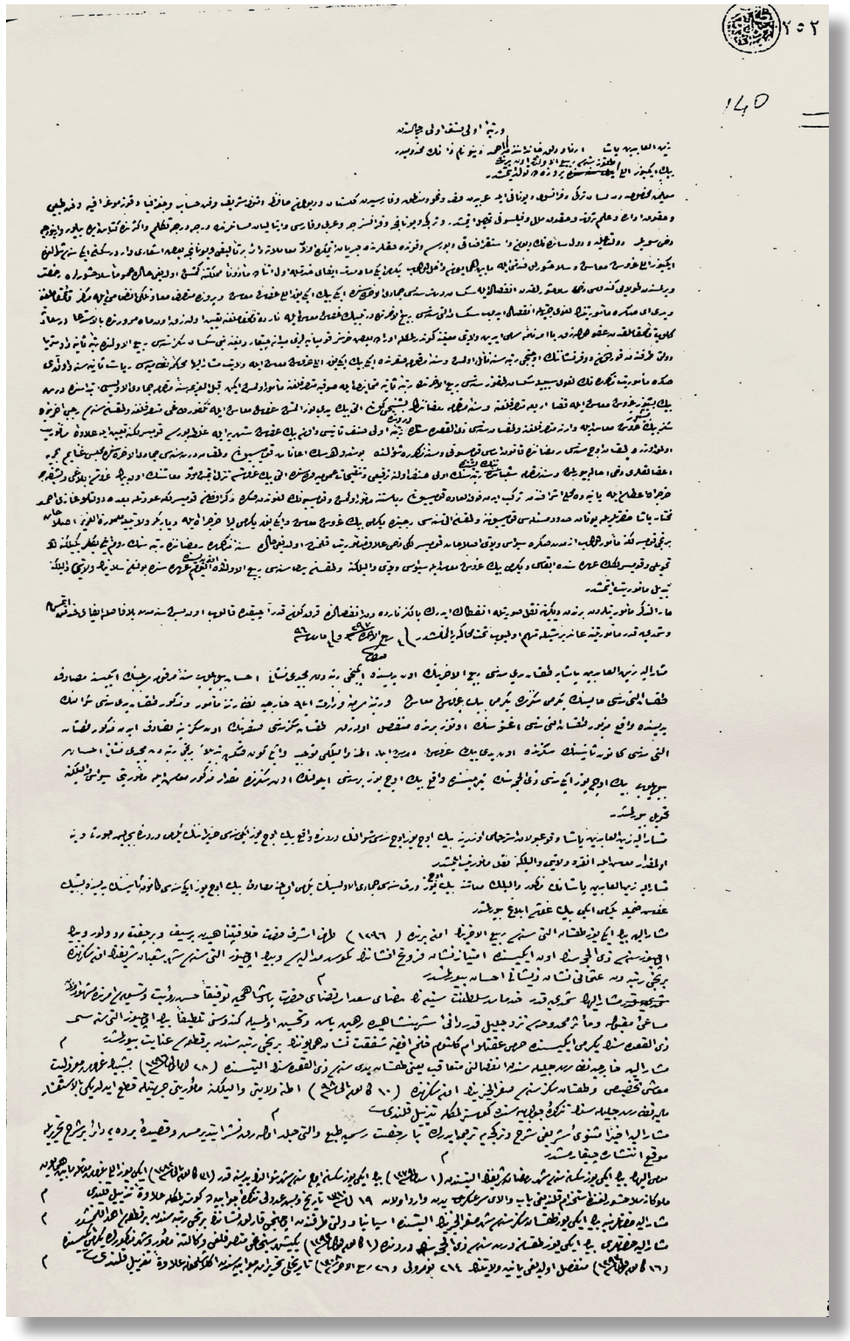
Abidin Pasha, like many Ottoman administrators, saw foreign interference as a direct challenge to imperial sovereignty. He reported attempts by British, French, and Greek consuls to manipulate local affairs. His reports to Istanbul emphasized that he successfully curbed consul influence—though whether this was the case remains debatable. The 1897 Greco-Ottoman War further heightened these tensions.

Beyond his administrative duties, Abidin Pasha left a notable intellectual legacy. He was a prolific writer and translator, particularly of Islamic texts. During his governorship, he also established a bilingual printing press in Rhodes. This initiative demonstrates his awareness of the need for imperial legitimacy through media and education.

Abidin Pasha's long, reluctant tenure in Rhodes encapsulates the paradox of late Ottoman provincial governance. On the one hand, he wielded significant power in a strategically sensitive region. On the other, he spent much of his time attempting to escape his post, petitioning for transfers, salary raises, and even retirement—only to be repeatedly denied. His career exemplifies the precarious nature of Ottoman bureaucratic service under Abdülhamid II, where officials were both indispensable and disposable. Despite his achievements, he was never able to fully reintegrate into the political center. His story is not just that of a provincial governor but a case study in the politics of bureaucratic exile and the personal struggles of Ottoman statesmen in the twilight of the empire. In the end, Abidin Pasha's career was shaped by the very forces that defined the late Ottoman state: surveillance, exile politics, and the balancing act of provincial administration in a crumbling empire.

His death in April 1906, shortly after returning to Istanbul, marked the end of an era for Rhodes as well. The governorship of the Aegean Islands after Abidin Pasha would be carried out by deputies for a considerable time. Nazım Pasha had been appointed as the last deputy two months after Abidin Pasha's death; thereafter, he became the new governor. Abidin Pasha's governorship of the

Mediterranean Islands exemplifies the complexities of late Ottoman provincial administration. During a transformative era in Ottoman history, his career offers insights into the interplay of local governance, imperial oversight, and personal ambition. While his tenure in Rhodes was fraught with challenges, his enduring contributions to Ottoman bureaucracy and culture highlight the multifaceted role of provincial governors in the Empire's final decades.



Next page: Excerpt from the *Sicill-i Ahvâl Defteri*, the personnel record of Abidin Pasha, which begins with the following sentences: *"Zeynelabidin Pasha is the son of a certain Mîr Ahmet Dino, a member of the Albanian dynasty and one of the statesmen of the first class of the highest rank. He was born in Preveza on the 11th of Rabi'al-awwal in the year 1259. He received education from private tutors in the Turkish, French, and Greek languages, and Morphology, Syntax, and Logic in Arabic. In Persian, he studied Gülistan, Divan of Hafez, and the Masnavi-i Sharif. He received education in arithmetic, geography, cosmography, natural sciences, administrative law, political economy, international law, and philosophy. He is able to speak, to varying degrees, Turkish, Greek, French, Arabic, Persian, and Italian, and can write proficiently in most of them. He also speaks Albanian. He has authored a work on the debts, loans, and financial transactions in the stock markets and funds of the Ottoman Empire and other states, and he has also composed some poetry in Greek."*

BOA, DH.SAIDd. 1/252.

Ἐν ἔτει απ΄δ΄

Ἐπὶ τῆς βασιλείας

Σουλτὰν Ἀβδοὺλ Χαμὶτ Χὰν Β΄.

Νομάρχου Αἰγαίου Ἀβεδὶν Πασσᾶ
Χορηγούντων Δημητρίου καὶ Μίνωος
Βενετοκλέους
Ἀπηλλάγησαν αἱ συνοικίαι τῆς ξηρῆς δίψης

In the year 1904

In the reign of

Sultan Abdul Hamit Khan II.

Under Governor of the Aegean Abidin Pacha
With the contribution of Dimitrios and Minos
Venetokles
The quarters were relieved of dry thirst.

Inscription in Greek and translation by
Anastasia Tsapanidou







Saint Anastasia
the Pharmakolytria Orthodox Church

Rhodes

Fountain donated to the neighborhood
by Rhodian brothers Venetokles
during the governership of
Abidin Pasha in Rhodes
1894-1906

Photos: T. Tuten

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*"There come times when coincidences - whims of fate, perhaps - happen to change your plans and lead you to new paths. Can a library ever have a hand in such things? Yes, it can, when it has a long and singular past, and is supported by inspired people who, in some magical way, persuade you to believe in them and their vision. I first met Abidin some years ago, and the result of our acquaintance would no doubt have lain tucked away in a drawer for quite some time. Everything changed when I received the extremely tempting offer to take part in a multicultural "**Conversation**", via which the Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library aspired to fill its rooms with the whispers of people from times past, who reached their prime - as the library did - right where the East and West were being bridged. I am so grateful to Tarık Tüten who saw to me getting a ticket on this journey of the mind. It has turned out to be fascinating."*

Anastasia Tsapanidou

When Rhodes doesn't inspire poetry

Abidin Pasha and his Greek poems*

Dedicated to Prof. Alexis Politis

1. The first Greek poems of a peripatetic Ottoman official

From 1873 onwards, the *Neologos (Νεολόγος)*, one of the leading Greek newspapers circulating in Constantinople in the second half of the 19th century, began to host Greek poems written by Abidin Dino, a polyglot Albanian official in the Ottoman administration. Abidin had gained a fluent command of Greek by attending a Greek school in his native Preveza, and possibly also the famed Zosimaia School in Ioannina.[1] At the time he sent his first Greek poem – "The Ark of Smyrna" – to the *Neologos*, he was a thirty-year-old *Bey*, serving Sultan Abdülaziz as the governor (mutasarrıf) of Raidestos (Tekirdağ). As originally published (20.3/1.4.1873),[2] "The Ark" ran to 19 quatrains. It was an elegy inspired by a tragic accident in Smyrna, when the Ark, a coffee house built on wooden piles in the sea, collapsed under the weight of a crowd that had gathered to watch an acrobatic show. Both on account of the poem's length and a desire to formally present it, the *Neologos* devoted a special second-page feuilleton to it, with a lengthy introduction praising the "well-educated", "ingenious", "capable" and "enlightened" "Ottoman fellow-citizen", who had received a "liberal education". The preamble notes his excellent knowledge of Greek and outstanding literary and poetic gifts, praising the poem itself and pointing out the main features of its structure and contents.

The introductory note ends with a broader political comment placing emphasis on the promotion of honest co-existence and collaboration between the ethnic groups living together in the Orient: Abidin's Greek poems are a reminder that when one nation uses the language of another it cohabits with, there are ever more signs that the races living in the Orient will achieve greater rapprochement and brotherhood, which is the desideratum of everyone animated by kind-hearted and forward-looking sentiments. At the end of the feuilleton, this political comment by the *Neologos* is reinforced via literature, with the addition of a seven-stanza poem by a contributor to the paper inspired by the elegy on "The Ark". Its lines praise Abidin as a "citizen", "human" and "brother of the world", for having the rare sensitivity to be moved by human misfortune irrespective of which race, nation or place it is experienced by. It is worth noting the deliberate vagueness of both calls for co-operation: neither makes it clear whether Abidin is to be seen as a representative of the sovereign

* Translated from Greek in collaboration with Dr. Ben Petre.

1 On Abidin's roots, family and studies, see Nuri Şimşekler, "Devlet Adamı ve Mesnevî Şârihi Abidin Paşa. Hayatı - İdareciliği - Eserleri", *Selçuk Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Edebiyat Dergisi* 9-10 (1994-1995) 117-118; Nikos Stylos, *Ο πρεβεζάνος Αμπεντίν πασάς Ντίνος, τα ελληνικά του ποιήματα και οι Ντιναίοι*, Ioannis Kouzas (ed.), Mülheim a.d.R [an der Ruhr (Germany)], 2014, p. 7-10, 61-78 (many thanks to doctoral candidate Maria Bolla for providing me with this hard-to-come-by publication). On Abidin's Greek studies, according to Greek bibliography in his own time, see, e.g., *Ημερολόγιον της εφημερ. Αμάλθειας του έτους 1894*, Smyrna, 1893, p. ²88· "Η δολοφονία του Αμπεντίν", *Εμπρός* newspaper (Athens), 29.4.1906; *Η φωνή της Ηπείρου* newspaper (Athens), 5.5.1906.

2 *Νεολόγος*, 1/13.2.1873. The newspaper uses a dual dating system, following the Old and the New [Gregorian] Calendar. Greek newspapers referred to here with a single date use the Old Calendar.

Ottoman nation[3] or of the Albanian nation, whose cooperation the Greeks of the time anticipated.[4] In both this and subsequent publications of Greek poems by Abidin, the newspaper avoids falling into the trap of making such clarifications; it only refers to him in the official capacity he holds as an Ottoman official at the time, without any reference to his Albanian roots.

What follows is a prose translation of the first four stanzas of "The Ark" along with the final one, as the prime examples of Abidin's first known attempt at poetic expression in the Greek language:

The Ark of Smyrna

Oh sea, what is your woe, why are you embittered?
Your waves do not laugh, your breast is cold;
Is all of you motionless, pallid and enshrouded?
Or has a mother's angry shout embittered your heart?

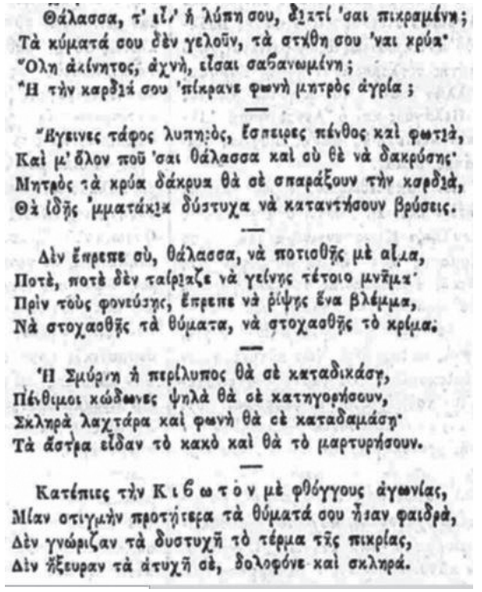
You have become a dismal grave, sowing grief and fire,
And though you are the sea, you too will weep;
A mother's cold tears will rend your heart,
You will see miserable little eyes reduced to fountains.

Oh sea, you should not have been bathed in blood,
It was never, ever fitting for you to become such a tomb;
Before you murdered them, you should have cast a glance,
And thought of the victims, thought of the crime.

Sorrowful Smyrna will condemn you,
Mourning bells on high will reproach you,
Harsh longing and cries will subjugate you;
The stars saw the wrongdoing and will tell of it.
[...]
Smyrna, you are not my homeland, but I pain for you,
In a short time you greatly honoured me, oh friend,
Though my destiny was to be appointed far away,
I shall pain for you in my heart, praise you with my lips.

3 To say nothing of whether Abidin was affiliated with the more progressive part of the Ottoman community favoured by the *Neologos*. In a letter composed in French (14.2.1972) and published in translation by P. Kypriotis, Abidin's grandson of the same name speculated that he had collaborated in secret with the progressive author Namık Kemal; see Platonas Kypriotis, "Αμπεντίν Πασάς Νομάρχης του Αρχιπελάγους", *Δωδεκανησιακά Χρονικά* 2 (1974) 141-179.

4 On how Greek-Albanian relations were cultivated and fluctuated in the 19th century, see, e.g., Ilias G. Skoulidas, *Οι σχέσεις Ελλήνων και Αλβανών κατά τον 19ο αι.: πολιτικές επιδιώξεις και θεωρήσεις (1875-1897)*, unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Ioannina - Department of History and Archaeology, 2001.



Θάλασσα, τ' εἶ,' ἡ λύπη σου, ἔτζι 'σαι πικραμένη;
Τὰ κύματά σου δὲν γελοῦν, τὰ στῆθη σου 'ναι κρύα·
Ὅλη ἀκίνητος, ἀχνή, εἶσαι σαβανωμένη;
Ἢ τὴν καρδιά σου 'πίκρανε φωνὴ μητρὸς ἀγρία;

Ἔγεινες τάφος λυπητός, ἔσπειρες πένθος καὶ φωτιά,
Καὶ μ' ὅλον ποῦ 'σαι θάλασσα καὶ σὺ θὲ νὰ δακρύσῃς·
Μητρὸς τὰ κρύα δάκρυα θὰ σὲ σπαράξουν τὴν καρδιά,
Θὰ ἰδῇς 'μματάκια δύστυχα νὰ καταντήσουν βρύσεις.

Δὲν ἔπρεπε σὺ, θάλασσα, νὰ ποτισθῇς μὲ αἷμα,
Ποτὲ, ποτὲ δὲν ταίριαζε νὰ γείνῃς τέτοιο μνῆμα·
Πρὶν τοὺς φονεύσῃς, ἔπρεπε νὰ ῥίψῃς ἕνα βλέμμα,
Νὰ στοχασθῇς τὰ θύματα, νὰ στοχασθῇς τὸ κρίμα.

Ἡ Σμύρνη ἡ περίλυπος θὰ σὲ καταδικάσῃ,
Πένθιμοι κώδωνες ψηλὰ θὰ σὲ κατηγορήσουν,
Σκληρὰ λαχτάρα καὶ φωνὴ θὰ σὲ καταδαμάσῃ·
Τὰ ἄστρα εἶδαν τὸ κακὸ καὶ θὰ τὸ μαρτυρήσουν.

Κατέπιες τὴν Κιβωτόν μὲ φθόγγους ἀγωνίας,
Μίαν στιγμὴν προτήτερα τὰ θύματά σου ἦσαν φαιδρά,
Δὲν γνώριζαν τὰ δύστυχῆ τὸ τέρμα τῆς πικρίας,
Δὲν ἤξευραν τὰ ἀτυχῆ σὲ, δολοφόνε καὶ σκληρά.

Figure 1: "The Arc of Smyrna" (an excerpt)
Neologos Newspaper, Constantinople, 20.3/1.4.1873,
(The Hellenic Parliament Library)

Abidin's Greek elegy reveals just how well versed he was in the everyday spoken language known as "Demotic", which the Greek people had always used in composing songs.[5] The way "The Ark" is constructed and the use of an almost vernacular show that Abidin knew the world of Greek folk song very well, evidently from the Epirot folk songs he had heard in his youth in his hometown of Preveza. Most of his Greek poems bear typical features of folk song technique: he composes lines with the meaning extending over 15 syllables each; uses the reading and singing rhythm resulting from successive pairs of one stressed and one unstressed syllable (iambic metre); shows a preference for dividing the line into two semantic subunits of 8 and 7 syllables; and attempts to ensure each line is semantically complete and independent.

On the other hand, there are two key features of folk song technique that Abidin does not adopt. One is economy of poetic expression: many lines in "The Ark" are so verbose that his poetic inspiration gradually loses conciseness, some individual meanings are repeated, and at certain points the semantic sequencing of stanzas is so loose that they could be reordered. Later on, when Abidin had matured as a poet, he saw the imperfections in both "The Ark" and subsequent poems, and made some revisions before collecting them in a slim volume entitled *Poems*,[6] which he published at the Neologos Press in 1888.[7] The second feature of folk songs not adopted by Abidin was the density and drama gained by their poetic diction in relying on the use of verbs rather than adjectives. By contrast, both "The Ark" and Abidin's subsequent poems brim with the repeated use of particular adjectives and their synonyms – excess baggage they are not freed of even when gathered in the poetry collection in 1888; in this instance, the Greek-educated poet clearly bypassed his folk song influences and leapt wholeheartedly onto the literary bandwagon of Romanticism, which the majority of 19th century Greek poets had joined quite some time earlier, so as to effusively express poetic emotion in elevated tones, and often in a needlessly pompous manner.

While continuing to serve as mutasarrıf at Tekirdağ, Abidin sent a second poem to the *Neologos*, published on 23.6/5.7.1873; the newspaper accompanied it with a reminder to its readers that it had recently hosted another "ingenious and emotionally replete" poem by "the noble, muse-nurtured governor of Raidestos". This new poem is again written in deeply plaintive tones, though now born

5 A later letter from Abidin to the Constantinople-based Greek poet Ch. Samartsidis reveals that he also had a fluent command of the official written language known as "Katharevousa", used by sufficiently educated Greeks of the time (see *Νεολόγου Εβδομαδιαία Επιθεώρησις* 3.3 (21.11.1893) 47).

6 In this instance, the revised form of the "Ark" moves the fourth stanza to sixth position, the tenth and twelfth are deleted, and the ninth stanza swaps places with the eleventh.

7 *Ποιήματα* συντεθέντα υπό Αμπετίν πασσά Ντίνου, νομάρχου Αγκύρας [*Poems* composed by Abidin Pasha Dino, Governor of Ankara], Constantinople, The Neologos Press, 1888.

of the profound personal pain felt by a lover far removed from his beloved, as forewarned by the title "The Soul-suffering Lover". Once again, this poem succumbs to the bombastic diction of 19th century Greek Romantic poetry, rendering the context of lovers' torment with overabundant lyrical effusion and rhetoric – the painful loss of blissful love, the unanswered questions tormenting the lover, his profound melancholy and his flirt with the spectre of death. As a result, when incorporated into Abidin's collected *Poems* (1888), it is halved in length: of the twenty originally published stanzas, only ten of the best in terms of form and content are retained. The first five given below will more than suffice for readers to grasp how Abidin chose to depict the profound pain of an enamoured soul in verse:

The Soul-suffering Lover

Are our sadness, separation, passions, pains
A cup of joy, a gift of happiness?
Or are the fiery, gut-wrenching sighs of the heart
Perhaps precursors of another bliss?

Are you mourning too, my beloved, as I am alone,
Or is a smile of joy blossoming on your lips?
Do your eyes seek me? Are they filled with tears,
Or is your dreamy gaze looking on another?

The Sun and Moon have long sought you, my beloved,
They are the palms of the sky and want to snatch you away.
But my many sighs hide you, so they do not see you,
My sighs become thick clouds to block their way.

Oh! How – wretched me – I envy even my heart,
The breeze and anything that can draw near you.
Oh! I even envy the earth wherever you tread,
The sky that sent you, lest it snatch you away again.

Yes, I envy my heart, though it may be broken.
Yes, I envy my heart, though it drips blood.
It has never separated from you, it stays ever with you;
It sees and feels your sad gaze.

[…]

2. Abidin and the Greek intellectuals

Although Abidin's next move had nothing to do with writing Greek poems, it does reveal an implicit link between him and the world of Greek publishing in the Ottoman capital, which may call for further investigation. In 1875, by which time he had already spent two years serving as the first imperial commissioner of the Constantinople Bourse, and had published a concise Ottoman study on its operation,[8] he placed the Greek translation of the French popular novel *Les Démons de la mer* (*The Demons of the Sea*) by Henry de Kock (1891-1892) "under his noble protection and support", according to the cover inscription on the Greek edition.[9] It is not known whether his "protection" and "support" extended beyond the fact that he bought an impressive 200 copies of the translated novel.[10] At any rate, the driving force behind the publication in question, Ippokratis Margaritis,[11] dedicated it to Abidin, describing him as a "true Epirot and patron of the Muses".[12] Five years later, when Abidin had become a pasha and was in his last days at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Margaritis honoured him once more by including a highly laudatory biography of him in the fortnightly magazine he was publishing at the time.[13]

The next known poem by Abidin is linked to his brief tenure in the vilayet of Thessaloniki, again in the capacity of governor general. In his response to the authorities and crowd that hastened to welcome him on his arrival in the city (16.3.1880), he stated how moved he was to hear the Metropolitan address him in Greek, and how happy he felt every time he heard his "mother" tongue, which he had been deprived the sound of during his previous tenure at Sivas.[14] Some days later, during a tour of the area in his charge, being in Veria (Karaferye/Karaferya), he came across the poem "Everything Prays", recently composed by the popular 19th-century Greek Romantic poet Achilleas Paraschos (1838-1895).[15] Inspired by it, within ten minutes he had dashed off his own version, as the *Ermis* newspaper in Thessaloniki informs us (23.5.1880), publishing it forthwith as part of its coverage of the new vali's tour. Roughly twenty days later, when Abidin had already assumed office as minister of foreign affairs,[16] the poem also appeared in the *Neologos*,[17] and was subsequently included in the published *Poems*. The newspaper notes that Abidin was in a fit of melancholy when

8 The work in question is *Konsolidenin hava oyunlarıyla sâir muamelât hakkında müstakrazât-ı maliyyeve dâir risaledir* (1874), republished in Modern Turkish as: Abidin paşa, *Borsa Risalesi: Hava Oyunları*, Celali Yılmaz (ed.), İstanbul, VakıfBank Kültür Yayınları, 2018 (first edition: *Hava oyunları*. Osmanlı borsasında finansal işlemer, 2011).

9 Henri de Kock, *Οι δαίμονες της θαλάσσης ή οι Άγγλοι πειραταί*, Constantinople, 1875.

10 From the book's List of Subscribers.

11 The French novel was rendered by three different translators and published in three small volumes produced at three different presses. Of the three individuals appearing on each cover as supervising editors, Ippokratis Margaritis is the only one common to all three.

12 Margaritis' dedicatory preface to Abidin extends over two specially decorated pages at the beginning of the first volume, and is dated 21.5.1875.

13 "Η Α. Εξοχότης ο επί των Εξωτερικών υπουργός Αβεδδίν πασσάς", *Ο Γραφικός Κόσμος* (Constantinople) 12 (15.8.1880) 365-368. Unfortunately for Abidin, by the time the magazine circulated he had already been relieved of his ministerial post; according to a later piece in the *Νεολόγος* (2/14.1.1881), he was dismissed on 31.7/12.8.1880.

14 *Ερμής* newspaper (Thessaloniki), 18.3.1880.

15 The poem by Paraschos had been written in Constantinople on 17.4.1880 and published in the *Νεολόγος* on 6/18.5.1880.

16 The *Ερμής* announced his appointment as last-minute news on 23rd May 1880 (Old Calendar).

17 *Νεολόγος*, 5/17.6.1880. Information on this second publication of the poem was kindly provided by Maria Bolla, who is close to completing her doctoral dissertation on the *Νεολόγος* newspaper.

under the inspiration of Paraschos; in common with the *Ermis,* the *Neologos* looks on Greek as being the poet's mother tongue, pithily remarking that: "we publish the poem as proof that nature never abandons its rights, and everywhere and forever, the sighs of the soul escape a man's lips in his true and real mother tongue, whatever his national or political sentiments may be".

The central idea running through the Paraschos poem is that all works of nature and all human beings, good or evil, pray to God; whatever constitutes nature or a human act is also, in its own way, a prayer to God, and the only one who cannot make a prayer is a person who does not believe in God. At the end of his poem, Paraschos wonders whether there is any hope that even unbelievers can be saved, via the prayers others offer up for their salvation. For his part, in the title of his own poem Abidin changes Paraschos' certainty that "everything prays" into doubt ("whether everything prays"); in the opening stanzas he wonders whether a heart in unbearable pain over the death of a woman it has loved can pray, and in the closing ones whether God will allow the human beings who have worshipped him to turn to dust.[18] Below are the intervening stanzas, where the poet converses with his departed beloved and asks her to pray:

Whether Everything Prays

[…]

Pray, angel friend, angels do not die.
Pray to the heavens for my life to end.
Why, oh God, should souls be bound to bodies?
And why should my breath burn me like hell on earth?

Was the final hour a prayer to death,
When you bade the world farewell with a smile?
When you said for the final time "I am dying now,
But do not weep for me, think of me as alive"?

Who would not cry, my friend? Then what is the point of tears?
Why was the very blood in the heart created?
As I bid you farewell on the grave's edge,
Is happiness possible anymore, oh God?

"It is true", you would say to me, oh hapless friend,
When you still shone in the darkness of life,
"The time for my lips to be closed draws near,
And then patience is needed, not snapping of the heart!"

Virgin, bright angel, hope of another life,
I feel that humans live in torpor;
In the ecstasies of the soul I always saw you alive.
Death too is life, even if it is thought to be darkness.[19]

[…]

18 In early published versions, this poem by Abidin extends over nine verses. Here again, they are reduced in number when included in the 1880 collected *Poems* (the seventh verse is removed, possibly because the meaning is out of temporal sequence with the following one). Above are verses 3-8 of the poem in its original form, i.e. including the subsequently removed verse.

19 In the 1888 collected edition, the last line is altered as follows: *death is light, even if it is thought to be darkness*.

Shortly after the intellectual encounter between the two poets, an in-person meeting between them was to take place in Constantinople, following an invitation made by Abidin in his capacity as minister of Foreign Affairs. According to some sources, Paraschos accepted the offer of hospitality in the Ottoman capital, much to Abidin's delight.[20] Another version of events claims that Paraschos was already in Constantinople when he received the invitation to meet Abidin at his office, which he agreed to with great reluctance; the Greek ambassador conveying the message to Paraschos had to visit him twice to persuade him to accede to the Ottoman minister's request; and when the Greek poet finally stood abashed before him, he was amazed to hear Abidin say:

> I regard myself as fortunate to have the honour of meeting you in person. For many years I have numbered amongst your most ardent admirers. Your poems are full of feeling and emotion; they have been sustenance and pleasure for me, and even now, when I read your works in times of leisure, I often feel myself being reborn.

According to the same account, on seeing Paraschos taken aback at his words, Abidin produced in evidence a "magnificent" album, in which he had copied out many of his poems by hand. The conversation then turned to other matters, with Abidin striving to lard his speech with lines by Paraschos until, eventually, he repeatedly asked the Greek poet whether there was any way he could be of use to him. Paraschos then asked for a favour which he knew from the outset would be very difficult to grant – two years after it had gone out, could the minister see to the relighting of a sanctuary lamp in a ruined monument in Constantinople, where the last emperor of Byzantium was believed to lie buried?[21] The account ends by saying that the minister promised to do so, but of course never kept his word.[22]

Whichever version of the story we believe, the in-person meeting between Abidin and Paraschos and the composition of "Whether Everything Prays" led several of his Greek biographers to overemphasize the influence exerted on him by his Greek colleague. Yet given that we have no knowledge of what other Greek poetry Abidin read, it would be fairer to see him as someone who chose to compose poetry in the Greek language as inspired by the Romantic literary tradition; by the late 19th century this was already considered somewhat passé,[23] but was still maintained by some advocates of it, with Achilleas Paraschos as its leading light. In other words, intense lyricism and nostalgia, melancholy and grief, sighs and a suicidal disposition remained the standard Romantic elements attracting Abidin in his Greek poems, at a time when the majority of his Greek literary colleagues had gone in search of new modes of expression, having derisively turned their backs on Romanticism.

20 See the Athenian newspapers *Εμπρός*, 29.4.1906 and *Φωνή της Ηπείρου*, 5.5.1906.

21 This tradition is referred to in many 19th-century Greek sources, and is linked to the Vefa Kilise Camii quarter in the Fatih area of Istanbul.

22 Ioannis M. Damvergis, "Πόθος ποιητού (ιστορικόν ανέκδοτον)", *Εβδομάς* 3 (19.1.1891) 1-2.

23 Romanticism reached its peak in Greek literature mainly over the half century from 1830 to 1880.

3. The Archipelago in Abidin's mind. Chios

In insisting on the idiom he had learned to use from the outset, Abidin took to verse once more to lament the terrible earthquake that struck Chios on 3rd April 1881, resulting in over 7,500 fatalities.[24] The new poem was completed on 16.4.1881 and dispatched to the *Neologos* from Adana, where its composer had yet again assumed office as governor general. The newspaper published it on 28.4/10.5.1888, reiterating its view of the significant fact that the poem was written in Greek: it was in the language that the former minister of Foreign Affairs had been raised and educated in – the language always used to express the pain felt in his soul, as the paper comments. Only things were not quite that way. The *Neologos* was either unaware of or disregarded the fact that when Abidin had become actively involved in settling Albanian national issues outstanding after the Congress of Berlin (1878),[25] he had had no hesitation in communicating what was then his national pain in the Albanian language. He had taken pains to do so outside Ottoman territory (possibly for peace of mind), in the now long-forgotten weekly newspaper *Voice of Albania. Albanian Rights Newspaper* [*Η φωνή της Αλβανίας. Εφημερίς των αλβανικών δικαιωμάτων*],[26] published in Athens from 1879 to 1880.[27]

The first published version of "The Destruction of Chios" runs to 17 quatrains, divided into four thematic sections. The poet begins by addressing Chios, describing how the island was destroyed and blaming it for drowning its children (stanzas 1-6). Chios reacts on hearing that it is a filicide and begs the sea to drown it, being unable to bear the thought of its own destruction (stanzas 7-8). The poet then turns to the earthquake, and once more laments the death it has caused (stanzas 9-12). He ends by making successive requests: to the Muse not to let him continue his description of the disaster (stanza 13); to merciful God to take care of Chios and its orphans (stanzas 14-16); and to compassionate people to assist those same orphans (stanza 17). Yet again, the poem was to be abridged when included in the 1888 collection; the fifth verse was removed, being a superfluous flashback to scenes of the happy life on Chios before the earthquake, as was the closing verse calling for a fundraising collection, which only made sense when first published. Below is a translation of stanzas 1-3, 6-7 and 13 from the original publication in the *Neologos*, as the finest excerpts from the poem. In the closing stanza, major revisions made by Abidin before the 1888 edition are given in normal type either side of a forward slash, as a sample of how he corrected himself later on, once freed of the haste to record his poetic sentiment in the heat of the moment.

The Destruction of Chios

Chios, are you dead or alive? Chios is in the throes of death;
surrounded by tears rather than the cool of May,
encircled by death painful and cold,
unadorned, as it once was, by the shining of the sun.

How does death not pity so many shattered bodies?
how does it not pity motherless orphan children?
how does it not pity sighs and crossed arms?
how does it not hear cries and lamentation in the air?

My devastated island, island of such grace!
how can you awaken? To see what? Your terrible convulsions
levelled you, emptied you, pride of the sea
and shake your heart to seize your life.
[...]
You will see ships in your harbour and you will ask,
"Which wind brought them to me?"
but if you look on your breast, you will take fright,
then you will say "Wretched me! I have smothered my children!"

I! compassionate mother, have I become a filicide?
to kill my beloved children?
oh! What curse is this on me? What darkened year?
drown me, friendly sea, I have no wish to escape.
[...]
Cease, my terrible/mournful *muse, I can no longer bear*
to describe victims, abandoned bodies.
Why should I recall such a deathly scene/a bitter and painful scene
to the memory of so many relatives, to bloodied/tearful *eyes*?

24 On the enormous losses suffered by Chios in terms of its workforce and infrastructure, see, e.g., *Βυζαντίς* newspaper (Constantinople), 5.4.1881 and 8.4.1881. See also the dispatches sent from Chios by K. N. Papamichalopoulos, son of the Greek minister of Foreign Affairs, who hurried to the island after the earthquake; having initially appeared in the Athenian newspaper *Εφημερίς*, they were published immediately thereafter as a volume entitled *Εκ των ερειπίων της Χίου. Ημερολόγιον*, Athens, 1881.

25 Via his participation in the Greek-Turkish committee on settling the borders of Epirus and Thessaly and on the founding of the Albanian League, which succeeded in having the borders settled to the advantage of Albanian interests. See, e.g., Kypriotis, 145-148; Stylos, 10-16. In general terms, 19th century Greek intellectuals living in the free Greek state (e.g., Tryphon Evangelidis, Georgios Tsokopoulos, Neoklis Kazazis) took a dim view of the developments set in chain by Abidin and the Albanian League. A different line was taken by Pavlos Karolidis, a historian of Cappadocian descent, who had lived within the Ottoman Empire for much of his life and was personally acquainted with Abidin (see his study *Σύγχρονος ιστορία των Ελλήνων και των λοιπών λαών της Ανατολής από 1821 μέχρι 1921*, vol. 7, Athens, 1929, p. 259-260).

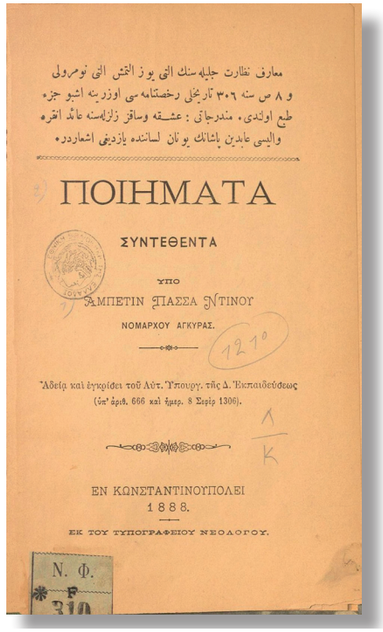
26 On 22.12.1879 Abidin published a poem in Albanian without a Greek translation, and another on 1.3.1880 with its Greek translation, which ends with the phrase: "Do not, oh do not, my virgins [i.e. of Albania] / I am Shqipëri [i.e. Albania], / Do not weep black tears, / For I will fight against Turkey, / Otherwise from my bones, / The new freedom shall not rise" (Stylos, 28-30).

27 For information on the content and ideological trends in this particular newspaper see *Εγκυκλοπαίδεια του ελληνικού Τύπου 1784-1974*, L. Droulia - G. Koutsopanagou (ed.), vol. 4, Athens, Modern Greek Research Institute - National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2008, p. 292-293.

4. *Poems,* Constantinople 1888, Rhodes 1894

Abidin's last poem, published in the *Neologos* (24.8/5.9.1885) before being included in the first edition of the *Poems* (1888), is "The Sorrowful Man", running to seven quatrains. It is the monologue of someone who nostalgically recalls the happy times he spent with his beloved in the past, and who is in deep pain over remaining far from her against his will. In other words, it revisits the motif lamenting the unwanted separation of a love couple he had used earlier in "The Soul-suffering Lover". In the 1888 version Abidin makes an interesting additional step: he mentally pairs the sad male lover's voice heard in "The Sorrowful Man" with a corresponding female one, also lending space for it to be heard. "The Sorrowful Woman" follows on from the "Sorrowful Man", with its six quatrains presenting the monologue of a woman who has not seen her beloved in five years, and who lives in lamentation, agonizing over whether he has already died. Let us now see the facing stanzas at the beginning and end of the two poems, in the form assumed in the 1888 edition (stanza numbers are in brackets).

The Sorrowful Man		The Sorrowful Woman	
Oh, the heartbes, the sighs *oh, my bitter thoughts* *Ever burn my heart* *without a moment's respite.*	(1)	*You gave still not written to me* *migratory bird,* *Who knows where you might be,* *where you are wasted away.*	(1)
How much I hurt, I mourn, *how fruitlessly I seek you,* *Much-suffering love,* *I know I shall see you no more.*	(2)	*Or has cruel death* *cut your thread* *And have you a slab as a shroud* *and a tomb as a bed?*	(2)
I do not know if death *Will leave me, to be inflamed.* *It leaves me in foreign lands* *To burn in your pain.*	(6)	*Oh! I the orphan am waiting* *to hear your name.* *Oh! Unhappy me, I hope* *to find myself near you.*	(5)
Where did you sweet days go *joys and laughter and glances* *And now have left me* *to torments and fires?*	(7)	*The day passes with sobs,* *the night with pains,* *My God, I am always alone,* *five years on my own.*	(6)


معارف نظارت جليله سنك الى يوز التش الى نومرولى
و ٨ س سنه ٣٠٦ تاريخلى رخصتنامه سى اوزرينه اشبو جزء
طبع اولندى . مندرجاتى : عشقه وساقر زلزاله سنه عائد اقره
واليسى عابدين پاشانك يونان لسانندە يازدېغى اشعاردر .

ΠΟΙΗΜΑΤΑ

ΣΥΝΤΕΘΕΝΤΑ

ΥΠΟ

ΑΜΠΕΤΙΝ ΠΙΑΣΣΑ ΝΤΙΝΟΥ

ΝΟΜΑΡΧΟΥ ΑΓΚΥΡΑΣ.

1210

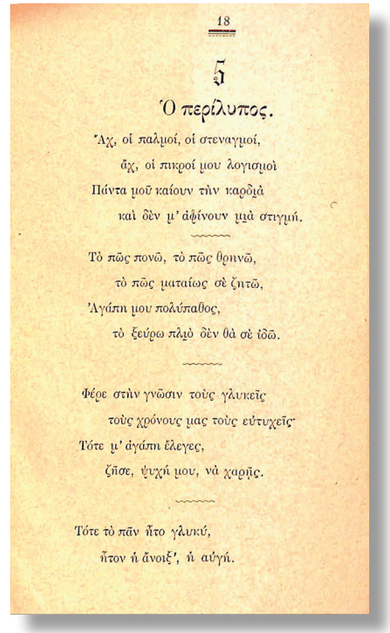
Ἀδείᾳ καὶ ἐγκρίσει τοῦ Λὐτ. Ὑπουργ. τῆς Δ. Ἐκπαιδεύσεως
(ὑπ' ἀριθ. 666 καὶ ἡμερ. 8 Σαφὲρ 1306).

ΕΝ ΚΩΝΣΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΥΠΟΛΕΙ
1888.

ΕΚ ΤΟΥ ΤΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΕΙΟΥ ΝΕΟΛΟΓΟΥ.

Ν. Φ.
F
310

Figure 2: *Poems*, 1nd Edition, inside cover, Neologos Press, Constantinople, 1888, (National Library of Greece).


18

5

Ὁ περίλυπος.

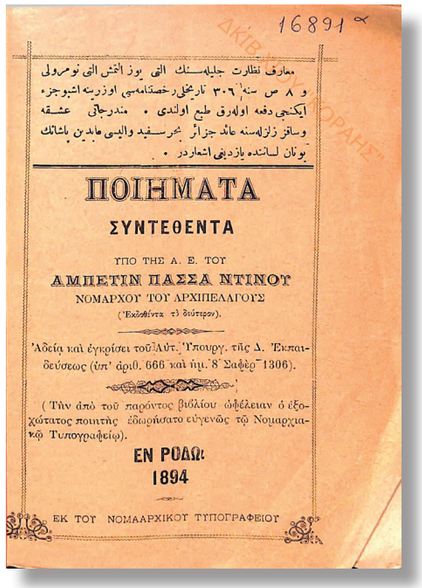
Ἀχ, οἱ παλμοί, οἱ στεναγμοί,
ἄχ, οἱ πικροί μου λογισμοὶ
Πάντα μοῦ καίουν τὴν καρδιὰ
καὶ δὲν μ' ἀφίνουν μιὰ στιγμή.

Τὸ πῶς πονῶ, τὸ πῶς θρηνῶ,
τὸ πῶς ματαίως σὲ ζητῶ,
Ἀγάπη μου πολύπαθος,
τὸ ξεύρω πλὸ δὲν θὰ σὲ ἰδῶ.

Φέρε στὴν γνῶσιν τοὺς γλυκεῖς
τοὺς χρόνους μας τοὺς εὐτυχεῖς·
Τότε μ' ἀγάπη ἔλεγες,
ζῆσε, ψυχή μου, νὰ χαρῇς.

Τότε τὸ πᾶν ἦτο γλυκύ,
ἦτον ἡ ἄνοιξ', ἡ αὐγή.

Figure 3: "The Sorrowful Man" (an excerpt) *Poems*, 2nd Edition, Provincial Press of Rhodes, 1894, (Koraes Public Library, Chios).


16891

معارف نظارت جليله سنك الى يوز التش الى نومرولى
و ٨ س سنه ٣٠٦ تاريخلى رخصتنامه سى اوزرينه اشبو جزء
ايكنجى دفعه اولاوق طبع اولندى . مندرجاتى عشقه
وساقر زلزاله سنه عائد جزائر بحر سفيد واليسى عابدين پاشانك
يونان لسانندە يازدېغى اشعاردر .

ΠΟΙΗΜΑΤΑ

ΣΥΝΤΕΘΕΝΤΑ

ΥΠΟ ΤΗΣ Α. Ε. ΤΟΥ

ΑΜΠΕΤΙΝ ΠΑΣΣΑ ΝΤΙΝΟΥ

ΝΟΜΑΡΧΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΠΕΛΑΓΟΥΣ

(Ἐκδοθέντα τὸ δεύτερον).

Ἀδείᾳ καὶ ἐγκρίσει τοῦ Λὐτ. Ὑπουργ. τῆς Δ. Ἐκπαιδεύσεως (ὑπ' ἀριθ. 666 καὶ ἡμ. 8 Σαφὲρ 1306).

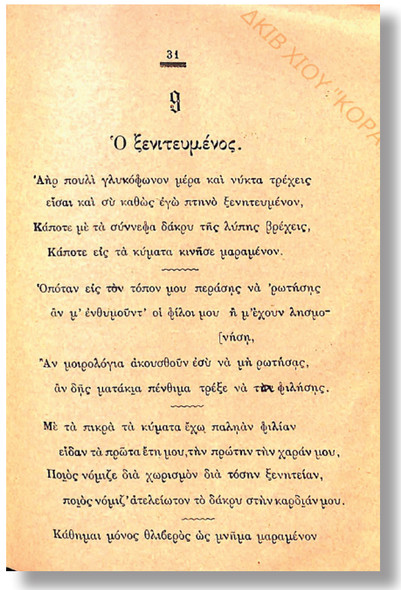
(Τὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ παρόντος βιβλίου ὠφέλειαν ὁ ἐξοχώτατος ποιητὴς ἐδωρήσατο εὐγενῶς τῷ Νομαρχιακῷ Τυπογραφείῳ).

ΕΝ ΡΟΔΩ
1894

ΕΚ ΤΟΥ ΝΟΜΑΡΧΙΚΟΥ ΤΥΠΟΓΡΑΦΕΙΟΥ

ΔΙΚΗ ΧΙΟΥ ΚΟΡΑΗΣ

Figure 4: *Poems*, 2nd Edition, inside cover, Provincial Press of Rhodes, 1894, (Koraes Public Library, Chios).


31

9

Ὁ ξενιτευμένος.

Ἀὴρ πουλὶ γλυκόφωνον μέρα καὶ νύκτα τρέχεις
εἶσαι καὶ σὺ καθὼς ἐγὼ πτηνὸ ξενιτευμένον,
Κάποτε μὲ τὰ σύννεφα δάκρυ τῆς λύπης βρέχεις,
Κάποτε εἰς τὰ κύματα κινῆσε μαραμένον.

Ὁπόταν εἰς τὸν τόπον μου περάσῃς νὰ 'ρωτήσῃς
ἂν μ' ἐνθυμοῦντ' οἱ φίλοι μου ἢ μ'ἐχοὺν λησμονήσῃ,
Ἂν μοιρολόγια ἀκουσθοῦν ἐσὺ νὰ μὴ ρωτήσῃς,
ἂν δῇς ματάκια πένθιμα τρέξε νὰ τὸν φιλήσῃς.

Μὲ τὰ πικρὰ τὰ κύματα ἔχω παλιὰν φιλίαν
εἶδαν τὰ πρῶτα ἔτη μου, τὴν πρώτην τὴν χαράν μου,
Ποιὸς νόμιζε διὰ χωρισμὸν διὰ τόσην ξενιτείαν,
ποιὸς νόμιζ' ἀτελείωτον τὸ δάκρυ στὴν καρδιάν μου.

Κάθημαι μόνος θλιβερὸς ὡς μνῆμα μαραμένον

ΔΙΚΗ ΧΙΟΥ ΚΟΡΑΗΣ

Figure 5: "The Exile" (an excerpt) *Poems*, 2nd Edition, Provincial Press of Rhodes, 1894, (Koraes Public Library, Chios).

When they first appeared, most of the above poems acquired a provisional title from their publication in the *Neologos*. This was finalised (with the addition of "The Sorrowful Woman") when forming part of the collected *Poems*, published by the Neologos Press in Constantinople when Abidin was governor general of Ankara. A slim volume, it obtained a circulation license from the Ottoman Ministry of Public Education on 8 Safer 1306, i.e. 2/14.10.1888, running to just 21 pages octet and priced at two silver kuruş.[28] According to a note on the last page, publication of the poems was to be continued in "a special forthcoming issue". This new "issue" did indeed appear, though six whole years later, in 1894. In that instance it was published by the Provincial Press of Rhodes, capital of the vilayet of the Archipelago, where Abidin had recently assumed office as governor general – formally from mid-December 1893, though in practice after mid-January 1894.[29]

On the cover, the new publication misleadingly describes itself as a reissue ("*Poems* […] published a second time"), in all probability so as to avoid the business of obtaining a new circulation license from the Ministry of Public Education (the initial one from 1888 was reused). As a matter of fact, it retains the same pagination for the six poems as in the first edition, organized in the same order, but then adds four new ones. Running to 33 pages,[30] it is thus noticeably expanded. The price increased to 3.5 kuruş, with the proceeds being "graciously donated by the most excellent poet" to the Provincial Press, according to a note to that effect on the inside front cover.

The new poems added to this second edition are "Maiden in Love", "Memories" with an "Elegy" written as a sequel, and "The Exile". In all but the last poem, Abidin abandons his favoured division of poetic meaning into quatrains, and spreads it uniformly across the entire poem, only ensuring that his fifteen-syllable lines are in rhyming couplets. The distressed figure of the "sorrowful" young woman reappears in "Maiden in Love" (52 lines). She is now gazing intently out to sea, wracked by mourning, waiting in vain for the ship that will bring her beloved back.

She searches for a ship to see on the boundless swell,
she spies no ship but a gaping tomb,
she sees the sun red, like the blood of the heart,
sinking into the sea, regally, calmly.
Her motionless eye sheds blood and tear
sadness overwhelms her pale face.
Her mind soars like an eagle, crosses the sea;
desire has laid her low, she has little hope.
She runs, seeks, always seeks her friend in pain
and curses life, separation, time. (lines 3-12)

28 Information from the digital copy of the edition provided to me by the National Library of Greece.

29 *Stamboul* newspaper, 16.12.1893. On Abidin's delayed arrival in Rhodes, see the information published in *Stamboul* on 19.12.1893, 27.12.1893, 5.1.1894 and 17.1.1894.

30 Warm thanks to the Koraes Public Library, Chios, and especially to Mr. K. Zafeiris and supervisor Ms. Anna Chaziri, for providing me with a digital copy of the second edition of the *Poems*.

While the maiden is in this dire plight, a sea nymph appears before her; she explains that she is the soul of the maiden's long-dead sister, and invites her to leave the terrestrial world, where love has consumed her, and follow her into the immaterial world of souls. The maiden first asks what has become of her beloved, and when her sister's soul confirms that he has died, she begs God to free her of her body so that her soul can meet the man she loved on earth in heaven; God grants her the wish:

God took pity on her, she falls dead.
Her soul leaves like a bird, only the body remains.
(lines 51-52)

In the very next poem, "Memories" (52+2 lines), a "sorrowful" lover speaks to his heart, sighing over its sorry state, having lost its past happiness and being constantly steeped in grief.

You have a sky, my heart, but without stars;
you have an unhealing wound no knives have seen;
you have your tempests, you too have winters,
you have the poundings of separation, bitter struggles.
In times past, my heart, you had a radiant sun;
you had ardent glances, you had the whole world.
Alas! you have now grown like a rough sea,
having your bitterness as life and abysses as a tomb!
Alas! How have you now grown like a reed in the wind,
with the north wind of pain bending you night and day;
alas! now you have grown like a sad moon,
with night your partner and grief your light!
Oh! What sorrow, what a burning candle in my heart,
what endless visceral pain!
(lines 5-18)

Thereafter, the distraught lover addresses time, which has left him so many sweet memories of the past, and asks it what has become of the woman he loved and whom he has never forgotten; the night wind always feels for him, but does not manage to cool him; the "sorrowful" one is now in Rhodes, which is stunningly beautiful and has all things good, but does not have his beloved. Since the only thing he now awaits is the moment when his tormented soul will depart its body, he wants to find time to bid farewell to "the love of his youth", so he dedicates an elegy born of his soul to her. This he tells her in the last two lines, which act independently, as a brief introductory explanation to the immediately ensuing "Elegy".

Despite maintaining integrity of meaning, this shorter poem (38 lines) serves as a continuation or extension of the previous one, and thus is not numbered separately in Abidin's collection.[31] The tormented lover now speaks solely to his departed beloved, complaining to her that the sun and moon will never again encounter a creature like her, and that she herself will be unable to come to the earth and see how she is being mourned not only by his own burning breast, but also by her friends:

Your friends will seek you, they will chant your youth,
they shall place flowers for you on your bitter grave.
They will say "Orphan friend, dead friend,
white flower of joy, asleep in the tomb,
how come you do not wake up, no longer come to ask for us,
why, as you left your youth, did you leave us too?
and instead of your white breast being adorned with lilies,
it has the earth as a blanket and the dirges of the north wind?"
(lines 23-30)

At the end of his "Elegy" the poet bids farewell to his eternal beloved, in the hope that he will meet her once more in heaven, and obliquely reminds God that that is what should happen to the souls of human beings who have loved each other.

Lastly, in the "Exile"[32] at the close of the collection, the poet returns to quatrain structure to address the wind, which is another migratory bird. When it passes over his homeland, he entreats it to ask whether he is remembered; if the wind sees sad eyes, it should kiss them (stanzas 1-2). He then recalls how happy life was in his youth, when he could never have imagined that separation, uprooting and endless heartache would follow (stanza 3). Now that he is far away from everyone, his mind races to where he met his beloved; he sighs at losing the love and friendship that were the stars in his life, and also because he has not reached the end of that life, even though no hope is now left to him (stanzas 4-6). There come moments when he thinks that the clouds and the sky reflect his own sadness at the separation he is experiencing, and he wonders in dismay whether his beloved is still alive or has now died (stanzas 7-8). At the end of his distraught confession (stanzas 9-10), the poet curses his plight and the separation that has only brought lamentation, and makes the decision to abandon life.

31 "Memories" is given as the eighth poem in the collection, followed by the unnumbered "Elegy". The volume of ten *Poems* ends with "The Exile", listed as number 9.

32 In the Greek title, Abidin opts for the word "Ξενιτευμένος", which has no precise equivalent in English (unlike Turkish, which has close equivalents in the words *gurbetçi*, *gurbetteki*). Of the closest English concepts "expatriate" and "exile(d)" the latter is used here, given that Greek folk songs on the pain of those forced to abandon their native land are usually termed "songs of exile" in English.

5. The Archipelago in Abidin's life. Rhodes

As the imaginary product of artistic material, a poem cannot by nature possibly acquire the value of a historical source on the actual biography of the person composing it. Yet when reading the entire series of Abidin's Greek poems, one is easily tempted to wonder whether the motif of separated lovers at the core of the narrative in seven out of his ten compositions is to be credited solely to the pose of Romanticism. "The Soul-suffering Lover", "The Sorrowful Man", "The Sorrowful Woman", "The Maiden in Love", "Memories", the "Elegy" and "The Exile" and half of "Whether Everything Prays" are full to the brim with the pain of a male or female lover who has long lost the object of their desire along with the joy of life. Could Abidin's incessant moves around the regions of the Ottoman state, on account of successive appointments to various administrative posts, have led to his forced removal from a great love? A letter in French (14.2.1974) from Abidin Dino, a grandson of the same name, informs us that his grandfather, like his great-grandfather, "only entered into one official marriage, but had many free relationships, from which he had illegitimate children in Greece".[33] It would thus appear that what first inspired Abidin to channel his sorrow into his love poems was compulsory distancing from one or more of his lovers. The only explicit indication of when this occurred or the minimum time such a distancing lasted is in the monologue in "The Sorrowful Woman", who has not seen her lover for five years. If we knew for certain that the poem in question was written shortly after "The Sorrowful Man" (*Neologos*, autumn 1885) rather than shortly before the first edition of the *Poems* (autumn 1888), then we could place the actual separation of "sorrowful" Abidin from his "sorrowful" beloved in the five years starting shortly after his dismissal from the post of minister of Foreign Affairs (31.7/12.8.1880), i.e. during the years when he was posted far away from Constantinople to serve as governor general at Adana, then Sivas (for a second time), and then Ankara.[34]

In 1894, i.e. shortly after being appointed in Rhodes, and almost six years after the *Poems* were first published, Abidin suddenly remembered to dust them off, add four more exclusively on love and lamentation, and reissue them at the Rhodes Provincial Press. Could his move to Rhodes have spurred him to channel the pain of a romantic farewell into poetry once more? Probably yes, since on the basis of the information we have on the first publication of three out of the four new poems, they were composed between late 1893 and the spring of 1894. "Maiden in Love" would seem to have been written immediately after Abidin was posted to Rhodes, as it appeared in the *Yearbook* (*Imerologion*) published by the Smyrna-based newspaper *Amaltheia* for the year 1894, which managed to include three references to his new appointment: a) in a potted biography; b) beneath a picture

33 Kypriotis, 177. According to unconfirmed rumours from an aged resident of Constantinople with roots in Preveza, (Stylos, 104), one of Abidin pasha's illegitimate children was Kornelia Preveziotou (1878?-1964), a well-known Greek intellectual in Constantinople (at any rate, her surname does link her descent to Preveza, where Abidin originally hailed from).

34 In January 1881 he was appointed governor general of Adana, in September 1885 he moved to Sivas, and in July 1886 to Ankara (*Stamboul*, 24.1.1881, 1.10.1885 and 8.7.1886 respectively). During his tenure in Adana, Abidin helped the Greek historian Pavlos Karolidis carry out historical and folklore research at Comana in Cappadocia. In turn, the latter dedicated the resulting study to Abidin (*Τα Κόμανα και τα ερείπια αυτών*, Athens, 1882).

of him; c) beneath the poem itself.[35] In fact, the poem is accompanied by a footnote clarifying that Abidin "presented" it to the publishers of the *Yearbook*. The "presentation" may well have occurred during the brief stop Abidin made in his beloved Smyrna in mid-January 1894, to stay with Hassan Fahmi pasha, his opposite number there.[36] The next pair of poems added to the 1894 collection, "Memories" and the "Elegy" were definitely written in Rhodes, as indicated by line 33 in the first one: "Now I am in Rhodes, a charming island". Besides, once composed they were sent to the *Neologos*, as was Abidin's wont, and appeared on 23.3/4.4.1894, under the general title "Love Sighs".

Yet once more, the *Neologos* recommends the two poems as fresh tokens of Abidin's knowledge of Greek and literary skill: "These elegies contain true poetry, are imbued with great metrical grace and art, and provide new evidence of the sensitive and poetic heart of their eminent creator, who continues to offer up brilliant sacrifices to the Muses, despite the obstacles and natural distractions posed by his remaining serious occupations", as the newspaper adds in introducing the pair of poems. Is the inference that one of the poet's new obstacles and natural distractions is his appointment in Rhodes? What we do know is that with the title "Memories" given to the first poem, Abidin urges us to take its content as a personal confession, in which he explicitly implicates his new residence in Rhodes:

Now I am in Rhodes, a charming island,
island like a bride of dawn, decked in lilies.
The sun loved it, gifting its light to it,
which is why it smells sweet and blooms like a rose.
Every spring, winter, summer you think,
you think the island, a bird, like a white dove,
will fly, will soar, will rise into the air.
It has heavenly wings, the wind for a companion.
It has tender twigs, fragrant flowers;
it has all things good, it has all things, all,
but it lacks your sweet, heavenly gaze,
your sad face, your blood-filled tear.

(lines 33-44)

The poet makes a threefold attempt to assure us that Rhodes has "all things good", excepting of course his beloved, who is absent. But perhaps we should not rush to believe him; his assertion looks more like subterfuge than a genuine establishment of fact, since "all things good" on Rhodes only relates to the wonderful nature there, not to its inhabited space, i.e. the place which he must first acclimatize to and which he will, essentially speaking, have to administer as governor.[37] It is said that from the Ottoman conquest onwards, Rhodes was traditionally a place of exile for those who had to be removed from Constantinople after falling into disfavour with the sultan.[38] Historical sources relating to Abidin's stay there confirm this; he really did experience Rhodes as an exile, and made desperate attempts to return to Constantinople.[39]

This sense of exile is very vividly depicted quite early on in relation to Abidin's lengthy stay on Rhodes, in his last know poem. Eloquently entitled "The Exile", it rounds off the 1894 edition of the *Poems*. Yet again, the lover laments the fact that he is separated from his beloved and wonders what has become of her and whether she remembers him. Yet his unwanted exile is more emphatically highlighted here, as it now takes up the greater part of the poem, or six out of ten stanzas – the first four and the last two, given in translation below. Note that the second line of "The Exile" makes use of the "migratory bird", a common motif in Greek folk song, also used earlier in the second line of the "Sorrowful Woman":

The Exile

Wind[,] sweet-voiced bird, day and night you race
like me, you too are a migratory bird,
At times with the clouds you rain a tear of sadness,
At times you move languishing on the waves.

Whenever you pass by my homeland ask
if my friends remember me or if they've forgotten me,
If dirges are heard then do not ask,
if you see eyes in mourning, hurry and kiss them.

With the bitter waves I have an old friendship
they saw my first years, my first joy,
Who thought of separation, of so long in foreign parts,
who thought the tears in my heart would be endless.

I sit alone, doleful like a languishing tomb
without familiar faces, relatives, without joy and hope,
My eye sheds the bitter blood of my heart,
and my mind races far off, to the place I saw her.
[...]

35 The picture shows Abidin from the waist up. It was drawn by the engraver Michail Nikolaidis, who worked with many publications in Smyrna and Constantinople.

36 *Stamboul* newspaper, 17.1.1894.

37 According to census data collected by Catholic delegates of the Sacred Congregation "de Propaganda Fide" in Rhodes, the population in Abidin's time was estimated at between 30,000 and 35,000 (Daniela Fabrizio, "Politica e missione: Rodi (1897-1928)", *Nuova Rivista Storica* 89.2 (2005) 350, 362, 415).

38 Edouard Biliotti - L'Abbé Cottret, *L'île de Rhodes*, Rhodes, 1881, p. 355-358. Biliotti was of a Levantine family that had long served the British consulate in Rhodes. The work was simultaneously published in a two-volume Greek translation.

39 See Abdülhamit Kırmızı, "Abidin Pasha in Ottoman Rhodes (1894-1906)" in the present volume; also, Yasin Özdemir, "Writer Abidin Pasha, an Ottoman Governor of Rhodes", *Turkish Culture in Rhodes and Kos*, Mustafa Kaymakçı - Cihan Özgün (ed.), Konya, Eğitim Yayınevi, 2020, p. 395-410 (Turkish version of the same study: "Rodos Osmanlı Valilerinden Yazar Abidin Paşa", p. 364-376, in *Rodos ve İstanköy Türk Kültürü*, issued simultaneously with the English volume, remaining publication details as above).

A curse on you, separation, a curse on you, fate
you have burned me to the core, my soul has caught fire,
And now I have taken the bitter decision
to abandon my doleful life altogether.

Separation is no joy, night has no sunbeams,
hell has no cool, and winter no lilies,
My heart does not have those flourishing
joys of early life, but always has lamentations.

At the conclusion of "The Exile", the poet makes the "bitter" decision to give up on his "doleful" life, without clarifying whether he has it in mind to commit suicide or to permanently abandon seeking the joy of life. In Abidin's real life, things did of course work out differently (and at times not in the least romantically). From early on he had to roll up his sleeves, willingly or not, to carry out his duties in the Archipelago region. It has been written that during his term the construction of new public and private buildings increased (including his personal mansion, and the so-called "Konak" or island's administrative headquarters), many drinking fountains were erected, most of the cemeteries were moved outside of the city and a community pharmacy was established.[40] From despatches on the first year of his tenure on Rhodes, published in the French-language newspaper *Stamboul* in Constantinople, among other things we learn that in February 1894 he decided to convert a building donated by a generous islander of Greek descent into a municipal hospital/poor house, and to that end sought an increase in the state aid received by the island, to be used in its entirety on the new foundation.[41] At the same time he urged the islanders to take advantage of the soil's suitability and take up viniculture, even transporting a large quantity of vines from Kos (İstanköy/Kos Adası) for the purpose, and asking the Sublime Porte for a ten-year tax exemption on vine growing.[42] At the end of the same year, a laconic report by the newspaper that Abidin had sent antiquities from excavations on Rhodes to the imperial palace[43] – in all likelihood those found at the site where he planned to build his mansion[44] – is worth further investigation, in the first place on the nature of his personal involvement regarding the island's antiquities, and secondly on any possible interest or indifference he showed towards preventing the illegal excavations that occurred during his tenure, aided and abetted by the local population.[45]

40 Kypriotis, 150-154.

41 *Stamboul*, 15.2.1894 and 23.3.1894. The following year, according to the same newspaper (29.5.1895), Netherlands Consul Henri Ducci donated his house on Rhodes for conversion into a hospital.

42 *Stamboul*, 26.2.1894.

43 *Stamboul*, 14.11.1894 (according to the piece, in its turn the palace forwarded the antiquities to the Museum of Constantinople).

44 Yasin Özdemir, "Writer Abidin Pasha, an Ottoman Governor of Rhodes", p. 403 (or p. 371 in the Turkish version of the same study).

45 See, e.g., Maria Chiara Monaco, "Ρόδος 1899-1912: παράνομες ανασκαφές και συμβολή στη μελέτη του υλικού. Στοιχεία αρχείου και κεραμική από το Αρχαιολογικό Μουσείο της Φλωρεντίας", in D. Damaskos **(επιμ.)**, *Χάρις χαίρε: μελέτες στη μνήμη της Χάρης Κάντζια*, Athens, 2004, p. 75-77. Regarding modern historical monuments on Rhodes, traveller Guy Sommi Picenardi records his irritation at the fact that Abidin and his subordinates did not permit him to study them (*Itinéraire d'un chevalier de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem dans l'île de Rhodes*, Societé de Saint Augustin, Lille, Desclée, de Brouwer et Cie, Imprimeurs des Facultés Catholiques de Lille, 1900, p. 13).

In any event, if one follows how Abidin divided up his activity within the geographical limits of his administrative region via the dispatches in the *Stamboul* newspaper, it soon emerges that it would not have been easy for him to monitor everything going on in Rhodes; from the very first year of his term, he left the island for lengthy periods, preferring Chios and especially Lesbos, on the pretext that he had to tour the other islands in the Archipelago.[46] He was usually away from the end of spring until autumn, mainly using Austrian Lloyd steamships, and often took advantage of their routes to make a short stop in his beloved Smyrna. Some of the lengthier despatches in the *Stamboul* newspaper from 1898 onwards appear to have been written at Abidin's suggestion, whether explicitly or implicitly, so as to argue positively for the requests he made on occasion to Abdülhamid II.[47] Thus, the special interest Abidin showed in Lesbos is reflected in a targeted dispatch conveying the inhabitants' wish for Abidin's stay on their island to be extended, so he could help them solve the problem of reduced soap production.[48] Later on, at the time he sent complaints to the palace about the humidity on Rhodes, a new dispatch advocated the Lesbians' wish to have their island redesignated as the administrative capital of the Archipelago: everything worked better when their vali was there, and their homeland was better than Rhodes in every way.[49] The dispatches in *Stamboul* also draw an association between unpleasant events in Abidin's life and his prolonged stay in Lesbos: first a problem with his eye, which he tried to deal with by seeing a doctor he called there from Constantinople,[50] then the worsening of his wife's health and, finally, her death on Lesbos in June 1904, after four months' suffering from stomach cancer.[51]

Similar targeted dispatches from Rhodes extol Abidin's administrative skills,[52] remind readers of his significant work improving the island's road network[53]and praise his positive insistence on retaining its quarantine station.[54] Of especial interest is a lengthy feature article from 1902, which looks back in time in order to acclaim Abidin's effectiveness in dealing with difficult situations. The article relates how when he was governing Sivas, despite the terrible weather he managed to get to Thessaloniki in time to co-ordinate the release of Savva pasha's nephew, who had been abducted by bandits in the area around Mt. Olympus.[55] This random trip down memory lane was obviously written at Abidin's suggestion, probably so as to obliquely bring to mind that his loyalty to Abdülhamid remained firm, in contrast to that of other officials – in this case Savva pasha, who hastened to

46 At least 39 dispatches in *Stamboul* between 1894 and 1905 were exclusively concerned with Abidin's movements between Rhodes, Chios and Lesbos.

47 Adequately investigated by Abdülhamit Kırmızı and Yasin Özdemir (see note 39).

48 *Stamboul*, 27.5.1898.

49 *Stamboul*, 21.3.1899. The piece reminds readers that Lesbos was the capital of the vilayet up until the earthquake of 1867, and cites the number of ships docking in its port over the previous year as tangible evidence of its superiority to Rhodes.

50 *Stamboul*, 25.7.1900.

51 *Stamboul*, 21.6.1900. The death announcement for Abidin's wife was written on 16.6.1900.

52 *Stamboul*, 16.6.1900. Extensive mention is made of his effectiveness in managing all sectors of the administration, his ability (in contrast to previous governors) to encourage his subordinates to produce results, his trust in laws and dislike of sycophants and favouritism.

53 *Stamboul*, 16.6.1900, 2.9.1901. In a dispatch dated 30.12.1904, Abidin is praised for taking interest in improving the rural road network on Rhodes, showing awareness of the difficulties villagers faced when travelling.

54 *Stamboul*, 9.12.1903.

55 *Stamboul*, 5.5.1902.

abandon the country in October 1900 and take refuge in France.[56] Indeed, if Abdülhamid's memory was good, he could easily have recalled that around the same time Savva pasha escaped to France, Abidin celebrated the sultan's jubilee in full pomp, and offered him a present of his mansion in Ankara for conversion into a School of Arts and Professions.[57]

6. Rhodes takes revenge

The above targeted despatches in the *Stamboul*, taken together with Abidin's prolonged escapes to Chios and chiefly to Lesbos, indicate that, ultimately, "all things good" on Rhodes did not suffice either to comfort him for being in foreign parts or to secure him a trouble-free term on the island with a more promising future after it ended. Abidin did not love Rhodes, and it more or less reciprocated. In September 1895 he only narrowly survived two accidents that occurred two days apart: on the first occasion his horse threw him when a rein broke, and on the second the horses drawing his carriage bolted on seeing some empty sacks by the road, and landed the carriage in a ditch as he sat inside, holding his sleeping grandchild in his arms.[58] Some while later, in 1904, "all things good" on Rhodes found themselves under water, demolished and washed away by a heavy, extremely destructive cloudburst, including some of the walls of Abidin's house; [59] then a few months later his wife died.

In any event, it appears that the exiled vali tried to contend with his intolerable posting to Rhodes by engaging in cultural pursuits. According to testimony by locals recorded three years after his death (1909), because Abidin was a devotee of the theatre, he would force his employees to pay him 150 liras to bring a troupe to Rhodes for two months every year.[60] Though not in intimate detail, there is greater certainty about his initiative to bring the first flatbed printing machine to the island, which was used to print the bilingual weekly newspaper Αιγαίον (*Egeon/Bahr-i Sefid*) from 1896; the paper ran to four pages per edition (two in Ottoman Turkish and two in Greek), and created "the initial core of printers and journalists" on Rhodes.[61] Yet it still remains unclear whether Abidin used the newspaper in place of the *Neologos* to publicise whatever writing he produced during his term on Rhodes.[62] While we do know what the Ottoman Turkish part of that work was,[63] it remains to be seen whether "in the multi-volume, full series of his works" he gifted the German Kaiser in 1898 in his capacity as Ottoman vali,[64] he thought it worthwhile to include his Greek poems in addition to the Ottoman volumes. Or whether he also wrote prose pieces in Greek, as the editor of the *Stamboul* wished to believe when writing Abidin's obituary the day after he died.[65]

Lastly, it has not been established whether he continued to compose new Greek poems in Rhodes. We can be sure that he intended to do so, since the Rhodes edition of the *Poems* concludes by announcing itself as the "first issue"; nevertheless, there is no evidence that a second one ever appeared. In other words, with the information to date, it could be said that Rhodes sapped Abidin of all his poetic vigour, blighting his artistic inspiration, as if taking revenge on him for regarding it as a place of exile. Then again, on Rhodes Abidin may have had his fill of using the Greek he so longed for while serving in the farthest reaches of the East, and the magical effect of the language that propelled him along the road of poetry may have worn off. In retrospect, at any rate, it seems that the eleven years he lived "in exile" on Rhodes were less fateful than the mere one year he managed to survive after leaving to move urgently to Constantinople.[66] Right at the end of the same year he met his end, unexpectedly and inexplicably, according to official accounts, while drinking his coffee in Yıldız Palace on the invitation of Abdülhamid II. But that is another story, and a separate "conversation in the library".



56 On Savva pasha's hurried departure from roads and possible reasons for it, see, e.g., the French newspapers *Le Temps*, 18.10.1890 and *Gil Blas*, 20.10.1890, and the Greek *Εφημερίς*, 4-6.10.1890, *Επιθεώρησις*, 5-6.10.1890 and *Νέα Επιθεώρησις*, 5-6.10.1890.

57 *Stamboul*, 25.9.1900. An earlier example of Abidin's generosity was the offer of 150 Turkish liras to the Relief Committee for the Muslims of Crete (*Stamboul*, 31.3.1897).

58 *Stamboul*, 26.9.1895.

59 *Stamboul*, 19.1.1904.

60 Alexandros Pallis, *Μπρουσός*, Athens, 1923, p. 77-78 (with a photograph of Abidin on p. 78).

61 Antonis Aggelis, "Ο τύπος στα Δωδεκάνησα", *Ο ελληνικός Τύπος 1784 έως σήμερα. Ιστορικές και θεωρητικές προσεγγίσεις*, Athens, Modern Greek Research Institute - National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2005, p. 308-309. Also, Kypriotis, 155-157.

62 The newspaper encouraged contributions on topics concerning science, literature and the general public (see the relevant announcement in the first issue on the Osmanlıca Mahalli Gazete ve Mecmu'alar website, https://www.osmanlicagazeteler.org/Sayfa.php?il=Rodos&GazeteID=Bahr-i%20Sefid).

63 Şimşekler, 123-126. Abidin's Ottoman oeuvre was the focus of the symposium *Bütün yönleriyle Abidin Paşa Sempozyumu*, Ankara, 4.5.2023.

64 *Stamboul*, 22.11.1898 and 23.11.1898. Abidin had prepared a sumptuous welcome for the German Kaiser, but as the latter never disembarked from the ship carrying him, he was forced to offer the gifts including his written works via a representative.

65 *Stamboul*, 10.5.1906 (front page obituary for Abidin).

66 According to dispatches in *Stamboul* in May 1905, Abidin received orders to depart for Constantinople, although he was intending to travel from Rhodes to Lesbos. He left with his grandchildren and son, and Chukri Bey was appointed his substitute; his leave in Constantinople is described as being "indefinite" (*Stamboul*, 10.5.1905, 12.5.1905, 20.5.1905, 30.5.1905, 6.9.1905, 30.10.1905).

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Ottoman burial in the town of Rhodes 1523-1917

The state of the evidence

The proper disposal of the dead is a major issue for all societies. Setting aside the obvious need to protect the living from biological contagion, the treatment of the dead is bound to beliefs about the afterlife and anxiety about the potential hostility of the deceased, and therefore to religion. They are also inextricably linked to status– not only the status of the dead and of their living relations, families or clans, but also the status of the authority represented on the local level by particular individuals. It follows, from this, that major political or religious changes are accompanied by discontinuities in burial practices, including the choices of loci for burials.

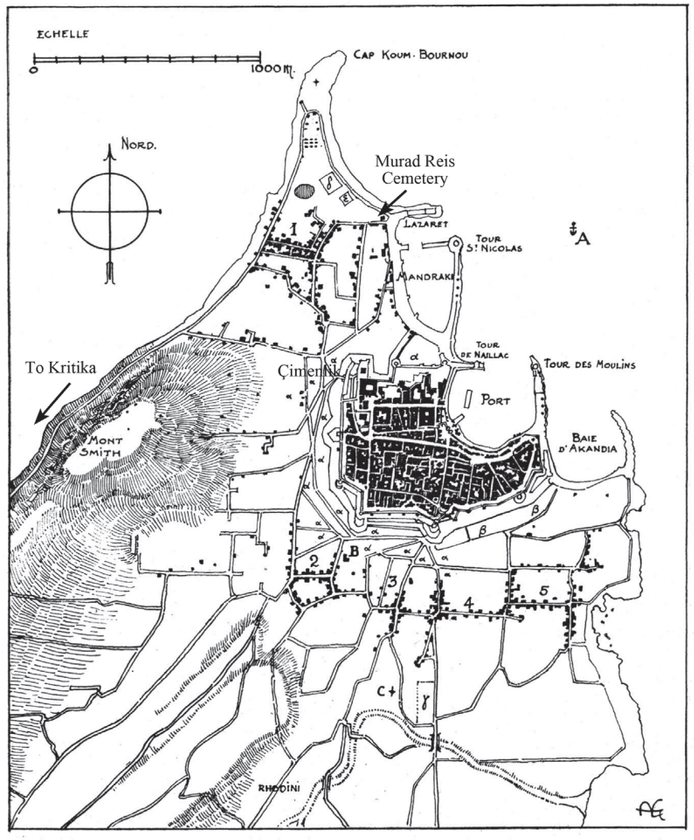
Rhodes is a case in point, not least because its expansion in the 20th century has been accompanied by extensive archaeological exploration of land under development, in the form of rescue excavation. Yet there are major gaps in our knowledge about the local disposal of the dead: the first involves Late Antiquity, when the arrival of Christianity overlapped with the decline of the great ancient city. Evidence about Early Christian burial is patchy and largely relies on inference drawn from the spatial distribution of specific types of finds such as clay lamps. The relative obscurity of Byzantine Rhodes is largely due to its replacement by the expanding and multicultural Hospitaller town (1309-1522) which is, by and large, still standing and legally protected and is, therefore, less amenable to comprehensive exploration of its substrate. The Hospitaller period also has the advantage of plentiful written evidence to back (and sometimes confuse) the evidence on the ground. In Hospitaller times, most of the Christian inhabitants of Rhodes town were apparently buried within or around churches. Shaft and cist graves, niche and table tombs as well as sarcophagi and plain inhumations are recorded in the excavation of various churches belonging to the Orthodox and Latin rite inside the town. We also know of the Hospitaller cemetery of St Anthony to the north of the town, close to Mandraki Harbour, where most of the Knights who died in Rhodes were buried[1].

Shortly after the conquest of Rhodes by Suleiman the Magnificent (1523) all the Christian residents of the town who did not choose to leave with the Knights had to relocate to the string of urban nuclei formed around particular churches outside the fortified town[2], in the so-called Christian "marassia"[3]. Of the approximately five thousand Muslims settled inside the walls after 1523 very few were buried there, and their tombs are associated with religious foundations they had

1 A. Gabriel, *La cité de Rhodes I, Architecture militaire*, Paris 1921, 14-15.

2 Probably completed when a local conspiracy to bring back the Knights of St John was brought to light in 1529. Z. N. Tsirpanlis, *Στη Ρόδο του 16ου-17ουαιώνα. Από τους Ιωαννίτες Ιππότες στους Οθωμανούς* Τούρκους, Rhodes 2002, 37-41. N. Vatin, *L'Ordre de Saint-Jean-de-Jérusalem, l'Empire ottoman et la Méditterranée orientale entre les deux sièges de Rhodes 1480-1522*, Louvain-Paris 1994, 368-371. E. Kolovos, The Fortress and the Town of Rhodes According to the Ottoman Survey After the Siege of 1522, in S. D. Phillips (Ed.), *The 1522 Siege of Rhodes: Causes, Course and Consequences*, Abington 2022, 134.

3 These Orthodox Christian parishes were St John, the Holy Anargyroi, St Anastasia, the Metropolis (former Paximada), St George "Ano", St Nicholas and St George "Kato", counter-clockwise from the SW to the SE of the walled town. The northern *Neomaras* (Greek Niochori) was associated with the operation of the fortified Ottoman military shipyard at Mandraki and was a double parish, with separate churches for Greeks and Latins.



1. Neokhori. — 2. Faubourgs de Saint-Jean et des Saints-Anargyres. — 3. Faubourg de Sainte-Anastasie. — 4. Faubourg de la Métropole. — 5. Faubourg de Saint-Georges.
α, α, α... = Cimetières turcs. — β, β = Cimetières juifs. — γ = Cimetière grec. — δ = Cimetière catholique.

Figure 1: Neighbourhoods and cemeteries outside the walled city.

set up, either mosques or mesjids[4]. Outside the walls, occasional isolated burials did occur[5]. The vast majority of the Ottoman town's inhabitants were buried in extensive cemeteries outside the walls

4 Such as the mosque of Topal Recep Pasha (built in 1587/8, H. 995), associated with the family turbe of its founder: A. Kalagri, *Τεχνική έκθεση για τη συντήρηση και την αποκατάσταση των ταφικών συνόλων και των διακοσμητικών στοιχείων εντός του μαυσωλείου του Ρετζέπ Πασά στη μεσαιωνική πόλη της Ρόδου*, Rhodes 2024, 17-24. Similarly, the more modest tomb of the founder of Borouzan mesjid, a former medieval church now known as St Kyriake, survives next to the building.

5 As in the late case of Mercan Dede, the founder of the Abdul Hamid Mosque at Kritika, whose mausoleum still stands below the brow of the Monte-Smith hill. Kritika was originally a coastal settlement for Turkish refugees founded after the Cretan uprising of 1896/7 drove many off the larger island to Rhodes. Ch. I. Papachristodoulou, *Ιστορία της Ρόδου από τους Προϊστορικούς Χρόνους έως την Ενσωμάτωση* (1948), Athens 1972, 478. The area of Monte Smith near the tomb was marked in Italian maps as "Merqiun" Tepe.

which gradually developed in two principal locations: one was the zone of the *glacis*[6] outside the medieval moat[7] and the other the tekke of Murad Reis which replaced the cemetery of St Anthony (Figure 1). The association of St. Anthony's church with the tekke is supported by the reported custom of local Christian women in Ottoman times to take candle offerings to the tekke, as Anthony was an important healing saint[8].

The problem with research on the Ottoman period *in situ* is principally due to the surgical tactics applied on the landscape by the colonial authorities under Italian rule (1912-1943)[9]. With the political objective of enhancing past ties of Rhodes with Western Europe, they summarily disposed of the Ottoman and Jewish cemeteries which surrounded the walled town[10] and embarked on extensive urban development in the zone between the historic centre and the Christian *Marassia*. Former aspects of the monumental zone are preserved in 19th century engravings (Figure 2)[11] and early photographs. We cannot estimate the extent of the losses, because the wholesale Italian interventions were not properly documented. Nevertheless, a great deal may be gleaned in various ways through the study and collation of other sources, despite the technical barrier of different scripts, languages and priorities.

Muslim burial in the zone outside the walls began immediately after the Conquest of 1522, and the first to be buried there were casualties of the siege. Two such burials were unexpectedly discovered by the author in 1993[12]; they were actually located inside the bulwark flanking the gate of St John[13] from the SE, then under restoration. The deceased were regularly laid out on top of a stout ancient revetment, which had later been encased in the Hospitaller fortifications. T1 was a cist burial covered by a row of six slabs, with a long axis oriented NW-SE. T2, a plain inhumation, lay to the north of the cist and parallel to it.

6 *Glacis*: the outer bank of the counterscarp.

7 Gabriel 1921, 1-2.

8 V. Strumza, Il "Tecchè" di Murad Reis a Rodi, RIVISTA DELLE COLONIE ITALIANE VIII, 7, 1934-XII, 4. For other examples of Christian veneration of Muslim holy men and sites, cf. F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans*, NY1973, Chapter VII.

9 M. Livadiotti- G. Rocco (eds), *La presenza Italiana nel Dodecaneso tra il 1912 e il 1948. La ricerca archeologica. La conservazione. Le scelte progettuali*, Catania 1996, 217-219.

10 According to Gabriel 1921, p. 3, Fig. 3, Ottoman burials in the *glacis* spread to the north, west and southwest of the medieval town, with the Jewish cemeteries located to the southeast towards Acandia Bay, east of the axis of the modern Pythagora Street inside the walls.

11 See esp. B. E. A. Rottiers, *Description des monuments de Rhodes*, Brussels 1830, Pl. 13-17.

12 *Archaiologikon Deltion* 48 (1993), Chronika, p. 571. Hitherto unpublished details from Excavation Diary "Medieval Fortifications of Rhodes Town II", 197-203.

13 In Ottoman times this gate was known as Kizil Kapu.

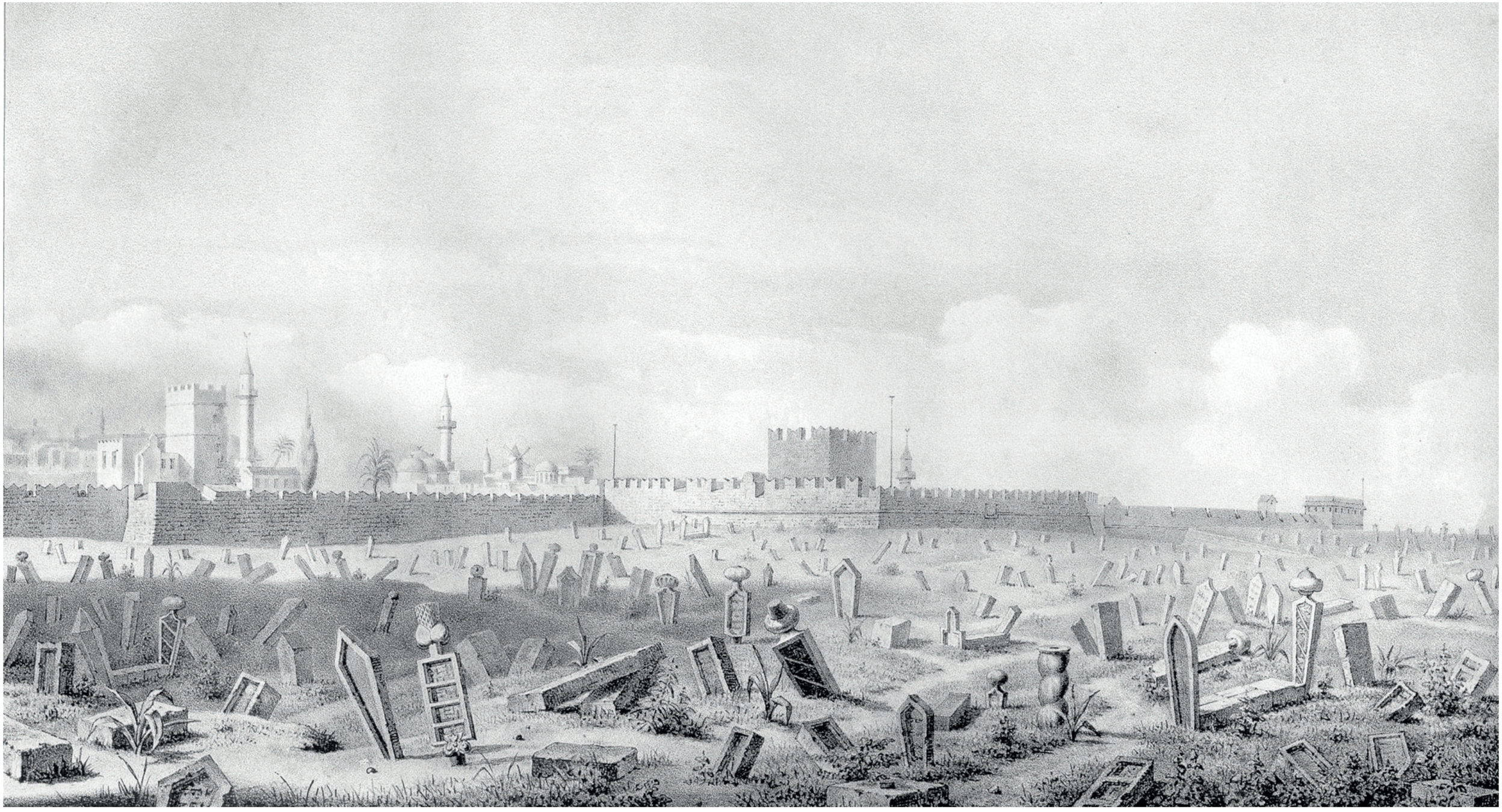


Figure 2: Bernard Eugène Antoine Rottiers, *Description des monuments de Rhodes*, Brussels 1830.

The position of the bodies described in the excavation diary is worth quoting and was the principal identifying factor[14], alongside the context. For T1 (Figure 3 A-C)

"The back seems to rest on the north side of the tomb, the body turned southwards. The cranium rests on the right side, as does the whole body: ribs, hip, long leg bones. The mandible nearly touches the right humerus, the left scapula among the ribs... the right radius and ulna extend towards the pelvis, where the small bones of both palms are concentrated... the left ilium lies edgewise, the lower limbs superimposed: the femurs cross each other, while the tibias and fibulas are parallel... The spine is strongly curved"; for T2 (Figure 4) *"The skeleton, supine and similarly oriented, survives down to the ankles, only traces of the long bones of the legs surviving. The cranium is raised with the neck strongly curved, slightly turned to the left. The arms are parallel to the body and the palms of the hands half-hidden by the pelvis... Teeth in good condition... Bones in very bad state, with multiple cracks... From the left side of the ribcage in the region of the heart was recovered a corroded iron fragment, probably spherical originally (artifact AE 79) ..."*







Figure 3 A-C

Both burials were covered with earth carried there for the purpose and containing a substantial quantity of ancient pottery fragments, a fact which initially confused the dating of the burials. The dead were probably laid to rest where they had fallen when the conquerors were clearing the fortifications of debris and corpses, immediately after the siege. No evidence of a marker on top of the burials has survived.

In recent times, the most organized part of the periurban cemeteries was the Çimenlik, on the site of the modern "Hotel Soleil", surrounded by a fence and planted with trees and flowers. Next to it lay an open space with venerable plane trees where the Kurban Bayrami was celebrated[15]. The Italian authorities stripped the zone around the moat of practically all funerary structures in order to create a monumental zone and showcase the Hospitaller fortifications. The only monument to escape was the tomb of Inat Pasha, chief of the besiegers' artillery in 1522, who fell in action; it is located at the junction of Dimokratias and Komninon streets[16]. It is likely that many of the burials belowground still remain *in situ* under the cypresses of the present parkland. The funerary stelai removed by the Italians were, for several decades, kept in the modern Gani Ahmed Muslim cemetery[17]. However, the space available there gradually dwindled as the cemetery filled up; eventually, about 400 funerary stelae, most of them inscribed, were handed over to the local bureau of the Greek Archaeological Service where they were catalogued and photographed. The oldest dated stele among them is from 1599 (H. 1008) and the most recent from 1898 (H. 1316).

14 T. Insoll, *The Archaeology of Islam*, Oxford 1999, 170-173.

15 Papachristodoulou, 512.

16 ARCHAIOLOGIKON DELTION 42 (1987), B2 Chronika, 658.

17 The Gani Ahmed opened in 1925. J. R. Barnes, The Place of the Ottoman Past in the History of Rhodes in DODEKANISSIAKA CHRONIKA 25 (2012), 453-454 (448-471).

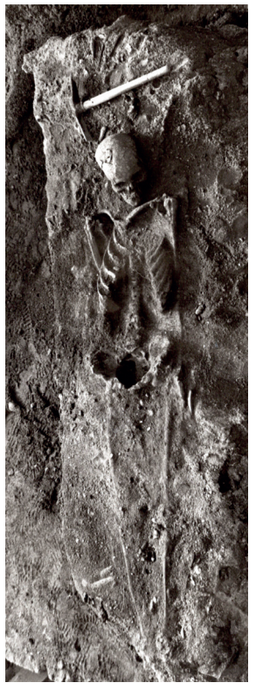




Figure 4, 5

The second Ottoman interment area developed around the tomb of Murad Reis (Figure 5, next page), a focus of grace of more than local appeal[18]. Murad Reis was a corsair who distinguished himself serving in the Ottoman fleet during the reign of Suleiman I (1520-1566) and his successors Selim II (1566-74), Murad III (1574-95), Mehmed III (1595-1603) and Ahmed I (1603-1617). He is supposed to have sailed in various expeditions alongside three celebrated Ottoman seamen of the 16th century: Hayreddin Barbarossa (d. 1546), Piri Reis (d. 1553) and Dragut, also known as Turgut Reis (d. 1565)[19]. He himself died half a century later, in action against the Knights of Malta in 1609/1610 (H. 1018). At his own wish he was buried in Rhodes. His venerable age and renown as a leading warrior of the Faith made his tomb a focus of *bereket* which endures to this day. A mosque was built nearby in 1636/7 (H. 1046) by Ebu Bekr Pasha[20] and was restored by Murabit Hasan Bey in 1797/8 (H. 1212). Nobility from various parts of the Ottoman Empire who died on Rhodes came to be buried nearby; this cemetery fortunately survives and the entire compound, measuring about 0.7 hectares, is today a listed monument. A brief presentation of the Murad Reis site was published in Italian by Vitalis Strumza in 1934, but it is of limited use to modern scholarship[21].

The two structures that dominate the cemetery, spiritually as well as spatially, are the turbe of Murad Reis and the mosque of Ebu Bekr twenty metres to the south. Apart from the small enclosed *hazire* east of the mosque, with the turbe of Shahin Giray at the farthest corner, all the other tombs are concentrated to the west of the line joining the two major monuments. Further away to the north and northeast are scattered six other mausolea, four of which are regular octagonal *turbe*[22]; the other two are the square mausoleum of Mehmed Redif Pasha and the hexagonal pillar mausoleum of Mehmed Shekib Pasha, both supplied with open arches exposing the tombs inside to the air and rain. The plan of the cemetery shows that the orientation of most graves was toward the east, or slightly to the northeast. Thus, if the dead inside was laid on his/her right side they would be facing towards the southeast, i.e. the rough direction of Mecca.

18 Barnes 2012, 450-454. For the influence of a "focus of grace" in the evolution of Muslim cemeteries see Insoll, 173, after J. Dickie, Allah and Eternity: Mosques, Madrasas and Tombs, in G. Michell (ed.), *Architecture of the Islamic World*, London 1978, 46.

19 As early as 1538 he is supposed to have had an active role in the Ottoman victory against a large Christian fleet near Preveza, along with Barbarossa and Dragut. If so, in 1609 he must have been about a hundred years old.

20 Barnes 2012, 464.

21 Strumza 1934. See n. 8 above.

22 Those of Ali Safi Mirza, Sincar Hevvash Bey, Chanbek Giray Khan and Memi Pasha.

Three main types of tomb are distinguished by observation aboveground: I) Headstone (inscribed marble stele, *şahide* or *baş taşı*) and footstone (usually also of marble, often decorated with a cypress symbolizing the soul, or occasionally a palm tree or vine scrolls) fixed on the ground without visible evidence of any other feature. They may signal either a cist or inhumation below, but this cannot be ascertained without disturbing the dead. II) A low masonry border barely emerging from the ground outlines the burial, with slots at the narrow ends for fixing the head and foot stelai. The stone border may occasionally be the visible rim of a cist without a lid. In a few poorer graves the stelai are replaced by squarish low stones. III) A masonry or marble-clad rectangular "box" (*sanduka*)[23], sometimes set on a low plinth, with the head and foot stelai set at the narrow ends, often with a hollow between for planting. Most of the tombs set inside the mausolea are more or less elaborate versions of this type. The majority of the head stelai are of the typical, so-called "anthropomorphic" Ottoman type, with a variety of headgears representing the status of males.



Figure 6

The Murad Reis tombs provide a concentrated visual guide for what the better-quality tombs in the periurban cemetery must have looked like; although judging from 19th-century engravings they were much more widely scattered across the landscape. The possibility comes to mind that, for the less well-to-do, markers could have been made of wood; however, no such evidence survives and the temptation to steal such a resource must have discouraged its use in unprotected areas. Most finely-carved tomb stelai were presumably bespoke and imported from major Ottoman centers of artistic production; but an unfinished specimen also points to the existence of a local workshop (Figure 6).

Although a protected monument, it should not be assumed that the Ottoman cemetery of Murad Reis has not been interfered with in recent times. The unfortunate idea of planting a grove of eucalyptus trees among the tombs in the Italian period has caused considerable trouble since. Several tombs have suffered structurally from spreading roots, while breaking branches have damaged or overturned tomb stelai. Many tombs were consolidated at various times from the Italian period onwards using modern materials. Other interference includes interventions during the Italian occupation of Rhodes connected to the development of the waterfront to the northwest of Mandraki harbour, including the opening of new roads and the construction of public buildings. These apparently resulted in the relocation of certain tombs that lay on the margins of the cemetery towards the new roads[24]. Further relocations were the result of damages caused by Allied air-raids during World War II.

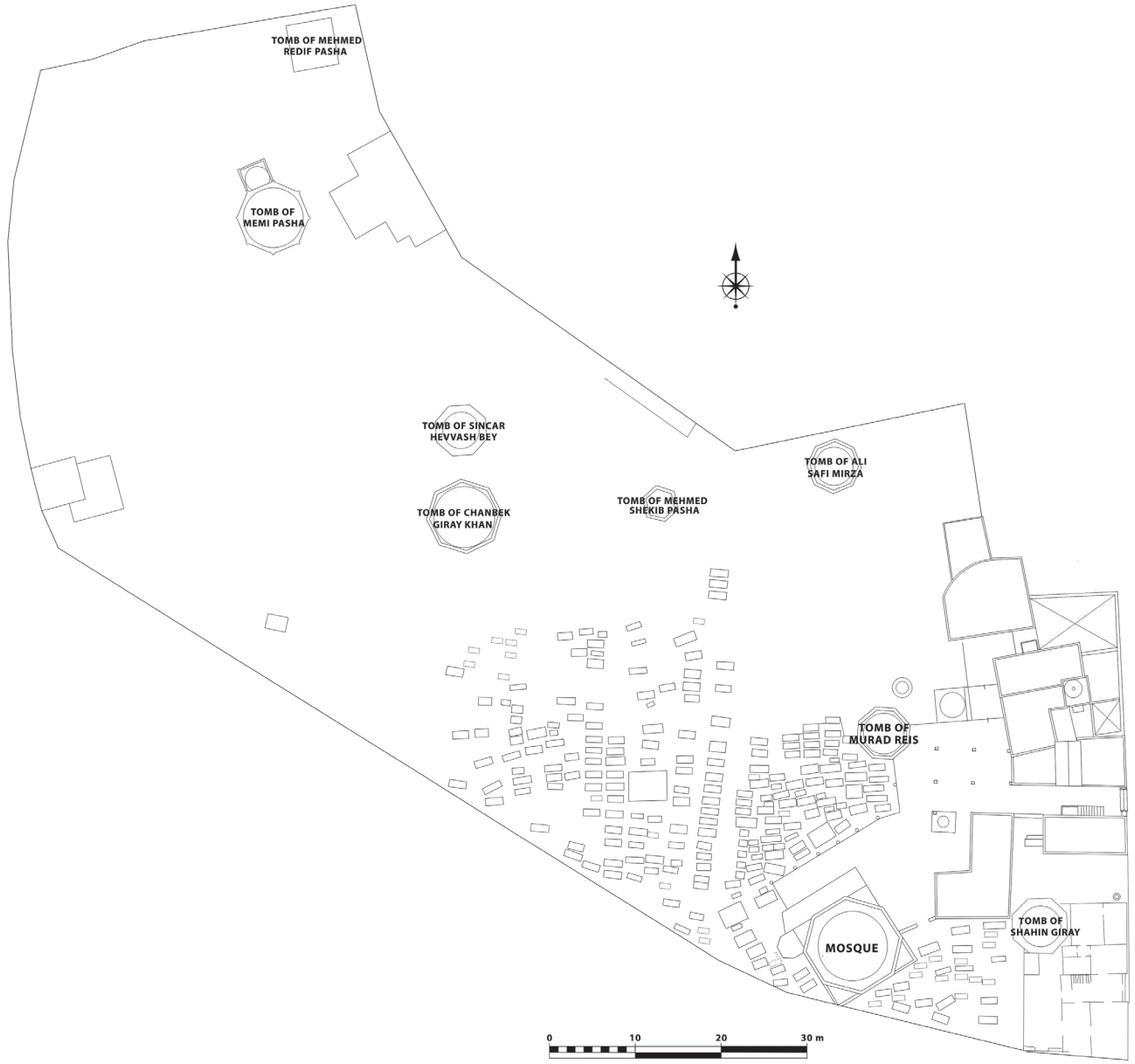


Figure 7: Murad Reis Cemetery layout

23 In the relevant English bibliography this is often misleadingly called a sarcophagus or pseudosarcophagus, as the body of the dead is never placed inside it.

24 Such as the mausoleum of Mehmed Shekib Pasha who died in 1894 (H. 1312). The structure, which collapsed in 2013 during a storm, did not exist in its present location in 1927. Cf. Excavation Diary of 2023 and Ministry of Culture Document No 607020/14-12-2023 related to the project for its restoration.

Between 1979 and 1981, the 4th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities[25] engaged the services of Mehmed Rauf Kalaycioglu[26], who could read the Ottoman script, to transcribe and translate, among others, the inscriptions of the Murad Reis compound. Between 2000-2007 a much more systematic undertaking of the recording and study of the rich epigraphic evidence on the site was entrusted to Ottomanist Dr. John Robert Barnes, who submitted the finished work in 2007. This study, although it remains unpublished, has proved of great assistance to various restoration projects on the site and provides a wealth of information on the history of its monuments and function down to the Italian period, as well as the correct identification of many of the individuals buried there[27].

In his 2012 article[28] Dr Barnes has included a discussion on the shifting policies of the Italians regarding the cemetery, and the degree of their interference with the extant tombs. On the present evidence, since no archaeological excavation on the site has taken place barring a limited number of trial trenches to gauge the condition of the foundations of buildings under restoration, it is hard to determine whether the Italian administration actually relocated tombs in order to reduce the scattering of the graves. In any case, it should be kept in mind that the families of some at least of those buried at Murad Reis were still residing and active in Rhodes, and piecemeal repairs of particular tombs by private individuals cannot be ruled out. In one case at least, that of the mausoleum of Mehmed Shekib, the relocated tomb was designed in the eclectic style of the mid-war years, definitely by an Italian architect then active in Rhodes, who used state-of-the-art technology of the period to produce a remarkably elegant structure. Similarities displayed by certain interventions, such as the use of concrete cast in forms, may be due to the execution of the work by particular workmen engaged by relatives of the dead or those responsible for the site. Displacements of epitaphs, on the other hand, are likely to be the result of more recent repairs after damage caused by the falling branches of the eucalyptus trees. These, however, cannot have been moved too far from the grave they originally belonged to.

The dates of the inscribed stelai surviving on most extant graves have permitted us to trace the development of the cemetery (Figure 7). It is clear that the early burials were scattered, the density of the graves increasing with time, probably mostly due to the desire for the dead to share in the beneficent aura of the tomb of Murad Reis. A secondary cause of the eventual crowding of particular patches, which makes a number of tombs difficult to access, could be the desire to concentrate burials of related individuals since the sharing of a grave by different individuals is not generally acceptable to Muslims.

The tomb of Murad Reis is, apparently, not the oldest Ottoman burial on the site. Ahmed Abdullah, standard-bearer of Suleiman I, who died in the siege of 1522, was probably also buried there[29], indicating that the use of the site as a cemetery passed from Latin Christianity to Islam without a break. It is quite likely that other casualties among the besiegers of 1522 were buried there, although no commemorative inscription survives. Presumably, before the siege of 1522, the

25 Later merged to the XXII Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities to form the current Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese.

26 Mehmed Rauf Kalaycioglu (1915-1983) was a teacher at the 13th Primary School of Rhodes Town.

27 J. R. Barnes, *A Visit to the Tekye of Murad Reis: A study of the Epigraphy in the Tekye and Cemetery of Murad Reis on the Island of Rhodes*, Rhodes 2007 (unpublished study).

28 See n. 17 above.

29 *Op. cit.*, MRPN 153, 324. The inscribed stele is incorporated in a concrete *sanduka* of the Italian period; it might be possible to argue that it could have been relocated to the cemetery at a later date.

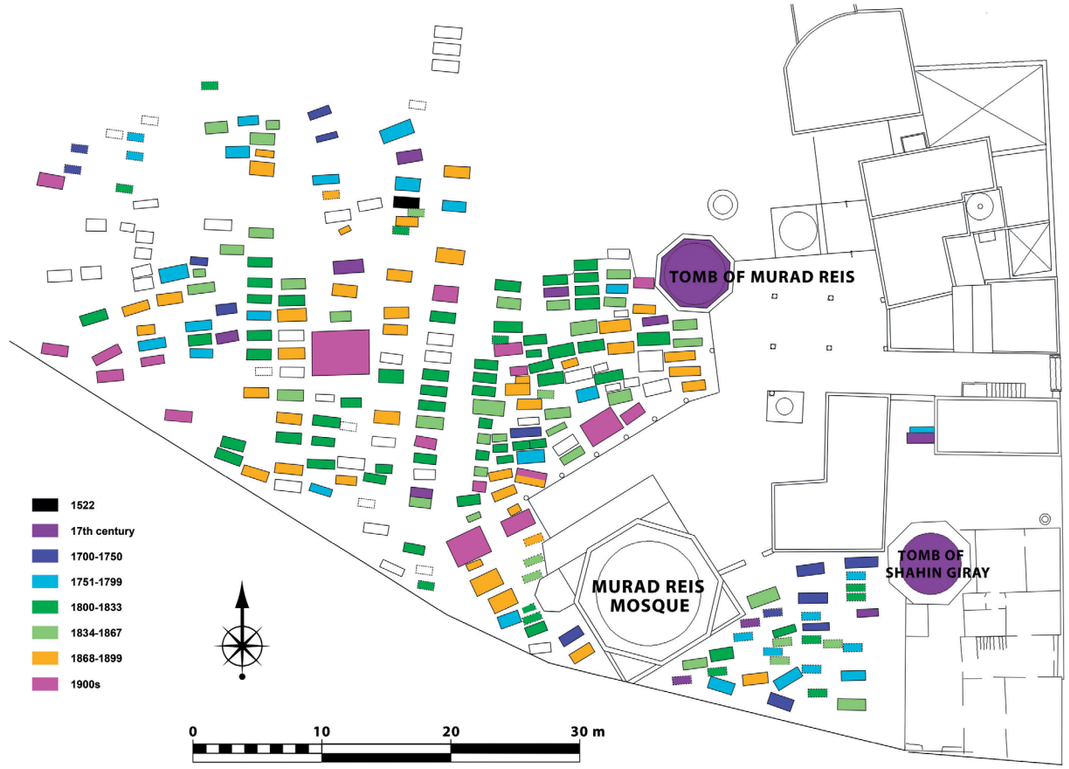


Figure 8: Murad Reis Cemetery chronological layout

Hospitallers had levelled the funerary church of Saint Anthony that stood on the site, as well as the enclosure protecting the adjacent Hospitaller cemetery, to deprive the besiegers of potential cover; they had done the same in 1480-1481, carrying the building material inside the town to serve for repairs during the siege[30].

The displaced Ottoman stelai of the town are already furnishing interesting preliminary data, allowing us to compare the two burial zones to each other, even though the study of the funerary inscriptions from the periphery of the medieval walls has barely started (Figure 8). Of course, much of the information will refer to the lives and milieu of the ruling class, consisting of the Ottoman administrators and nobility, highlighting different styles, fashions and status. Nevertheless, epidemics and natural or manmade disasters are equally likely to have impacted other social groups such as the less prominent Muslim and Jewish urban population within the walls and the Greek population of the suburban parishes, which are not easy to study directly through lack of material evidence. Moreover, periods of excess mortality and the shifting ratios between males and females through time have wider implications.

30 Cf. G. Bosio, *Dell' Istoria della Sacra Religione et Illustrissima Militia di San Giovanni Gierosolimitano*, vol. 2, Rome 1630, 398-399, 432.

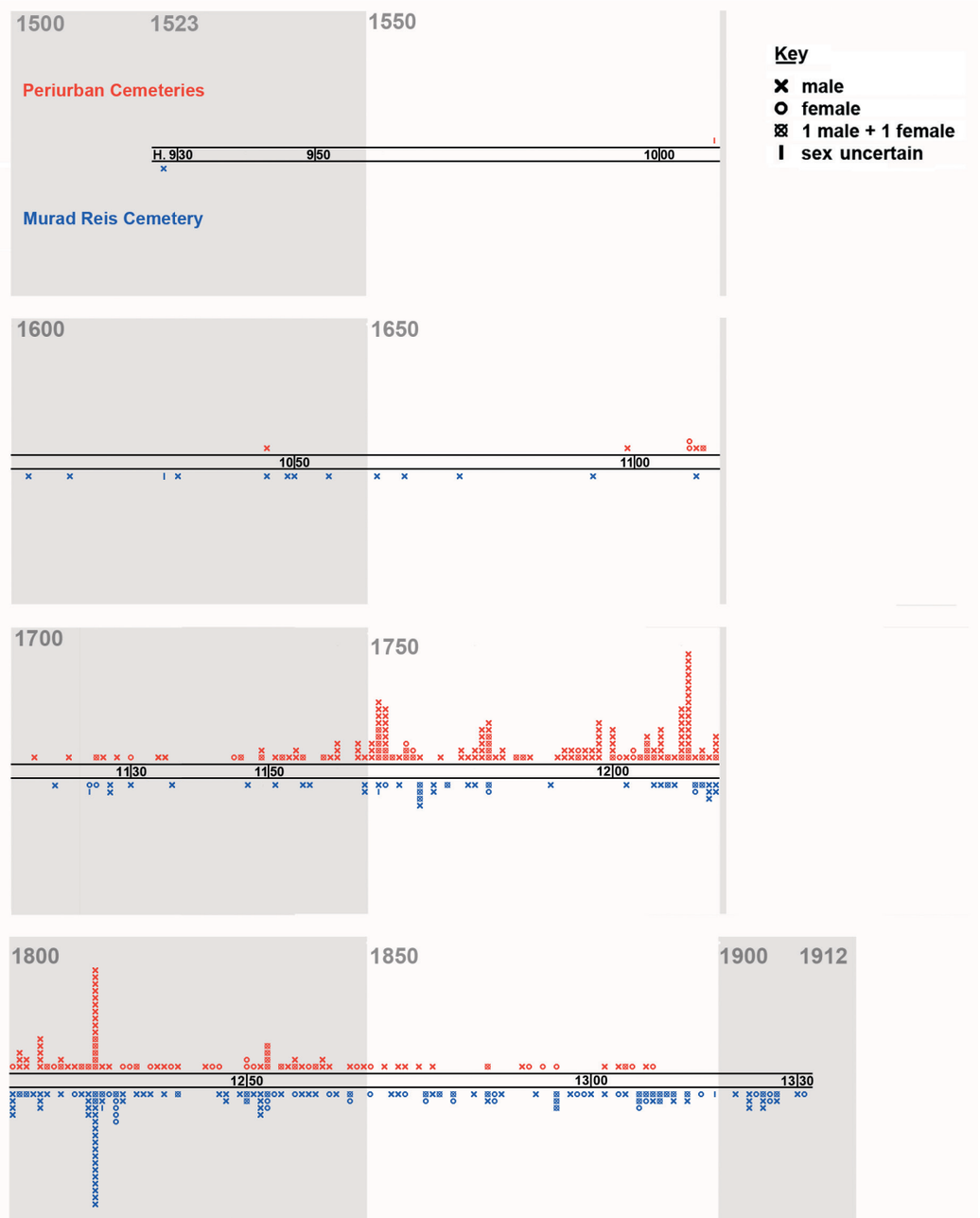


Figure 9: Burial activity in the periurban and Murad Reis cemeteries in the Ottoman period.

It is striking that, apart from one clear case probably due to plague, peaks of burial activity between the two Ottoman cemeteries of Rhodes do not coincide (Figure 9, 10). Even so, major mortality incidents are unlikely to have affected only the upper tier of society, who could afford a *şahide*, and let us know when, and sometimes how they died. Therefore, the understanding of the causes of discrepancies between the data of the two burial zones is of interest not only to students of Ottoman civilization but of local history and society more generally, as well as the role of Rhodes in military events and the international maritime traffic of the times. The planned publication of the study of the inscriptions of the Murad Reis Cemetery by Dr Barnes in collaboration with the scholars of the National Hellenic Research Foundation; and the production by them of a companion volume covering the funerary inscriptions of the periurban Ottoman cemeteries, will allow the past to speak more directly to everyone genuinely interested in the history of the Eastern Aegean in the last three centuries.

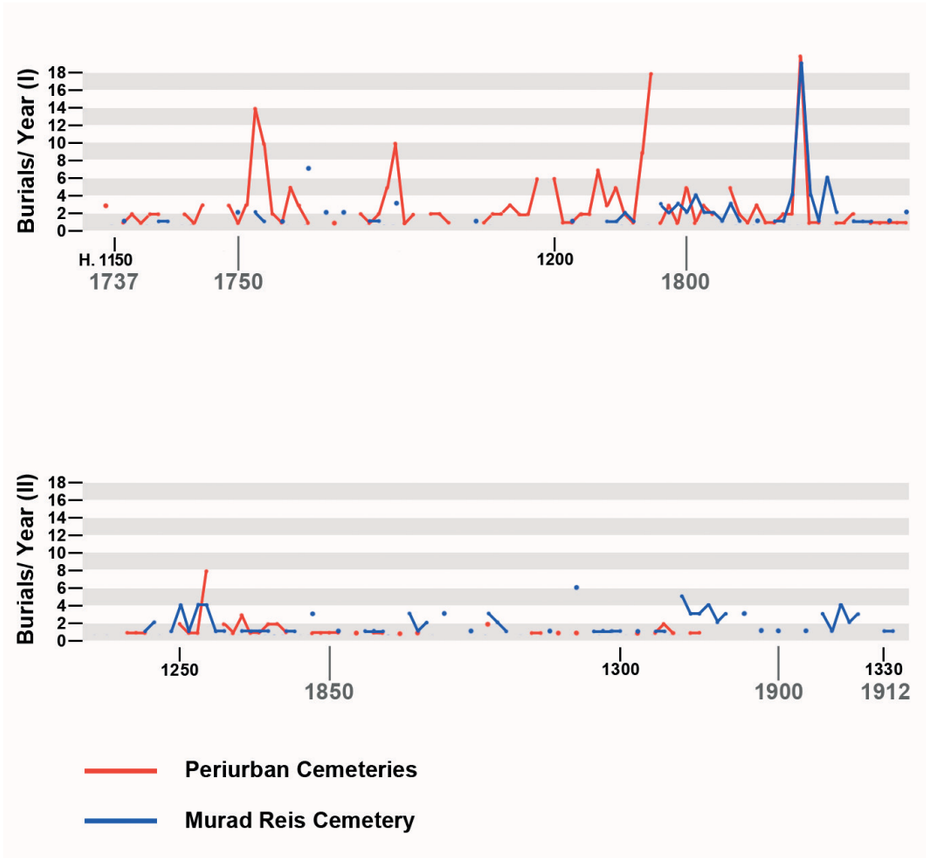


Figure 10: Annual burial rates in the periurban and Murad Reis cemeteries in the Ottoman period.

Hüve'l bâkî
Rikabdâr-ı hazret-i Şehriyârî Sâbık
Hâfız Ahmed Ağa'nın pederleri
merhûm ve mağfur ilâ rahmet-i
rabbih'l-ğafur Baba Hasan Ağa'nın
ruhuna bi-hürmet'l-fâtiha. Sene 1186

He is the Everlasting.
For the soul of Baba Hasan Ağa,
deceased father of the former
Rikabdar of His Imperial Majesty
Hafız Ahmed Ağa, may God, the All-
Forgiving, bestow His mercy upon
him. Recite Al-Fatiha. Year 1186
(1772)

Tomb of Hasan Ağa (d. 1772), father of Hafız Ahmed Ağa,
Murad Reis cemetery in Rhodes,
Transliteration of the inscription on the stele and the translation by İbrahim Akkurt & Burhan Çağlar, Photos: T. Tuten.



Savvas Alexandros Pavlidis studied at the department of Turkish And Mediterranean Studies, University of Cyprus. Having been awarded a J. F. Kostopoulos scholarship through the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), he went on to receive his MA in International Relations (with a focus on Turkish-Greek relations) from Istanbul Bilgi University. He is a founding member of the Rhodes Centre for History and Social Research SCE, and has participated in numerous of its research projects.

"I suffer from an affliction of sorts, a certain overstimulation of the imagination. When I look at an old building, a book, an artefact, I immediately start imagining the people who created them, their habits and customs, their way of thinking, their language and culture. In this specific part of the world, anyone thinking this way will inevitably be affected by a certain melancholy, a sense of void, because so much in our surroundings belongs to peoples that are no longer here. It is my belief that Tarık Tüten - as well as the common friend who introduced us, Prof. Ayhan Aktar - shares this malaise, but he also possesses the drive to act positively upon it. I thank him for the opportunity and impetus, through this book, to finally publish part of my family archive, something I have been putting off for a long time."

Savvas A. Pavlidis

Theodoros Constantinidis - Savvas Pavlidis

Two Rhodian Statesmen (1908-1912)

Introduction

The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 brought about significant changes to Ottoman public life. Among other things, it forced Sultan Abdul Hamid II to reinstate the constitution and reopen parliament, and general elections were held later that year. Rhodes elected physician Theodoros Constantinidis as its deputy to the Ottoman parliament. In 1911, mayoral elections were held for the first time in Rhodes; the person elected was lawyer Savvas Pavlidis.

During this same period, the Italian crown was trying to extend its influence and establish itself as a colonial power. This resulted in the war over Libya, which broke out between Italy and the Ottoman Empire in late 1911. In May 1912, almost incidentally to the main war, Italian troops led by General Giovanni Ameglio captured Rhodes. Although this was initially seen as a temporary occupation, it eventually led to the Dodecanese being formally ceded to Italy in 1923.

For a brief time they were two of the main political figures in Rhodes, but Constantinidis' and Pavlidis' aspirations of playing a role on the main political scene were cut short. They remained influential even during the Italian period; Pavlidis in particular, after initially being deposed and deported by the Italian authorities for supporting unification with Greece, returned from exile and continued being elected president of the Orthodox Community of Rhodes until eventually dying in office in 1933. But in colonial and Fascist Italy, that was the extent of the locals' involvement in political life. Rhodians were not to participate in either municipal or parliamentary elections again until after unification with Greece.

This contribution focuses on the correspondence between Constantinidis, the MP, and Pavlidis, the Mayor, that is found in the unpublished Pavlidis family archive which is in my possession. The correspondence in question consists of 15 letters sent by Constantinidis to Pavlidis during his tenure as MP between 1908 and 1912, plus one later letter from 1921.

It must be assumed that the extant letters are only a fragment of their total correspondence. It is also obvious that they constitute only one side of what was a dialogue - Pavlidis is only indirectly present and one has to infer his thoughts from the writings of Constantinidis. Even with these caveats, they offer interesting insights.

I should clarify that this is not an attempt to provide a full biography of either of the two. Except for some broader information for context, the focus is exclusively on the information found in this correspondence. Specifically, the aim of this contribution is to explore the relationship between Constantinidis and Pavlidis, their political views and activities, and the political context in which they were acting, as they emerge from Constantinidis' letters to Pavlidis found in the Pavlidis family archive.

The profile of the two men

It has been suggested that the Young Turk revolution and the 1908 general elections caused a shift in the leadership of the Rum millet. Traditionally, power and influence among lay men of the millets had been held by the landowning classes; these remained the main social group represented in the appointed senate, but the vast majority of the elected members of parliament were representatives

of what Anagnostopoulou calls the "average Greek bourgeoisie"[1], meaning the professional and mercantile classes.

Pavlidis and Constantinidis both fit this profile very well. A lawyer and doctor respectively, originating in relatively small and remote villages in the south of Rhodes. Their families were far removed from the traditional centres of power and without significant landholdings.

Although hailing from Vati, Theodoros' father was employed as a farm superintendent in Aydin province, and this is where Theodoros was born in 1874. Having received his education and a medical degree in Athens, he returned to his father's village by choice, working there as a doctor[2]. The correspondence suggests that he had strong political connections and backing in the remote villages. Constantinidis was also a lover of language, having compiled a noteworthy collection of Rhodian idioms[3] and applied himself to learning both Ottoman Turkish and, later, Italian. In one of his letters to Pavlidis, he writes:

> [...] I can only write to you that whenever I have some leisure time left over I sacrifice this too in front of the lexicon and for learning Turkish [...] for I admit that I have fallen in love with this language [...]; I could not have imagined or known the wealth of terms the vividness and expressiveness of this language since as you know I knew but little Turkish of the demotic Anatolian Turkish[4] .

Later known to his contemporaries as Savvas Efendi or *Savvafendis*, in accordance with Ottoman honorific traditions, Savvas Pavlidis was born in the village of Gennadi in 1860, but left at a young age to seek his fortune in the capital, Rhodes. Although initially a young man of limited means, he managed to study law and married into one of the wealthier Rhodian families, improving his social standing. The correspondence indicates that, although born in one of the island's villages, he did not have a strong political power base outside the capital; family tradition relates that he had some sort of falling out with his family at an early stage and cut ties with Gennadi.

Both of them seem to have been ambitious and willing to take on responsibility and leadership. Pavlidis in particular appears to have been keen to support his upward social mobility with public offices (most notably, he served as President of the Commercial Court[5] and Mayor under the Ottomans, and President of the Orthodox Community of Rhodes during the Italian period). His son Victor had been sent to study in Constantinople and at least two more of his sons had been enrolled in schools in various important Ottoman cities. This is a clear indication of his social ambition, but it also places him firmly within the Ottoman-Mediterranean world at this point in time.

1 Αναγνωστοπούλου (2013)

2 Κωνσταντινίδης (2019).

3 Κωνσταντινίδης (2022).

4 Constantinidis (1909-06-02): [...] δεν δύναμαι να σας γράψω παρά τούτο μόνον ότι εάν μοι περισσεύη ώρα τις αναψυχής και ταύτην την θυσιάζω εις το λεξικόν και εις την εκμάθησιν της Τουρκικής, [...] διότι ομολογώ ότι ηγάπησα την γλώσσαν αυτήν [...]· δεν ήλπιζον ποτέ και δεν εγνώριζον τον πλούτον των όρων την γλαφυρότητα κ' εκφραστικότητα της γλώσσης αυτής καθ' ότι ως γινώσκετε εγνώριζον ολίγα μόνον τουρκικά της δημόδους Ανατολητικής τουρκικής.

5 It is not clear whether this was a judge's position or an administrative one.

Savvas had four sons and one daughter, but they were ill-fated and left him only one grand child, who was left an orphan and raised by his grandparents. This orphan was my grandfather, and I am currently the mayor's only direct descendant living in Rhodes. Theodoros Constantinidis had three sons and three daughters, leaving 18 grandchildren, and his extant descendants in Rhodes are numerous.



Figure 1: Constantinidis' letter from 2 June 1909.

The personal relationship

Although hailing from two neighbouring villages in the south of Rhodes, their biographies suggest that they were not likely to have been familiar with each other as youths. Nonetheless, the Pavlidis surname is present in Vati, indeed associated today more with that village than with Savvas' birthplace, Gennadi, so some sort of family connection or acquaintance cannot be ruled out. Still, the origins of the personal relationship between the two are unclear. What is certain is that by the time of the 1908 elections, they had a close personal relationship. This is confirmed both by the style of address in the correspondence ("My beloved friend, mr. Savvas Pavlidis"), the use of the familiar singular, but more importantly by the content. Constantinidis acts as a liaison between Pavlidis and his son Victor, who was studying in Constantinople[6], and on a number of occasions he checks on him and reports his well being and progress back to his father. He also seems to have kept a close eye on him and supported him actively:

> PS. During the coming holidays I shall be visiting father Hierotheus and if I do not meet Victor there I may travel to Chalki in order to introduce him to the teachers.[7]

In one letter he reports meeting Savvas Efendi's other two sons Pavlos and Constantinos - what they were doing in Constantinople is not explained[8]. On a particularly somber occasion, having been informed of the untimely death of Pavlidis' very young daughter Aspasia in early 1911, Constantinidis takes on the responsibility of personally informing her brother in Constantinople:

> Honoured friend Mr. S. Pavlidis
>
> It is with great sorrow that I have read the news concerning the death of your beloved daughter, which occurred in Athens. I express to you my deepest condolences and hope that you and your Lady shall receive consolation from above.
>
> I will be seeing Victor tonight and I shall prepare him appropriately and announce to him the lamentable news.
>
> With love and respect
>
> Th. Constantinidis[9]

6 Constantinidis mentions going to Chalki to speak to Victor's teachers, which suggests that he might have been studying at the Chalki Seminary. An inscription in a book found in the Pavlidis family archive, however, indicates that he was enrolled in the Lycee GrecoFrancaise HadjiChristou at an unspecified date.

7 Constantinidis (1910-12-19): Υ.Γ. Κατά τας επικειμένας εορτάς θα μεταβώ παρά τω πατρί Ιεροθέω όπου εάν δεν συναντήσω τον Βίκτωρα πιθανόν να μεταβώ εις Χάλκην όπως τον συστήσω εις τους καθηγητάς".

8 Constantinidis (1911-11-11).

9 Constantinidis (1911-03-03): Αξιότιμε φίλε Κύριε Σ. Παυλίδη, Μετά μεγάλης λύπης αναγνούς τα του θανάτου της προσφιλούς υμών θυγατρός του επισυμβάντος εν Αθήναις εκφράζω υμίν βαθύτατα τα συλλυπητήριά μου επευχόμενος την εξ ύψους παρηγορίαν εφ' υμών και της Κυρίας σας. Τον Βίκτωρα θα ίδω απόψε και καταλλήλως θα προδιαθέσω και θα αγγείλω αυτώ την θλιβεράν είδησιν. Διατελώ μετ' αγάπης και εκτιμήσεως Θ. Κων/νίδης.



Figure 2: Constantinidis' letter from 11 November 1911

In March 1911, He reports that Victor is leaving his school, under instructions from his father. The reason for this is not explained, but he does not seem to have moved permanently to Rhodes, as other sources place him in Constantinople until 1912-1913[10]:

> Concerning Victor I heard from Stroumbis that he is well and that he is preparing to come to Rhodes, leaving the School entirely in accordance with your wishes.[11]

The "personal affairs"

A significant part of the Constantinidis-Pavlidis correspondence is dedicated to their respective "personal affairs". Constantinidis' issue concerns legal aspects of his marriage, which Pavlidis, as a lawyer, is trying to help with. The problem, as it emerges from the letters, is that Constantinidis cannot legally leave inheritance to his children as they are the result of an "obstructed" marriage (κωλυόμενος γάμος). The reason for this legal obstruction to his marriage is not sufficiently explained. In the letter through which he announces that he is forced to run for MP again (discussed in more detail later in this text), Constantinidis also makes the curious claim that the solution to his problem is somehow related to his status as MP:

> [I was hoping] that the people would not be willing to reelect me, which would excuse me in the eyes of the party, but above all in the eyes of my wife and family who think that it is my fault that my marriage has not been recognised and that I do not wish to be elected in order to prevent it from being recognised [...] I can only hope and pray that my personal affair will be arranged in a timely manner, allowing me to resign long before the conclusion of the four year tenure[12].

What is certain is that at this point, Constantinidis is despairing with the situation. In the very next letter, having consulted the legal books sent by Pavlidis from Rhodes to Vati, the MP makes the following poignant remark:

> Thank you for the books by Karavokyros, but what can I say my friend, I was filled with despair when I saw an article according to which children from an obstructed marriage may neither receive inheritance from their parents through will nor through intestate succession and therefore a will is entirely redundant.
>
> There remains only ىـنـبـت [tebeni - adoption] or rather in my case الـيـتـسا [istilad (misspelt in the original) - legalisation] in other words the legalisation (not adoption) of my natural children while ىـنـبـت [tebeni] is for children of unknown father or for children who are not one's own.
>
> If neither having my wedding recognised ecclesiastically, nor ىـنـبـت [tebeni] or الـيـتـسا [istilad] succeed, there remains nothing for me but to have my life insured in the name of my children which the companies accept and then either I pay my yearly installments or if I am not able to then I shall commit suicide and that'll solve the matter; for my health now does not allow me to perform doctor's duties in the villages and moving to the capital with my family to practice medicine there is challenging.[13]

Pavlidis' "personal affairs", that Constantinidis is trying to help solve, are the most commonly recurring theme of the correspondence. Up until his election as mayor, Pavlidis' "personal affair" is simple enough: he is trying to get appointed to public office. The background to this is mentioned in a letter written a few years later by Savvas Pavlidis to Greek Prime Minister E. Venizelos, found in the Venizelos archives:

> In the year 1897, accused due to my Greek sympathies of collecting funds in support of Greece I was discharged from the position of president of the Commercial Court of Rhodes and only after three years was I able to relieve myself of this persecution with great difficulty. Since then the doors of government positions have been closed for me and I was forced to turn to practicing law in the courts of Rhodes [...][14]

So Constantinidis is apparently trying to influence various parties in Constantinople to overcome this silent ban and get Pavlidis back on his career path. Savvas Efendi is also fairly particular: he is interested in a decent position in the Aegean provinces, preferably in a place with a significant Orthodox presence; he is not interested in some remote post in the depths of Anatolia[15]. In April 1909, Constantinidis gives a long report of his efforts in this direction - one gets the feeling that Pavlidis might have complained about the lack of progress, prompting him to write the full details. Although Constantinidis' narrative is too long to quote in its entirety, I shall relate the main points as it reads rather like a late Ottoman political sitcom with a backdrop of famous figures and events.

Constantinidis had spoken about the matter to the Minister of Justice, Manyasizade Refik Bey, who had promised to look into it. Constantinidis attempted to visit him at home, but Refik Bey had been taken ill and he was not allowed to meet him. Refik bey died soon afterwards and with him both a report by Pavlidis to the ministry and a letter of recommendation from the *vali* of Rhodes, Hilmi bey, were lost. Constantinidis then had to start anew with the new minister, Mustafa Nazim Pasha. Nazim Pasha expressed a positive opinion and instructed Constantinidis to coordinate in this matter with a certain ministry official - a *müsteşar* - who was present at the meeting. Having left the meeting, Constantinidis realised that he had not noted the name of this official; rushing back to the

10 Παυλίδης (1914).

11 Περί του Βίκτωρος έμαθον χθες παρά του Στρουμπή ότι είνε καλά και ότι ετοιμάζεται το Πάσχα να έλθη εις την Ρόδον αποχωρών παντελώς της Σχολής κατά την θέλησίν σας.

12 Constantinidis (1912-03-08): [...] δεν θα εκλεγώ υπό του λαού, οπότε θα δικαιολογηθώ ως προς το κόμμα και προ πάντων προς την σύζυγόν μου και τους συγγενείς μου οίτινες νομίζουν ότι εγώ ημέλησα εις την αναγνώρισιν του γάμου μου και ότι δεν θέλω να εκλεγώ δια να μη αναγνωρισθή. [...] Ελπίζω μόνον και εύχομαι όπως κανονιζομένης της ατομικής μου υποθέσεως εγκαίρως παραιτηθώ πολύ προ της λήξεως της τετραετίας.

13 Constantinidis (1912-03-16): Σας ευχαριστώ δια τα βιβλία του Καραβοκυρού, αλλά τι να σας πω φίλε μου; απελπισία με κατέλαβεν όταν είδον εν άρθρον καθ' ο τα εκ κωλωλυομένου γάμου τέκνα ούτε εκ διαθήκης ούτε εξ αδιαθέτου δεν κληρονομούσι τους γονείς αυτών και επομένως περιττή όλως η διαθήκη.
Δεν μένει ή το [tebeni - υιοθεσία] ή μάλλον δια την εμήν περίπτωσιν το [istilad (ανορθόγραφο στο αρχικό) - νομιμοποίηση τέκνου] ήτοι η νομιμοποίησις (κ' ουχί υιοθέτησις) των φύσει εμών τέκνων ενώ το [tebeni] είνε δια τα αγνώστου πατρός τέκνα, ή τα ξένα τέκνα. Εάν ούτε η αναγνώρισις εκκλησιαστικώς του γάμου μου, ούτε το [tebeni] ή [istilad] επιτύχη, δεν μοι μένει ειμή να ασφαλίσω την ζωήν μου επ' ονόματι των τέκνων μου όπερ δέχονται οι εταιρείαι και κατόπιν ή πληρόνω τας ετησίας δόσεις μου, ή εάν δεν δύνωμαι αυτοκτονώ κ' ξεπερδεύει το ζήτημα· διότι και τον ιατρόν πλέον εις τα χωρία δεν μοι επιτρέπει η υγεία μου να εξασκώ και να μετακομισθώ οικογενειακώς εις πρωτεύουσαν προς εξάσκησιν αυτόθι της ιατρικής μοι είνε δύσκολον.

14 Παυλίδης (1914).

15 Constantinidis (1909-04-04)

office, he was told that both men had left and he was not able to verify the identity of the official. He intended to pay the minister another visit shortly and get the necessary information, but on the 31st of March 1909, in the midst of political turmoil and an army mutiny, Mustafa Nazim Pasha was murdered[16].

Whether due to the disheartening survival rate of Ottoman justice ministers or due to other reasons, Constantinidis does not seem to have been able to secure the appointment of Savvas Efendi to public office. His election to the position of Mayor of Rhodes in March 1911 eventually signalled the beginning of a new "personal affair" that Constantinidis was called upon to champion. Apparently, as mayor, Savvas was precluded from practicing law, even though the position was *pro bono*[17]. Constantinidis describes a new round of meetings, but notices a certain recalcitrance in the administration, which he suspects might be due to machinations by the local organisation of the Committee of Union and Progress[18] in Rhodes to undermine their efforts. Commenting on the ineffectiveness and obscurity of the governmental process, the disgruntled MP writes the Turkish proverb *eski tas eski hamam*[19]; in other words, "same old story".

In November 1911, Constantinidis informs that he has been promised that the issue will soon be resolved and that both the *vali* of Rhodes and a certain "officer Nuh Bey" had acted in support of Pavlidis' complaint[20]; less than two weeks later he reports that the issue should soon be resolved[21]. There is no indication in the archive on whether or not the resolution was achieved, but this would soon be irrelevant, as the Italian conquest in May 1912 put an end to all this.

It should be noted that, although from our modern point of view it is tempting to look at this in terms of a corrupt MP trying to do favours for his friend, this personal brand of politics seems to have been very much the expected norm; Constantinidis is not exclusively acting on behalf of his friend Savvas Efendi, but mentions various countrymen whose "personal affairs" he is attending to. Indeed there seems to be a specific code of conduct in these matters. Constantinidis mentions an occasion on which the minister of the interior, Talaat Pasha, informed him that a certain doctor Karavokyros, having served as municipal doctor in Rhodes for 25-30 years, had approached Yemen MP Ahmed Said Efendi with such a "personal affair" (either to request a pension or a new appointment, Constantinidis is not sure). Talaat Pasha gave a positive opinion concerning the doctor's request, but expressed his bemusement that Karavokyros had elected to not go through his constituency's MP, Constantinidis, who was also a fellow Christian, but rather a Muslim MP from Yemen. Constantinidis relays this discussion with thinly vailed reproach for the *faux pas* and informs that he will most likely be the one handling the issue going forward[22]. On another occasion he notes:

> All MPs, even the personal friends of ministers, are complaining about the ministers because they do not process any of their cases even though they always make promises and never say no. But in my opinion the ministers also have a point because they are at a loss as to whom they should first please, the extraparliamentary CUP members making demands or the MPs, while those in the pursuit of positions and particularly good ones add up to hundreds.[23]

It is well documented that the efforts that started in the Tanzimat period to modernise and rationalise the Ottoman bureaucratic administration had generally mixed results[24]. Constantinidis' descriptions give the impression that the role of the MP at this time was to act as an intermediary between his constituents and the central government and to promote their requests, even (or perhaps especially) when they were fair and legal. The express blessing of the relevant minister seems to have been a prerequisite to get anything processed through the vast Ottoman bureaucracy and the various government offices, and politicians would act as lobbyists of sorts.

A final example of this is the following quote:

> It is a stroke of luck that as you know Mr Vagiannis has been appointed deputy minister of Justice [...] you may be aware that here through Vagiannis three of our Greek Orthodox brethren were immediately appointed to higher judicial positions. Let's just hope that Vagiannis doesn't get discharged anytime soon or appointed to another position.[25]

The political relationship

Pavlidis family tradition has long related that there had been a deal between Savvas Efendi and Theodoros Constantinidis: even though both of them wished to stand for MP in the 1908 elections, they decided that it was best not to split the Christian vote. They reached the compromise that Constantinidis would stand in 1908, leaving Pavlidis to stand in the next elections, scheduled to be held in 1912.

This story is corroborated, indirectly but clearly, by the correspondence. In his second letter from Constantinople, after relating his early impressions from Parliament and the Greek MPs, Constantinidis writes to the effect that Pavlidis would have been more suitable for the job: *As a member of parliament I am often reminded of you and wish that you were in my place or at least that I*

16 Constantinidis (1909-04-04).

17 Constantinidis (1911-04-18). There is some confusion, however, as the letters from 1911-11-11 and 1911-11-23 indicate that the issue might have been slightly different; perhaps a matter of recognising his previous years in public service and the concomitant pay grade. These might even be two different issues, raising the total of Pavlidis' "personal affairs" to three.

18 The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) was the most powerful segment of the wider and looser Young Turk movement. It had a leading role in the Young Turk revolution and was the most powerful faction in the parliament formed in 1908.

19 Written in Greek letters: εσκί τας εσκί χαμάμ. Constantinidis (1911-04-18).

20 Constantinidis (1911-11-11).

21 Constantinidis (1911-11-24)

22 Constantinidis (1910-12-19).

23 Constantinidis (1911-01-21): Όλοι οι βουλευταί και αυτοί οι ατομικοί φίλοι των υπουργών έχουσι παράπονα κατά των υπουργών διότι δεν ενεργούσι καμμίαν υπόθεσίν των αν και τους υπόσχονται πάντοτε και ουδέποτε τοις λέγουσιν όχι. Αλλά κατ' εμέ έχουσι δίκαιον και οι υπουργοί διότι εσάστισαν ποίον να πρωτοϊκανοποιήσουν, τους έξωθεν κομιτατικούς απαιτητάς ή τους βουλευτάς, οι δε θηρεύοντες θέσεις και ιδίως καλάς συμποσούνται εις εκατοντάδας.

24 Weiker (1968).

25 Constantinidis (1909-06-02): Προς καλήν μας τύχην διωρίσθη ως γινώσκετε υφυπουργός της Δικαιοσύνης ο Κος Βαγιάννης [...] ίσως γινώσκεις ότι ενταύθα μέσον του Βαγιάννη διωρίσθησαν αμέσως 3 ομογενείς εις ανωτέρας δικαστικάς θέσεις. Μόνον να παρακαλώμεν μη τυχόν και παυθή γλίγορα ή διορησθή εις άλλην θέσιν ο Βαγιάννης.

would have your qualifications[26]. Given the context, it seems that the qualifications he has in mind are Pavlidis' knowledge of Ottoman law and superior command of the Ottoman language.

Savvas Pavlidis became mayor of Rhodes while Constantinidis was already in Constantinople. His reception of the news of the candidacy was enthusiastic and supportive:

> Please write to let me know if it is true that you have submitted candidacy for mayor of the Capital, when are the elections to be held? and whether the villages will participate? If so, whether you would like me to write to the villagers. It would be a most fortunate event for Rhodes and I hope for your success.[27]



Figure 3: Savvas Pavlidis, probably 1910s.

Constantinidis' reception of Pavlidis' eventual electoral success was naturally even more enthusiastic[28]. It is clear throughout that the two have a shared understanding of politics and consider each other allies. Regarding their agreement to collaborate in the parliamentary elections, however, the ultimate corroboration comes in the letter dated 1912-03-08, which is probably the most tense of all. Constantinidis must have informed Pavlidis in a previous letter, not found in the family archive, of his intention to run for MP again, in spite of the agreement. Constantinidis' defensive tone suggests that Pavlidis did not take very kindly to this change of plan - one gets the feeling that he is trying to convince himself with his arguments, not only his friend in Rhodes. His arguments are numerous: the Christian parliamentary group has decided to support the incumbent MPs and there is considerable pressure on him from his peers; Turkish MPs from the CUP have indicated that they would be unhappy if he stepped down in favour of "his lawyer friend"; he is under continuous pressure from friends and family to run again; he has it on good authority that Pavlidis' candidacy is not favoured in the villages, a weakness that would be crucial in the event that the vote would be split by the participation of another Christian candidate, as was apparently likely. Last but not least, he fears that he would be branded a coward and deserter, a permanent blemish on his reputation. Throughout, Constantinidis stresses that he would rather abdicate and be with his family, but is forced by the circumstances to rise to the occasion:

> [...] before the sinister machinations to bring about the success of a third party besides you and me and especially you, before the uncertainty of your success and before the present danger of a division, before my wife's persistence as well as my friends' that I should stand as candidate and before the latest urgings and requests, which I have received in writing, by my friends in the Capital and abroad and by my former colleagues... etc. I am forced to stand as candidate for the sake of our fatherland and in order not to appear a recreant and may the Lord help me.[29]

This letter was not sent from Constantinople, but from Constantinidis' home village of Vati. The reason for his visit is not mentioned, but the new elections were coming up and it is reasonable to assume that he was there precisely for this reason. In any case, the way he puts it, the discussions he had during this time back home are what finally pushed him to participate in the elections rather than stepping down in favour of his friend. According to his description, he resisted the pressure from his political peers in Constantinople, intending to honour the agreement with Pavlidis, but the urgings of his family and the perception he formed about the current situation in Rhodes outweighed his reservations. Remarkably, the letter ends with the following request:

> [...] I am sending you separately for your reading my application for candidacy, which I ask you to please read and if there is no formal or essential error, present it officially to the committee that you preside over, otherwise return it with instructions for additions or corrections, so that I may send another or leave it to the villagers as they are considering nominating me themselves through 300 signatures. If the application only has a grammatical or syntactical error and not a legal one, present it.[30]

Pavlidis was apparently president of the electoral committee, not surprising given his position as mayor and his legal profession. Nonetheless, this request to personally take care of his application, coming at the heels of his announcement that he is (unwillingly) reneging on their agreement, does seem bold. Is it a test and a defiant challenge? A display of faith in Pavlidis' integrity? Confidence that their relationship was stronger than the rift that had appeared between them? It is hard to say.

26 Constantinidis (1909-01-15): Ως βουλευτής πλειστάκις ενθυμούμαι σας και ήθελον ή σεις να ήσθε εις την θέσιν μου, ή τουλάχιστον εγώ να είχον τα προσόντα υμών.

27 Constantinidis (1909-02-06): Γράψατέ μοι εάν είνε αληθές ότι υπεβάλατε κάλπην δημάρχου Πρωτευούσης, πότε θα γείνωσιν αι εκλογαί; και εάν θα συμμετάσχωσι τα χωρία; Εν τοιαύτη δε περιπτώσει, εάν θέλητε να γράψω εις τους χωρικούς. Θα ήτο κάλλιστον ευτύχημα το τοιούτον διά τον τόπον και εύχομαι επιτυχίαν σας.

28 Constantinidis (1909-02-06). The full text is related later in this text.

29 1912-03-08 [...] προ των καταχθονίων ενεργειών προς επιτυχίας τρίτου πλην σου και εμού και προ πάντων σου, προ της αβεβαιότητος της επιτυχίας σας και προ του βεβαίου κινδύνου της διασπάσεως, προ της επιμονής της συζύγου μου ως κ' των φίλων μου να εκθέσω επισήμως υποψηφιότητα και προ των τελευταίων, ας έλαβον γραπτώς, συστάσεων και παρακλήσεων των εν Πρωτευούση φίλων και έξωθεν εκ των πρώην συναδέλφων .. κ' τλ. Αναγκάζομαι να θέσω υποψηφιότητα χάριν της πατρίδος και δια να μη φανώ ρίψασπις και ο Θεός βοηθός.

30 1912-03-08 [...] αποστέλλω υμίν ιδιαιτέρως προς ανάγνωσιν αίτησιν υποψηφιότητος την οποίαν σας παρακαλώ αναγιγνώσκετε και εάν μεν δεν έχη τυπικώς και κανονικώς σφάλμα, την παρουσιάζετε επισήμως εις την υφ' υμάς επιτροπήν, άλλως την επιστρέφετε και μοι γράφετε τας προς προσθήκην ή διόρθωσιν οδηγίας , ίνα στείλω άλλην, ή αφήσω τους χωρικούς όπως σκέπτονται να αποταθώσιν εκείνοι δια 300 υπογραφών . Εάν η αίτησις έχει γραμματικόν ή συντακτικόν μόνον λάθος και όχι νομικόν παρουσιάσατέ την.

What is clear is that already in the immediately following letter, four days later, the tone is once again calmer and more familiar, even warm. Pavlidis has duly obliged and sent his suggested corrections to Constantinidis' application and also sent him some legal books concerning his personal legal problem (discussed in the relevant segment). But Pavlidis has apparently also shared that he is considering running for MP regardless of Constantinidis' candidacy and the further splitting of the vote. In spite of this, Constantinidis obviously still considers the two of them a political unit, using the first person plural ("us", "we") and indicating that, in spite of appearances, they will not be in opposition to each other. It is also apparent that powerful circles in Rhodes were promoting another candidate:

> Even though we find ourselves, as I perceive, before a *fait accompli* of a third party's success, since that is the will of today's powerful and influential, even though I was of the opinion that in light of these illegal and tendentious events I should even withdraw my candidacy, if it were predetermined, I have nonetheless decided to apply, following urgings and requests by others.
>
> [...]
>
> If you too stand as a candidate anyway I believe that even in case of failure it is not detrimental to you nor would it be worthy of umbrage from me or anyone else, although I believe that presently many of yours will beg you to withdraw it, but they will do this without careful thought.
>
> I have been so bold as to express my view, but it is up to you to adopt it or not. Firstly who knows what the future might bring; secondly, failure is no capital offence nor is standing as candidate without certainty of success, and thirdly it will give the impression that the two of us will be opposing each other and foster hope that we may splinter and therefore those opposed might not spend nor play all their trump cards to win.[31]

The exact meaning of Constantinidis' insinuation about the mayor's circle (*many of yours will beg you to withdraw*) is not known; nor are the details of the *sinister machinations* against the duo. In the letter from 8 March 1912 he makes mention of a Mr. Malliakas who is apparently vying for the nomination, whom he calls an "instrument of fragmentation"[32]; but the follow-up letter does not clarify the identity of the person whose victory is deemed a *fait acocmpli*.

31 Constantinidis (1912-03-16): Αν και βρισκόμαστε, ως βλέπω, προ τετελεσμένου γεγονότος επιτυχίας τρίτου, διότι ούτως έδοξε τοις σήμερον ισχυροίς κ' ιθύνουσιν, αν και εγώ ήμην της ιδέας ότι προ των γεγονότων τούτων των παρανόμων και μεροληπτικών έπρεπε και να αποσύρω την υποψηφιότητά μου, εάν ήτο δεδομένη εκ των προτέρων, εν τούτοις κατά σύστασιν και παράκλησιν άλλων αποφασίζω να δώσω αίτησιν. [...]
Εάν θέσητε και υμείς υποψηφιότητα εν πάση ενδεχομένη περιπτώσει νομίζω ότι και εν περιπτώσει αποτυχίας δεν είνε κακόν δι' υμάς ούτε παρεηγήσεως άξιον εκ μέρους μου ή άλλου τινός, αν και ως νομίζω αμέσως πολλοί εκ των η μ ε τ έ ρ ω ν θα σας παρακαλέσωσι να την αποσύρητε, αλλά ουχί βαθέως σκεπτόμενοι θα κάμωσι τούτο.
Εκ θάρρους εκφράζω απλώς την γνώμην μου ταύτην εναπόκειται όμως υμίν να την υιοθετήσητε ή όχι. Πρώτον τις οίδε πώς έρχονται τα πράγματα· β! Η αποτυχία δεν είνε έγκλημα καθοσιώσεως και η υποβολή υποψηφιότητος άνευ βεβαιότητος, και Γ! θα νομισθή ότι ημείς αντιπολιτευόμεθα αλλήλους και θα ελπισθή ότι θα διασπασθώμεν, οπότε δεν θα εξοδεύσωσι και δεν θα παίξωσιν όλα των τα ατού δια την νίκην των οι αντίθετοι.

32 Constantinidis (1912-03-08): Επίσης θα εμάθετε ότι ο Κος Μαλλιάκας προαλείφεται διδασκόμενος την Τουρκικήν ενώ εγώ του παρήγγειλα ρητώς ότι ουδείς γίνεται λόγος περί αυτού εν τοις χωρίοις και ότι δεν έχει ουδεμίαν ελπίδα επιτυχίας; πού λοιπόν; βασίζεται; δυστυχώς όργανον διασπάσεως και ούτος. Δυστυχώς είνε και άλλοι τοιούτοι χριστιανοί και ο θείος αυτού κτλ.

As fate would have it, none of this would make a difference in the end, as the Italian conquest of the islands, only a couple of months after the letters in question and the deliberations and machinations they concern, rendered any discussion of elections for the Ottoman parliament quite irrelevant. The final letter of the collection, however, proves that Constantinidis and Pavlidis remained on good personal and political terms long after the political landscape went through this dramatic transformation.

The letter was written on 17 May 1921, long after the Italian conquest and much later than the rest of the collection. It has been written in Vati, and concerns local politics within the framework of the Greek Orthodox Community - the entity created by the Italian administration as a successor to the Rum millet - as well as the price and quality of local butter in the villages of Rhodes, of which Constantinids' opinion is not favourable[33]. The tone indicates that Constantinidis still considered Pavlidis very much a political ally. It ends with a request to "give a kiss to Savvas", obviously referring to the former mayor's young grandson, a tender touch that further proves their strong personal relationship.[34]

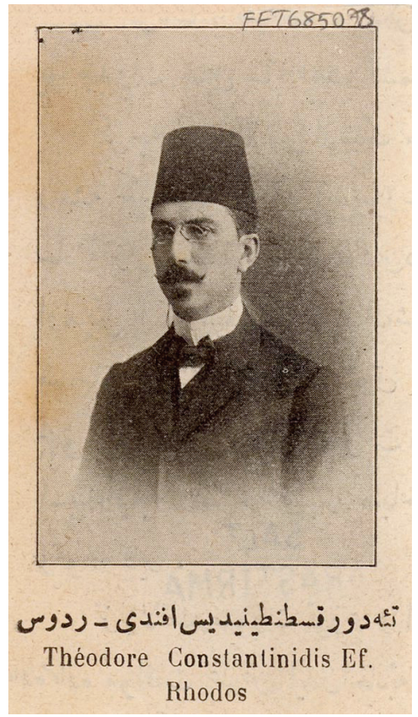


Figure 4: Entry of Theodoros Constantinis in the Ottoman Parliament's, *Meclis-i Mebûsan*, album. It says "Rodos Mebusu (representative) Teodor Konstantinidi Efendi, Aydın, Nazilli 1874" indicating his birthplace as Aydin province. It also states that Constantinidis is a graduate of the medical school in Athens who served in making of policies related to general health and medicine laws. He was elected in October, *Teşrinievvel*, 1908 with 18 votes in Rhodes. He lived in Beyoğlu, Pera.

33 *For butter they still demand 50-60 francs, whereas I hear that in the Capital there is butter from Anatolia sold much cheaper [...] after all, even at the exact same price, butter from Anatolia is preferable since it is much more fatty and much healthier and much more fragrant than the local one, which is only suitable for sweets.* Constantinidis (1921-05-17): Δια τον βούτυρον απαιτούσιν ακόμη 50-60 φράγκα, ενώ ως επληροφορήθην εν Πρωτευούση πωλούνται βούτυρα της Ανατολής κατά πολύ ευθηνώτερα [...] άλλως τε και εις την αυτήν ακόμη τιμήν εάν πωλήται είνε προτιμότερος ο βούτυρος της Ανατολής διότι είνε μάλλον λιπαρός και μάλλον θρεπτικός και μυρωδάτος από τον εντόπιον, όστις είνε μόνον δια γλυκύσματα κατάλληλος.

34 Constantinidis (1921-05-17): Φιλήσατέ μου τον Σάββαν και δεχθήτε τους ασπασμούς μου.

The political situation

Constantinidis did not belong to a party in the strict sense of the word, at least not to start with. After all, multi-party politics were difficult during this period of Ottoman parliamentarism, and many parties that had been formed after the reinstitution of the constitution were banned in 1909. The politics that brought him to power seem to have been mostly personal and local, not necessarily in the sense of lack of ideology or political affiliation, but in the sense that there was no central party providing support or strict direction. Upon taking up his duties in the parliament, Constantinidis naturally allied himself with the Christian MPs, but they were not a homogeneous group[35]. Plenty of infighting and intrigue ensued, but sooner or later a parliamentary group was formed that Constantinidis aligned himself with; this eventually seems to have taken on some characteristics of a party, in the sense of agreeing on certain internal procedural matters[36] and later on guidelines for the upcoming elections in 1912[37]. It should be noted that this is in line with the characteristics of *elite based parties* according to the typification of Duverger[38].

Constantinidis does report on various issues concerning politics on the central scene in Constantinople, particularly in his early letters. Political dynamics within the Rum millet, relations with the Muslim MPs, and certain larger political issues are briefly touched upon. He also conveys his personal impressions of various Christian MPs. He is most impressed with Georgantzoglou[39], the Smyrna MP who eventually came to lead the parliamentary group; he is greatly disappointed with Carolidis, a university professor in Athens with a high profile; and he nearly gets into a physical altercation with Choneos (Χωναίος) from Salonica[40].

Mention of current events is, however, not detailed. On a couple of occasions he mentions that there is no need to give details about things that have been widely reported in the newspapers, which explains the matter. Here we shall not go into details concerning the political dynamics and events in Constantinople; after all, the information is fragmentary. Rather, we shall be focusing on the material concerning Rhodes and the relationship between Constantinidis and Pavlidis.

The primary affiliation of both men is to the Rum millet, their "brethren" (ομογενείς) which is natural given the social organisation of the late Ottoman Empire. They are also both against the Committee of Union and Progress, placing them in the political opposition. Constantinidis refers to Unionists (in other words, members of the CUP) in a tone not exactly derogatory, but implying a certain distaste[41]. He unequivocally states that he does not support the ruling party, when he writes: *after all, some government reshuffle cannot be ruled out in which case persons positively disposed towards us in the opposition would come to power*[42] Pavlidis in particular seems to have been a *persona non grata* to the Unionists[43]. The exact reasons may be found in Pavlidis' letter in the Venizelos archives:

> When the constitution was proclaimed, the Young Turks established a club of the young Turk committee in Rhodes as well, which not only did I not accept to join, but I managed to sway many important Turks with whom we established a club of the Liberal party in order to counter the machinations of the young Turks, and of which I was elected vice president, but as a result of the events of 31st March 1909 the members of the board of this club were accused as reactionaries and we were forced to close it as was the case in other parts of Turkey.
>
> Furthermore, in 1911 I was elected Mayor of Rhodes with the support of our fellow brethren and the old Turks and I am (the first elected Mayor since the fall of Rhodes to the Turks)[44].

The reason for the Unionists' ire is then obvious: not only did Savvas Efendi stand up to them and establish a rival association, but he actually managed to snatch the mayorship from them. Constantinidis' letters confirm the establishment of Pavlidis' local committee of the Liberal party, and interestingly he also mentions the creation of a third political organisation:

> Firstly, I cordially congratulate you on the establishment of an association which I too wished and suggested, namely an international one, whose vice presidency you have assumed, and I hope for its success.
>
> As for the other association, the progressive one, I fear it might fall on its face as it started not only with confusion and irregularities concerning the composition of its board, but also with an egotistic and isolationist outline [...] I beg you to persist steadfastly with your association which will have the most beneficial of results for the island[45].

The term "international" must surely be read in the context of the Ottoman millets; he is almost certainly referring to the same thing that Pavlidis later mentioned to Venizelos, namely the participation of both Christians and Muslims in the Liberal association. Indeed it would seem that the third faction, the Progressives, might have been a purely Greek political association[46] - at

35 Constantinidis (1908-12-23); Constantinidis (1909-02-06).

36 Constantinidis (1909-01-15).

37 Constantinidis (1912-03-08).

38 As quoted in Ελευθερίου (2023).

39 Constantinidis (1908-12-23); Constantinidis (1909-02-06).

40 Constantinidis (1909-02-06).

41 eg Constantinidis (1911-04-18)

42 Constantinidis (1911-04-18): Άλλως τε δεν είνε απίθανος και υπουργική τις κρίσις οπότε θα έλθουν εις τα πράγματα πρόσωπα μάλλον καλώς διακείμενα προς ημάς τους αντιπολιτευόμενους

43 Furthermore, I have it on good authority that the Turks of the Capital and especially the Unionists will oppose you more actively should you stand as candidate than they would against me. Constantinidis (1912-03-08): Επίσης θετικώς έμαθον ότι και οι Τούρκοι της Πρωτευούσης και προ πάντων οι κομιτατικοί περισσότερον θα ενεργήσουν καθ' υμών εάν εκτεθήτε παρά κατ' εμού.

44 Παυλίδης (1914).

45 Constantinidis (1909-02-06): Εν πρώτοις από καρδίας συγχαίρω υμάς διά την σύστασιν συλλόγου οίον και εγώ επεθύμουν και επρότεινον τουτέστι διεθνούς, ου και την αντιπροεδρείαν ανελάβητε· ελπίζω και εύχομαι περί της κατευοδώσεως αυτού.
Όσον αφορά τον άλλον σύλλογον τον προοδευτικόν φοβούμαι μη ναυαγήση καθ' ότι ήρξατο με όχι μόνον αταξίας και παρατυπίας περί την συγκρότησιν του συμβουλίου του, αλλά και με εγωϊστικόν και απομονωτικόν διάγραμμα· είχον δίκαιον οι Λίνδιοι και άλλοι να μη μετάσχοωσι, διότι ως έγραψα και εις τον ίδιο πρόεδρον Μαλλιάκαν έπρεπε να προταθή παρακλητικώς και η συμμετοχή των άλλων, η δε κατάρτησις του συμβουλίου εγένετο απολυταρχικώ και αυταρχικώ τω τρόπω χωρίς να γείνωσι τυπικαί τουλάχιστον εκλογαί. Σας παρακαλώ όπως εμμένητε σταθερώς εις τον υμέτερον σύλλογον ου τα αποτελέσματα θα ώσι κάλλιστα δια την νήσον.

46 Although the term "Progressives" could be taken to refer to the Committee of Union and Progress, Constantinidis does not use such a term for the CUP anywhere else in the correspondence; he consistently prefers the term κομιτατικοί (*komitatiki*), deriving from Italian *comitato* for "committee". Further evidence against such

least that is how I read Constantinidis' accusation of an "isolationist" agenda. That would mean that in 1909 there would have been (at least) three different political organisations in Rhodes: a Turkish "national" one, adhering to the CUP; a Greek "national" one, the Progressives; and one "international", the Liberals. Constantinidis clearly agrees with Pavlidis that collaboration between the millets is the way forward.

Significantly, this strategy paid off in the 1911 mayoral election, with Pavlidis succeeding in splitting the Turkish vote as mentioned in his letter to Venizelos. Constantinidis was elated, not only for his friend's success, but also for the support of his Turkish countrymen.

> Honourable Mayor of Rhodes
> And dear friend Mr. S. Pavlidis
>
> While cordially congratulating you on your election as Mayor of the capital of Rhodes, at the same time I also deeply congratulate my fellow Rhodian countrymen, Mohammedan Jews and Christians, for through this fortunate choice they have proven most constitutionally that in favour of progress and the common good of our fatherland they know how to unite and to value virtue and merit in full impartiality and regardless of religion, nation or home town.
>
> Wishing you health from god and collaboration from the Rhodians in your work.
>
> With respect,
>
> Th. Constantinidis[47]

Continuing, he further adds:

> If you approve, my dear friend, I would like you to publish my congratulatory message on the previous page in the "Aegean" because I believe it shall have a positive effect on our Turkish cohabitants whose spirit of fellowship and collaboration is growing stronger.[48]

---

an interpretation is that Constantinidis mentions that a mr. Malliakas is president of the organisation and that *the Lindians refused to participate* due to some disagreement, all indicating that this was an organisation made up mainly of Greek Orthodox members. Whether or not this is the same mr. Malliakas who is later mentioned as an "instrument of fragmentation" is unclear(see the segment concerning the discussions about the upcoming 1912 elections).

47 Constantinidis (1911-03-20):
Αξιότιμε Δήμαρχε Ρόδου
Και αγαπητέ φίλε Κύριε Σ. Παυλίδη
Επί τη εκλογή υμών ως δημάρχου της πρωτευούσης Ρόδου συγχαίρων υμάς από καρδίας συγχαίρω εν ταυτώ ενδομύχως και τους επαρχιώτας μου Ροδίους Μωαμεθανούς Εβραίους και Χριστιανούς, διότι εν τη επιτυχεί των εκλογή ταύτη απέδειξαν συνταγματικώτατα, ότι προς χάριν της προόδου και του κοινού της όλης πατρίδος συμφέροντος γινώσκουσι να συναδελφώνται και να εκτιμώσι την αρετήν και την αξίαν εν πλήρει αμεροληψία και ανεξαρτήτως θρησκεύματος, έθνους ή ιδιαιτέρας πατρίδος.
Ευχόμενος υμίν υγείαν παρά θεού και συναρωγήν παρά των Ροδίων επί τω έργω υμών.
Διατελώ μεθ' υπολήψεως
Θ. Κωνσταντινίδης
Βουλευτής Ρόδου

48 Constantinidis (1911-03-20) Επεθύμουν, φίλτατε, ίνα αν και υμείς το εγκρίνητε, δημοσιεύσητε το απέναντι συγχαρητήριόν μου εις την "Ρόδον" και κατά μετάφρασιν εις το "Αιγαίον" διότι, ως φρονώ, θα επιδράση καλώς ιδίως επί των συνοίκων μας Τούρκων, ων ενισχύται το πνεύμα της συναδελφώσεως κ' συνεργασίας.

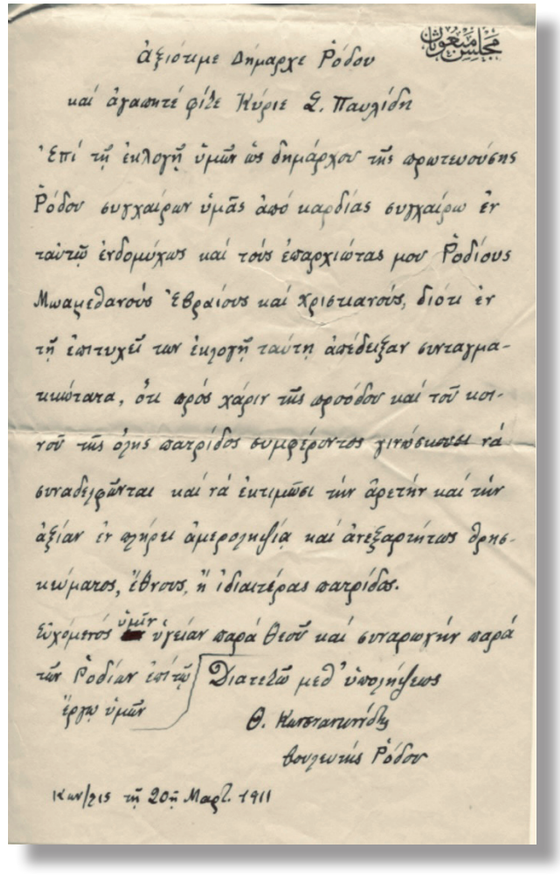


Figure 5: Constantinidis' congratulary letter 20 March 1911

This stance of Constantinidis is apparent in numerous comments throughout the correspondence: at no point does he seem to have an *a priori* negative stance towards Muslim politicians or officials; rather, he judges by the merits or shortcomings he perceives. In his very first letter, he reports his early impressions from the parliament, noting that *concerning the parliament, things are not pleasant, not so much from the side of the Turkish colleagues most of whom are most polite and prudent, but more from our own side*[49]. Later on, he notes a completely different atmosphere in the parliament and a sense of hostility towards his parliamentary group[50]. He had taken a liking to Minister of Justice Manyasizade Refik Bey, but of a later successor at that post he comments that the *current minister of justice is most barbaric*[51].

On a purely social level, Constantinidis' letters also reveal an extension of trust towards certain Muslim individuals, which proves the existence of mutual trust relationships in Rhodian society beyond the confines of the millet:

> Please find policeman Hamdi efendi and tell him that I was visited by his son-in-law Enver bey who almost weeping begged me for two Ottoman liras which I gave him in the presence of Tselepidis and Tsouvallas and he assured me that he would write to Hamdi efendi to repay them to any friend that I indicate. So please suggest it to him and if he recognises this debt he may give them to you also by virtue of the enclosed receipt. I didn't want to give them but he swore a thousand oaths to me that he was even suffering from hunger. If Hamdi refuses to recognise it please write to inform me and I shall have a drink of cold water to get over it [..][52]

Interestingly, what is conspicuously absent from the letters is any clear mention of promoting interests of the Greek state. He does make mention of the "Macedonian issue" for instance, in reference to a statement by Hilmi bey that was "most favourable for us"[53] rather than the Bulgarians. Constantinidis' letters are filled with allegiance to his "brethren" (ομογενείς), but there is certainly no indication of any secessionist aspirations or any activities such as coordination with the Greek embassy.

Constantinidis uses the term "patriotism" and related words on a number of occasions. My impression is that he mostly conceives of Rhodes as the fatherland and object of his patriotism, but he may just as well be referring to the Ottoman Empire. One way or another he certainly does include Turks in his concept of patriotism:

> I was most pleased with the actions of our Vali who endorsed your complaint as well as the good officer Nuh bey; one does admittedly feel elated with such state functionaries and sacrifices oneself under their truly patriotic and legal orders.[54]

When the Italian threat becomes imminent, in late 1911, Constantinidis is unequivocal regarding his position in this conflict - and there is no indication that Pavlidis is in any sort of disagreement on this matter:

> I shall be observing the situation carefully, if I perceive any danger I shall send you a telegram, I might possibly even come in person if I make it there before the blockade, in order to participate in the defence of the honour and property of the fatherland and the Rhodians. I do, however, hope that the insatiable and grasping Europeans will stand by their original decision for fear of war and strife among themselves, and confine the Italians' actions to Tripolitania[55].

This stance poses a problem insofar as it clashes with later accounts of the two men's trajectory and particularly their adherence to Greek national ideals. It is well documented that both of them got into trouble with the Italian authorities very soon after the conquest, for supporting unification with Greece. Theodoros Constantinidis was a key figure in organising the Conference of Patmos, which in July 1912 issued a declaration asking for unification of the Dodecanese with Greece. Soon thereafter, acting as one of three elected representatives of the Conference, he visited Rome, Vienna, Paris, and London to promote the cause[56].

Savvas Pavlidis, on the other hand, in his official capacity, was a signatory of a similar petition sent to various European state officials in December 1912[57]. As a result, on 27 February 1913 Pavlidis was deposed from his office as Mayor of Rhodes by decree of General Giovanni Ameglio, and very soon afterwards he was deported to Athens along with his sons. He too made further efforts to attract international attention to the Dodecanesian issue, as attested by his interview in the Italian "Messagero" newspaper only a few days after his deposition and deportation, where he described the Greek sentiments of the Rhodians. It is accompanied by a telegram addressed to the Mayor of Rome asking for his support as one mayor to another[58].

Furthermore, both men have later attested to having been involved in pro-Greek activity even

49 Constantinidis (1908-12-23): Τα την βουλήν αφορώντα εισίν ουχί ευχάριστα ουχί τόσον εκ μέρους των Τούρκων συναδέλφων ων οι πλείστοι ευγενέστατοι κ' φρονιμώτατοι όσον εκ μέρους ημών αυτών [...]

50 Constantinidis (1911-01-21).

51 Constantinidis (1909-04-04): Ο νυν υπουργός Δικαιοσύνης είνε βαρβαρότατος, αλλ' ίσως αλλάξη.

52 Constantinidis (1909-02-06): Σε παρακαλώ όπως ανταμώσης τον αστυνόμον Χαμτή εφέντη και τω είπης ότι ήλθε παρ' εμοί ο γαμβρός του Εμβέρ μπέης και κλαίων σχεδόν μοι εζήτησε δύο λίρας οθωμ. τας οποίας τω έδωκα ενώπιον του Τσελεπίδου και Τσουβαλλά μοι είπε δε ότι θα γράψη εις τον Χαμτή εφ. ίνα τας δώση εις όντινα φίλον τον διατάξω. Πρότεινε το λοιπόν αυτώ και εάν αναλαμβάνει το χρέος αυτό ας σας τας δώση δυνάμει κ' της εγκλείστου αποδείξεως. Δεν ήθελον τω δώση αλλά μοι έκαμεν χιλίους όρκους ότι υπέφερε και από πείναν ακόμη. Εάν δεν παραδεχθή κατ' ουδένα τρόπον ο Χαμτής γράψατέ μοι το δια να πίω ένα κρύο νερό [...]

53 Constantinidis (1909-02-06): την ευμενεστάτην δι' ημάς δήλωσιν του Χιλμή επί του Μακεδ. ζητήματος

54 Constantinidis (1911-11-11): Πολύ εχάρην με την πολιτείαν του Βαλή μας επικροτήσαντος τας παραστάσεις σας ως και του καλού αξιωματικού Νουχ μπέη· ομολογουμένως ενθουσιά τις με τοιούτους λειτουργούς του κράτους και θυσιάζεται υπό τας πράγματι πατριωτικάς και νομικάς διαταγάς των.

55 Constantinidis (1911-11-11): Παρακολουθών βήμα προς βήμα την κατάστασιν, εάν ίδω κίνδυνον θα σας τηλεγραφήσω, πιθανόν δε να έλθω και ο ίδιος εάν προκάμω τον αποκλεισμόν, ίνα συμμετάσχω στην άμυναν της τιμής και περιουσίας της τε πατρίδος και των Ροδίων. Ελπίζω όμως ότι οι αχόρταγοι και πλεονέκται Ευρωπαίοι φοβούμενοι τον αναμεταξύ των πόλεμον και αλληλοφαγωμόν να εμμίνωσιν εις την πρώτην απόφασίν των όπως περιορίσωσι την δράσιν των Ιταλών μόνον εν τη Τριπολίτιδι

56 Παπαχριστοδούλου (1972), p. 534-536.

57 Παπαχριστοδούλου (1972), p. 539

58 Il Messagero 03/03/1913

during the Ottoman period. We have already mentioned Pavlidis' letter to Eleftherios Venizelos, where he stated that already in the 19th c. he had got in trouble with the authorities and lost his position as President of the Commercial Court due to his Greek sympathies[59]. Constantinidis has later claimed to have been involved in secret talks that led to the creation of the Balkan League in 1912, challenging Ottoman power in the region[60].



Figure 6: Photo from the Pavlidis family archive. In his book Niohoritika, Vratsalis writes the following about the picture: Athens 1915? The first exiled Rhodians following the Italian occupation. From right to left: Maliakas (doctor), Kefalakis, D. Anastasiadis (Headmaster of Ventoklion school), Savvas-Efendi Pavlidis (mayor of Rhodes), - (?). The unidentified man on the left may possibly be Theodoros Constantinidis.

One explanation for this discrepancy is the fragmentary nature of the correspondence surviving in the Pavlidis archive - there may have been relevant references proving Constantinidis' pro-Greek sentiment in the letters that have not survived. It may also be a matter of discretion: it seems perfectly reasonable to assume that, if an MP was involved in secessionist activities and harboured pro-Greek sentiments, he would avoid mentioning this in writing for fear of being discovered. The abovementioned quotes, however, concerning patriotism, relations with Rhodian Muslims, and the political factions of Rhodes, cannot readily be attributed to such self-censorship. Did their ideology change? Were they simply opportunists? Or pragmatic statesmen who, although supporters of unification with Greece, sought to achieve this only when they perceived that the time was right, and not to the detriment of the Rhodian population be it Christian, Jew or Muslim?

My personal understanding, from the evidence of these specific documents, is that pragmatism is the key here, as well as an honest sense of respect and kinship with their Muslim fellow countrymen - much more so than with the Italian newcomers. As the Italian-Ottoman war over Libya broke out in 1911 and the Italian fleet started spreading terror among the population of the Aegean islands Constantinidis wrote:

59 Παυλίδης (1914).

60 Κωνσταντινίδης (2019).

> Also, I am very pleased and boastingly make mention wherever I go, even to MPs and ministers, of my Rhodian compatriots who have on this occasion displayed composure and prudent bravery and were not alarmed like the inhabitants of Chios and Mytilene who caused a commotion like little children; it is with patriotic pride that I indicate and demonstrate the brotherhood with which our Turkish and Jewish brothers cohabitate with the Christians in Rhodes while, as I have learned, the Muslim families are departing Mytilene and Chios in droves, even the ones residing in the villages, whereas there to the contrary they are not departing but seek refuge in the Christian villages; the Muslims of Rhodes are indeed worthy of praise, having always during times of difficulty displayed brotherly love and stewardship towards their Christian compatriots who in turn value and love them as older brothers. In seeking to explain this their generally prudent and verily manful and patriotic comportment full of brotherly love, I say that they are descendants of those chosen and trusted by the Magnificent and most chivalrous and most just Sultan Suleiman in whose time Turkey reached the apex of her glory, and therefore descendants of persons valued and established as the select of this magnanimous and noble-minded man can only be expected to also have magnificent feelings.[61]

Alas, in the very next letter he was forced to note that he had been wrong:

> I shouldn't have boasted that Rhodians, as opposed to those in Mytilene and Chios, showed composure and bravery and that not a single one of them departed from Rhodes. To my disappointment I now hear that the Rhodians too are unfortunately departing with their families any which way, and that they are scared. In light of other nascent major political events it seems to me laughable to think that the war will spread to our insignificant islands, as it seems to me laughable that the Rhodians would be gripped by such fear as if the matter concerned Rhodes and as if there were any thought about Rhodes. [62]

Barely half a year would go by before his estimation of the chances of Rhodes' involvement in the conflict would also be proven wrong.

61 Constantinidis (1911-11-11): Επίσης πολύ χαίρω και καυχώμενος κάμνω λόγον όπου τύχω και εις βουλευτάς και υπουργούς με τους πατριώτας μας Ροδίους, οίτινες απέδειξαν εις αυτήν την περίστασιν ψυχραιμίαν και μετά σοφροσύνης ανδρείαν και δεν εθορυβήθησαν ως οι Χίοιοι και Μιτυληναίοι (sic) που εχάλασαν τον κόσμον ως παιδιά· μετ' εγκαυχήσεως πατριωτικής υποδεικνύω και επιδεικνύω την αδελφοσύνην μεθ' ης συμβιούσιν εις την Ρόδον οι αδελφοί μας Τούρκοι κ' Εβραίοι μετά των χριστιανών και ενώ όπως έμαθον αι Μουσουλμανικαί οικογένειαι αναχωρούν σωρηδόν εκ Μιτυλήνης (sic) και Χίου και αυταί ακόμη που ευρίσκονται εις τα χωρία, τουναντίον εκεί δεν αναχωρούν, αλλά καταφεύγουν εις τα χριστιανικά χωρία· είνε πράγματι άξιοι επαίνων και συγχαρητηρίων οι Μουσουλμάνοι της Ρόδου οι οποίοι εις τας δεινάς περιστάσεις της πατρίδος και πάντοτε έδειξαν αδελφικήν αγάπην και προστασίαν προς τους Χριστιανούς συμπατριώτας των καθώς και εκείνοι τους εκτιμούν και τους αγαπούν ως μεγαλήτερους αδελφούς των. Δικαιολογών δε την εν γένει σώφρονα και πράγματι ανδρικήν και πατριωτικήν και φιλάδελφον στάσιν και διαγωγήν των, λέγω ότι είνε απόγονοι εκλεκτών και εμπίστων του Μεγαλοπρεπούς και ιπποτικοτάτου και δικαιοτάτου Σουλτάν Σουλεϊμάν εις ούτινος την εποχήν η Τουρκία έφθασε το κατακόρυφον της δόξης, και επομένως απόγονοι ανθρώπων τους οποίους εξετίμησε και ενεκατέστησεν ως εκλεκτούς του ο μεγαλόκαρδος και μεγαλόφρων εκείνος ανήρ δεν είνε δυνατόν παρά να έχουν και αυτοί αισθήματα μεγαλοπρεπή.

62 Constantinidis (1911-11-24): Κρίμα που εκαυχώμην με του Ροδίους ότι εξαιρετικώς από τους Μυτιληναίους κ' Χίους αυτοί εφάνησαν ψύχραιμοι και γενναίοι μη αναχωρήσαντος μηδενός έξω της Ρόδου. Μετά λύπης μου δε τώρα μανθάνω ότι και οι Ρόδιοι δυστυχώς αναχωρούν οικογενειακώς τήδε κακήσε, και ότι είνε πεφοβισμένοι.Ενόψιον τόσων άλλων αναφυέντων μειζόνων πολιτικών γεγονότων μοι φαίνεται γελοίον το να νομίζωμεν ότι ο πόλεμος θα μεταφερθή εις τα ψωρονήσια μας όπως γελοίον μου φαίνεται το να κατέχονται υπό τόσον φόβον οι Ρόδιοι ως να ήτο ζήτημα δια την Ρόδον, κ' ωσάν αν υπήρχε σκέψις δια την Ρόδον.

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The third *Meclis-i Mebûsan* (1908-1912), the Ottoman parliament, where Theodoros Constantinidis served as the representative of Rhodes, then part of *Cezayir-i Bahri Sefid* (Mediterranean islands) province, was congragating at the *Çifte Saraylar*, the twin palaces, built by the period's imperial architect Garabet Amira Balyan in *Fındıklı* at the shores of the entrance of the Bosporus for Abdülmecid's daughters Cemile and Münire Sultans. Cemile moved into her palace in 1858 when she married Mahmud Celaleddin Pasha. Mahmud Celaleddin was the son of Ahmed Fethi Pasha and Şemsinur Hanım. He was born in 1836. He served as a minister of trade twice during the reign of Abdülmecid (r. 1839-1861) and was involved in the coup d'etat against Abdülaziz (r. 1861-1876) in 1876 together with Mithat Pasha. Mahmud Celaleddin and Mithat Pasha were later tried by Abdülhamid II, Cemile's brother, and sentenced to death after a three day trial in 29 June 1881. Upon the sentencing, Şemsinur Hanım suffered a stroke and died on July 4th. The death penalties were converted to prison sentences and the pashas were sent to Jeddah for imprisonment in Taif. The journey was on the Imperial yacht "Izzeddin". Mahmud Celaleddin and Mithat Pasha traveled in tight cells adjacent to the vessel's steam boilers. The two men died the same night, on 8 May 1884 in prison in Taif. They were both strangled by their guards and executioners sent from Istanbul. Cemile and Mahmud Celaleddin's palace, once the Ottoman Parliament where Constantinidis has represented Rhodes, serves as part of the Mimar Sinan University's Faculty of Arts and Architecture today.



Before the trials of Yıldız, the first Ottoman Parliament, 1. *Meclis-i Mebûsan*, was elected in March 1877 and consisted of 115 representatives. The first representative of Rhodes in the Ottoman Parliament was Hacı Vasilaki Efendi. His photograph is dated 1876 and is from Abdulhamid's private collection called *Yıldız Albümü*, Hamidian Album, preserved in Istanbul University's rare books library.

Lucia Maria Orlandi is an archaeologist and historian specialising in Late Antiquity and Early Byzantium. Trained in Classics and Archaeology, she holds a Ph.D. in Cultural Heritage Studies (2017), awarded under the joint supervision of the University of Bologna (Italy) and the Sorbonne University (France). She has held research positions in Italy (University of Bologna, 2017-2019), Greece (Italian Archaeological School at Athens, 2019) and France (Sorbonne University/Unité Mixte de Recherche 8167 Orient et Méditerranée, 2020-2022), and has participated in several excavation projects in Italy (Central Italy, Catholic University of Louvain, 2010-2017) and Greece (Crete and Kos, University of Bologna, 2012-2019), focusing on Late Antique housing and settlement and Early Christian religious architecture. She has been a teaching assistant at the Sorbonne (Byzantine history) and at Cergy Paris Université (Roman history), and has participated in several digital humanities projects funded by national research funds or by the European Union, dealing with Byzantine cultural heritage and Byzantine lead seals. Currently, Dr Orlandi is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellow at the École française de Rome, with a project entitled "SIGN-IT - Signacula in Roman and Post-Roman Italy: marking religious and cultural identity (2nd-11th c. CE)" (HORIZON-MSCA-2023-PF-01-01-GA Id: 101146566), which aims to facilitate the study of Roman and Byzantine signacula or markers as a historical source for the social and cultural history of the Italian peninsula. Dr Orlandi's main research interests are Roman to Early Byzantine epigraphy and sigillography; baptism and baptisteries and the social implications of Christian initiation between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages; interreligious relations, religious topography and settlement dynamics in the Late Antique and Early Medieval Mediterranean; databases and data management of archaeological and documentary sources.

"I am very happy and grateful to participate in this volume and the Conversation. This has not only allowed me to return, at least in thought, to places and research topics that are close to my heart and have shaped my education and research, but also to open new windows onto the history and lived experiences of a place with inexhaustible human richness. Have a great journey, all of us readers."

Lucia Maria Orlandi

Hermes Balducci

The discovery and rediscovery of the archaeological and architectural heritage of the Dodecanese

Hermes Balducci contributed to writing a short but significant chapter in the history of Italian archaeological research in the Dodecanese. This paper presents his research and achievements, as well as his contribution to the study of the archaeological heritage of the Dodecanese, especially as regards the early Byzantine monuments.

Balducci is a figure that can rightly be described as multifaceted, owing to his training, his wide-ranging interests, and research and documentation activities conducted both in Italy and in the Dodecanese, which was at that time under Italian rule[1].

His work ranges from engineering applications to the history of architecture, from the masterly graphic documentation of monuments and decorative elements of antiquity, both ancient and more recent, to comprehensive historical studies that have often rescued so-called minor buildings and contexts from oblivion. Through his work, a significant part of the archaeological and architectural-artistic heritage in Italy and Greece has been recovered for memory and study, although often only in very recent times[2].

Balducci was born on October 27, 1904 in Fano, in the Marche region, into a bourgeois family; his father was an architect. He studied engineering at the Italian universities of Pavia, Padua, and the Politecnico in Milan, where he graduated in 1928[3]. A model student, he excelled in disciplines related to drawing and construction. From 1925 to 1933, he served as an assistant in the Chair of Drawing at the School of Ornament and Architecture at the University of Pavia, the institution where he would spend his entire academic career. In 1935, he was appointed Professor of Drawing[4] at the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Natural Sciences, a position he held until his sudden death on February 13, 1938[5]. Alongside his teaching, he conducted intensive research and engaged in professional collaboration in the study and restoration of monuments, particularly medieval and modern ones.

Much of Balducci's work focused on the city of Pavia and its surroundings, where he documented numerous medieval religious buildings, initiated the restoration of the local Visconti Castle, and designed an ossuary for the fallen of the Great War[6].

His research, documentation, and design activities in Italy likely stemmed from the experience and sensitivity he developed in the Dodecanese, where he lived and worked for long periods[7] as a fellow and later as a collaborator of the F.E.R.T., the Italian Historical and Archaeological Institute

1 See for example, Doumanis 1997; Pignataro 2011, 2013 and 2018.
2 For an annotated bibliography and an extended biographic profile, see Orlandi 2019 and 2021.
3 ASUPv, Students' files, file of Hermes Balducci.
4 Balducci 1930a.
5 ASUPv, Students' files, file of Hermes Balducci.
6 See for example Balducci 1930b, 1932a, 1933a, 1933b, 1933e, 1935a, 1935b, 1935c, 1936b; see also Vicini 2016, p. 233-235.
7 Livadiotti, Rocco 1996, p. 40-42, 64, 67-68, 78, 81, 84, 94, 119, 141-144, 159-162, 240, 245; Livadiotti 2017, p. 151 and notes; Baldini, Livadiotti 2011, p. 80 and notes.

of Rhodes[8]. After a first stay in Rhodes in 1930, his scholarship was renewed for 1931, 1932, and again in 1937[9].

During these particularly productive years, Balducci alternated between collaborating on major ongoing archaeological research projects in Rhodes and Kos — where he was responsible for the documentary and reconstructive survey of newly uncovered structures — and pursuing independent research initiatives.

Under the direction of Giulio Iacopi, then director of the Archaeological Superintendency of the Dodecanese and head of the F.E.R.T., Balducci participated in excavations on the hill of Filerimos, the ancient acropolis of Ialysos, between 1930 and 1931. This site had been investigated by Italian archaeologists in various missions since 1913[10]. Balducci studied the remains of the early Byzantine Basilica and the church built under the Knights' rule, which occupied the site of the Temple of Apollo (5th–4th century BC) before the construction of the modern monastery (1932–1935)[11]. He also published a general plan showing the relationships between the different phases of construction.

Between 1931 and 1932, he carried out surveys of the temple and theatre dedicated to Apollo Erethimios on the Acropolis of Rhodes (dating to the 5th/4th and 4th centuries BC, respectively)[12], reconstructing their dimensions and the typology of their architectural elements (Figure 1).

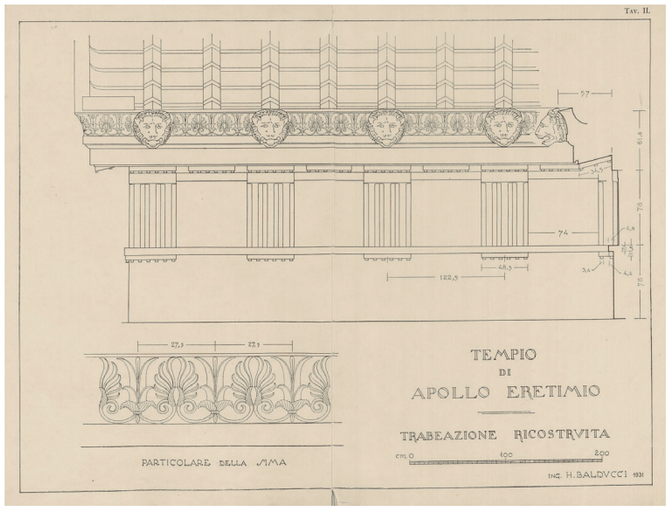


Figure 1: Rhodes, Temple of Apollo Erethimios, reconstruction of the frieze, Balducci 1932a, Pl. II.

8 Advanced Studies in Medieval and Modern Architecture. On the origins of F.E.R.T., see Santi 2018, p. 204–210. F.E.R.T. awarded two six-month scholarships each year, one for a specialist in classical studies and one for a medievalist; women candidates were not admitted.

9 Santi 2018, p. 245, and note 324; p. 257 and p. 327

10 Livadiotti 1996a, p. 40-42.

11 Balducci 1931b; see also Livadiotti 1996a, p. 40-42.

12 Balducci 1932a.

Between 1930 and 1933, Balducci documented the finds at Kamiros, including the sanctuary of Athena and Zeus Poliades on the acropolis and part of the lower town, excavated by Iacopi between 1928 and 1933[13].

During the same period, as a scholarship holder at F.E.R.T., Balducci focused on Rhodes' artistic and architectural heritage of Rhodes adopting a perspective consistent with the political and cultural climate of the time[14]. In particular, his studies in the Dodecanese revealed him as a man of his era, and a supporter of the Italian regime, and, as such, a scholar fully adhering to the exegetical, ideological and rhetorical frameworks then prevalent in Italian academia and promoted by the Italian government, especially concerning cultural policies in a colonial context[15].

The interest in the monuments of the Knights' period in Rhodes and their study, to which Balducci was an active contributor[16], was justified as an to recover and valorise the island's "Italian" past, which the new ruling power ideologically reclaimed. From the beginning of the Italian occupation of the Dodecanese in 1912, the primary—though not exclusive—focus was on the remains of the Hospitaller period. However, during the Fascist regime, under the governor of the Italian Aegean Islands Mario Lago (1922-1936), and especially under his successor Cesare Maria De Vecchi (1936–1940), greater emphasis was placed on the classical and Roman remains in the area. Archaeological discoveries, along with their restoration and monumental presentation to the public, played a central role not only in promoting the region's tourist potential but also in the propaganda and legitimisation policies of the Fascist regime. The latter positioned itself as the heir to the Roman imperial civilisation and sought to stimulate the "recovery of a Western consciousness" among the inhabitants of the Aegean after centuries of Ottoman rule[17]. The revival of architectural heritage—whether medieval, Renaissance or Turkish—was explicitly pursued to place Italy on an equal footing with other nations in the field of research[18] and to establish a comparative framework that would serve as a basis for developing architectural expressions considered "overtly Roman"[19].

Balducci studied the influence of the Renaissance, particularly the Italian Renaissance, on the architecture of the Knights, meticulously documenting examples of both civil and religious buildings[20]. In 1932, he focused on the so-called House of the Admiral Costanzo Operti[21], an

13 Balducci 1932-1933; see also Caliò 1996, p. 64, and Di Vita 1996, p. 67-68; Santi 2018, p. 269.

14 Santi 2018.

15 On this topic, see for example Santoro 1996, Orlandi 2013, p. 533-534, with references.

16 Santoro 1996, *infra*; Santi 2018, p. 359-362, note 137.

17 Santi 2018, p. 325-332. As for the distinctly *Italian* influence on the architecture of the Hospitaller period, see for example the remarks of Vittorio Mesturino, the former Superintendent of Monuments of Piedmont, appointed in 1937 to oversee the restoration and transformation of the Grand Master's palace in Rhodes into the seat of the Italian government. According to him, the palace complex was "fully in keeping with the architecture of the Savoy in Piedmont" (my English translation): Santi 2018, p. 362-364, note 156, with references.

18 See G. Iacopi's preface in Balducci 1932b; on Italy's *national* contribution to archaeological science and, through the latter, to the legitimisation of Italian imperialist aspirations in the Levant, see the statements by Alessandro Della Seta, director of the SAIA 1919-1939, in Santi 2018, p. 449 and note 379.

19 Balducci 1932b, p. 190 (my English translation): "[…] if we believe that one of the main tasks of architecture in a conquered territory is to express the personality of the ruler in a tangible and lasting way, we must also recognise that these simple and, if you like, modest buildings have left a deep mark on the city of Rhodes: Therefore, if we are to draw valid advice for the future from the study of the past, we must come to a conclusion that is logical and to which I have already alluded in another way: The architectural art of Rhodes today must be systematically of purely Italian inspiration and feeling; we must give it the most overtly Roman imprint".

20 Balducci 1931a.

21 Balducci 1932c.

important member and leader of the Order of Saint John between 1498 and 1517 (Figure 2). His study, which served as a preliminary step to the restoration, received praise from the then-governor Mario Lago. Another monument to which Balducci dedicated his efforts was the Gothic church of Santa Maria del Borgo (Figure 3)[22], which underwent significant restoration.

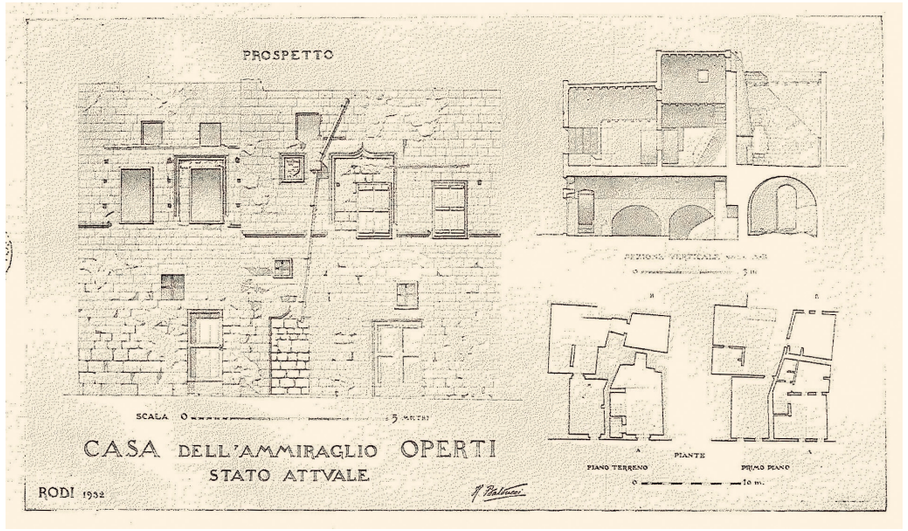


Figure 2: Rhodes, House of the Admiral Costanzo Operti, façade, plan and section, Balducci 1932c, Pl. I.

In spite of the political and ideological context, Balducci's work is highly valuable because it generally provides comprehensive documentation. This includes not only the "normalised" drawings required for restoration projects but also precise records of the existing state, closer to archaeological surveying, which preserve crucial data for future research and conservation[23]. He then extended his interest to local Ottoman architecture, producing a preliminary comprehensive study on the subject[24].

In addition to his work in Rhodes, his later studies in Kos are noteworthy.

Following the earthquake that struck the Dodecanese on April 23, 1933, Italian archaeological research focused on the island of Kos under the direction of Luigi Morricone, who succeeded Luciano Laurenzi as director of the Archaeological Service of Kos in 1935[25]. During this period, Balducci surveyed and, in some cases, studied the structures that had been discovered[26], working in collaboration with the military topographer Virgilio Brighenti, who was responsible for the general plans of the site, and the painter Traiano Finamore, draughtsman for the Superintendence of Antiquities of Bologna, who was in charge of drawing objects, architectural details and reconstructions[27].

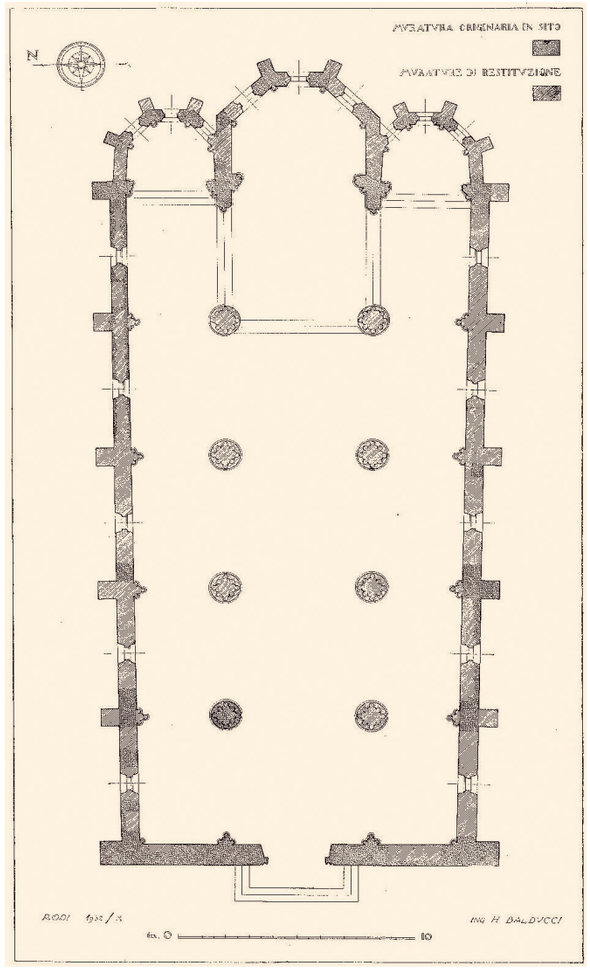


Figure 3: Rhodes, "S. Maria del Borgo", planimetric reconstruction of the original church. Balducci 1933a, Pl. IV, p. 37.

22 Balducci 1933a.
23 Santoro, p. 245.
24 Balducci 1932b; Balducci 1933b. See Luca Orlandi in this volume.
25 Morricone 1950.
26 For Balducci's activity in the capital: Livadiotti, Rocco 1996, particularly fig. 201; p. 94; p. 119 and fig. 267; p. 141–144; p. 159–162; see also Santi 2018, p. 286, note 481.
27 Livadiotti 1996b, p. 94.

Among the discoveries of those years were Roman and Late Antique dwellings in the southwestern area of the capital, such as the *domus* of "Piazza Quadrata"[28] and the baths of "Via della Croce" on Odos Mitropoleos, for which Balducci produced drawings and watercolour reproductions of the mosaics[29]. His 1:100 scale survey and some of his watercolour depictions of mosaics are also the only surviving records of another discovery made by Morricone in 1936 under the present Agios Theologos Square, where a richly decorated *domus* with significant mosaic ornamentation was found (Figure 4)[30].

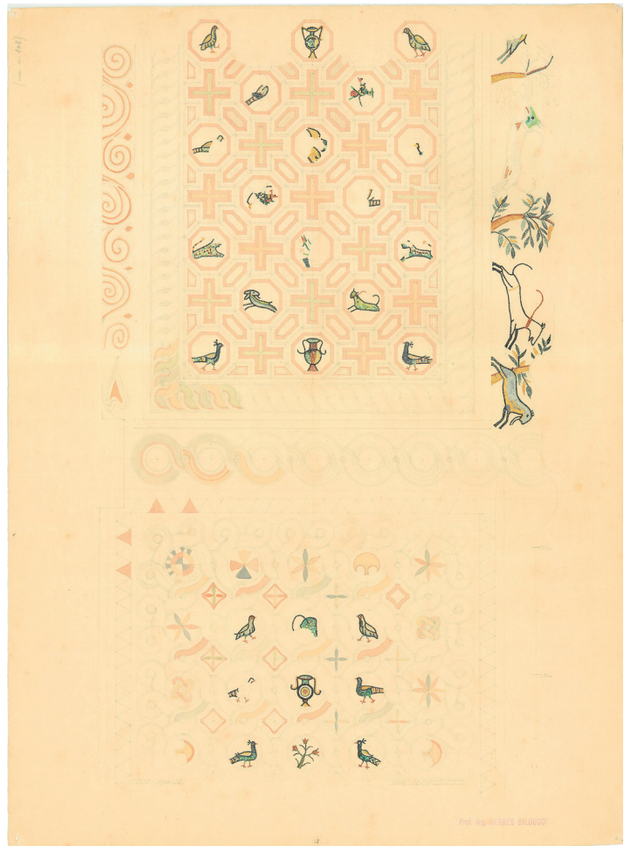


Figure 4: Kos, *domus* found in Agiou Theologou Square, plan and watercolour depiction of the mosaic floor. ©Archivi SAIA, Fondo Morricone, Balducci 108.

28 Rocco 1996 p. 159-160 and fig. 365.
29 Rocco 1996, fig. 367 and 368, p. 160-161.
30 Rocco 1996, fig. 369, p. 162.

In 1936, a mid-to-late Roman imperial bath complex was identified in the Port area, in the Bozuktà neighbourhood, just outside the western section of the city walls, together with structures built after the earthquake of 469 AD, including some mosaic pavements[31]. Balducci also documented numerous mosaics found during the excavations carried out in 1936-1937 at the Western Baths, where, in recent years, the island's 6th-century episcopal complex has been identified (Figure 5)[32].

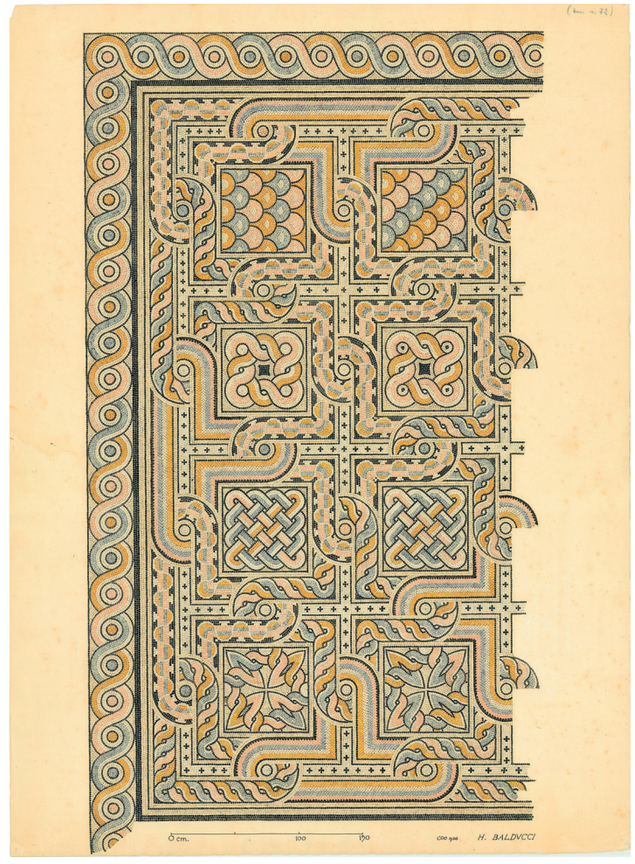


Figure 5: Kos, Western Baths' complex, plan and watercolour depiction of a mosaic floor (Room XIV, annex to the Basiica B). ©Archivi SAIA, Fondo Morricone, Balducci 72.

31 See Rocco, Livadiotti 1996, p. 95, fig. 201 (H. Balducci, 1936, watercolour on cardboard).
32 Baldini, Livadiotti 2015.

One of Balducci's lasting legacies is his work on the early Byzantine basilicas of the chief town and the island's hinterland. In 1932, Laurenzi, then director of the island's archaeological office, discovered the great basilica of Agios Stephanos on the promontory that borders Kephalos Bay to the northeast (Figure 6)[33]. In 1935, his successor Morricone began a systematic search for early Byzantine religious buildings[34]. During these years, Agios Gavril and "Punta della Sabbia" (Lampi/Skandariou) were found in the area of the capital, along with Agios Pavlos and Kapamà in the area of Asfendiù, and the small basilica of Kamari in Kephalos. Other finds from the Byzantine period were made at Antimacheia, in the area of Agios Theodoros, and at Linopoti, Kephalos, where a small funerary basilica was found near the basilica complex of Agios Stephanos and the small church of Agia Paraskevi. Morricone entrusted the study and graphic documentation of these monuments to Balducci, then a young engineer and fellow of the F.E.R.T. in Rhodes, who is also credited with the discovery of the Basilica of Kardamena[35].

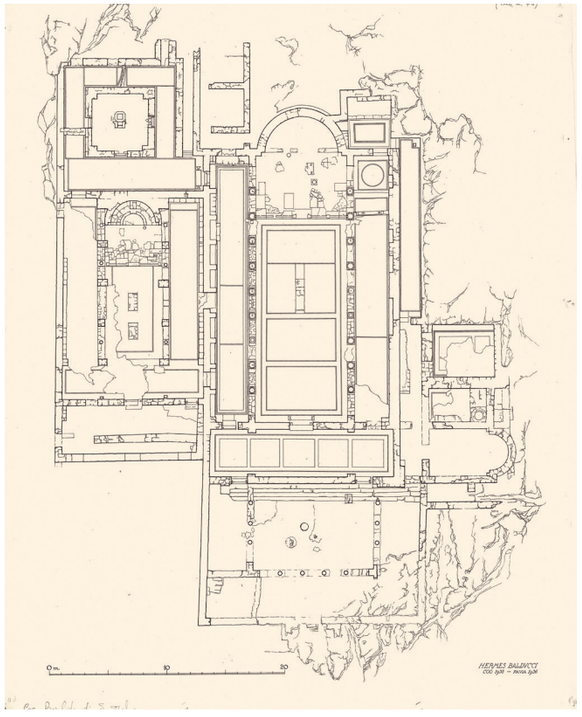


Figure 6: Kos, Kephalos, Basilica of Agios Stephanos, plan. ©Archivi SAIA, Fondo Morricone, Balducci 76.

33 The study of basilica of Agios Stephanos, published in Baldini, Cosentino 2021, take its cue from these first researches.

34 Rocco 1996, p. 78 e 81; Santi 2018, p. 283, and note 476, p. 293.

35 Rocco 1996, p. 81.

Balducci's interest and documentation activities also extended to the later phases, as evidenced by his drawings of the mid- and late Byzantine churches in the city and on the island (Figure 7), and of the Hospitallers' castle of Nerantzia (Figure 8), which dominates "Città Murata", the ancient walled citadel in the centre of the Kos city.

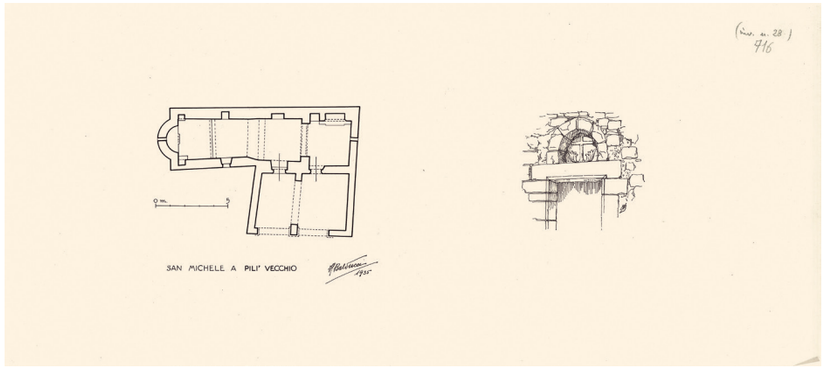


Figure 7: Kos, Palaio Pylì, Church of Agios Michail, plan and detail of the entrance door. ©Archivi SAIA, Fondo Morricone, Balducci dis.716.

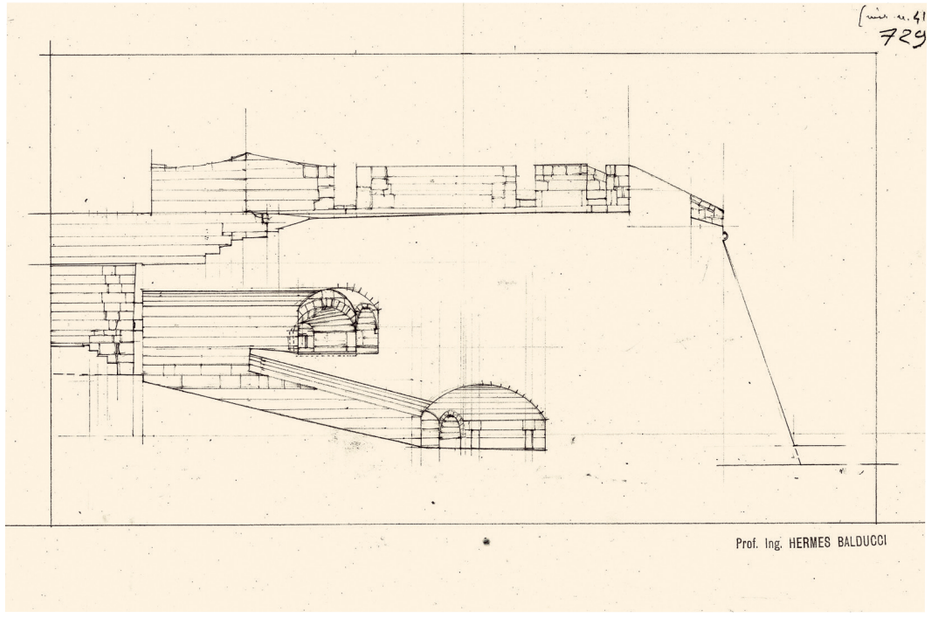


Figure 8: Kos, Castle of Nerantzia, section of the Great Master del Carretto's bastion. ©Archivi SAIA, Fondo Morricone, Balducci dis.729.

The monograph on the early Byzantine basilicas of Kos[36], which compiles much of the graphic documentation produced by Balducci following his investigations of the monuments, remained for decades the only publication on the subject and served as an indispensable reference for all subsequent studies.

The most visually striking part of this rich documentation - which in some cases is the only surviving evidence - consists of the surveys and watercolours of the floor mosaics of the residential and religious complexes, true works of art both in their material and graphic representation (Figure 9).

A corpus of fifty-five watercolour plates depicting mosaic pavements is currently preserved in the archives of the Italian Archaeological School in Athens[37] as part of a larger body of work that also includes architectural surveys and drawings of religious and civil buildings produced by Balducci during his years in Kos. Although they focus mainly on the mosaic layers and exclude the context of the elevations, these watercolours capture a snapshot of the moment of the discovery. This is particularly important for mosaics whose memory was lost in the turmoil of the Second World War, or those that were relocated, heavily restored and sometimes altered, to decorate the floors of the Palace of the Grand Master of Rhodes. This building underwent extensive renovations between 1937 and 1940 to become the seat of the Italian Governorate, and the mosaics are still preserved there today.

In spite of the historical-political context in which they are set, and regardless of the historical-political interpretations that can be derived from them, Balducci's studies on the Dodecanese (as well as those carried out in Pavia) reveal a genuine scientific interest that transcends mere rhetoric and develops in an encyclopaedic manner. His work ranges from construction techniques to architectural forms and the functional organisation of spaces, from artistic and epigraphic culture to archival sources. These aspects present the image of a curious and meticulous scholar, capable of combining historical synthesis with a rigorous and technical analytical approach to the study of monuments, who still resonates with us today:

«When we then see these ruins [of Agios Stephanos on the Bay of Kephalos] set against the evocative and picturesque background of the nature that surrounds them, with the peculiar violet reflections of the nearby mountains, with the dark blue of the sea that almost surrounds the rock on which they stand, with the islet of Agios Nikolaos rising steeply from the sea nearby, then we, who, instead of being cold surveyors and anatomists of the remains, must elevate ourselves to a higher sense of beauty – the sweet fulfilment of scientific endeavour – and must recognise in the ancient architects not only the builders of a monument but also the eminent users and creators of a landscape that we will never forget for the rest of our lives. Our soul goes into ecstasy as our imagination reconstructs volumes out of the mutilated masonry, and melancholy spreads from the columns that rise senselessly to the sky in a now fruitless effort.»[38]

36 Balducci 1936; available online at https://www.thiasos.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Balducci-Basiliche-protocristiane-e-bizantine-a-Coo.pdf (last access 03/04/2025).

37 Published in Michailidou, Papi 2019.

38 Balducci 1936, p. 15-16: "Quando poi noi vediamo questi ruderi inquadrati nello sfondo così suggestivo e pittoresco della natura che li avvolge, con gli speciali riflessi lacei delle montagne vicine, con il cupo azzurro del mare che quasi circonda la roccia sulla quale essi si ergono, con l'isolotto di S. Nicola che sorge scoseso dal mare lì presso, allora noi che, oltre essere freddi rilevatori ed anatomizzatori dei resti, dobbiamo elevarci al senso superiore del bello - dolce completamento della fatica scientifica - , allora dovremo riconoscer negli antichi architetti non solo i costruttori di un monumento ma gli esimi utilizzatori ed insieme creatori di una scenografia che per tutta la vita non potremo giammai dimenticare. Il nostro animo si immerge tutto nell'estasi mentre la fantasia ricostruisce i volumi dalle monche murature e la malinconia si spande dalle colonne che si ergono verso il cielo inani in uno sforzo ormai senza frutto."



Figure 9: Kos, Kephalos, Basilica of Agios Stephanos, plan and watercolour depiction of a mosaic floor (Great Basilica, narthex, central section). ©Archivi SAIA, Fondo Morricone, Balducci 115.

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Pignataro 2011 = Luca Pignataro, *Il Dodecaneso italiano 1912–1947, vol. I: L'occupazione iniziale 1912–1922*, Chieti 2011.

Pignataro 2013 = Luca Pignataro, *Il Dodecaneso italiano 1912-1947,* vol. II: *Il governo di Mario Lago. 1923-1936*, Chieti 2013.

Pignataro 2018 = Luca Pignataro, *Il Dodecaneso italiano 1912-1947,* vol. III: *De Vecchi, guerra e dopoguerra 1936-1947/50*, Chieti 2018.

Rocco 1996 = Giorgio Rocco, "Altri scavi in città", in Rocco, Livadiotti 1996, p. 158-163.

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Santoro 1996 = Rodo Santoro, *I restauri degli edifici medievali di Rodi*, in Livadiotti, Rocco 1996, p. 211-259.

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Luca Orlandi is an architectural historian specializing in Ottoman and Turkish architectural heritage. He graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Genoa and earned his PhD in 2005 from the Polytechnic University of Turin in the "History and Criticism of Architectural and Environmental Heritage" program. Based in Istanbul for over two decades, he was awarded the title of Associate Professor by Turkey's Inter-University Council (UAK) in November 2022. At Özyeğin University, he teaches History of Architecture and Architectural Design Studio courses within the Faculty of Architecture and Design. Dr. Orlandi actively collaborates with international organizations such as ICOMOS Italy, the Alte Vie Foundation, and PIMo (People in Motion). Since 2012, he has served as a Senior Tutor for the Premio Piranesi - Prix de Rome, an international student competition organized by the Accademia Adrianea. He has also held academic appointments as a visiting professor at the Polytechnic University of Milan during the Spring Semesters of 2018 and 2019. At Özyeğin University, he established the Erasmus exchange program and oversees bilateral agreements with international universities. Dr. Orlandi is the author of *The Landscape of Sinan's Architecture: The Case Study of Thrace*, published in both Italian and Turkish. His scholarship also includes numerous essays and articles featured in prestigious publications such as Routledge, Springer, Bruno Mondadori, and leading international scientific journals. He regularly participates in conferences, seminars, and workshops worldwide, while also organizing exhibitions and events related to his research interests which span a wide array of topics, including:

- The architectural legacy of Mimar Sinan and Ottoman heritage.
- Turkish architecture and its evolution.
- Galata and Genoese colonies in the Eastern Mediterranean.
- Italian architects in the late Ottoman Empire and early Turkish Republic.
- Travel literature and the cultural heritage of the Levantine world.

"I arrived in Rhodes by chance, following the traces of a little-known Italian engineer who had worked there during the Fascist era. Over the years, my research led me to reconstruct the life and numerous works of Hermes Balducci—engineer, archaeologist, and university professor—who, through his studies and fieldwork, significantly contributed to the knowledge of the archaeology, restoration, history, and culture of the Dodecanese: from its classical past to the era of the Knights in the Middle Ages, through the Byzantine and Ottoman periods, the Italian presence, and finally the annexation to Greece. In a similar way, Tarık Tüten has likely come across my research on Balducci, which I have scattered over these years of study and travel. I hope that this collection of conversations—once completed—will add a new cultural fragment to that marvellous corner of knowledge that is the Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library in Rhodes."

Luca Orlandi

Visions of the Past: Italian Perspectives on Ottoman Rhodes through the Studies of Hermes Balducci

Abstract

This paper explores the cultural impact of Italian colonial rule in the Dodecanese Islands between 1912 and 1943, focusing on Rhodes and its Ottoman heritage through the studies conducted by Hermes Balducci. The paper briefly investigates the contrasting policies of governors Mario Lago and Cesare Maria De Vecchi, who shaped the islands' urban and architectural development. Special emphasis is placed on the pioneering work of Hermes Balducci, a young and promising Italian engineer and archaeologist who systematically documented Ottoman architecture in Rhodes during the years of the Italian occupation.

Balducci's meticulous surveys and publications, including the fundamental book "*Architettura Turca in Rodi*", published in 1932, provided valuable insights into Ottoman architectural heritage. Despite reflecting the ideological biases of his time, full of fascist rhetoric and propaganda, Balducci's contributions are a vital resource for understanding the cultural complexity of the Dodecanese during the Italian occupation. By examining both colonial ambition and heritage preservation, this study offers a nuanced perspective on Mediterranean architectural history.

Introduction

The colonial policies undertaken by Italians in the Dodecanese Islands during the period 1912-1943 remain a marginal topic in Italian historical studies. Only in the past two decades have these policies been analyzed comprehensively from diverse perspectives. While the bibliography on the Dodecanese is abundant, it is often plentiful with contradictions. For instance, Italian literature from the Fascist era is heavily saturated with rhetorical language aimed at glorifying successive Italian governments. Meanwhile, Greek literature has often portrayed Italian rule as oppressive, shaped by nationalist narratives that evoke resistance and subjugation. However, in recent years, the academic approach has shifted away from both nationalist Greek perspectives and the overly romanticized Italian narrative of "good colonizers".

Current scholarship adopts a more balanced analysis, exploring the nuanced impacts of Italian governance in the region, including and magnifying its contributions to architecture, urban development, and cultural heritage. These studies on Italian colonial architecture and heritage preservation has further highlighted Balducci's contributions within broader themes such as *Italianità*, *Romanità*, and particularly *Mediterraneità*.

For instance, Jones and Pilat's edited volume (2020) examines the legacy and reuse of Fascist-period architectural spaces, analyzing their role in shaping national identity and architectural discourse. Similarly, Maglio, Mangone, and Pizza's (2017) exploration of *Mediterraneità* contextualizes Italian cultural and architectural endeavors within the Mediterranean basin, providing insights into how figures like Balducci contributed to these narratives. Valerie McGuire's monograph (2020a) positions Italy's colonial experience as a unique intersection of imperial and cultural economies that reshaped the Mediterranean during its period as a "colonial sea". Orlandi (2021) and Troilo's (2021) investigations into the re-appropriation of Italian colonial archaeological practices underscores the role of scholars like Balducci in defining the European imperial imaginary. These studies collectively reaffirm the significance of the massive amount of work done by the Italians in the Dodecanese, framing it within contemporary debates on heritage, colonialism, and identity.

Historical Background

On May 4, 1912, Italian troops seized Rhodes during the Italo-Turkish War, marking the beginning of Italy's presence in the Dodecanese Islands. The occupation aimed to disrupt Ottoman supply routes to Libya, a strategic move in the broader conflict against the Ottoman Empire. Although initially intended as a temporary wartime measure, the islands – renamed the Italian Aegean Possessions – became a permanent part of Italy following the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, Figure 1.



Figure 1: The Dodecanese Islands (From: Stefanini, Giuseppe and Desio, Ardito (1928). *Le Colonie, Rodi e le Isole Italiane dell'Egeo,* Torino: UTET, p. 382).

From 1912 to 1923, the Dodecanese Islands were largely under the rule of military administrators as governors, including Giovanni Ameglio (1912-1920), a military officer who played a key role in consolidating Italian control after the archipelago's conquest. His early governance focused on addressing logistical and political challenges while laying the groundwork for future infrastructure development. With the rise of Fascism in 1922, the region saw significant changes under Mario Lago, who served as governor from 1923 to 1936. He adopted a relatively moderate approach, attempting to balance Fascist policies with respect for local Greek, Turkish, and Jewish communities. He was undoubtedly a pivotal figure, who promoted a cultural and infrastructural vision that aimed to integrate the Dodecanese into the Italian imagination without alienating the local population. Under his governance, iconic buildings were constructed, and numerous restoration projects were initiated.

In contrast, his successor Cesare Maria De Vecchi – governor from 1936 to 1940 – implemented a more authoritarian regime, emphasizing Fascist ideology and suppressing minority rights. His administration marked a shift toward a more aggressive policy of Italianization, often with polarizing consequences. He promoted "purification" architectural interventions that altered existing buildings to reflect the Fascist regime's style.

Finally, Ettore Bastico (1940-1941) and Inigo Campioni (1941-1943) were the successive military governors, their tenure coincided with World War II and the growing instability of the Italian presence in the area. During this dramatic period control of the islands shifted dramatically: in 1943, after the Italian Armistice, the Dodecanese fell under Nazi occupation, then in the aftermath of World War II was followed by British military administration until the islands' eventual transfer to Greece in 1947.

Rhodes, the largest and most strategically significant island, became a focal point of Italian colonial development. Major infrastructure projects included new roads, waterworks and ports, alongside the restoration of historical monuments. Italian authorities also pursued extensive archaeological research and introduced agrarian colonization policies, establishing new villages to support agricultural expansion. Overall Italian colonial policies in the Dodecanese were marked by ambitious architectural and urban development projects aimed at showcasing Italy as a modern state. While the islands were initially considered strategic military outposts, by the late 1920s, they had been reshaped into tourist destinations. This transformation was actively promoted by the Italian government through specific publications, including (Stefanini, Desio 1928), (Cesari 1930) and (Touring Club Italiano 1930).

Notable architects and urban planners were instrumental in reshaping the islands and designing landmark structures that blended Italian, medieval, vernacular, and Islamic architectural elements. Among the prominent architects contributing to the architectural regeneration of Italian colonies, Florestano Di Fausto (1890-1965) stands out as one of the most influential figures of his time. His work in Rhodes includes the Governor's Palace (1926-1927), a Neo-Venetian Gothic masterpiece designed to evoke Italy's historical heritage, and the Market and Fish Market (1925–1926), which harmoniously blend local and Italianate architectural elements to resonate with the cultural context, including references with the traditional Ottoman caravanserais' typology. Another prominent architect, Pietro Lombardi (1894-1984), designed the Thermal Bath of Kallithea (1928-1930), a spa complex that integrates classical forms with oriental Ottoman influences. Similarly, Armando Bernabiti (1900-1970) contributed to the modernist architectural landscape of Rhodes through his designs of the Town Hall, the Opera Theatre "Puccini" and the Casa del Fascio (1935-1938), while Vittorio Mesturino (1895-1979) played a key role in the restoration and reconstruction of the Palace of the Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes (1937-1940), reinterpreting medieval styles with a monumental aesthetic that reflected Fascist ideals of grandeur and authority, Figure 2.

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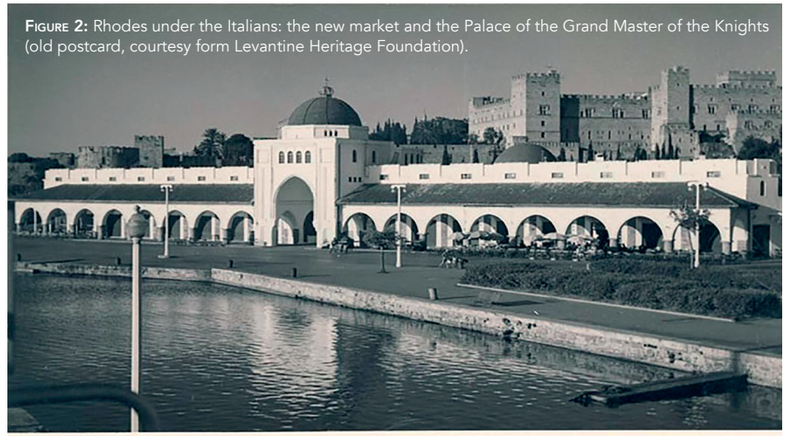


Figure 2: Rhodes under the Italians: the new market and the Palace of the Grand Master of the Knights (old postcard, courtesy form Levantine Heritage Foundation).

A valuable body of literature providing insights into the impact of Italian architects in the Dodecanese, particularly through studies conducted by Italian scholars, can be found in the works of Antoniades (1984), Petruccioli (1992), Rocco and Livadiotti (1996), Martinoli and Perotti (1999), (Godoli, Giacomelli 2005), Cigolini and Merello (2008), Orlandi (2010), Maglio (2014) and Livadiotti (2017). These studies explore in an exhaustive manner all the architectural and urban transformations undertaken during the Italian administration, shedding light on their cultural, historical, and political significance within the broader context of Mediterranean colonialism.

To sum up, Mario Lago's administration oversaw major projects, including roads, bridges, hotels, and thermal resorts, exemplified by the above mentioned thermal baths at Kallithea, an extraordinary example of Italian Art deco complex blanded with local Ottoman allure (Ivkovska, Orlandi 2020), Figure 3. However, under De Vecchi's rule, a shift occurred toward emphasizing Fascist and Roman aesthetics, stripping earlier buildings of their "Oriental" and exotic elements.



Figure 3: Pietro Lombardi (1894-1984) designed spa complex, the Thermal Bath of Kallithea (1928-1930) that integrates classical forms with oriental Ottoman influences. Photo by the author.

This era saw the construction of modernist and rationalist structures that symbolized the Fascist regime's ambitions, and "Italianness", more aligned with the will of Mussolini's imperialistic vision and research for a 'genuine' identity of the islands (McGuire 2020b). The Opera Theatre "Puccini" by Bernabiti can be seen as a perfect example to underline this new approach in the late '30s, Figure 4.



Figure 4: The Opera Theatre "Puccini" designed by Armando Bernabiti (1900-1970). Photo by the author.

These initiatives had a lasting impact, as highlighted by scholars like Nicholas Doumanis and Vassilis Colonas, who emphasize the enduring influence of Italian architecture and urban planning on the region. From an historical perspective, Doumanis' work (1997) focuses on the cultural and social transformations of the Mediterranean under Italian colonial rule. In his analysis of the Dodecanese, Doumanis explores the interactions between Italian authorities and the local population, highlighting the complexities of colonial policies that aimed to assimilate and modernize while preserving a degree of local identity. He examines how infrastructure development, architectural projects, and urban planning by the Italian administration reshaped Rhodes and its neighboring islands. His research often emphasizes the dual legacy of these projects: fostering modernization while imposing Italian cultural and political dominance. Doumanis also investigates the impact of Italian policies on communal life, particularly how Greek, Turkish, and Jewish populations navigated their identities under Fascist rule. His broader historical perspective situates Rhodes as a case study of Mediterranean colonialism, where architectural and cultural interventions became tools of governance and imperial identity formation, taking distances from the previous multi-ethnical and multi confessional Ottoman world.

Colonas' studies (2002) investigates deeply into the architectural and urban planning initiatives undertaken by the Italian administration in Rhodes and the broader Dodecanese. He analyzes the strategic efforts of the Italian regime to integrate modernist principles with the islands' unique historical and cultural landscapes. Colonas highlights key projects, such as the restoration of medieval monuments, the construction of public buildings, and the development of new settlements, which served dual purposes: preserving historical heritage and asserting Italian cultural superiority.

Colonas' work underscores how Italian architects, influenced by Fascist ideals, sought to create a harmonious blend of traditional and modern elements. For instance, the redesign of Rhodes' town center and the construction of buildings like the *Albergo delle Rose* exemplify this synthesis. He also sheds light on the agrarian colonization policies that led to the creation of new villages, reflecting a systematic approach to rural development and economic integration.

Both scholars recognize the enduring impact of Italian interventions on Rhodes, noting how the architectural and urban changes initiated during this period have shaped the island's identity. They critically examine the paradoxical nature of Italian policies, which simultaneously sought to celebrate local history and impose a foreign cultural framework. Their studies contribute to broader discussions on colonialism, heritage, and the politics of architectural preservation.

Hermes Balducci: A Pioneer in Ottoman Architectural Studies

Hermes Balducci (1904-1938), Figure 5, was a prominent figure among Italian scholars whose contributions significantly influenced the fields of local culture, heritage preservation, and, particularly, archaeology. However, with the exception of a few relatively recent publications in which his work is mentioned, there are still gaps in the overall evaluation of his figure at a historiographical level (Orlandi 2013); (Michaēlidu, Papi 2019). (Orlandi 2021).



Figure 5: Hermes Balducci (1904-1938). Picture courtesy of Balducci family's private collection.

Balducci's work occupies an important place in the study of Ottoman architecture within the Dodecanese Islands. As an Italian engineer, archaeologist, and academic, Hermes Balducci exemplified the integration of scientific rigor with historical preservation during a period when Ottoman contributions were frequently overlooked or marginalized under Italian colonial rule. Born in Fano, Italy, Balducci pursued degrees in chemistry and civil engineering, eventually serving as a professor of Ornament, Applied Geometry, and Survey of Ancient Monuments at the University of Pavia. Although Balducci passed away prematurely at the age of 34, his contributions to architectural documentation and restoration practices left a lasting legacy. His tireless work was highly regarded by his contemporaries, who honored his achievements in commemorative eulogies, including those by Locati (1938) and Molina (1938).

Balducci's academic and professional efforts diverged from the prevailing tendencies of Italian colonial scholarship, which prioritized classical antiquity and medieval Christian heritage while relegating Ottoman architecture to a secondary status. At a time when Ottoman structures were often dismissed as merely picturesque or exotic, Balducci recognized their structural and artistic significance, treating them as integral componets of Rhodes' historical idendity.

During this period, several renowned Italian archaeologists and scholars actively engaged in the region, with a primary focus on uncovering its historical past. Among them, Amedeo Maiuri (1886-1963) made substantial contributions through his extensive excavations and restoration projects, particularly in Rhodes and other islands, which underscored the historical importance of the area and its connection to Italian heritage. Similarly, Giuseppe Gerola (1877-1938) and Luciano Laurenzi (1902-1966) played critical roles in documenting and restoring the cultural heritage of the Dodecanese, thereby enriching the historical understanding of the islands.

As a member of the Archaeological and Historical Institute in Rhodes (FERT), Balducci collaborated with notable figures such as Giulio Jacopi (1898-after 1959?) and Luigi Morricone (1906-1979) to contribute to a broader understanding of Rhodes' complex architectural history, blending archaeological inquiry with rigorous architectural analysis, finalized to the restauration and the recovery of ancient and medieval structures (Balducci 1931), (Jacopi 1932), (Balducci 1933a-b). His multidisciplinary training in chemistry and civil engineering facilitated a methodical and innovative approach to architectural documentation and restoration as well as archaeology. Between 1930 and 1937, Balducci conducted extensive surveys in Rhodes, Kos and Samos, meticulously documenting ancient Roman, Byzantine, medieval, and – even more interesting – Ottoman structures as well.

Balducci's fascination with the island's architectural heritage and built environment as well as traditions and crafts, shaped by its former Ottoman-Turkish conquerors, was sincere and driven by a curiosity for the "other," distinct from his Western background. Notably, even in his study of Ottoman architecture, he applied his expertise with rigor, achieving remarkable insights into this unique culture. At the time, only a handful of works had been published on the Ottoman presence in the islands, with few contributions from Italian scholars.

Among other studies done by Italian in those years on the Ottoman-Turkish heritage, one notable work examines the conquest of Rhodes by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1522. This study, based on Ottoman literary sources discovered at the Hafiz Aga Library in Rhodes, was translated and published by Ettore Rossi in 1927. Additionally, Amedeo Maiuri conducted significant research on the vernacular architecture and artistic productions of Lindos, a village in the southeastern part of Rhodes Island (Maiuri 1924a). However, Maiuri's work primarily focused on the characteristics of the traditional "Greek house," reflecting his broader interest in Hellenic architectural forms rather then considering them as a reflection of the Ottoman influence in the islands. It must be acknowledged that, according to Maiuri, if not in architecture, it is in the minor arts and local craftsmanship that the distinctive characteristics of Islamic art should be sought. Some innovations were introduced in the minor arts, such as carved and worked wood, which, along with embroidery and even majolica, represents one of the most interesting expressions of taste and Folk Art in the Dodecanese (Maiuri 1924b).

Other important Italian contributions include Giulio Jacopi's study of Suleiman's Baths, for which he was assisted by architect Rodolfo Petracco in conducting a complete survey of the complex, including drawings and measurements (Jacopi 1930), Figure 6 (next two pages), and Vitalis Strumza's research on the religious complex (or *tekke*) of Murat Reis (Strumza 1934), both located in Rhodes.

As a matter of fact, Balducci's seminal work, *Architettura Turca in Rodi* (1932), represented a significant achievement for what concerns the Italian studies on Ottoman art and architecture. Drawing inspiration from the works of international scholars such as Edouard Biliotti (1881), Cornelius Gurlitt (1912), and Albert-Louis Gabriel (1921), Balducci frequently cited them in his book as essential references for understanding Ottoman civilization in Rhodes. Likewise, he relied on the research of the Genoese diplomat Antonio Baratta on Constantinople (1831) to gain deeper insight into the Ottoman built environment and its architectural masterpieces in Istanbul.



Figure 6: The Suleiman Bath in Rhodes. (From: Giulio Jacopi (1898-1959). "Il Bagno di Solimano." *Dedalo*, Anno IX, vol. I, 1930-31).

The preface of *Architettura Turca in Rodi* by G. Jacopi provides insight into the motivations behind the creation of the book. One of Balducci's primary concerns was to advance studies in a field where Italian scholarship had lagged behind that of other foreign nations with a long-standing interest in the Orient. Additionally, Jacopi highlights the enduring influence of the Ottoman Empire, whose architectural legacy remained prominent in the Dodecanese islands for at least four hundred years. From the cover picture and very first pages of his book, Balducci captures the allure of the 'Orient' and the splendor of the 'Ottoman landscape' in Rhodes, Figure 7, ultimately portraying it in a poetic and evocative style:

> "To those arriving from the sea, Rhodes appears with the low, golden line of its walls, like a hermetic jewel whose sturdy chest hints at the value within. From that concealed assembly of buildings, which outwardly maintains a rugged and menacing silhouette, only the minarets rise into the blue sky, competing with the occasional palm tree – like gigantic stone stalks projecting from the domed mass of the mosque into the boundless azure. As symbols and expressions of a religion, a race, and a world so different from our own, they nonetheless complete, in a marvelous harmony of line and color, the vision of the city rising from the sea, upon which another closed spirit – warlike and monastic – has left its indelible marks" (Balducci 1932, 10).

Balducci's *Architettura Turca in Rodi* is divided into five chapters: 1) an historical background, contextualizing the Ottoman architecture within the broader history of Rhodes; 2) the urban morphology and the public buildings, in which he examinates military and civil structures, including market spaces, mosques, and public baths; 3) a specific chapter introducing and exploring religious and funeral Muslim Architecture, i.e. analyzing mosques, tombs, and prayer halls; 4) another chapter related to structural and decorative features, in which Balducci investigated materials, techniques, and aesthetic elements such as tilework and woodcraft; 5) the conclusions, offering insights into the architectural integration of Ottoman and local influences. His documentation was enriched by a profound knowledge of material properties and construction techniques, which guided his restoration proposals or intents. The publication was further enhanced by numerous drawings, sketches, and photographs, all meticulously created by him, reflecting a rigorous and dedicated approach to his work.

Balducci's main analysis examines the influence of Ottoman settlements on the pre-existing medieval urban fabric, highlighting how numerous noble medieval residences and offices were repurposed into Turkish homes by the newcomers. According to his studies, the old town was divided into two distinct quarters, roughly separated by the road linking the Castellania to Porta Coschino. On one side, closer to the Collachio, lay the Turkish quarter, while the Jewish quarter was situated on the opposite side. By analyzing the urban texture and the dwellings, he also proposes categorizing Turkish houses into two distinct types: those constructed directly along the public road and those designed to face inward, centered around a private, enclosed garden.

Beside the dwellings and the vernacular architecture, the monumental stone buildings left by the Ottomans were largely analyzed by Balducci, especially for what concerns mosques, masjids, and funeral structures, like mausoleums and tombstones.

Among the other collective typologies identified in Rhodes, Balducci lists: the hospital, the soup kitchen, the schools, the library, the baths and the fountains, leaving out however almost all those constructions of the late Ottoman period, perhaps not seeing them – in his standpoint – 'Turkish' enough to be considered as original and too hybridized with Western architectural models, like the Fethi Pasha Clock Tower or some administrative Neoclassical buildings such as the Şer'iye Court.

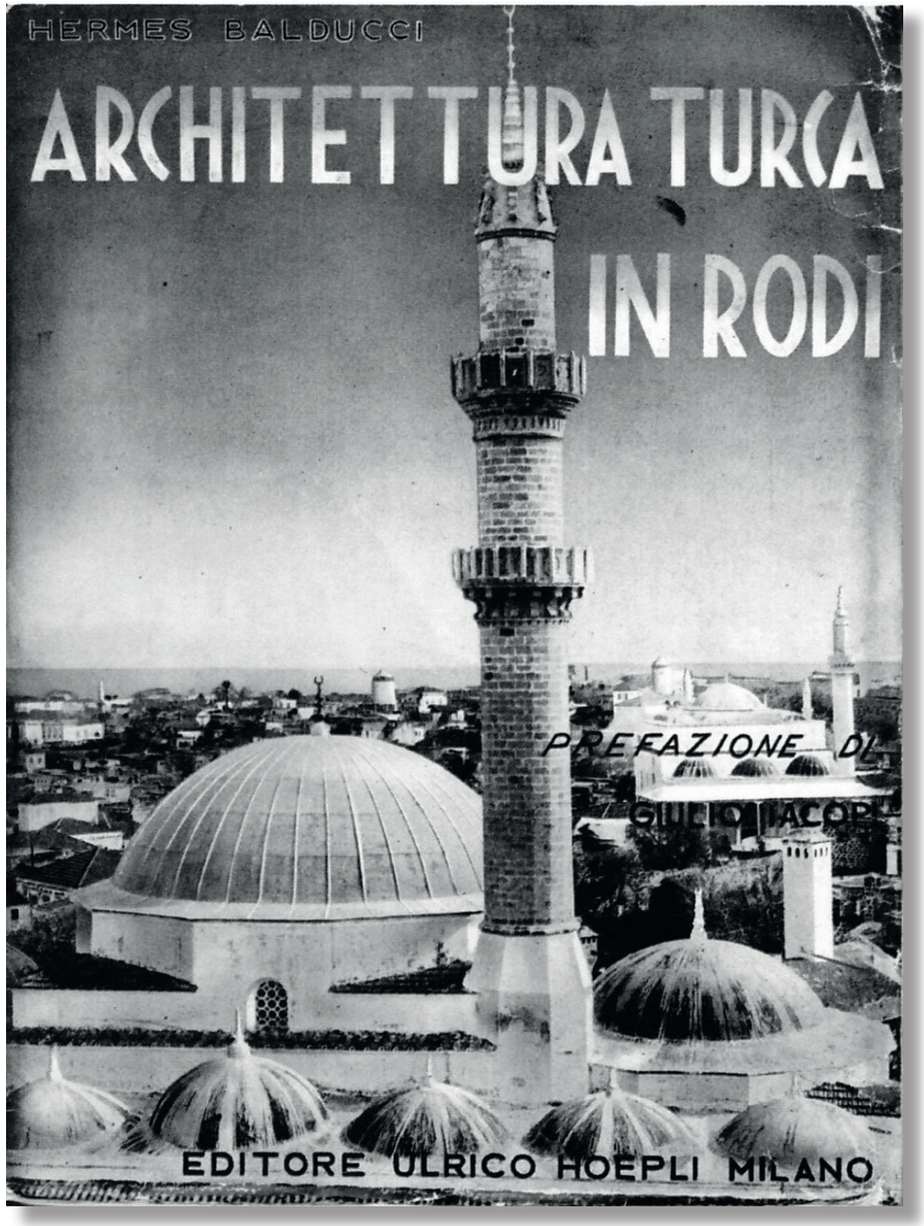


Figure 7: The cover of *Architettura Turca in Rodi* by Hermes Balducci (Author's private collection).

Indeed, when viewed through a contemporary lens, the architectural and artistic features related to the second half of the 19th century Ottoman's architecture vividly embody the essence of the Levantine world, within the Ottoman culture. This cultural and aesthetic synthesis reflects the unique ability of the Ottoman Empire to blend and harmonize elements from diverse traditions – Byzantine, Islamic, Mediterranean, and European – into a cohesive and distinctive identity. Such amalgamation not only highlights the Empire's multi-ethnic and multi-religious character but also underscores its role as a cultural bridge between East and West. This is particularly evident in the period following the *Tanzimat* reforms of 1839, which aimed to modernize the Empire while preserving its rich, pluralistic heritage. Thus, these structures in Rhodes stand as enduring symbols of a Levantine world where diversity and integration were celebrated, offering a glimpse into the cosmopolitan spirit that defined the Ottoman Empire at its height.

Balducci identifies nine mosques within the town of Rhodes: Sciadrevan (or *Şadırvan*, the Mosque of the Fountain), Ali Hilmì Pasha, Murad Reis, Aga, Hamza Bey, Ibrahim Pasha, Regep Pasha, Sultan Mustafa, and Suleiman, one of the most imponent and elegant buildings in the old town, Figure 8.



Figure 8: The Mosque of Suleiman in Rhodes. Photo by the author.

To these are added several mosques converted from older buildings and those of more modest size, such as: Abdul Gelil, Alemnak, Bab Mestùd, Bedestàn, Borazanì Ali Baba, Cizmegì, Demirlì Dolaplì, Enderùn or Kanduri, Ilk Mihrab, Jenigieli, Kadi, Kahn Zadè, Kavakli, Khurmaly, Pial-ed-Din, Sadri Celebì, Sikintì, Takyegì, and Uday. Within the walled town of Rhodes in 1932, the Ibrahim Pasha Mosque was the only mosque still in operation and used by the Muslim population. However, Balducci also describes the other mosques, attempting to trace their origins where possible:

"The Sciadrevan Mosque, or the Mosque of the Fountain, located near the bazaar street, occupies the upper floor of a building and replaced a much older mosque at the end of the 19th century, which was destroyed by fire. Its location may correspond to that of the former Church of St. Sebastian. The Ali Hilmì Pasha Mosque stands outside the city walls. Also outside the walls is the Murad Reis Mosque, surrounded by a cemetery that borders the road leading from the Government Palace to the Albergo delle Rose. Upon entering, one finds a cobblestone courtyard, typical of Rhodes... At the far left stands the mosque with its minaret, from which the muezzin calls the faithful to prayer... The temple is inaccurately referred to as the Murad Reis Mosque, as its true name is the Mosque of Ebù-Bechir Pasha, named after its founder, who built it in 1046" (Balducci 1932).

Alongside mosques and masjids, there are also mausoleums (*türbe*), tombstones, and cemeteries, which Balducci regarded as masterpieces of Muslim funerary art. A notable example is the 17th-century Murad Reis Mosque, situated outside the walled town at Sand Cape (*Kum Burnu*). The mosque is surrounded by a cemetery immersed in the greenery and distinguished by the presence of numerous tombs of prominent figures, including the circular *türbe* that houses the tomb of Murad Reis, the admiral who served under Suleiman during the siege of Rhodes in the 16th century or the one for Gazi Memi Pasha, who had great service in the Ottoman navy in the Mediterranean, passed away in 1620, Figure 9.

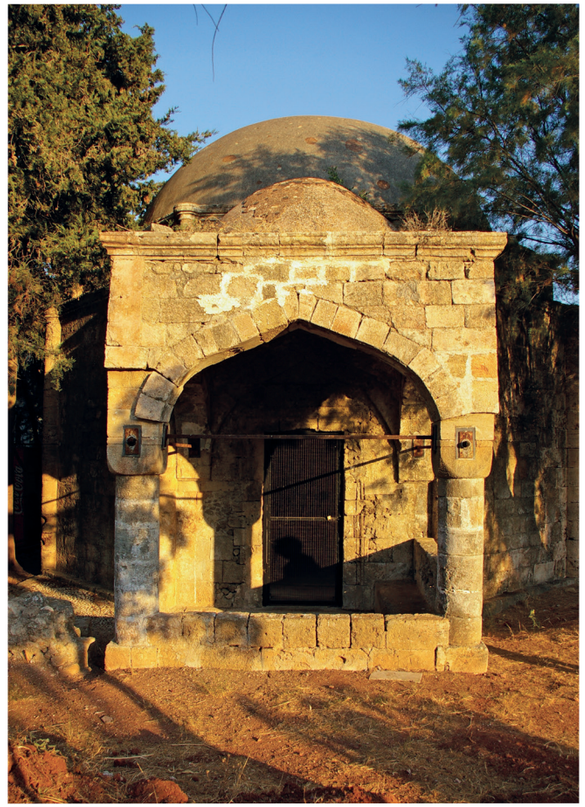


Figure 9: The mausoleum of Gazi Memi Pasha. Photo by the author.

Among other various types of buildings and structures clearly tied to Ottoman culture and Turkish-Muslim tradition, baths (*hamam*) and fountains (*çeşme*) hold a significant place. Balducci found these public structures particularly fascinating to study. Indeed, the Turks in Rhodes undertook numerous public works aimed at benefiting the population, primarily to improve sanitation and to properly adhere to the principles of Islam. In this context, baths, alongside mosques, stand out as quintessential symbols of their rule. The Turkish bath thus became a distinctive architectural feature in Rhodes, though its origins may draw inspiration from earlier Roman models. Three main baths were constructed in the town of Rhodes, with only two being entirely new constructions, the Old Bath, unfortunately lost and the Suleiman's Bath, also known as the Yeni or Çifte Hamam, dated 1558, Figure 10 (next page). The bath on the Street of the Knights, however, was partially adapted from pre-existing medieval structures, as Balducci pointed out:

"The Turkish Baths of Rhodes are three: one bath in the Via dei Cavalieri; the Eskì Hamam or Old Bath, adjacent to the Market Street, and the New Bath, Ienì Hamam, or Mustafa's or Suleiman's Bath. The only one for which a partial reuse of pre-existing structures can be assumed is the Bath in the Street of the Knights. Obviously, only the walls could be reused as partitions for the dressing room, while everything else was reworked" (Balducci 1932, 37-56).

Another type of construction that strongly reflects Turkish sentiment and contributes to the hygiene and decorum of the city is the public fountains. Balducci categorizes them based on their placement: isolated fountains, such as those for ablutions paired with mosques or those in squares, and fountains integrated into walls, often along the town's fortifications. According to him, the latter, in particular, exhibit a high artistic character and one of the best example analyzed by him is the one in Piazza dell'Armeria (*Tersane çeşmesi*) , a small gem nestled near the sea walls, close to what was once the Ottoman shipyard, now Symi Square, Figure 11 (next page).



Figure 10: The Suleiman Bath. Photo by the author.



Figure 11: The Fountain in Symi Square. Photo by the author.

Among other public buildings, Balducci described the library of Hafiz Ahmed Ağa, located near the Mosque of Suleiman: "[It] consists of two domed halls interconnected by doors and windows. The first hall is used for reading, while the second houses approximately 800 manuscripts and books. In the outer courtyard, there are several *oda* (small rooms) designated for readers of the Quran." (Balducci 1932,66)

Overall, the book was acknowledged by Italians (Rossi 1933), and achieved significant success, especially in Türkiye, where it was translated and published just over ten years later by the scholar Celalettin Rodoslu under the title *Rodos'ta Türk Mimarlığı* (1945). In the decades that followed, this translation of Balducci's work laid the foundation for other Turkish scholars to explore and document the Ottoman architectural legacy preserved in what are now the Greek Islands (Çelikkol 1992, Konuk 2008).

Balducci's documentation extended to articles in Italian academic journals, where he explored residential architecture and adaptive reuse practices within the Ottoman context. For instance, his article, published in *Ticinum*, provides a detailed analysis of a noble Turkish house in Rhodes, owned by the Alajalì Ascià bint Mehemed Mustafà Agà family (Balducci 1933c).

The above mentioned Turkish house is described as a representative example of post-1522 Turkish architecture, reflecting the domestic life of the Ottoman era, which was characterized by a clear separation between public spaces (*selamlik*) and private quarters (*haremlik*). Balducci examines its spatial organization: the ground floor features a veranda and storage rooms, while the first floor includes residential rooms, a second veranda, and a small bath equipped with a sophisticated heating system. Particularly noteworthy is a window in the haremlik, allowing women to discreetly observe the selamlik veranda without being seen.

The author highlights the house's simplicity and functional layout, as well as its austere aesthetic, influenced by the Turkish nomadic tradition. The description of the house was meticulously integrated with detailed plans and a few sketches. Interestingly, a perspective drawing of the house attempts to present the structure in a distinctly 'rationalist' style, as though Balducci wanted to establish a connection between the traditional vernacular architecture and the emerging Italian architectural influences on the island, Figure 12.



Figure 12: Perspective view of the Turkish house (From Balducci, (1933c). "Casa turca in Rodi", *Ticinum*, 8, p. 3.)

Balducci emphasizes the importance of documenting such buildings due to their inherent fragility and the continuous transformations they undergo over time, and overall, he criticizes the state of abandonment and the urgent need for restoration of Turkish architecture in Rhodes but acknowledges the efforts of the Italian Governorate in restoring certain buildings, such as the Ethnographic Museum or the of the mansion (*konak*) of Hasan Pasha into the headquarter of the Italian electric company SIER (Società Industrie Elettriche Rodi). Unfortunatelu, the latter, after the Italian domination was slowly abbandoned and it is still in very poor conditions, waiting to be brought back to its spendour, Figure 13.

In other way, these contributions meticulously reported in Balducci's monography on the Ottoman heritage in Rhodes are particularly valuable as many of the structures he studied have since been lost or neglected, making his records indispensable to contemporary researchers and conservationists.



Figure 13: The Hasan Pasha mansion. Photo by the author.

Conclusion

The Italian occupation of the Dodecanese Islands represents a complex chapter in Mediterranean history, marked by cultural exchanges, architectural innovation, and colonial ambition. While architects like Florestano Di Fausto and Pietro Lombardi introduced new styles that blended local and Italian influences, scholars like Hermes Balducci played a pivotal role in interpreting the region's Ottoman heritage.

Balducci's work serves as a valuable historical record, highlighting the need for further research into the Ottoman architectural legacy in the Dodecanese. This case study underscores the importance of examining colonial histories through a balanced and multifaceted lens, acknowledging both their contributions and their contradictions. As pointed out by Lucia Orlandi about the role of Balducci as an archaeologist and a scholar:

"Despite this framework, and beyond the historical-political assessments that may arise from it, Balducci's studies on the Dodecanese (as well as those conducted in Pavia) reveal a genuine scientific interest that transcends mere rhetoric and unfolds in an encyclopedic manner: from construction techniques to architectural forms and the functional organization of spaces, from artistic and epigraphic culture to archival sources. All these aspects portray a scholar who was both curious and meticulous, capable of uniquely combining historical synthesis with an analytical approach – rigorous and technical – in the study of monuments." (Orlandi 2021, 18)

Although Balducci operated within the ideological framework of Italian colonialism, his work reflected a genuine recognition of the cultural and historical value of Ottoman architecture. Today, some of Balducci's archival materials – sketches, drawings, photographs, and field notes – are preserved at the Italian Archaeological School of Athens (SAIA), where they continue to contribute to both academic research and ongoing restoration efforts.

The critical reception and contemporary significance of Balducci's work have been relevant and consistent; while his conclusions occasionally reflect the biases of his era, his meticulous records remain invaluable for reconstructing the architectural history of the Dodecanese Islands. His studies offer a counter-narrative to the colonial tendency to marginalize Ottoman contributions, highlighting the complexity and richness of Rhodes' architectural heritage. Through his research, Hermes Balducci demonstrated that architecture is far more than a collection of buildings. It is a historical narrative, a dialogue between conquerors and the conquered, a tangible expression of cultural identities meeting and transforming. As Balducci wrote: "Domes and minarets leave an indelible mark on the city of Rhodes, reminding us that every architectural conquest is a dialogue between past and present." (Balducci 1932).

The studies conducted at the time, even by respected and rigorous scholars such as Balducci, reveal however a bias that reflects a tendency to assert a certain cultural and artistic superiority – something that is now evident to contemporary scholars. This attitude was not devoid of ideological influences; in the Italian context, for example, it was strongly pushed by fascist propaganda, which sought to justify Italy's dominant role in the Mediterranean by constructing a supposed superiority of Italian civilization over other traditions.

However, these prejudices did not disappear with the end of that historical period but continued to shape both academic and popular narratives, leading to simplifications that have persisted over time. A significant example is the tendency to mix and confuse the terms "Turkish" and "Ottoman," using them interchangeably when, in reality, they refer to specific historical, cultural, and ethnic realities. While this equivalence was often accepted uncritically in the past, today's academic debate leans toward a more nuanced and conscious analysis, aiming to delineate more precisely – not only politically but also ethnically and culturally – the boundaries within which the various identities of the Ottoman world developed.

This critical evolution goes beyond a mere terminological revision; it is part of a broader reassessment of the past, where the goal is not only to recognize the errors of past perspectives but also to build a more balanced and inclusive understanding of historical interactions between civilizations.

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"Conversation is precisely the mode of interaction that is fast disappearing in our polarized world. It has been replaced by sermon, preached to an already converted choir and invective, no less unilateral in intention. The basic premise of a conversation is the acceptance and the desire to preserve a diversity of views and of opinions. Though it could lead to consensus, its purpose is to provide conditions for peaceful dissensus. I am particularly honored to be joining this Conversation on Rhodes and its past, which has too often been dragooned into the service of exclusivist metanarratives, be they colonial or nationalistic. A true conversation with the archipelago's diverse cultural heritage may offer the gateway to more inclusive, and therefore more democratic stories."

Alexis Rappas

Decolonial or National?

Greece's Reactions to Italian Cultural Heritage Policies in Rhodes

Abstract

This paper examines the Greek cultural heritage policies implemented in the Dodecanese following their 1947 annexation to Greece, focusing particularly on the island of Rhodes. Framed as a historical correction, this integration was accompanied by efforts to reverse over three decades of Italian cultural influence and to assert a singular Hellenic identity. Central to this agenda was the Doxiadis Report—commissioned by the Greek Ministry for Reconstruction—which defined cultural policy as a process of restoring the islands' "true" Greek essence, in deliberate opposition to the Fascist Italian vision that emphasized Roman, medieval, and Renaissance legacies to assert Italian sovereignty. While the Greek state's critique of Italian heritage policy was not unfounded, its countermeasures were likewise rooted in a teleological narrative of Greek continuity, leaving little space for the archipelago's Ottoman and Sephardic Jewish past.

Greek authorities pursued policies of re-Hellenization: purging Italian symbols, realigning education, and privileging ancient and Byzantine heritage. This was not only a reaction to Italian colonialism but also a strategic assertion of national sovereignty amid Cold War tensions and domestic instability. Over time, tourism necessitated a selective acknowledgment of Rhodes' cosmopolitan past—particularly its Islamic heritage—culminating in the city's 1988 UNESCO designation. However, Jewish memory remains marginalized, revealing the limits of this pluralist turn.

Ultimately, the paper argues that both Italian and Greek regimes instrumentalized heritage to construct legitimizing national narratives. A truly decolonial approach would embrace the Dodecanese's layered, contingent history, advancing a more inclusive and democratic understanding of cultural identity.

On 31 March 1947, official ceremonies marked the transfer of power over the Dodecanese from the British to the Greek military administrations.[1] This was the first time the Eastern Mediterranean archipelago, long ruled by Italy (1912-1943) and then briefly by Germany during the latter phase of World War II (1943-1945), would ever integrate the modern Hellenic state. And yet that transition was broadly perceived as a *retrocession*, given that the great majority of the islands' population was Hellenophone and Orthodox Christian. That very same year, as if to better enshrine this specific interpretation, the Greek Ministry for Reconstruction, published, under the direction of Konstantinos Doxiadis, a four-volume report identifying the urgent priorities and the perimeter and meaning of its action in the Dodecanese. Aside from the fact that the assumption of postwar reconstruction responsibilities is in itself an act of sovereignty, the Doxiadis report, from its opening lines, defines its mission as one of restoring the historical record about, and therefore genuine identity of, this

1 Robert Holland and Diana Markides, *The British and the Hellenes. Struggles for Mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 210.

"new and yet so ancient Greek land."[1] All of the information contained in this document, detailed, substantiated and even nuanced as it is, is therefore mobilized in support of the political intention to offset over thirty years of Italianization and dehellenization of the islands.

A thorough examination of all the topics -economic, legal, political- covered in the Doxiadis report would require an extended analysis. What is being proposed here instead, is to focus on how it informed Greek official reactions to Italian cultural heritage policies in the Dodecanese, as these were taken to be touching directly the history, and therefore identity, of the archipelago. Focusing specifically on the island of Rhodes, the capital of the archipelago, it will be argued that the Greek diagnosis of the purpose of these Italian policies is not, on the whole, incorrect. However, its firm rooting into a semantics of national restoration instead of one of decolonial intervention leaves little room for the articulation of more plural alternatives, inclusive, for example, of the Muslim and Jewish legacy of Rhodes.

*The incorporation of the Dodecanese in 1947 marked the end of a period during which, in less than forty years, the archipelago had experienced four different administrations: Ottoman until 1912, two different forms of Italian rule -liberal until 1923 and fascist until 1943- German until 1945 and British until 1947. The islands had by then suffered all the consequences of the Second World War, including destitution, famine, combat and reprisals on the part of the occupiers also directed against the Italian forces when the latter sided with the Allies after the armistice of Cassibile.[2] More tragically even, the entire Jewish community of the Dodecanese, located for the most part in the main island of Rhodes, with a few families in that of Kos, had been sent to the Nazi death camps.[3] As for the country to which the Dodecanese was annexed, Greece, it had not only undergone a very comparable level of destruction but in addition found itself, in 1947, in the middle of a Civil War between nationalist and communist forces; it is indeed often argued that Britain's cession of the Dodecanese to Greece was meant to boost the legitimacy of the former, in control of the government in Athens.[4] The nationalist vigilance of the Greek authorities that took over the administration of the archipelago was thus particularly heightened, and inspired initiatives to both reverse the cultural policies of the former Italian rulers of the Dodecanese and prevent a potential communist infiltration. On a broader geopolitical scale, the display of national intransigeance was also addressed to the Republic of Turkey. Indeed, the relations between the two neighbors, officially allies in the context of the Cold War, were being gradually strained over the Cyprus issue and competing sovereign claims in the Aegean Sea.

Several highly symbolic measures were immediately implemented to illustrate the priorities of the Greek state. The Italian families, including Greek Orthodox women who had married Italian men and converted to Catholicism, were forced to emigrate to Italy.[5] Other local collaborators, or persons suspected to have colluded with the fascist occupiers, including the Archbishop of Rhodes, were purged from their positions.[6] School curricula were once more aligned with the directives of the Greek Ministry of Religious Affairs and Education. Unperturbed by the enduring presence of a small Muslim and Turkish-speaking community on the island of Rhodes, the Greek administration thus embarked on a large-scale effort to re-Hellenize the islands. This meant that it had to overturn Italian efforts at cultural assimilation, of which Greek authorities had been made amply aware, by their consul, members of the Dodecanesian diaspora, indeed by the raucous advertising of the archipelago by the Fascists themselves as the *Isole Italiane dell'Egeo*.

After a discussion with the commander of the Greek Military Mission in the Dodecanese, Brigadier Christodoulos Tsigantes, influential architect and urban planner Konstantinos Doxiadis, obtained from the Greek Ministry for Reconstruction, where he was serving as undersecretary, the setting up of a team tasked with offering a holistic assessment of the situation in the Dodecanese. Illustrating the sense of urgency motivating Greek authorities is the fact that the fifteen-member team disembarked in Rhodes on 5 November 1946, a whole five months before the official transfer of power and completed its study by January 1947. This haste was also meant to be a show of competence on the part of the Greek administration:

> "a demonstration to the Dodecanesian people and a proof to the other peoples, that Greece is able to administer her own home and provide to her people the benefits of civilization, from which they had been denied by others for centuries."[7]

Such displays of administrative competence are inseparable, of course, from claims to the legitimacy of territorial sovereignty, addressed both domestically and internationally. As mentioned before, the observations and recommendations of the scientific team were supposed to be holistic in nature, simultaneously addressing, that is, the economic, financial, administrative, urban as well as cultural challenges facing the Dodecanese. Yet one focal point of interest for the Greek administration, thus far rather neglected by historiography, was the question of cultural heritage.

From a cultural perspective, Doxiadis begins with a clear distinction between "the reputation of the Dodecanese," which he opposes, in two sections bearing these very titles, to "the truth about the Dodecanese." What does the reputation of the archipelago say, he asks rhetorically?

> "that the monuments [therein] are all from the Medieval Ages and the Renaissance, Italian monuments that is, illustrative of the Italian spirit, which created civilization and brought it to the Mediterranean. How easily one perceives here the infamous Nazi-Fascist claim, characteristic of domineering nations that purport to be civilizing everything and everyone."[8]

In contrast to this reputation, the truth, Doxiadis proceeds to explain, is that in the Dodecanese one will find monuments from all the civilizations, which have ruled over the archipelago in the last two thousand and five hundred years, and that most of these testify to the Greek essence of these islands, from the "Classical and Pagan" to the "Byzantine" times. However, there is, writes Doxiadis, the real danger that the countless restorations to which the Italians proceeded may have altered the original meaning and purpose of most ancient and medieval monuments.[9] So what is to be done? Doxiadis' reply is straightforward: "We will do exactly the opposite of what the Italians did."[10]

1 K. A. Doxiadis (ed.), *Δωδεκάνησος. Τετράτομος μελέτη του υπουργείου ανοικοδομήσεως και συνεργατών του*, Greek Ministry for Reconstruction, Athens, 1947, p. 1.

2 Ettore Vittorini, *Isole dimenticate. Il Dodecaneso da Giolitti al massacro del 1943*, Florence, Le Lettere, 2002, pp. 71-72.

3 Anthony McElligott, *The Last Transport. The Holocaust in the Eastern Mediterranean*, London, Bloomsbury, 2024.

4 Holland and Markides, *The British and the Hellenes*, p. 201.

5 Despina-Georgia Konstantinakou, "The Expulsion of the Italian Community of Greece and the Politics of Resettlement, 1944-1952," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 55(2), 2018, pp. 316-338.

6 Holland and Markides, *The British and the Hellenes*, p. 206.

7 Doxiadis, *Δωδεκάνησος*, p. 5.

8 Doxiadis, *Δωδεκάνησος*, p. 11.

9 Doxiadis, *Δωδεκάνησος*, p. 12.

10 Doxiadis, *Δωδεκάνησος*, p. 15.

In June 1947, soon after the Greek authorities took over the administration of the Dodecanese, Ioannis Kondos, succeeding to Luigi Morricone, assumed the duties of "ephor" of Antiquities. Ever since, the *ephoreia* of Antiquities has successfully pursued its own excavations and excavations undertaken before its establishment, notably that in the Classical and Hellenistic city of Rhodes, the sanctuary of Demeter, the Parthenon, the Asklepion, the Ptolemaion and the temple of Isis (Iseion).[11] Expectedly, most of the work of the *ephoreia* focused on ancient and medieval Greek, or Byzantine, vestiges. Illustrating this orientation is the fact that one of the very first reports published by the *ephoreia* was that on the Hippodamian plan of Rhodes, a telling testimony to the Hellenic *foundations* of that ancient city. To this day, it is hard to find on the *ephoreia*'s website explicit references to a past that is not in some sense Greek.[12]

The concern to reassert the archipelago's Greek past against decades of Italian dehellenization policies is echoed in much of the historiography on the Dodecanese. Most authors will acknowledge the significant work done by Italian archaeologists, credited among other things with excavating and developing the sites of the triad of the ancient city-states of Lindos, Kameiros and Rhodes.[13] But they also point out that such Italian archaeologists and historians, and especially their popularizers, advertised the idea that the Dodecanese lived its brightest times when it was under some form of "Italian" rule: of the Romans, the Maritime Republics or of the Knights of St. John.[14] Hence the predilection of Italian scientists for that latter period (1309-1522), during which the imposing Palace of the Grand Master of the Knights and the Medieval City of Rhodes were constructed. Indeed, the very name of the first Italian Historical and Archaeological Institute created in the archipelago in 1928 included the acronym "FERT," the motto of the House of Savoy, sometimes translated as 'Fortitudo Eius Rhodum Tenuit' -His Strength Conquered Rhodes.[15] This was a reference to Amadeus V, Count of Savoy, who in 1315 successfully held Rhodes against the Turks. According to Italian governor Mario Lago, the mission of the Institute was first and foremost to promote studies relative to the "history of Italian expansion in the Levant."[16] Equally noted by Greek historiography is the Italians' interest for Muslim monuments as their promotion was designed, it is argued, to further challenge the Hellenic identity of the islands. "How intentionally," Doxiadis writes, "were the Turkish monuments and minarets, etc. preserved to give the impression that a considerable proportion of the local population is Turkish, when the latter never amounted to more than a twentieth of the Greek inhabitants."[17] Such would not be the priority of the newly established *ephoreia* of Antiquities.

11 Melina Filimonos-Tsopotou and Toula Marketou, "Les fouilles grecques," in Anne Coulié and Melina Filimonos-Tsipotou (eds.), *Rhodes : une île grecque aux portes de l'Orient, XV^e-V^e siècle avant J.-C.*, Paris, musée du Louvre, 2014, pp. 184-185.

12 The website of the *ephoreia* can be found at: https://efadod.gr/

13 Ch. I. Papachristodoulou, *Ιστορία της Ρόδου. Από τους Προϊστορικούς χρόνους έως την ενσωμάτωση της Δωδεκανήσου (1948)*, Athens, Municipality of Rhodes-Stegi Grammaton kai technon Dodekanisou, 1994, p. 561.

14 Zacharis N. Tsirpanlis, *Ιταλοκρατία στα Δωδεκάνησα, 1912-1943. Αλλοτρίωση του ανθρώπου και του περιβάλλοντος*, Rhodes, Zete Publications, 1998, p. 82.

15 Luca Orlandi, "Searching for 'Italianità' in the Dodecanese Islands (1912-1943). Some Considerations on Art, Architecture and Archaeology through the Works of Hermes Balducci," in Beatrice Falcucci, Emanuele Giusti and Davide Trentacoste (eds), *Rereading Travellers to the East. Shaping Identities and Building the Nation in Post-Unification Italy*, Florence, Firenze University Press, 2022, p. 130.

16 Filippo Marco Espinoza, 'Fare gli Italiani dell'Egeo: Il Dodecaneso dall'Impero ottomano all'Impero del fascismo', Trento, Università degli Studi di Trento, unpublished PhD dissertation, 2017, p. 173, footnote 122.

17 Doxiadis, *Δωδεκάνησος*, P. 14.

One Italian legacy Greek authorities would not seek to erase however, is tourism development. As part of its project of using the Dodecanese as an instrument of cultural hegemony in the Levant -or "soft power," one might anachronistically venture-, the fascist administration, particularly under the rule of Governor Mario Lago (1923-1936), had gone at great lengths to make the archipelago attractive for international tourists.[18] This effort, positively acknowledged by Greek historians and pursued from the late 1940s onwards by an administration in financial straits, would eventually lead the *ephoreia*, once it became sensitized to the commercial merits of 'exoticizing' the Dodecanese, to nuance the purely 'Hellenic' orientation of its cultural management policy.[19] Indeed, as Pierre Sintès argues, from the 1970s onwards, the promotion of the island's layered cultural past, particularly visible in the island of Rhodes, combining Greek Antiquities, Frankish castles and Ottoman mosques, became more overtly assumed. This proclivity, illustrated by the renovation of the Süleymaniye mosque in the 1990s, was consolidated after the Old Town of Rhodes was officially declared a UNESCO world heritage city in 1988. The investment seems to have paid off: by the early 2000s: "the entire Dodecanese [was] welcom[ing] 20% of [Greece's] room nights every year, Lindos became the country's second most visited site after the Parthenon and the Old Town of Rhodes attracted 1250000 tourists every year."[20]

This cosmopolitan turn, in the official cultural heritage management, remains however partial and selective. If the great mosques of Rhodes have been rehabilitated, they were also decommissioned and can now only be visited as museums. Smaller edifices, including fourteen byzantine churches repurposed as mosques under the Ottomans, are now officially designated by their original Christian names.[21] If, despite this, sporadic references are made to the islands' Islamic past, this is not the case for the rich Jewish legacy in Rhodes, and to a lesser extent Kos. Jewish monuments, such as the Kahal Shalom Synagogue in Rhodes, the oldest in Greece built in 1577, receive no government funding and depend on private patronage and European Union funding for their maintenance.[22] References to other constructions remain incomplete: hence while the Medieval origins of the Hospice of St. Catherine are properly evoked, nothing is said of the fact that in the 1920s and 1930s it hosted a regionally influential Rabbinical College.[23] This silence over the Old Town's Jewish past has to do, as Pierre Sintès has shown, with the seizure by local Greeks of the houses and property left by the Sephardim who were almost all murdered in the Nazi death camps. This appropriation was legalized on account of the rule according to which only Greek nationals can own property in areas bordering foreign -Turkish in this instance- areas; and, of course, the few Rhodian (Rodesli) Holocaust survivors never had been Greek citizens.[24] But the mere evocation of that past ownership is perceived as potentially de-legitimizing the current one.

18 Valerie McGuire, *Italy's Sea: Empire and Nation in the Mediterranean, 1895-1945*, Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2020, pp. 96-109.

19 For the acknowledgment in Greek historiography of the merits of Italian tourism development, see Papachristodoulou, *Ιστορία της Ρόδου*, pp. 560-561.

20 Pierre Sintès, "A qui Rhodes? Discours d'appropriation et mise en valeur touristique dans la vielle ville de Rhodes (Grèce)," in Maria Gravari-Barbas, Laurent Bourdeau and Mike Robinson (eds), *Tourisme et patrimoine mondial*, Québec, Presses de l'Université de Laval, 2012, p. 186.

21 Sintès, "A qui Rhodes?" p. 188. See also Georgios Karatzas, "On the Physical and Discursive Articulation of the Heritage Space of the City of Rhodes (1912-1967)," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 28(1), 2019, p. 41.

22 Pierre Sintès, "Retrouver Rhodes," *Teoros*, 29(1), 2010, p. 49.

23 Sintes, "A qui Rhodes?" p. 189.

24 Sintes, "A qui Rhodes?" p. 189.

In tracing their official cultural heritage management policy, opposed as it was meant to be to Italian falsifications of history, Greek authorities may have overcorrected. Indeed, their exclusive promotion of the islands' Hellenic legacy, judiciously sprinkled with "Oriental" exotica, has, as a result, occulted the rich layering of cultures that made the archipelago such a unique place, one of the very last enclaves -with its enduring Muslim community- of the Mediterranean's cosmopolitan, pre-national, past. This overcorrection may be the result, and this is the issue we now have to turn to, of a misapprehension of the conception and use of history that motivated Italian cultural heritage management. The heritage policy implemented by Greek authorities once they took over the administration of the Dodecanese was driven by a rather teleological understanding of history whereby the current Hellenic identity of the islands was already manifest in their distant past. This was a purposefully linear narrative, which they believed they were opposing to an equally unidirectional representation of the archipelago as having always been, in some sense, "Italian." The reality of the fascist "politics of time," or *chronopolitics* may have been, however, more complex.

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Indeed, Italian officials did not content themselves with restoring such medieval vestiges that would allegedly confer a degree of venerability to their sovereign claims over the islands. Rather, they incorporated these ruins into an ambitious modern urban planning with a view to not just evoking the past but conjuring it in the present and in the process obliterating the distance between old and new. The implication of this fascist chronopolitics -inspired as it was by a characteristically Nietzschean conception of 'monumental' history- was simple: the Italian presence in the Dodecanese should not simply be considered as ancient; it was eternal.[25] In addition, such high-handed handling of the past and its fragments was not meant to crudely legitimize Italy's sovereign claims against those of Greek irredentists; interlocked with an energetic touristic policy, it was to serve as a display, for the whole world to see, of the technological feats and cultural dynamism of fascism. Hence, in terms interestingly similar to the ones later used by Doxiadis and cited earlier in this paper, Italian Governor Lago, prefacing a tourist guide for the Dodecanese, shared his intention to show that "modern Italy knows how to organize a country and generate wealth just like all the great Western powers."[26]

It is undeniable that Italian authorities, especially under Fascism, were obsessively seeking to assert the Italian identity of the islands, which they officially rechristened *Isole Italiane dell'Egeo*. But this they did with a complete disregard for conventional chronology, indeed by creatively embracing anachronism. Surely, and as mentioned before, Italian archaeologists conducted work compatible with conventional scientific protocols. But in the 'official mind' of their administration, the anastylosis of ancient and medieval monuments was never simply meant to unearth, preserve and document the past, Italian as they may have believed it to have been. Blended with the erection of new buildings purposefully reminiscent in their style of the maritime republics, it became part of a concerted effort to establish a coevalness between past and present; the scale of the islands' Italianness was eternity. The indefatigable Governor Mario Lago (1923-1936) had his architects, chief among whom Florestano di Fausto, oversee the construction of buildings meant to seamlessly blend with the medieval edifices of the Old Town.[27] Exemplary in this vein was the Palazzo del Governo -the Governor's residence and offices-, the style of which was an unambiguous reference to the Palazzo Ducale in Venice, signifying "Italy's return as a thalassocracy or a maritime empire."[28] Perhaps even more illustrative of the chronopolitics at play in this fascist combination of cultural heritage management and urban planning was the restoration, overseen in 1937-1940, by Vittorino Mesturino, of the Palace of the Grand Master of the Knights of Rhodes, where Governor Cesare Maria de Vecchi di Val Cismon, Lago's successor, had relocated his headquarters. This restoration presented a creative, and very political, conflation of time as Roman vestiges, such as mosaics from the island of Kos, were brought in to decorate a Gothic medieval structure in Rhodes.[29] The same plastic irreverence can be seen in the -very intrusive and since then much decried- restoration of the acropolis of Lindos in 1937, a true palimpsest of the traces left by all of the successive rulers of the island of Rhodes.[30]

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The past is invoked to justify the present. In that sense, it is an undertaking that cannot but be political, particularly, one might add, when it hides that intention behind scientific language and protocols. Remembered, celebrated, reinterpreted or willfully ignored and neglected, the rich cultural heritage of the Dodecanese is no exception to that rule and has served in recent times to legitimize competing, yet chronologically successive, sovereign claims in the Eastern Mediterranean. Noteworthy in this confrontation between the Italian and Greek handling of that past is the difference not only in the meaning each ascribe to it but in the manner in which they invoke it; it is a difference of both 'truth and method' to paraphrase Gadamer. On the Italian side, the past is "malleable material at one's disposal for the present"[31]; on the Greek side, the past is the "origin" of a teleology leading seamlessly to the Hellenic present.[32] Neither, not the "creative," nor the "scholarly," are concerned with nuance, and for that reason both are, intentionally if not overtly, partial. The alternative could be to simply forgo coherence, in its esthetic (Italian) or narrative (Greek) forms, and consider the contingency at work in the writing of the Dodecanesian palimpsest. This would entail not only properly indexing the archipelago's heritage in the full diversity of its material manifestations, but also referencing the multiple, chronologically successive, meanings ascribed to the latter. The work required for this would be decolonial, that is, a work not only critical of the Italian colonial legacy, but attentive to the Western colonial lineages of Greek nationalism and its handling of the Dodecanesian past.[33] This more inclusive consideration of the archipelago's cultural legacy would be both scientifically heuristic and politically more democratic for the islands' minorities, past, present and future.

25 Scott Jenkins, "Nietzsche's Use of Monumental History," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 45(2), 2014, pp. 169-181.
26 Mario Lago, "Prefazione," in Touring Club Milano, *Rodi e le minori isole italiane dell'Egeo*, Milano, 1930, p. 3.
27 Karatzas, "On the Physical and Discursive Articulation," p. 35.
28 Alexis Rappas, "The Fascist Temptation: British and Italian Imperial Entanglements in the Eastern Mediterranean," *Contemporary European History*, 33(2), 2024, p. 663.
29 Karatzas, "On the Physical and Discursive Articulation," pp. 38-39.
30 Matteo d'Agunto and Melina Filimonos-Tsopotou, "Les fouilles italiennes à Rhodes," in Anne Coulié and Melina Filimonos-Tsipotou (eds.), *Rhodes : une île grecque aux portes de l'Orient, XV^e-V^e siècle avant J.-C.*, Paris, musée du Louvre, 2014, p. 54.
31 Fernando Esposito and Svein Reichardt, "Revolution and Eternity. Introductory Remarks on Fascist Temporalities," *Journal of Modern European History*, 13(1), 2015, pp. 39-40.
32 For the "origin" as "beginning which is a complete explanation," see Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, New York, Vintage Books, 1953 (translation of a French posthumous publication, 1949), p. 30.
33 This last thought is inspired by the collective Decolonize Hellas, see: https://decolonizehellas.org/en/out-thinking/

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The Jewish Communities of Rhodes and Kos

A Transnational Community between Ottoman Collapse and the Italian Empire

The origins of the Jewish communities of Rhodes and Kos extend back into antiquity. Records of a small settlement in the islands occur as early as the first century BC. The small community of Greek-speaking Romaniote Jews was integral to commerce in the life of the Byzantine Mediterranean. After Ottoman empire capture of the islands in 1522, the community changed shape dramatically as the Aegean islands began to absorb the diaspora of Jews expelled by the Spanish sovereigns. The Jews from Spain brought with them a new Judeo-Spanish language, Ladino, as well as the religious rites of Sephardim. By the turn of the century, the Jewish community was almost one-quarter of the local population in the town of the port of Rhodes. [1]

Globalization and the draw of new sources of wealth and labor led the community to migrate in large numbers beginning at the turn of the century. Yet the population decline was not so disruptive to the fabric of the community when one also accounts for kinship patterns as well as the way patterns of migration established abroad new communities of Rhodes and Kos originating Jews, often called *Rhodeslis*.[2] It was common practice for members of the Jewish community to return home to choose a spouse from their extended family (also called endogamy), thus leading to the legendary so-called "bride bazaars" when men returned to the shores of the island to choose a spouse. Memories and stories of the islands followed community members abroad and a growing sense of the islands as storied 'home' paralleled their greater mobility throughout the world.

Rhodesli communities were therefore already a transnational community and established in pockets from Los Angeles to the Belgian Congo when the Italian state took the islands by fiat in 1912 from a weakening Ottoman empire. The Italian period has commonly been narrated as a 'golden age' in which the Italian investment into rebuilding Rhodes and supported the welfare of the Jewish community. Yet the Italian period was to prove the last phase of a Jewish minority in Rhodes and Kos. In 1944, during the Nazi occupation of the islands, the last remaining Jewish residents in the islands (about 1800 persons) were deported to concentration camps in Poland. There were only 100 survivors from the camps and none of them returned to the islands after the war. The diaspora of the Jewish community from the islands has ultimately engendered their survival into the twenty-first century but their past in the islands continues to be debated.

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2 Hirschon, Renee, "Jews from Rhodes in Central and South Africa" in *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World*, Vol II, Melvin Ember, ed. (New York: Springer, 2007), p. 925-934; Keretz Yitzchak. "The Migration of Rhodian Jews to Africa and the Americas, 1900-1914: The Beginning of New Sephardic Communities." In *Patterns of Migration, 1850-1914: Proceedings of the International Academic Conference*, Aubrey Newman and Stephen Massil, eds. (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England and the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College, London, 1996).



Figure 1: Jewish girls' school, the Alliance Israelite Universelle, Rhodes, early 20th century.

The Jewish communities of Rhodes and Kos today are but a *memento mori* of an Ottoman past in the islands—almost solely constituted by monuments that remember the community's deportation and destruction during the Second World War. The diaspora gathers in their storied homeland on the anniversary of the deportation, July 20th, to remember the loss of their community. But the permanent year-round community is miniscule and does not constitute a recognized minority (unlike the Turkish community). The multi-ethnic, Ottoman past in the islands is hawked to visitors through the trappings of contemporary mass tourism. The old Jewish quarter in the two islands, called the *Djuderia*, has become another Greek neighborhood with Greek toponymy and Greeks residing in the old Jewish houses, a transformation that reflects a delicate legal situation. The Jewish community was not only not Greek speaking in modern times, but because of the Italian empire's rule of the islands (1912-1943), it was also never at any point part of the Greek nation and *Rhodeslis* have never held Greek nationality. Since the islands were not officially part of Greece at the time of the Second World War, the Jewish community of the islands has not had entitlement to the Greek state's reparations to survivors of the Holocaust.[1]

1 Rhodes and Kos fell outside of the purview of the official Organization for the Welfare and Reparation of Israelites of Greece (Οργανισμός Περιθάλψεως και Αποκατάστασης Ισραηλιτών Ελλάδος). Alexis Rappas, "Memory and Property in Insular Spaces: The Case of Postcolonial Rhodes" Working Paper presented at "Islands in the Mediterranean: New Theorisations of Insularity" European University Institute, Florence, Italy, May 2014. See Esther Fintz-Menasce, *Buio nell'Isola*, for a description of the Jewish quarter, the Juderia, has been changed entirely to Greek toponymy with little trace of the Jewish quarter as it once was, p. 141-146.

Like all sites of the Holocaust in Europe, questions remain about how the horror of the deportations could occur, but in the case of the Jewish communities of Rhodes and Kos, such questions are complicated by further ones about questions of the community's identity, and how their experience during their last resident phase in the islands during Italian occupation impacted them during the Holocaust, and after. From 1912 until 1943, the Italian empire controlled the islands as one of their overseas colonies during which time a robust Italian commitment to expansion and investment led the Rhodes Jewish community into an important relationship with the Italian state. The most notable members of the community were often imagined by the Italian government as a key ally in their expansion into the Levant; yet later, after Italy adopted an Anti-Semitic position, began a process of de-naturalization and persecution that foreshadowed the community's demise during Nazi occupation of the Aegean. These facts have only recently begun to be documented and discussed. In the field of Italian history, the islands remain marginal to the history of Italian colonialism under both the Liberal and Fascist states. Italy's colonial interests are still remembered as primarily focused on Africa, and though new global approaches continue to widen this frame, the study of Italian empire remains marginal to European history.[2] Most Greek language history follows a similar pattern and while written from the perspective of the Greek national narrative barely touches upon the Jewish communities.

A new generation of research as well as the opening of new archives has however drawn increasing attention to the Jewish community encouraging a fresh interrogation of the available sources. In addition to increasing availability of the Greek State Archives of the Dodecanese Prefecture (**Γενικα Αρχείων του Κράτους του Δοδεκανεσου**), an entirely new body of sources was catalogued in 2013. The surveillance files of the Carabinieri—the military arm of the Italian police—links the Italian presence in the islands directly to Mussolini's regime of surveillance, and suggests the existence of a para-state, one beyond the local colonial Italian administration, which surveilled both the islands inhabitants as well as, somewhat paradoxically, the ruling Italian administration. With over 140,000 documents dedicated exclusively to the islands' inhabitants, which numbered 120,000 at the time of the Italian rule, the documentation testifies to the gross level of surveillance of the Fascist state. The existence of the archive speaks scholarly calls to revisit the myth of the 'good Italian', or the soft-pedalling of the Fascist dictatorship under Mussolini.[3] The still very recent cataloguing of these documents also testifies to the challenge that the local community in the islands still faces in confronting the period of Italian occupation.[4]

Most of the surveillance documents concern the Greek community, the clear ethnic majority in the islands at the time of Italian rule. Yet researchers have also combed the documentation to find important records about the Jewish community and have further scrutinized the 1943-44 period when the abrupt collapse of Mussolini's dictatorship and the Italian armistice with the allies led to Nazi invasion and control of the islands. In their recent book, Italian researcher, Marco Clementi, and head archivist of the Greek national archives of the Dodecanese, Ireni Toliou, examine how the Italian Anti-Semitic Legislation of 1938 inaugurated a process of labeling and persecuting the Jewish

2 Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller, eds. *Italian Colonialism* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

3 See Paul Corner, "Whatever Happened to Dictatorship?" *Journal of Modern History* (74:2) 2006, 325-351. For a recent work of scholarship that underscores the level of surveillance and imprisonment of Mussolini's dictatorship, see Michael Ebner, *Ordinary Violence under Mussolini* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

4 For almost six decades after the end of the war these documents sat untouched in the municipality of Rhodes; they were finally partially catalogued in 2014.

communities of Rhodes and Kos that would be exacerbated during the deportations of July 1944.[5] The authors demonstrate that the vestiges of the Fascist administration in the islands was still intact at the time of the deportations and indicate potential collaboration between the Italian military and the Nazi occupying forces regarding the labeling and collecting of the community in July of 1944. Their argument supports earlier research demonstrating that following the 1943 armistice a part of the Italian administration remained loyal to Mussolini's national-socialist republic of Salò.[6] This new research makes clear that if the Jews of Rhodes and Kos must from here forward to be included in the history of Jews in Greece (as they have not often been previously), that they also need to be included within the Italian history of the Holocaust.

Within the wider frame of reconsidering Italian empire, the history of the Jewish community of Rhodes and Kos also offer an important lens onto Fascist Italy's relationship to ideologies of race and Anti-Semitism. One challenge of placing the Jewish communities of Rhodes and Kos within the Italian history of Fascist dictatorship, however, is the positive collective narrative of the Italians that has remained with the Rhodesli survivors and its diaspora. Memoirs by survivors of the deportations, some historical accounts and local history insist upon the Italian rule in the islands as a 'golden age' during which the community thrived and prospered.[7] In fact, under Italian rule, the population numbers of the community continued to dwindle with emigration an increasing fact of life. Yet memoirs and histories single out the quality—and indeed, culture—of Italian rule as marking the period of Italian rule. More than one scholar has analyzed the enduring presence of popular stereotypes about Italians and Aegean natives as 'one face, one race' ('*una faccia, una razza*') within collective narratives about Italian occupation in the Dodecanese.[8] But these studies have always theorized the presence of such "nostalgia" through the lens of Greek national identity, and have variously speculated about the ways positive memories of the Italians may imply a critique of the Greek nation-state and Greek national identity, and have overlooked what such stereotypes may reveal about local perceptions of Italian rule. To also include the Jewish community's experience in the historical record of the islands, as well as within debates about memory and a 'postcolonial'

5 Marco Clementi and Ireni Toliou, *Gli ultimi ebrei di Rodi: Leggi raziali e deportazioni nel Dodecaneso italiano, 1938-1948* (Roma: DerriveApprodi, 2015).

6 Luca Pignataro, *Il Dodecaneso italiano, 1912-47*. Chieti: Solfanelli, 2011. See also, Luca Pignataro, "The Italian islands in the Aegean from 8 September 1943 to the end of World War II" *Clio: rivista trimestrale di studi storici* 37:3 (2001): 465-552.

7 Survivors of the period have completed a number of memoirs and works of history. The following texts all touch upon the Italian period in the islands though to greater and lesser degrees. Esther Fintz Menasce, *Gli Ebrei a Rodi* (Milan: Guerrini, 1991); Hizkia M. Franco, *The Jewish martyrs of Rhodes and Cos;* translated from the original French by Joseph Franco (Zimbabwe: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994); Haham Solomon Gaon and Mitchell Serels, eds. *Del Fuego, Sephardim and the Holocaust* (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1995); Lévy, Isaac Jack. *Jewish Rhodes: a lost culture* (Berkeley: Magnes Museum, 1998); Levy, Rebecca Amato. *I remember Rhodes* (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press for Sephardic House at Congregation Shearith Israel, 1987); Laura Varon, *The Juderia: a Holocaust survivor's tribute to the Jewish community of Rhodes* (Westport: Praeger, 1999).

8 The presence of these stereotypes among the Greek community has been interpreted in myriad ways. For Nicholas Doumanis, positive memories of the Italian period offer an implicit critique of the Greek national narrative, and point to dissatisfaction with the Greek nation-state. Nicholas Doumanis, *Myth and Memory in the Mediterranean: Remembering Fascist Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997). For Michael Herzfeld, these myths can be located within practices of "self-stereotyping", e.g., the Greek proclivity to adopt the label of an unruly people that requires the authoritarian rule of dictatorship. Yet neither of these scholars address the history of the Jewish community, and neglect the fact that the 'good Italian' also defines, to some extent, their memory of the interwar period. Michael Herzfeld, "The Horns of the Mediterraneanist Dilemma" *American Ethnologist* 11:3 (1984), 439-454. Yet neither scholar takes into account the way the nostalgia and stereotypes of Italian familiarity with the Aegean natives cut across the divides of communal narratives.



Figure 2: B'nai B'rith meeting in the Notrica Foundation building 1930.

afterlife, stands to reveal a fuller picture of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean region in its last cosmopolitan phase before the preeminence of the nation-state.

The purpose of this article is to provide a short introduction to the community's experience under Italian imperial rule and to add some further perspectives to these new discussions about the community's experience during the Second World War by touching on their sense of belonging and identity to the Italian state prior to the Nazi occupation. The article describes how the community's own experiences of education, culture, trade, and not least, global migration, closely aligned with Italian policies of expansion at the time. It reconsiders the issue of the community's positive memories by describing the Italian citizenship which came about as a result of the collapse of the Ottoman empire and the rise of the Greek and Turkish nation-states in the Aegean.

The Jewish communities of Rhodes and Kos at the frontier of Italy's Mediterranean expansion, 1912-24

Italy's commitment to secure an empire in the Mediterranean had roots as far back as the Italian national unification. A significant Italian population was already established in Tunisia (including a large Jewish community originally from Livorno) by the time of the unification of the peninsula. Italy's first colonial campaigns were in East Africa at the end of the nineteenth century, and largely aimed at establishing a resettlement colony that could help resolve a mass unemployment problem and stem the massive tides of emigration toward North and South America. Yet the Mediterranean, where the peninsula had historically derived both its wealth and culture, remained an undisputed objective of Italian expansion, and in 1911, anticipating the collapse of the Ottoman empire, Italy

invaded the North African provinces of Misurata and Cirenaica. These regions were eventually annexed as Libya, inaugurating what was to prove a thirty-year commitment to colonial conquest and state-building in North Africa, also known as Italy's 'fourth shore' among nationalists. Rhodes and the other Aegean islands were soon, too, to play a very important role in Italian expansion, and at the end of the First World War, were defined as promoting an Italian a 'sphere of influence' in the eastern Mediterranean.



Figure 3: Jewish boys' elementary school, Scuole Israelitiche Italiane (former Alliance Israelite Universelle), Rhodes, June 1936.

The taking of Rhodes and the other the Aegean islands was a byproduct of the Italian war against the Turks for Libya (1911-12), but it was instantly a success story for the nationalists that had championed Italian expansion as a remedy for national disillusionment caused by widespread poverty and emigration.[9] As the war for Libya had dragged on for months—well beyond what the Italian nationalists had anticipated and promised the Italian population, with Turkish reprisals unrelenting—the Italian government determined it should take another section of Turkish territory to force the Ottoman Porte to sign a treaty of peace over North Africa. Italy succeeded in convincing its Austro-Hungarian and German allies of the Triple Alliance that the Dodecanese islands were so far to the east that they could not be considered part of the Balkans. In the spring of 1912, the Italian army swept across Rhodes and other Aegean islands while encountering resistance only from the Turkish rulers. Many Greeks allegedly fought alongside the Italian army while believing that they had come to 'liberate' them from Turkish rule.

At the time of the Italian landing, under the influence of the Young Turks, the Ottoman Porte had begun to revoke the special 'privileges' and autonomy that the islands had enjoyed since 1821.[10] The Italian arrival in the islands was widely seen as a 'liberation' of the islands from Turkish rule, and the presumed reinstatement of the 'privileges' (freedom from Ottoman taxation) was heralded by the Orthodox community as proof of the Italian army's good intentions. But when the Italian administration also turned to opening a night school in Rhodes for teaching the Italian language, none of the Greek Orthodox community voluntarily enrolled in Italian language night classes. Their disdain was in definite contrast with a handful of Turks, but especially the Jewish community in the island, which greeted this initiative with enthusiasm.[11] Around the corner from the old Synagogue of Rhodes a monument (which still stands today) was erected in homage the first governor of the islands. In Italian, it is written, "Al Generale Giovanni Ameglio, La Comunità Israelite Riconoscente" (1913), a message of thanks to the general that led the conquest of the islands and that acted as the first Italian governor of Rhodes. The monument testifies that upon the Italian army's arrival in 1912, the Italian administration immediately established a positive relationship with the local Jewish community in the island.[12]

After an initial treaty of peace with the Ottoman empire over Libya and the Aegean, Italy obtained a further promise that it might retain the islands, along with several other areas in the Balkans, in exchange for entering World War One against its former partners in the Triple Alliance (Pact of London, 1915).[13] The possibility of permanent sovereignty encouraged the Italian administration to secure a long-term Italian presence in the islands whatever the outcome of the war. The resident Italian government broke ground on projects to restore the Christian monuments in the islands—starting with the re-construction of the walls of old forted city built during the medieval crusader period in the island. But the capstone of its efforts to was the project to establish a district of Italian schools that promoted the diffusion of the Italian language among the native population of the islands. Projects to spread the Italian language spearheaded by organizations such as the *Dante Alighieri Society* had been successfully adopted in North and South America during the phase of

9 See Enrico Corradini, *Sopra le vie del nuovo impero: dalla Tunisia all'Egeo* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1912).

10 A small minority of the Dodecanese population had participated in the 1821 revolution against the Turks. The nascent Greek state chose, however, to trade the Dodecanese and integrate the much larger, and closer, island of Eubeoa. In exchange, the Dodecanese islands received special 'privileges' exempting them from most Ottoman taxation. Islands such as Simi meanwhile had enjoyed an independent status as insular territories of the Austro-Hapsburg empire.

11 For Italian education programs during the First World War see the General State Archives of the Prefecture of the Dodecanese (here forward, GAK DOD), Box K.6/Envelope 37/1915-17.

12 The novelty of this is all the greater when one reflects that the Jewish communities had lived well under Ottoman rule and that, unlike the Greek community, they did not have the same 'national' motivations to wish that the era of Turkish rule be brought an end.

13 In the initial treaty of peace with the Ottoman Porte, Italy promised to return the islands once the entire Turkish population had evacuated North Africa. This was a facile promise. Documents from the Historical Archive of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs show that Italy had every intention of retaining the islands for as long as possible. See Richard Bosworth, "Britain and Italy's Acquisition of the Dodecanese, 1912-15" *The Historical Journal*, 13:4 (1970), 683-705.

consolidating an imperial program through policies toward emigrants.[14] But now such institutions found new opportunity to promote Italian as an official *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean. Given the favorable relationship between the Jewish community and the Italian government, the administration was able to arrest control of the schools run by the *Alliance Israélite Universelle*.[15] One French-Catholic missionary in the island complained about the transformation of an *Alliance Israélite Universelle* into an Italian operation, but the Italian administration successfully enlisted the Vatican to obtain his consent and proceeded to sacked all the French teachers at the school and replace them with Italian ones.

In the early part of its rule, the Italian government also assessed numerous applications from Jewish persons for positions within the local administration. Requests were sometimes from natives of the islands, but other requests came from Jewish persons residing in the eastern Aegean---some even hailed originally from Italian merchant cities such as Livorno—who desired to be a part of the new Italian administration. Jewish applicants were highly competent tending to have a high level of education and possessing skills such as accounting while competent in four or even five languages of the Mediterranean, a fact that was not lost on the Italian government who often found positions for such Jewish persons in the nascent Italian administration.[16] When the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman empire gave Italy, now under the rule of the Fascist party, with an unforeseen opportunity to annex not just Rhodes but fourteen Southeastern Aegean islands--including the distant and tiny island of Kastellorizo—early seed initiatives to establish an Rhodes as a major outpost of Italian language and culture in the Mediterranean were no longer far-fetched.

Official annexation to Italy occurred in 1924 through the Second Lausanne Treaty resolving the end of the Ottoman empire and the Greco-Turkish War. While the annexation of the Dodecanese was hailed as a clear victory by Mussolini's new Fascist state, in contrast with other territories in the Balkans that it had failed to receive in exchange for its service in World War One, it raised new questions about whether the islands were one of Italy's colonies or whether they were in some way an independent territory under the tutelage of the Italian state. Given the sensitivity of viewing a European population of colonial subjects, the Dodecanese were annexed as a "possession" (*possedimento*) and kept under the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The nationality among the islands natives remained however an issue that underscored ambivalences about the Italian mandate in the islands. Since Italy's establishment of an overseas empire with its first colonization of Eritrea in 1881, the Italian state had issued some form of Italian status to colonial subjects. In 1919, with annexation of Libya, Italy had further created a form of colonial citizenship for non-Bedouin Libyans (itself modeled on the French colonial citizenship law for the indigenous of Algeria).[17] In the Dodecanese, however, the resident communities in the islands could not be equated with African natives, but nor could they be considered 'Italians' without creating a diplomatic upheaval.

The Italian government eventually introduced a sui generis form of citizenship called Italian Aegean Citizenship (*cittadinanza egea italiana*), which made the islands' entire population, including the Jewish communities into subjects of the Italian state, but which bore no political rights (or responsibilities toward military service). Aegean citizenship also preserved the 'civil statute' or the right to marry (and divorce) according to personal religion. The first Italian governor in the islands was confident that a "small naturalization" to Italian nationality would eventually be accepted by the local population—as long as long as the Italian government revived the old Ottoman order in which the three communities, Greek, Turkish and Jewish, stayed separate from one another and autonomously managed all civil and judicial matters within their religious institutions.[18]

Italy's preservation of an Ottoman model of ethnic and religious pluralism was to become an ongoing aspect of its administration and was to produce a series of initiatives aimed at reviving the 'cosmopolitan' and 'Mediterranean' culture of the islands. It is important to recall that Italian annexation occurred at the same time as the final treaties of the First World War resolved the collapse of the Ottoman empire and ended the bloodshed of the Greco-Turkish War in the eastern Aegean. In marked contrast with the rest of the Aegean region, the Dodecanese were exempted from the exchange of Greek and Turkish minority populations. The "un-mixing of the peoples" as British foreign minister Lord Curzon famously referred to the exchange of 1.5 million people between Greece and newly formed national Turkey radically reshaped the Aegean region and was the death knell to the cosmopolitan way of life in the region.[19] Yet the Second Treaty of Lausanne stipulated a two-year window in which locals elected their nationality, and tacitly accepted to migrate. Italy chose to be flexible on this limitation as well as the treaty's definition of *etablis*, understanding it as domiciled --meaning, owning property—rather than resident, and up until the late 1930s, liberally granted Italian Aegean nationality to any person who desired residence in the islands. Provided they were of 'good moral and political conduct,' and did not espouse anti-Italian sentiment, a person that hailed from the eastern Aegean could easily relocate to Rhodes or one of the other Dodecanese islands.

Supporting 'Levantine' culture and the Jewish community:

The Jewish residents of Rhodes and Kos especially benefited from Italy's 'liberal' policy toward refugees from escaping the Aegean region and the Asia Minor catastrophe. Mussolini himself affirmed in a 1927 memo to the local administration of the Dodecanese that a 'liberal' approach to naturalization to Italian nationality was especially warranted with the Jewish community given that they often brought with them wealth and trade connections that benefited the overall objectives of the Italian state.[20] Moreover, since the Lausanne Treaty had not specified any national destiny for the Jewish minority, no government could contest their naturalization to Italian Aegean nationality (which was not the case with Greek or Turkish subjects).[21] Even when they recognized that applicants had concocted a fantastic and untrue connection to the islands, the administration granted Italian

14 On Italy's programs to diffuse Italian language and identity among its emigrants see Mark Choate, *Emigrant Nation* (Harvard University Press, 2008).

15 The *Alliance* had been instrumental for education among Jewish communities the eastern Mediterranean throughout the nineteenth century. See Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860-1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

16 GAK DOD, Box 30, Series B, F.3/1918 "Forze Armate".

17 See Florence Renucci, "La strumentalizzazione del concetto di cittadinanza in Libia neglli anni Trenta" *Quaderni Fiorentini per la la storia del pensiero giurdico* 33-34 (2005) pp. 319-342

18 When the Italian consulate in Turkey read the first draft of a law for Italian citizenship to natives of the islands, he was nonplussed at the idea the natives be in some way nominated Italians "when they are above all Greeks and Turks" but ultimately the notion that in some way the population of the Aegean was "Ottomanized" and "Levantine" won out and justified the Italian empire in the islands. Lago clearly saw the restoration of the Ottoman millet system as a key way that Italy would succeed in pacifying the resistant parts of the local population. "Statuto di Rodi" Historical Archive of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (here forward ASMAE), Political Affairs Series, "Dodecaneso" 1919-30/983, Fascicolo 2392.

19 Renée Hirschon, *Crossing the Aegean: an Appraisal of the 1923 Compulsory Population Exchange between Greece and Turkey* (New York: Berghahn, 2003).

20 It is difficult to gage how many persons were naturalized based on this criteria, however, we do know that in 1938, at the deployment of the Anti-Semitic Racial Laws, the administration attempted to expel 500 Jewish persons established to be non-natives, or was one-third of the Jewish population of Rhodes at the time.

21 Circular #78, "Cittadinanza dei Dodecannesini" October 2, 1925 (GAK DOD:93/1927/163).

nationality to nearly all Jewish petitions.[22] The Jewish communities of the Aegean, whether the Dodecanese (and which would later apply to annexed territories in Albania).

The situation of the Jewish communities in Rhodes and Kos however was arguably much better than the one in Libya. Italian Aegean Citizenship was a thicker nationality than Italian Libyan citizenship, and it included, not insignificantly, the right to mobility for economic purposes. A young Jewish scholar that wrote a thesis on the legal ramifications of Italian annexation of the Aegean in 1926 was not far from off the mark when he assessed that the Italians were providing a valuable form of citizenship in a globalizing world. Italian Aegean Citizenship enabled the islands' population to emigrate and return more easily and helped to mitigate the fact that many natives of the Dodecanese had lost their main source of income when quotas had been placed on migrants from Southeastern Europe in the early 1920s.[23]

Italy's rising star in the Aegean under Fascist leadership attracted many notable members of the Jewish community in the Balkans and Aegean and brought many intellectuals from other Mediterranean and European cities. When notables learned of the public works of the Italian administration, they traveled to Rhodes to witness the Italian empire supporting the education and advancement of the Aegean Jewish community. Some of the permanent and semi-permanent notable Jewish residents in the islands included Marcus Berger, Vitalis Strumza, Davide Gaon, Michele Albagli, and Isaiah Sonne – the latter was a major Judaica scholar who went on to have an illustrious career later. The Italian administration drew these Jewish notables into a project to establish a Rabbinical College in Rhodes to provide higher education to the young men in the islands. Although the project was aborted in 1938 during the deployment of the Anti-Semitic Racial Laws, the Italian government initially saw this project as supporting not only the local Jewish community but also the Italian state's larger interests in the region, with graduated rabbis of the program eventually servicing other Italian speaking Jewish communities in the eastern Mediterranean. By the same token, the Rabbinical College became a means to create links between the Jewish communities of the Italian peninsula and Italian Aegean communities of the empire in Rhodes and Kos. The governor of the islands from 1923-37, Mario Lago, was said to rule over a 'Renaissance' of the Jewish community privately hoped that the Jewish community in Rome should support the public works of the Italian administration toward the Jewish communities of Rhodes and Kos. [24]

When the option to assimilate to full Italian citizenship became available to Italian Aegean subjects through a 1934 reform, the Jewish community was one of the main subjects to take advantage of this option.[25] Vitalis Strumza is an interesting and exemplary case of the path of Jewish notables that found their way into the island of Rhodes. A Jewish notable from Salonica who had been an Ottoman bureaucrat – at one point even a candidate for local representation of his Jewish community of Salonica -- Strumza moved to Rhodes in 1921 and began a career of service to the Italian administration; reportedly his appointment was partly due to his close friendship with the Italian governor at the time.[26] Strumza collaborated with Isaiah Sonne, who stayed on Rhodes between 1935-1938 as a professor at the Rabbinical College, to complete a short monographs about the history of the Jewish communities in Rhodes.[27] One interesting aspect about the draft for the monograph project is that the Jews of Rhodes would be considered as part of the history of "Italian" Jews. Strumza also frequently communicated with the Gran Rabbi in Rome, Davide Prato, about developing the international profile of the Rabbinical college in Rhodes. Strumza applied successfully and obtained full Italian citizenship in 1934 enabling him to travel freely back and forth between Italy and Rhodes. He was even named at one point named by the Italian governor a *Cavaliere della Corona*. But he had to leave the islands just a few years later at the deployment of the Anti-Semitic Racial Laws.[28]

Strumza's story illustrates the ambivalences that characterized the Italian empire's attitude towards the Jewish community. On the one hand, Jews, especially notables and intellectuals, stood to become an important class of imperial subjects and while located at an important nexus of Italian imperial interests, could help advance Italy's broader imperial interests in the region. On the other hand, the Italian view of the native population as fundamentally 'Levantine' was unflinching, and they were regarded as 'Italian' only briefly, and largely, out of interest for Italy's overall position in the Aegean region. Fears of nationalist uprising became increasingly present throughout the 1930s, and this extended to the Jewish community as well. A surveilled 1935 letter to the president of the Jewish community at the time, Hizkià Franco, pled for the innocence of a teacher who had recently been fired for proselytizing Betar Zionism to his students. The teacher (not incorrectly) pointed out the similarities between Mussolini's Fascist revolution and Betar Zionism (which, like Fascism, is also oriented as a youth movement).[29] Yet anxieties about Italy's fragile hold on the islands were increasing, and these justified hardline measures for removing persons who deviated from the party line, as well as efforts to 'Italianize' the population. These anxieties came to a head a few years later after the invasion of Ethiopia and the declaration of an Axis alliance between Mussolini and Hitler.

The 1938 Laws for the "Defense of the Race"

The local Italian administration under the direction of the first Fascist governor of the Dodecanese, Mario Lago, had largely viewed the population as an 'indigenous' and 'Levantine', but one which could be ultimately pacified through public works to their benefit. The issue of whether the Dodecanese constituted an 'indigenous' or 'European' population resurfaced again however in the aftermath of Italy's 1935-6 invasion of Ethiopia. The invasion of Ethiopia is widely regarded as one of the catalyzing events of the Second World War with an enormous impact within international relations and precipitating Mussolini's doomed Axis alliance with Hitler. Yet within Italy and its colonial territories, the consequences were just as far-reaching. The conquest of Ethiopia marked both the realization of fantasies of Eurafrica and an imperial community (*communità imperiale)* in the Mediterranean, but equally, new discourses about colonial contamination and racial miscegenation. In 1937, when the first racial laws in the East African colonies went into effect, Italy

22 Royal Carabinieri Archive of Rhodes/Fondo Ufficiale Speciale Carabinieri Reali (here forward GAK CCRR)

23 Vittorio Alhadeff, *L'ordinamento giuridico di Rodi e delle altre Isole Italiane dell'Egeo*, Milano: Istituto Editoriale Scientifico, 1927.

24 ASMAE Affari Politici 1931-45 14 (36-7), Fasc. 7, "Scuole".

25 The 1933 reform was largely created to enable Italian citizenship for Dodecanese natives living in Egypt. There a large community of ethnic Greeks, but also Jews, could be legally assimilated to Italian nationality and support the wider objectives of the Italian empire in the Mediterranean region.

26 Notes in Strumza's surveillance file suggest that his appointment was due to partly the fact that he was a personal friend of the Italian governor at the time, Felice Maissa. "Strumza" (GAK CCRR)

27 Vitalis Strumza, *Alcuni cenni storici sugli Ebrei di Rodi*. Bologna, 1936.

28 The Italian surveillance documents capture the bitterness of the situation for Strumza in 1938. Strumza wrote to Davide Prato with extreme melancholy, "It's useless that I should describe to you our mood here. I am getting ready to leave, my heart heavy with bitterness at the thought of abandoning this island and this environment for which I have worked passionately and with love over the past eighteen years." "Strumza" (GAK CCRR)

29 GAK DOD k.49/series B/1938/837

reversed its earlier stance toward mixed-marriage and *meticci*, the children of mixed race couples between Italian colonists and Italian colonial subjects in Africa, by making the former illegal and denying metropolitan citizenship to mixed race children. In this heightened atmosphere of racism, the Fascist party published its manifesto for the "Defense of the Race", and deployed an Anti-Semitic race policy against all Jews in both Italy and all its overseas territories.[30] While the origins of the Race Laws in Italy have long been debated by historians of Italy, the link between the establishment of an empire in Africa, and thus the founding of a 'new civilization' has been accepted as (at the very minimum) as a key factor in the development of Italian ideologies of race during the Fascist dictatorship.[31]

In the Italian occupied Aegean, the application of the Anti-Semitic Racial Laws in Rhodes and Kos was especially harsh, and was a dramatic reversal of fortune of the Jewish communities who under Lago had enjoyed not only patronage but also citizenship and belonging to the Italian state. The newly installed, arch-Fascist governor of the Dodecanese, Cesare De Vecchi, an original member of the Quadrumvirate that had the Fascist march on Rome, chose to issue an edict of expulsion for all Jews that had arrived in the islands after 1919, or all those Jews that had naturalized to Italian Aegean Citizenship as refugees of the Greco-Turkish War. Many eastern Aegean Jews petitioned the Italian government in Rome directly to have expulsion sentences reversed, either by pleading that they held Italian nationality as naturalized Italian Aegean citizens, or showing certificates of Italian protection, as *attaches* protected by the stipulations of the 1924 Treaty of Peace. Yet De Vecchi was categorical in his response that persons who had arrived in the Dodecanese Islands as a refugee of the Asia Minor Catastrophe had only resided the islands "in passing" ("di passaggio") and obtained an Italian passport had only done so "given the procedures agreed about in that period about the Jewish element" ("date le facilitazioni accordate in quel tempo all'elemento ebraico"). As the Italian government had already done previously on several occasions when expelling 'undesirable' Turkish residents of Rhodes and Kos, De Vecchi invoked the principle of the ethnic minority created during the Lausanne negotiations and stated that given the islands ethnic majority was of Greek "race and religion," Jewish person had no recourse to the protections of the 1924 Lausanne Treaty.[32]

Those Jewish persons who remained in the archipelago because they had achieved Italian citizenship by right or option—that is, because they were natives or residents of the archipelago prior to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire—suffered the same humiliations as Jews in peninsular Italy did. Jews persons could not be teachers or caregivers to any minor who was not Jewish; run or own a business or possess property of significant value (more than five thousand lire); have any domestic help that was Italian; be part of a civil or military administration; or hold any kind of public office, and all members of the Jewish community were required to report to the local civil registry and register their religion. Especially upsetting to the Jewish community was the closing of Jewish private schools and the expulsion of Jewish children from Italian public schools. The Italian support of education and literacy among the Jewish community had been a special source of positive relations between the community leaders and the Italian administration. Given these conditions of persecution, many more members of the Jewish community voluntarily emigrated. Italy's early adoption of Anti-Semitism therefore paradoxically saved many members of the community, as less than half of the community's population of the mid-1920s were remaining in the islands when the Nazi deportations occurred several years later.

The Anti-Semitic Racial Laws impacted Greek and Turkish subjects as well. Mixed marriages in the Aegean were already an issue in Italian surveillance, but after 1938, it was necessary that both parties show certificates of proof of an "Aryan race" (*di razza ariana*). Marriages between Italian persons and foreign persons was now to be subject to the regulation and approval of the Interior Ministry. Under the first Fascist governor, no policy against mixed marriages between Italian settlers and natives in the islands was ever put into effect since Lago had feared local reprisals if he were to adopt a policy of open racism.[33] Through the Anti-Semitic Laws, Italy affirmed that the Greek and Turkish communities on the Dodecanese Islands were similar to an "indigenous" population, and the administration implemented a set of ideologically related programs of ethnic assimilation at the same time as the Anti-Semitic Race Laws.[34] These hardline measures predictably incited riots and ardent displays of Greek nationalism and helped to ensure that De Vecchi's tenure as governor of the Dodecanese was short lived. After the departure of De Vecchi from Rhodes, the Italian administration softened its position on the expulsion of Jews in Rhodes and Kos originating from Turkey.[35]

Yet the deployment of the Anti-Semitic Racial Laws in Rhodes and Kos nevertheless represents an important juncture in the community's demise during the Second World War. By affirming that Jewish subjects in the Aegean had no right to protection under the Lausanne Treaty, the Italian state participated in the process of making European Jewry into or stateless persons, refugees -- or what was known at that time as *apolidi* – without legal protection. The stripping of citizenship of Jewish persons is widely recognized as one of the key mechanisms that enabled the Holocaust.[36] During the war itself, Rhodes became a temporary home for many stateless Jews; some were even refugees from Central Europe who arrived in Rhodes by shipwreck as they attempted to escape to Palestine. But those Jews from the Aegean, who at one time had been considered 'Italian' Jews, were effectively stateless as the refugee crisis swelled in Europe and expanded into the Mediterranean. Persons such as Mose Varon illustrate how unlucky it was to have opted for Italian citizenship in the 1920s. Varon had been born in Smyrna in 1922 just one year before the collapse of the Ottoman empire. He had naturalized to Italian Aegean Citizenship in the 1930s, and been a victim of the Italian Anti-Semitic Racial Laws. He had made multiple attempts to escape to Palestine, one of which included a close shave with death by drowning when he swam out to meet a ferry boat as it departed from the harbor of Rhodes, but he had always been turned back. [37]

30 As Fabrizio de Donno has argued, the alliance with Nazi-Germany that issued from the Ethiopian invasion created a new problematic for Fascist discourses of race. De Donno shows that the category *Romanità* was eventually used to resolve apparent idiosyncrasies about race and national identity that were inherent to the Italian colonial project: "With the fascist-Nazi alliance, the fascists were faced with the problem of race in a new form (which in the past they had criticized) but sought to deal with it in a way that could turn it to their advantage." Fabrizio de Donno, "La Razza Ario-Mediterranea" in *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* (8:3), 2006: 394-412.

31 Olindo De Napoli, "The Origin of the Racist Laws under fascism: A problem of historiography" *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 17 (1) 2012: 106-22.

32 GAK DOD 725/1938 "é stato solo di passaggio, non può neppure considerarsi suddito italiano di diritto a norma dell'art.30 del trattato di Losanna. Né aveva diritto ad opzione—di cui del resto non esiste traccia—perchè non appartenente alla maggioranza etnica della popolazione del Possedimento (art.32 trattato di Losanna)."

33 GAK DOD 639/1936 Celebrazione Matrimoni Misti, Servizio Stato Civile Carteggio General f.to Lago, 21 Settembre, 1936. See also Alexis Rappas, Greeks under European Colonial Rule: National Allegiance and Imperial Loyalty" *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* (34:2) 2009, 201-18.

34 The Greek Orthodox Churches in the islands were closed, and all languages other than Italian were banned from the schools in the island.

35 A document August 1, 1942, from the Civil Registry and Statistics (Dipartimento di Anagrafe e Statistici) of the local government of the Dodecanese Islands stated that, "vennero erroneamente compresi anche gli ebrei già sudditi turchi, i quali essendo stabiliti nel Possedimento all'entrata in vigore del Trattato di Losanna (6 agosto 1924) acquistarono di diritto o per opzione, la cittadinanza egea."

36 See Giorgio Agamben, *Means without End: Notes on Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2000).

37 GAK CCRR "Varon".

Varon was one of the 1,800 remaining Jewish subjects in the islands in July 1944, all of them established as stateless persons and therefore beyond the protection of international treaty, and was deported with the rest of the islands' remaining community in what was the last deportation of the war. In contrast, with former Italian Aegean citizens, those Jewish persons who still held Turkish nationality were saved from the deportations through the intervention of the consulate in Istanbul. The real survival of the community, however, has most likely been through its emigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century which has preserved Jewish communities throughout the world.[38]

Conclusion: the Jews of Rhodes and Kos as a Transnational Community

This article has discussed how the Italian empire navigated the thorny question of its sovereignty in the region by leveraging the numerous ambiguities and opportunities created by the collapse of the Ottoman empire. How to re-organize the numerous and sometimes internecine groups that had once been held together under the sprawling authority of the Turks troubled international diplomacy, but it also interrupted onto, and ultimately reshaped, Mussolini's project to achieve an Italian empire in the Mediterranean. Policies of aggressive expansion in the Aegean initially positioned the Jewish communities as potential allies and assets in the Italian state's focus on the 'East' as an essential new frontier for Italian expansion, and on Rhodes as the future epicenter of a new 'Mediterranean' empire. Yet after the expansion of the Italian empire into East Africa (*Africa Italiana Orientale*), the regime espoused a view of Dodecanese natives as a colonial indigenous population and Jews faced the harsh reprisals of a now ardently Anti-Semitic Fascist regime. The Jewish communities of Rhodes and Kos therefore offer a further window onto the link between Italian empire and the adoption and deployment of an Anti-Semitic policy.

The arc of the Fascist dictatorship's motivation for at first privileging, and then persecuting the Jewish community was not always discernible 'from below' however and the Jewish communities of Rhodes and Kos consistently sought to make their peace with the Italian Fascist regime. At times, the community viewed Fascist ideology as aligning with Zionism, and even when faced with patent racism and persecution, they still turned to their Italian nationality as an important form of belonging that might protect them from Anti-Semitism elsewhere. The Italian administration in the islands was further able to draw numerous Jewish community intellectuals, notables, and wealthy trader and merchants to the shores of Rhodes in the 1920s and 1930s, and involve them in the Fascist project to rebuild the islands into a center of 'Levantine' culture, and to renew the sense within the larger *Rhodesli* diaspora that the island was an important homeland. Not only did these persons believe the hearsay that the island was bound to become an important center for trade and culture in the Levant, but Italian nationality was one of the few options that was available with the end of the Ottoman empire.

What's more, the legacy of Italian occupation in the Dodecanese is felt in the present and enables members of the Rhodesli diaspora to acquire Italian citizenship by demonstrating their Dodecanese heritage. In these changing times of European integration—of nationalism alongside globalization—many *Rhodesli* Jews have carried forward their 'Italian' heritage into present day regimes of European citizenship, and they have used their Italian nationality to leave Africa for Europe.[39] The community's last phase of residency in the islands of Rhodes and Kos is therefore intimately bound up with the idea and memory of Italian culture and identity – *italianità*, or Italian-ness. To be sure, the fact that Italy eventually adopted a hardline Anti-Semitic policy, and that Fascist Italy aligned itself with Hitler's Nazi ideology, is not absent from collective memories of Italian rule. But one can well argue that popular memories of Italians and Aegean subjects as "one face, one race" register the peculiarly shifting landscape in the Aegean at in the interwar period. Fascist Italy was racist, but its empire also occasioned policies that would promote a great multi-national Italian empire in the Mediterranean, one which would include Italians, Greeks and Turks—as well as Jews. To adequately address the story of the Jewish communities of Rhodes and Kos in the twentieth century, then, demands a paradigm that moves beyond the 'national' and which locates the Jewish communities of the Aegean not so much in Greece, but at its crossroads, between Europe and the Middle East, a transnational community with strong ties not only to Turkey, Africa and the wider Mediterranean, but also to Italy and its imperial history.



Figure 4: David and Rivka Hasson with children at the beach, Rhodes 1922.

38 Renee Hirschon, "The Jews of Rhodes: The Decline and Extinction of an Ancient Community" in *The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond: the Jews in Turkey and the Balkans 1808-1945 (II),* ed. Minna Rozen. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2002, pp. 291-307.

39 My thanks go to Joey Hasson of the Rhodesian (Zimbabwe) Rhodesli community who kindly gave me an interview about his experience acquiring second-generation Italian citizenship through his patrilineal links to Rhodes.

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"It was a sunny late-summer day in 2014. During my first proper research stay in Rhodes I decided to inquire into the material held at the Hafiz Ahmed Ağa Library. I was welcomed by Yusuf Bey and his dog at the gate and we started a conversation in a mix of Turkish, Greek, and German. I felt privileged to be allowed into the courtyard and the library. To my surprise, the reading room contained not only valuable manuscripts and rare books, but also miscellaneous collections and historical documents. Two things drew my attention: Firstly, several copies of the late Ottoman satirical magazine Karagöz: I would have loved to read them and use them for my book, but they were too off-topic. Secondly, covered under a pile of scattered documents, I found an original excerpt from the 1905-1907 Ottoman census, which proved to be a precious source for my study. When I think of that place, beyond pictures of its wonderful garden, I like to remind myself that libraries and archives hold hidden gems that are as rare as the determination and patience to dig beneath catalogues and inventories."

Andreas Guidi

Within and Beyond "Communities"

A Connected Approach to Confessional Diversity in Rhodes

Situated on the maritime route of the Levant connecting Istanbul and the Levant provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the island of Rhodes served as a station for travelers for centuries. More or less famous Western travelers like Gustave Flaubert and Victor Guérin stopped there and left descriptions of the island's ancient heritage as well as anecdotes about contemporary daily life and impressions concerning a confessionally diverse population – Greeks, Jews, Muslims, and Catholics – that they encountered there. In the nineteenth century, Ottomans too became more acquainted with the town, its history, and its diverse habitants. To cite but two examples, quite different in format and content, the first modern Ottoman history of Rhodes was published in 1896 by Ziver Bey, an Ottoman bureaucrat who had spent part of his tenure on the island researching its past. In the same year, the most prestigious Ottoman illustrated journal, *Servet-i funun* dedicated a few paragraphs and a series of photographs to the town of Rhodes. In those years, innovations in infrastructure, technology, and media made it possible for readers throughout the Ottoman realm to familiarize with the empire's provinces, including the corner of the Aegean Sea where Rhodes was located.

In the late nineteenth century (1888), Rhodes town had become the center of the Vilayet of the Archipelago (*Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid Vilayeti*). Although the local economy did not experience any proper boom compared to other Ottoman towns – especially in the neighboring Anatolian coast, Eastern Anatolia or the remaining Balkan provinces – in the following fifty years the town would remain a comparatively safe place, aloof of mass displacement and intercommunal violence shattering coexistence in the region. Whereas the presence of diverse ethnic and religious communities captivated the gaze of Ottoman and Western travelers, this was certainly nothing special in the empire. However, even for the empire's standards, Rhodes was marked by a strikingly balanced ratio of confessional categories. No available Ottoman census provides precise data for the town's population in terms of confessional belonging, but one carried out by the Italians in 1917 recorded around 5,700 Muslims, 4,000 Orthodox and 3,300 Jews – many of whom had emigrated in the previous ten years to destinations as far as Central Africa and the Americas. Catholics – like Muslims but unlike Orthodox and Jews – did not have institutions related to an official community (*millet*) in late Ottoman times.

After the Italians occupied Rhodes in 1912 and even more after the Treaty of Lausanne sealed Italian sovereignty over Rhodes in 1923, the number of Catholics in town came closer to that of the other confessional categories, thereby making Rhodes a setting in which coexistence also implied the absence of any clearly dominant group. To be true, this only applies to only one specific scale of analysis, the one encompassing the old town of Rhodes and its expanding suburbs like Saint Anastasia or Neochori. If one exclusively considers the Old Town, for instance, until 1909 only Muslims and Jews were allowed to dwell there. Everyday interactions thus stopped at sunset when shops closed, and Christians went back to their homes. If one, on the contrary, adds the whole town of Rhodes to the other villages and even the minor islands of the Vilayet (what later became the Italian *possedimento* of the Aegean), the Orthodox population would become the absolute majority, with only a few hundred Muslims and Jews living outside of Rhodes in places like Lindos and Kos.

Nonetheless, the diversity observable in Rhodes *town* has invited historians to reflect on coexistence, intercommunal interactions, and other forms of socialization that can be subsumed under a peaceful sense of belonging *to* and *in* a shared place. I have tackled this issue in a 2017 article discussing the economic dimension of intercommunality by showing how economic changes impacted both labor and business in Rhodes as the town became increasingly integrated into regional capitalist circuits. As a consequence, "modern" economy did not primarily rely on confessional exclusivism, with most companies in Rhodes being open to workers and partners of its different confessions. This does not imply that working with townsmen of other confessions was culturally valued as progressive, but rather than pragmatism and segmentation along classes mattered more than identification with one's community as a closed circle. In a later article, I discussed how emigration affected the sense of belonging to communities. If Communities (capitalized as an official entity) existed as institutions in Ottoman and Italian Rhodes, what happened when thousands of Jews and Greeks left their hometown (or island) and moved abroad? I argued for considering communities and communal belonging as something that can – actually, that has to – be constructed through efforts that often erase other forms of collective socialization and identification. In other words, Jews and Greeks often left Rhodes on the same steamship, and the first steps in the "new world" were marked by a significant degree of proximity based on a common geographic origin and beyond confessional exclusivity. However, as years passed and new generations of Rhodians were socialized abroad, some of the emigrant elders invested considerable energy into (re)building bonds around confessionally exclusive religious institutions that – together with integration into the new society, for instance as US American naturalized citizens – eventually erased most traces of commonality based on the place of origin of Rhodes shared with emigrants of other confessions.

As other studies, notably by Alexis Rappas, have shown in recent years, a discussion on past intercommunality requires caution. Memories of the Ottoman and the Italian periods have increasingly been coded collectively along the notion of separate communities after the Second World War and the Holocaust, a rupture that – with the violent disappearance of the Jewish community – in 1944 tore once and for all the idea of peaceful coexistence in Rhodes. However, these collective memories only very superficially address relations among communities. If we add to this the lack of sources available produced before 1945 that underscore and reclaim coexistence as a cultural value, we are left with the sense that the coexistence of various communities was primarily a pragmatic consequence and heritage of imperial rule. This included its being instrumentalized by Ottoman and Italian authorities, that – with different stratagems and aims – both supported and organized Communities as institutions (with specific tribunals and schools). In so doing, they contributed to foster belonging to a community as a question of loyalty. Notables recognized as Orthodox, Jews (and later in the Italian period Muslims) sat in local councils and interacted with state authorities, thus acting as "representatives" of the community vis-à-vis the state. If one excludes the four years of proper constitutionalist rule between 1908 and 1912, Rhodians (a small portion thereof, the wealthier) never had the possibility to directly vote for their representatives at the state level. Communal belonging, for most of the period considered here, was therefore also a marker of notables aiming at political careers at the local level.

Rather than essentializing intercommunality as individuals and collectives interacting in the name of their own community with others animated by a similar awareness, this contribution proposes a different approach to the diversity of Rhodes. Instead of looking at the setting as a closed microcosm of diversity, we can open up the perspective to embed Rhodes in a changing Mediterranean context. As a result, all communities would emerge as part and parcel of broader networks and spaces where influences and ideas travelled and impacted the local reality. Important sources to infer the diversity of the population are those produced by Ottoman and Italian authorities, including courts and police files, as well as those related to associations and newspapers that reveal such broader connections. Lastly, censuses and family sheet confirm the diversity common to all confessional groups in terms of places of origin. What follows is an overview of topics and examples emerging from those sources, that I have dealt with more in detail in my monograph *Generations of Empire*.

To begin with, the Muslims of Rhodes were a quite composite population that reflected political transformations in the last decades of Ottoman rule. Next to a majority of Muslims who had lived in Rhodes – as well as a few villages like Sgourou, Koskinou, Salakos and the town of Lindos – for several generations, some "surnames" – or, more precisely, appellations called *lakab,* like Alayalı or Faralyalızade – reveal origins from towns in Asia Minor (Alaya, Faralya), where those families often had property and land. Moreover, since Rhodes was one of the most frequent sites of political banishment (*sürgün* or *nefiy*), the town hosted Muslim families of the rebellious tribe of the Hemavend from the Aleppo and Mosul vilayets as well as Yemenis. Some of them decided – or were left with no other choice than – to stay in Rhodes at the end of their banishment. A few dozen Muslims were refugees (*muhacir*) from Crete. During and following the insurrection of Cretan Greeks that led to violence against and expulsion of most of the island's Muslims in the 1890s, the Ottoman government included Rhodes in the list of sites where these displaced families where to be hosted. A few families bore typical Cretan surnames like Yussufaki or Sulaki and most likely spoke Greek as their mother tongue.

Most of them remained in Rhodes and were recorded by the Italian administration as late as the 1940s. A small settlement first called Hamidiye in honor of Sultan Abdülhamid II was built in 1904. Lying some three kilometers away from the Old Town, this settlement kept a name referring to their Cretan inhabitants *Kritika* or *Villaggio Cretese* throughout the Italian period even when most of them had left the simple one-room houses that had been used by other poor newcomers – especially Greeks from the villages and Italians from Anatolia. More generally speaking, the Muslims of Rhodes kept strong ties with Anatolia before and after 1912. Not confined to land property, studying at Ottoman (and then "Muslim", as the Italians renamed them) primary schools in Rhodes opened career options in the late Empire and the Early Republic and student as well as post-diploma mobility toward the mainland was so frequent that it became a political issue for the Italian governors in the 1930s.

Already during the Constitutional regime after 1908, political factions fragmented the community: some Muslims were attracted by the Young Turks, the Committee of Union and Progress and – in the 1920s and 1930s – by Mustafa Kemal's Republican People's Party (CHP) while others were categorized by observers as supporters of the "ancient régime", namely they were closer to conservative and religious circles. Generally speaking, in both the Ottoman and Italian period (until the late 1930s), frictions *within* communities were considered by the local population as more fastidious than those *among* communities. Rather than a fracture at the local level, this polarization also reveals how the setting of Rhodes was permeable to events and ideas pervading the surrounding Aegean and Anatolian region.

The Orthodox population of Rhodes as well was diverse and mobile. Already in the late nineteenth century, both well-off families and laborers moved from Rhodes and other islands to Egypt, attracted by the prospects of the capitalist expansion in the Khedival state. The construction of the Suez Canal brought many villagers and islanders to the Port Said and Ismailia area, while those pursuing liberal professions mainly moved to urban centers, especially Alexandria. As a result, women in those lower-class emigrant families, not allowed or willing to move across long distances, settled in Rhodes from minor islands, often working as housemaids. The vibrant Greek community of Alexandria was also a cultural and political center. Since the Italian occupation

of the islands, and boosted by the news of the Greek army's victories in the Balkan Wars and the First World War, nationalists based in Alexandria agitated for the *Enosis*, the annexation of the Dodecanese into the Greek state. In a way, the center of Greek irredentism concerning the islands under Italian occupation was therefore in Egypt, far enough from the governor and his *Carabinieri*'s strict surveillance. Irredentist agitation often also involved students from the Dodecanese who had moved to Athens as well as workers who had emigrated to the United States and founded migrants associations there. Until today, by walking in the neighbors around Rhodes and in the island's villages, one can observe early-twentieth-century villas built through the fortune accumulated by certain families abroad, like the Kazoullis, or donations from expatriated communities in the Americas or Australia aimed at building or repairing churches. Until today, the oldest secondary school in town, the *Gymnasion Venetokleion* is considered with pride as a landmark of community and nation-building dating back to Ottoman times. This institution too is a result of broader Mediterranean connections, since its foundation was only made possible by donations sent from Alexandria by the brothers Venetoklis, who had kept ties with their place of origin in Rhodes.

Yet the Greek community of Rhodes is not only marked by contacts with the diaspora. It also grew through the inflow of Greek families from Anatolia, especially from Antalya, Makri (Fethiye) and Livissi (Kayaköy). These were displaced at the end of the Greek Turkish War and arrived as refugees in the Autumn of 1922. Unlike most of the Asia Minor Greeks refugees and those displaced according to the Lausanne Treaty's terms, a few dozen families did not move to Greece and remained in Rhodes throughout the Italian period. Until today, the descendants of families from Makri and Livissi consider Rhodes as one of the main sites of their own dispersed community and its memorialization through projects like those of the society *Lycia*. In this case too, the community was deeply impacted by social and political transformations in a broader space.

The case of the Jewish community is probably the best known given the recent historiographic rediscovery that, however, gravitates around the trauma of the Holocaust that annihilated it it in 1944. Yet, in this case too, the "Jews of Rhodes" proves to be a complex unit of analysis given the diversity within it. This is not to deny a feeling of belonging to this local setting based on confession, that was actually reinforced among survivors and the diaspora along with the memorialization of the past after the Holocaust. Descendants feel attached to Rhodian (or, as the old term appropriated by the group has it, *Rodesli*) heritage in terms of "traditions", sayings, and cuisine. Rather, it is interesting to observe how this eclipses the fabric of social and cultural relations impacting the *Rodeslis* in the Ottoman and Italian periods.

Their very arrival is linked to migration across the Mediterranean. As was the case in most Ottoman Jewish communities, at the turn of the 16th century, refugees from the lands of Al Andalus "reconquered" by the Catholic kings and queens traveled across the sea (often with stops of several years along the way) and brought Sephardic culture and a language that assimilated previous Jewish residents who were often Romaniotes. A few centuries later, in the years before the arrival of Italian troops in 1912, the Jewish community experienced a profound change with the opening of a new school claiming to break with the past and build modern Jewish citizens in the name of the *Francophonie*. The *Alliance Israélite Universelle* – a network that had its headquarters in Paris and ran schools in dozens of towns from Morocco to Iraq to Greece – opened its school in Rhodes in 1902. Yet, this was not only a French initiative. The Jewish Ottoman scholar Avram Galante, who had taught at the Muslim *idadiye* but also in other cities of the Aegean, participated in this initiative in the name of educational reformism. The Jewish Community (as an institution) embraced the idea and was involved – not without frictions – in the management and funding of the school. Although the number of graduates did not exceed a few dozen per year, attendance of the lower grades was remarkable. As a consequence, the majority of Jewish children of both sexes at the dawn of the century were exposed to French language and culture. Judging from the school directors' reports and some memoirs, the impact of the *Alliance* cannot be underestimated, even if the migration trajectories of the *Rodesli* were mainly directed to English-speaking areas like Rhodesia and the Americas. After 1912 and during their military administration, willy-nilly, the Italian authorities authorized the presence of a French institution. This changed when Italian sovereignty was recognized in 1923, leading to the closing of the *Alliance* school two years later and its replacement through local Italophone *scuole ebraiche*.

Within three generations, the local Jewish population thus interiorized different cultures and links between language and belonging. Even though the fascist empire in which Rhodes was embedded did not tolerate foreign interference, the governors instrumentalized the Jewish community of Rhodes for a project aimed at expanding Italian influences among Mediterranean and Balkan Jewry. Mario Lago thus opened the *Collegio Rabbinico*, a theological school attracting students from other communities, while teachers mostly came from Italy.

Shortly before the persecution officially started with the antisemitic Racial Laws promulgated in Italy in late 1938, a part of the Jewish population – especially a group of youngsters in their twenties and sometimes even teens – became sympathetic to the most right-wing version of Zionism, the so called "Revisionist Zionism" led by Vladimir Jabotinsky. Here too, loyalty toward Italy and its fascist imperial project, visions of settler colonialism and sovereignty in Palestine, but also generational factors (the young against the old) conflated and shaped discussion about the place of Rhodian Jews in a broader context. Whereas only a very few Rhodian Jews eventually moved to Palestine before WW2, many used family networks to attempt to escape persecutions in the crucial months between the Racial Laws and the official opening of warfare in Rhodes in 1940s. Local belonging and diasporic displacement thus coexisted in the lived experience of a large number of *Rodeslis* before Italian and German genocidal brutality exterminated the local community in 1944.

The last category to be discussed are Catholics. This confessional category, not too much relevant for the Ottoman nor the Italian administration, can be used as a steppingstone to identify those who were often not considered proper Ottoman subjects or, in the Italian period, at least for the most part were not considered "Dodecanesians". Already at the dawn of the 20th century, they were a range of Francophone and Italian families, Armenians and Syrians, as well as former captives now *protégés* of European countries like Great Britain or Sweden. In the early Italian sources from the 1910s, this group that did not fit into what the Italian considered to be the Ottoman local society were often categorized as European. For most of them, the arrival of hundreds of Italian families actually meant that the Catholics turned from being "European" (and multilingual) to "Italian", with the exception of those owning a foreign nationality. This happened parallel to the (unfinished) legal elaboration of a citizenship regime aiming at distinguishing full (metropolitan) citizens from Dodecanesians who were juridically defined as Aegean citizens (or subjects). This left a narrow door open to obtaining the status of Italian citizenship by decree for men, in most cases after their voluntary military service, for example in the Spanish Civil War. Although a few hundred Dodecanesians manage to go through the process between 1933 and 1942, this does not question the persisting separation between metropolitan citizens and colonial subjects that was, indeed, centered on the separation between Italians and members of the respective local or "indigenous" confessional communities.

But how "Italian" was this growing population? Several hundred newcomers in Rhodes did indeed come from the Italian Kingdom. Policemen and military who decided to stay at the end

of their service often married local women, especially Greek women who had moved to Rhodes town from the nearby villages and islands. Others can be classified as "adventurers" starting a new life in Rhodes, mostly with poor advancement in terms of economic situation. Their social status was, however, often enhanced by the alignment with and activism in Fascist institutions such as the party and its militias, the *Camicie nere* (Blackshirts). Moreover, Governor Mario Lago launched a few projects to establish colonies on the main island. Woodcutters from the northern Italian Trentino region (that Rome had recently annexed in 1918) and peasants from Veneto came to rather remote parts of Rhodes island, but these projects were abandoned after WW2, leaving only abandoned buildings.

Not all Italian citizens came from the peninsula. Several families moved to Rhodes from other former Ottoman cities, mostly Izmir, starting in the mid 1920s. The most striking marker of this mobility is the first name Policarpo in honor of the patron saint of the Catholics in Izmir, quite common in the family certificates produced by the Italian administration but otherwise extremely rare in the Italian peninsula. Next to a very few wealthy individuals already running prosperous business in Turkey, the majority of these Smyrniote newcomers found themselves in a rather marginal and precarious economic position, partly compensated by membership in fascist institutions and marriage with local women who owned modest properties. The reason why most of them arrived in Rhodes was the nationalization of the economy in the newborn Republic of Turkey that, in the late 1920s, passed laws and decrees aimed at excluding foreigners – like those Catholics Italian citizens – from a wide range of professions and occupations. One could wonder why they chose to move to Rhodes instead of moving to the Kingdom of Italy. Generally speaking, this represented a convergence of interests between, on the one hand, the Italian government needing to assert its legitimacy in the Dodecanese by increasing the presence of Italian citizens and, on the other hand, a certain familiarity and proximity with an Aegean setting in which older Ottoman modes of governance and institutions were not erased but adapted to the fascist colonial project. This also meant that, for a part of the Catholic population in Rhodes, being the spearhead of Italianness in a colonial setting could coexist with the fact they had never – or only very briefly – set foot in metropolitan Italy.

Allegiance to fascism embraced by many of these newcomers in Rhodes implied an advantage in terms of social status, but this made them dependent on the fate of a dictatorial, colonialist, and genocidal regime. When the end of WW2 dealt the final blow to Mussolini and his Mediterranean dreams of *Mare Nostrum*, the British authorities taking over during the interregnum of 1945-1947 and then the new sovereign Greek institutions made it clear that Italians would lose all privileges that the fascist regime had conferred on them. Most of the Italians citizens in the Dodecanese left after the war in a legally and economically chaotic and precarious framework that cannot be simply portrayed as a smooth "repatriation". Once again, as Pamela Ballinger recently showed in her monograph *The World Refugees made,* the fate of the Italians in Rhodes cannot only be explained in a local, communitarian, or national lens: it has equally much to do with regional dynamics of imperial collapse and dispersion in the Mediterranean and international geopolitical shifts.

Conclusions

This contribution aimed at discussing the notion of community from an alternative perspective. Instead of using confessional belonging as the sole perimeter of analysis for the people we study and learn about, but also instead of searching for definitions of coexistence and intercommunality often elaborated retrospectively, I have proposed two possible avenues. One is to distinguish between, one the one hand, institutional Communities shaped by state authorities to mediate with the local population and, on the other hand, people sharing a confession but not necessarily social or political interests. The other, more important here, is to stress that confessional categories include fragmentation within themselves and above all a variety that reveal interesting links (and ruptures) with the broader Mediterranean world in which Rhodes was embedded during both the Ottoman and the Italian period. This approach can be thought of as a "conversation in the library" (or the archive), that seems to fit well the purpose of the volume. A library in which all the fascinating local histories and life trajectories of people from Rhodes are valued and preserved, but also one in which wide windows are open to remind us of the broader outside world and its impact on those histories and trajectories, without which much of the fascination of Rhodes would be impossible to understand.



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"There is no Greek word for 'patronizing'. Yet this is what I incurred as a young scholar in 1990 when I sat in the office of a Dodecanesian lawyer, who had just written the history of his island. It was a very large book that detailed the deeds of great men and the patriotic struggles of his island compatriots. I tried to explain my project was about how people experienced Italian rule, and that I was generating my information by conducting oral histories. He yelled – yelling was his natural mode of communication – that I was not doing history. He asserted that I was confused, badly trained, and that I should either reconsider my project or go home. A few weeks later, he concluded that what I was doing was sociology, but while he was kind enough to lend me useful materials, he continued to behave like the god-professor authority, which he was not. That experience encouraged me to think about class, about social inequality, and how local elites treated humble folk. I thought more about how that treatment might have influenced relations with the Italians, and how sometimes the national adversary was not necessarily the primary adversary."

Nicholas Doumanis

Becoming Dodecanesian

The Italian Occupation and Local Greek Conceptions of Time

For Greek Rhodians and other Dodecanesians who experienced it, the Italian occupation (1912-1947) held a unique place in collective or social memory. Although Italy was under a fascist dictatorship for most of the occupation, and despite the oppressive measures inflicted on the islanders, including forced assimilation, the islanders often claimed 'the Italians were good' (οι Ιταλοί ήταν καλή).[1] Since Greek society deems it shameful to praise 'conquerors' (καταχτητές), the claim only came up in social gatherings and in everyday conversations. Moreover, 'the Italians' were the only foreign rulers that were discussed or seemed worth discussing.

The following pages offer reflections on an ethnographic history project conducted in the early 1990s with elderly Greek Dodecanesians in their 70s, 80s and 90s.[2] That project's purpose was not to determine if the Italians *were* good, but to explain why interviewees *said* they were 'good'. This chapter reflects more on why the Italians held a dominant place in social memory. Why privilege the Italians? Why such interest in their rule? And what did that choice mean? What did it say about Dodecanesian social thought, and about the past and its uses? Social memory or collectively accepted versions of the past, speak to issues that hold meaning for that collective, such as shared identity.[3] The following pages consider social memory and show how Italian rule in a sense *created* 'the Dodecanese' and *made* 'Dodecanesians'.

Living in History

More so than most Greek islands, Rhodes and Kos present the visitor with strikingly diverse historical legacies. Archaeologists have uncovered an extraordinary abundance of antiquities that can be seen in museums but more often in open public display. A large part of Kos's main town is an archaeological park. The main centers of Rhodes and Kos, hereafter referred to as Rhodes Town and Kos Town, are dominated by medieval walls, bell towers and minarets, and feature Catholic cathedrals and synagogues. Many graveyards are filled with headstones inscribed with Arabic, Hebrew and Latin characters. Each day the inhabitants stroll, drive, cycle and sail past imposing Crusader fortresses. Almost as imposing are the Ottoman mosques, including Rhodes's *Süleymaniye camii, Sultan Mustafa camii* and *Recep Pasa camii*, and Kos's *Defterdar camii* and *Gazi Hassan camii*. The whole island group is saturated with medieval castles, most of which date from the rule of the Knights of St John, a military monastic order that seized the islands several years after the fall of the crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1291.

1 See *Myth and Memory in the Mediterranean: Remembering Fascism's Empire* (Macmillan and St Martins: Basingstoke, Hampshire [UK] and New York, NY, 1997) and the Italian translation with a foreword by leading historian of Italian colonialism, Nicola Labanca: *Una Faccia, Una Razza: le colonie italiane nell'Egeo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003)

2 Aside from *Myth and Memory in the Mediterranean,* see also

3 James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1990)

Recent academic literature and popular publications have rightly emphasized the cultural plurality of Rhodes Town and its environs, although the plurality largely disappeared during the 1940s.[4] The local Jewry was all but exterminated during the Second World War, with the pitifully few survivors moving on to central Africa and South Africa, Italy, Israel, South America and the United States.[5] Today there are several Jewish families in Rhodes and one functioning synagogue.[6] Following the end of Italian administration in 1947, Italian colonists departed for Italy, as did indigenous Catholics, known locally as 'Franco-Levantiní (literally 'Levantine Catholics'). And while many Turks still live in Rhodes and Kos, including the progeny of Muslim Cretan refugees, many have long since relocated to Turkey.

The physical imprint of Islamic, Jewish and Catholic nevertheless remains. There was no hurried destruction of Islamic buildings (mosques, madrassas, tekkes) or bulldozing of Turkish and Jewish cemeteries following unification. But local Greeks have been indifferent to these legacies. However much conquerors shaped their built environment, few Rhodians or Koans rarely, if ever, talk about them.

To be sure, Greek antiquities are placed in a special category both officially and in the public mind because they link the localities to Greek antiquity. Even if much of the unearthed archaeological riches date to the period following the Roman conquest, they nevertheless look very 'Greek'. But few Dodecanesians today seem aware of the Knights of St John, the military monastic order that had been driven out of the Levant and occupied the islands for over two centuries (c.1310-1522). This Latin feudal ruling order was responsible for the island's most striking monument, the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Old Town, with its impressive fortification complex and the Palace of the Grand Master. The Knights have virtually no purchase in Dodecanesian thought, despite their monumental legacies. Aside for the fact that they were Catholic foreigners, this indifference may relate to the fact they were Hospitallers, an international order that lacked an ethnic profile.

Ottoman legacies have been ignored for a different reason. Ruling for almost four hundred years (1522-1912), the Ottoman Turks hold a decidedly negative place in Greek social memory, whose rule has been associated with tyranny and backwardness, and considered anti-Christian and anti-Greek. The great mosques of Rhodes and Kos are centrally located and figure on numerous tourism advertisements and postcards, yet for Greek Dodecanesians they serve as a reminder of a past best forgotten. Overall, Rhodians and Koans subscribe to a caricatured nationalistic version of Ottoman rule which accords with official Greek representations found in school textbooks.[7]

In contrast, the Italian occupation was (and still may be) an object of fascination in the decades following unification. This was especially true for the inhabitants of Rhodes, Kos and Leros – the latter had served as Italy's principal military base. The Italian colonial government committed to extensive development projects on these three islands, from town planning to port and road construction. These islands were left with a striking architectural legacy that locals have regarded as a great source of pride.[8] Other islanders, in turn, would often concede with envy how the Italians had done wonders for Rhodes, Kos and Leros, and not for them. Local identities were sometimes mediated by Italy's development policies. People on Kalymnos, for example, often accused neighbouring Koans of 'allowing' a foreign power to leave such a profound material imprint, suggesting a failure of patriotism and lacking courage to obstruct the occupier's projects. Kalymnians argued that they were the only Dodecanesians to actively resist Italian authority, which made them better Greek patriots – locals did indeed stage the only major protest against Italian authority in 1935. Yet ethnographic investigations have also noted, locals wished the Italian government *had* developed Kalymnos. Some Kalymnians explained that they were punishment for being Greek patriots, hence arguing that being denied Italian development was a patriotic sacrifice.[9]

Dodecanesian interest in the Italian past has not just been about development, however. 'The Italians' (Οι Ιταλοί) were invoked in conversations about tourism, foreign cultural influence, governance, authority, and many other issues of public interest. In these areas, interviewees claimed that high standards of practice were observed, which set benchmarks for the future. In other words, 'The Italians' were useful to think with. Locals could see if they were faring well or if standards (e.g. the policing of traffic rules, public order) were falling. Moreover, social memory was also important for identity formation. Reading between the lines, stories about, or reflections on, 'The Italians' said much about regional identity and where Dodecanesians placed themselves in the time. Italian rule introduced numerous regulations and pursed policies that were designed to culturally transform the population. The occupation administration had intentionally penetrated Greek Dodecanesian society to attain consent for Italian rule and to Italianize the population. These efforts failed, but as Dodecanesian society were being integrated into Greek society after 1947 they left deep impressions. As a distinctive collective experience, social memory of Italian rule helped Dodecanesians find their place in the nation.

How Italy 'made' the Dodecanese

In some senses, the Italian occupation created the Dodecanese. Historically, the islands had not been a well-defined unit, as were, say, the Cyclades. The term 'Dodecanese' (Δωδεκάνησα), which today refers to Astypalea, Halki, Kalymnos, Kasos, Kos, Lipsos, Nisyros, Patmos, Rhodes, Symi, Tilos and Kastellorizo, has been in use since Byzantine times, but did not always apply to the islands in question. It was not an Ottoman administrative unit. Nor did they form an organic unit. Kos and Kalymnos, for example, were tied more intimately with Bodrum, as was Kastellorizo with Kas and Demre and other nearby Anatolian towns. Karpathos and Kasos had perhaps more do with Crete than with Rhodes, and Patmos with Samos. The Athens press revived the term 'Dodecanese' around 1908 to cover the Young Turk regime's abrogation of local privileges, which means it was not referring to Rhodes and Kos.[10]

4 Valerie McGuire *Italy's Sea: Empire and Nation in the Mediterranean, 1895-1945* (Liverpool, UK: University of Liverpool Press, 2020); Andreas Guidi, *Generations of Empire: Youth from Ottoman to Italian Rule in the Mediterranean* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2024): Valerie McGuire and Aron Rodrigue (eds), *Italian Fascism in Rhodes and the Dodecanese Islands, 1922–44* (London and New York: Palgrave, 2024)

5 Anthony McElligott, *Last Transport: The Holocaust in the Eastern Aegean* (London: Bloomsbury 2024), 289

6 Kira Kaurinkoski, 'The Muslim communities in Kos and Rhodes: reflections on social organization and collective identities in contemporary Greece', in J. Lindstedt & M. Wahlström (eds.), *Balkan Encounters. Old and New Identities in South-Eastern Europe. Slavica Helsingiensia* 41. (Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 2012), p. 47-78.

7 Hercules Millas, 'History Textbooks in Greece and Turkey', *History Workshop Journal* 31 (1991), 21–33; Efi Avdela, The Teaching of History in Greece', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 18.2 (2000), 239-53

8 Simona Martinoli and Eliana Perotti, *Architettura coloniale italiana nel Dodecaneso, 1912-1943* (Turin: Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1999); Aurelio Bruno, *Dodecaneso, cento anni dopo: Rodi (omaggio a Mario Lago)* (Rome: Aurelio Bruno, 2025

9 See the work of David E. Sutton and his extensive studies on Kalymnian memory and food, particularly 'Re-Scripting Women's Collective Action: Nationalist Writing and the Politics of Gendered Memory', *Identities*, 5.4. (1999), 469-500

10 J.L. Myres, *Dodecanese* (London: Admiralty. Naval Intelligence Division, 1943), 3-4

Some islands experienced Ottoman rule very differently. Blessed with ample arable land, Rhodes and Kos received substantial Muslim settlement, specifically in the arable areas near the main towns. The latter, in turn, were extensively 'Ottomanized' in terms of population and built environment, and Rhodes Town especially had a substantially military presence. Muslims historically occupied the walled precincts of both main towns, which were shared with Jews. Elsewhere the Ottoman imprint was minor, and was largely restricted to garrisoned fortresses, of which there were two in the Rhodian hinterland (Lindos and Feraklos), three near the Koan villages Pyli, Antimachea and Kefalos, and one each on Kalymnos and Leros.[11] Being largely autonomous, the rest of the island group had a very limited Ottoman imprint. Kastellorizo's mosque is the only one outside of Rhodes and Kos that survives, which in late Ottoman times serviced a small number of government officials, their families and a tiny garrison.[12]

Ottoman rule was experienced very differently by the 'privileged' (προνομιούχα) islands. During the nineteenth century some island communities experienced a golden age, especially Kalymnos, Symi and Kastellorizo, which prospered from sponge fishing. Sponges fetched high prices in Europe's industrial centres, and locals were masters of an exceedingly dangerous kind of deep-water fishing. Locals also prospered on cabotage and small-scale manufacturing, including sponge processing. Councils introduced tariffs to finance free community education and medical services. Consequently, the ports of Kalymnos, Symi and Kastellorizo drew many immigrants from their surrounding regions and became densely populated. Wealth was displayed by the construction of two-storied neo-classical homes and invested in land along the nearby Anatolian littoral. However, while these island communities today are aware that these halcyon days took place during the Ottoman period, they do not give the Ottomans any credit. Rather, in local memory the golden years had all to do with local enterprise and ingenuity, which they claim the Turks tried to suppress. Local historians make much of the fact that in the late Ottoman period the state tried to their rescind privileges and sometimes blockaded their ports to enforce new taxes.[13]

When an Italian force led by General Giovanni Ameglio occupied the islands in the Spring of 1912, it unwittingly created a territorial unit. Previously the islands hardly figured in Italian imperial ambitions. In fact, the 1912 seizure was a strategic afterthought. The previous September, the Italians had invaded Libya but were pinned to the coast by Ottoman and local tribal groups. To force a capitulation, Italy threatened Ottoman heartlands. An Italian naval squadron bombarded Beirut on 25 February, and then the Dardanelles on 18 April. The latter attack caused a greater stir in diplomatic circles but did not have their desired effect. The decision was then taken to occupy Astypalea on the 26 April, which seemed a tentative move given its diminutive size and isolation.[14] The Italians then seized a set of contiguous islands along the southwestern Anatolian coast. Not included was any island north of Patmos or Kastellorizo. The latter was excluded because, as Ameglio explained to Kastellorizian leaders at the time, it was too remote and difficult to secure.[15] The only island claimed of significant size was Rhodes. On 16 May Ameglio claimed it with minimal resistance. Everywhere Greek leaders and crowds greeted the invaders as liberators. In Rhodes Town there was a parade and a feast, in which the Ottoman governor and his soldiers participated, but who were then shipped off to Italy.[16]

These were the circumstances in which the Italian Dodecanese came into being, but Italy's prolonged presence was to give the Dodecanese a solidity it hitherto lacked. In 1912, Italy's actions raised strong concerns in diplomatic circles regarding regional stability and trade, but the Italian public celebrated as a glorious conquest, with the press making grandiloquent claims that Italians were finally revealing their innate martial values and civilizing potential.[17] Even so, foreign minister Antonino Di San Giuliano reassured his European counterparts that the occupation was temporary. Yet from the outset, occupation regime behaved more like a permanent administration, with much energy channelled into education, archaeological research, infrastructure and other projects that held long term benefits.[18] After all, Italy, as indeed most European states, was an imperial state. For decades, the Italian political class and the Italian public regarded imperial expansion as the nation's primary calling, but this goal was frustrated by the nation's limited economic and military wherewithal. Italy's miserable imperial record to date was deemed its greatest failure. The islands hardly counted as significant conquests, but they seemed strategically well-placed for more substantial gains in the eastern Mediterranean.[19]

Therefore, once securely in hand, the Dodecanese Islands were difficult to give up. Even when the Libyan issue was settled on 18 October 1912 (the Treaty of Ouchy), in which Ottoman sovereignty was recognized Ottoman, Italy found it near impossible to relinquish them. It could argue that ongoing indigenous resistance, which Italian forces did not overcome until the 1920s, meant the Ottomans had not withdrawn their forces and had not yet fulfilled their treaty obligations.[20] Regional instability also helped. The First Balkan War (1912-1913) had already started (12 October 1912), and in the ensuing months the Ottomans lost their remaining Aegean possessions, including Crete, Lesbos, Chios and Samos. Their determination to reclaim their Aegean islands was frustrated by Greek navy dominance, which was to be addressed with the delivery of two Dreadnoughts ordered from British firms Armstrong and Vickers. But time was on Italy's (and Greece's) side. The First World War break out before the ships were delivered, and by October Britain and the Ottomans were at war. Within a year, Italy and the Ottomans were fighting on opposite sides.[21]

11 Elias Kolovos, 'The Fortress and the Town of Rhodes According to the Ottoman Survey After the Siege of 1522', in Simon David Phillips (ed), *The 1522 Siege of Rhodes Causes, Course and Consequences* (London and New York: Routledge, 2020), 140

12 N.G. Pappas, *Castellorizo: An Illustrated History of the Island and its Conquerors* (Sydney: Halstead, 1994)

13 Numerous articles can be found in such local journals as *Ta Kalymniaka*.

14 Philip Carabott, 'The Temporary Italian Occupation of the Dodecanese: A Prelude to Permanency', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 4.2. (1993), 289

15 See Doumanis, Italokratia and the "Privileged" Islands: Factions and Social Protest on Kastellorizo', in Valerie McGuire and Aron Rodrigue (ed), *Italian Fascism in Rhodes and the Dodecanese Islands, 1923-44* (Routledge 2024), 143. Kastellorizians had revolted against Ottoman authority and its leaders invited the Italians to occupy their homeland as well. Once the First World War had broken out, France stepped in and administered Kastellorizo until 1921, after which it was conceded to Italy. See Nicholas G. Pappas, *Near Eastern Dreams: The French Occupation of Castellorizo, 1915-1921* (Sydney: Halstead, 2022)

16 Carabott, 'The Temporary Italian Occupation of the Dodecanese, 290-91

17 Luca Cottini, 'The Italian Occupation in the Dodecanese (1912-1923)', *Italica* 98.1 (2021), 82

18 For a full account, see Luca Pignataro, *Il dodecaneso italiano 1912-1947*, vol. I, *L'occupazione iniziale: 1912-1922* (Solfanelli, Chieti, 2011)

19 The classic statement on the contradiction of Italy's great imperial ambitions and domestic weaknesses is R.J.B. Bosworth, *Italy, the Least of the Great Powers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979)

20 R.J.B. Bosworth, 'The Great Powers and the end of the Ottoman Empire', in Marian Kent (ed), *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Frank Cass: London, 1996), 61

21 Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War* (Cambridge 2008), 42-3

In a secret treaty signed in London in 1915, Italy was promised major territorial spoils and sovereignty over the islands in return for joining the war against the Central Powers, which included the Ottoman Empire. At the post-war peace conferences, however, Italy came away virtually empty-handed. Sovereignty over the Dodecanese seemed like a consolation prize, to which Kastellorizo was added. (Kastellorizo had rebelled against Ottoman authority in 1912, clung onto its autonomy until the First World War, during which time it was occupied by France. In 1921, the French agreed to cede it to Italy.)[22] Italian possession of the Dodecanese was confirmed by the Treaty of Lausanne, Article 15.

The decision was hotly disputed in Greece, where the term 'Dodecanese' became a useful descriptor for what had become a well-defined territory. The hard borders inserted in 1912, and which were legitimized geopolitically by the Treaty of Lausanne, had also turned the island communities inwards. Interaction with the Anatolian coast were restricted. Cut-off from Kas and other nearby Anatolian coastal towns since 1912, Kastellorizo lost its chief source of income and most of its population. Local ties with Rhodes, however, were strengthened. A large proportion of Kastellorizians migrated to Rhodes Town. Meanwhile, island communities as far apart as Kastellorizo, Patmos and Kasos found they were now part of a territory governed from Rhodes and subjected to a regime that was exceptionally intrusive. The official newspaper, The *Messagero di Rodi*, routinely published the names of numerous people who had been fined or incarcerated for legal transgressions. Italian authority seemed omnipresent. Small island communities as far apart as Kasos, Agathonisi and Astypalea were made acutely aware that they now belonged to a specifically Dodecanesian territory and subject to the dictates of a Dodecanesian administration.

Dodecanesian Periodization

To convey why the occupation was meaningful, the Dodecanesians I interviewed in the late 1980s and early 1990s divided it into phases. Few could remember the earliest phase, namely 1912-1922, when future ownership of the islands was uncertain, and during which unification with Greece was a genuine possibility. Of greatest significance to them was the period 1922-1936, the governorship of Mario Lago. It was his civil administration that implemented extensive development projects that included extensive urban development in Rhodes Town and Kos Town, the renovation of historical buildings and structures, including the walls of Rhodes's Old Town and the Palace of the Grand Magister, and the modernization of economic infrastructures, including airports and electricity grids, road building and the modernization of agricultural practices. His governorship also tried to Italianize the islands through compulsory Italian classes in schools, by promoting archaeological research into Roman and Venetian remains, and by exposing locals to Italian film, music and theatre.[23]

The governorship of Mario Lago was commonly remembered as the high period of Italian rule. It was associated with progress and modernity, as well as a time of high employment. Locals treasured the buildings produced by the regime because they gave the islands a distinctive style that was both aesthetically pleasing and evoked modernity. Such massive buildings as the suitably named *Grande Albergo delle Rose* were sources of immense local pride. Those who worked on the urban re-development of Kos following the earthquake of 1933 appreciated the functionality of the streetscapes, which could accommodate motor vehicle traffic, and the housing, which had modern internal features and gardens. Interviewees also claimed the regime treated Greek Dodecanesians in a civil manner. They made much of Lago's character, who was remembered as having a warm smile, and who was said to engage with locals in an affable manner. Lago was regarded as the personification of Italian civility.

Indeed, the fact that Dodecanese lacked the kind of authoritarian tone during this period owed much to Lago himself, a Piedmontese liberal monarchist who believed in Italy's civilizing potential could be fulfilled more through soft power than coercion. Lago had enough discretionary power to operate in his own manner, seeing no need for the coercive and violent practices on display in Italy's African territories, namely Libya, Somalia and later, Ethiopia.[24] His approach to Italianization was through consent rather than forced assimilation. He left local government intact, respected the specific rights of the three principal confessional groups, and maintained the teaching of local languages in schools. Dodecanesians remembered with some fondness the benefits of Italian schooling, claiming only good could come from learning another language. Youths also liked such cultural influences as modern Italian music, opera, theatre and organized sports.

Un-Italian Italian rule

Lago's replacement created a very different environment. Cesare Maria de Vecchi (1936-1941) had already earned notoriety as one of Mussolini's more brutish henchmen, including a blood-stained record as governor of Italian Somaliland in the 1920s. In the Dodecanese he wanted to make his mark as a Fascist and imperialist: Ho trovato terreno pressoché vergine per il mio fascismo inter oche non si contaminerà mai finché io viva".[25] He disapproved of his predecessor's approach, claiming 'imperial' means would bring much quicker and effective results.[26] His administration, which locals described as 'fascist' rather than 'Italian', was noteworthy for the banning of Greek lessons in schools and for the more brutish treatment of the local population. Interviewees remember officials were often more officious, less courteous and sometimes prepared to humiliate locals publicly – some described it as a time of 'face slapping', χαστούκια.

There were also fewer jobs during the De Vecchi period, as public investment and development projects dried up. The loss of gainful employment overshadowed any of the other benefits that the islanders still might have enjoyed in these difficult times. As Italy itself drew closer to Nazi Germany and seemed bent on preparing for a European war, the new governor's approach was to achieve its domestic aims coercively. In practice, De Vecchi's approach had the opposite effect. It galvanized Greek nationalist sentiment and made those who might have been indifferent to Greek nationalism much more receptive. It also launched forms of passive resistance, which ranged from jokes to the secret school movement, which saw children having to meet in secret locations, often at night, to take Greek language classes.

22 Nicholas G. Pappas, *Castellorizo: An Ill. History of the Island and its Conquerors* (Halstead: Sydney, 1994).

23 Pignataro's second volume is the best research work on the Lago period: *Il Dodecaneso italiano 1912-1947*. Vo; II., *Il governo di Mario Lago. 1923-1936* (Solfanelli, Chieti, 2013)

24 Luca Pignataro, 'L'amministrazione italiana del Dodecaneso', *Res Publica – A proposito del Dodecaneso italiano* 8 (2014), 15: https://www.laleggepertutti.it/prodotto/res-publica-82014-a-proposito-del-dodecaneso-italiano#google_vignette (cited 30 January 2025).

25 Excerpt from a message to a friend, quoted in Pignataro, *Il Dodecaneso Italiano, 1912-1947*, Vol. III *De Vecchi, Guerra e Dopoguerra, 1936-1947/50* (Solfanelli, Chieti, 2024), 96.

26 Pignataro, L'amministrazione italiana del Dodecaneso, 18.

Subsequent short-lived governorships (Ettore Bastico, Inigo Campioni) were forgotten, by which time Italy was at war. Italy occupied much of Greece between the end of 1941 and the summer of 1943, including most of the mainland and Greek islands. These were times of extreme scarcity and dearth, and Italian personnel, military and civilian, suffered almost as much as the subject population.[27] The years 1943 to 1945 proved to be much traumatic. When Mussolini's replacement, General Pietro Badoglio, announced in early September 1943 that an armistice had been signed with the Allies, German troops moved quickly into the Dodecanese and repulsed a British invasion. For the first time, Dodecanesians witnessed wartime violence at close quarters. Although an Italian civil administration was retained, the Dodecanese were effectively under German authority, and locals remembered it as the 'German occupation' or simply as 'the war' (ο πόλεμος). Many recalled 'near-death' experiences, as some interviewees tried to assist the Allies by passing on information or feeding Allied personal trapped in nearby hills. Most locals remembered that period primarily as a one of hunger. Food shortages were severe on the less fertile islands, which in peacetime normally relied on food imports. To survive, many families risked the crossing to Turkey, from where they were sent to refugee camps in British Palestine.

German troops were withdrawn from the mainland on 12 October 1944, but those stationed in the Dodecanese were not evacuated and were effectively marooned until May 1945. The British military occupied the islands, dismissed the Italian civil administration but retained many Italian personnel.[28] The official objective was to secure the islands before their future was determined. Social memory does not cast the British in a positive light. Although Britain was an ally, many interviewees and some local historians regarded the British as 'occupiers' because they treated Dodecanesians as if they were colonial subjects.

Greek rule

The most difficult topic to address was the period following unification (ενσωμάτωση) in 1947. The historiography is virtually silent. Each island has had its history written by dedicated amateur historians, who learn foreign languages, read mountains of primary documents, and publish books and learned articles. Over the years, their scholarly books and articles have appeared in journals produced by local cultural and educational associations. It is noteworthy, however, that almost nothing has been written on the period following unification.

Two reasons can be surmised. The first is that 1947 represented the 'end of History': 'History' being the studying of the Greek nation, the deeds of patriots and the misdeeds of the nation's enemies. Local historians have focused on patriotic struggle and how they endured foreign rule. Other historical subject matter is deemed trivial in comparison. According to this logic, therefore, history ends in 1947. Once liberty was achieved, the Dodecanese Islands ceased to matter as an historical subject. The second reason has to do with the lack of events that are conventionally interesting to historians. Local municipal politics is not considered sufficiently interesting to the historians or indeed readers. To paraphrase the historian of Italian unification Charles Delzell, the poetry of the struggle for unification with Greece gave way to the prose of the post-unification period.[29]

27 Cf. Shelia Lecoeur, *Mussolini's Aegean Island Mussolini's Greek Island: Fascism and the Italian Occupation of Syros in World War II* (I.B. Tauris: London, 2009).

28 Pignataro, *Il Dodecaneso Italiano, 1912-1947*, Vol. III *De Vecchi, Guerra e Dopoguerra, 1936-1947/50*, 318.

29 C. F. Delzell (ed), *The Unification of Italy, 1859–61: Cavour, Mazzini or Garibaldi?* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston: New York, 1965), 1.

For ordinary Dodecanesians, however, Greek rule brought with it a new phase of authoritarian rule. Sometimes they would talk of 'the coming of the Greeks', as if they were another invader: "Οταν ήρθανε οι Έλληνες, ...". To be sure, Dodecanesians support the commonplace Greek view that all foreign regimes, including the Italians, were illegitimate. Only Greek rule is deemed legitimate, yet for Dodecanesians there were aspects of the post-liberation era that were deeply disappointing.

Most painful was their exposure to the extremely divisive nature of Greek political life. Until 1947 Dodecanese had been spared the two political crises that had cut deeply into Greek society since before the First World War, namely the Venizelos-Royalist schism and the ideological chasm that had emerged during the Axis occupation. Unification took place at the height of the Greek Civil War, in while the fighting was contained to Greece's mainland, the persecution of leftists, real or imagined, extended to all parts of the country. 'When the Greeks came', said many interviewees, the Dodecanese became politicized. Greek authorities were determined to find Communists, even though the Communist movement barely existed in the Dodecanese. The Athens government extended patronage to locals who seemed supportive of far-Right politics, giving them public jobs and licenses. Significant numbers of Dodecanesians were to emigrate to Australia, the United States and Canada in these postwar years for economic reasons, but many of them were also happy to leave behind the new politics that was dividing their communities. One émigré recalled how his father was often harassed for being a self-professed 'democrat', with police incessantly inspecting his carpentry workshop to check if he had committed a regulatory or legal infraction.[30]

In later years, Dodecanesians could use the Italian period, specifically the governorship of Mario Lago (1922-1936), as a standard against which Greek rule could be measured. 'The Italians' were recalled whenever locals believed they had cause for complaint about maladministration, public service and employment opportunities. For such reasons, people who recalled Italian rule frequently idealized it and made it look too rosy. Some interviewees felt a need to correct this common tendency. One noted that it was Greek administration that brought electricity to the villages and built most of the road networks, not, as some irresponsibly claimed, the Italians.

Becoming Dodecanesian

One might describe Dodecanesian as a 'weak' identity. Not many use it to describe themselves. People of smaller islands that are obscure even to most Greeks, such as Tilos, Halki or Lipsos, might find it useful. But most will identify with their island. Rhodians will always say they are Rhodians. Even for Rhodians, however the term is not devoid of meaning. The difficulties that Greek rule presented the islanders in the post-unification years and perhaps through to the end of the military dictatorship (1967-1974), made the Italian period important in social memory. It did much to 'make' the Dodecanese and give Dodecanesians a common identity. The governorship of Mario Lago provided them with an Italian version of modernity, which helped them make sense of unification and its challenges. Within the context of the Greek nation, these island communities had experienced something that was not shared by the rest of Greece.

30 Testimony of Emmanuel Dimitriadis, Greek Australian Archive collection, State Library of NSW.

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"I'm honored to be part of the Conversation - an opportunity to reflect on the diverse human experiences of this place and its people, past and present. It is through these experiences that we can recognize exceptions to grand narratives of regional and world history - particularities that bear important lessons. My time on Rhodes shaped much of my thinking about heritage and place, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to share my research in this collection."

Evan Taylor

Living with others' pasts

Monumentality and everyday heritage in Rhodes

The surfaces of Old Town Rhodes bear the traces of myriad residents, workers, and passers through that span centuries. In this chapter, I ask how the material traces of the past come together in the lives of those who live and work in Old Town in the contemporary moment. In an age of mass tourism, the future of local communities in historic urban spaces is uncertain. The dominant aesthetic arrangement of Old Town Rhodes reflects its management as an archaeological site protected by the Greek Ministry of Culture, as a UNESCO World Heritage site, and as a global tourism destination. This aesthetic, which I have referred to as a medieval/Greek time-space (Taylor 2022a), aligns the time depth and monumentality of medieval architecture so desirable to tourists with aspects of Greek historiography (Hamilakis 2007; Rappas 2018). Rhodians who live and work in Old Town have a different relationship to its materiality than those who visit its monuments as tourists or who identify as professionals in heritage management. Like inhabitants of other historic urban centers (Alexandrino Ocaña 2023; Herzfeld 1991; 2016; Taylor 2022b) they offer alternative ways of thinking about heritage that center their own present and future that are yet to resonate in the wider field of heritage management. Close attention to local narratives and Old Town's surfaces illuminates formations of heritage that contribute to livelihoods and livability in the everyday. For many in Old Town, heritage is a reciprocal practice of accompanying and being accompanied by the material traces of the past. At times this involves taking on a role of stewardship—replastering walls, for example, in accordance with local aesthetics—but it also involves using the material traces of the past to cultivate a meaningful life—as a source of wage labor, an infrastructure for maintaining community relations, or as the bearer of local memory.

Most residents and workers in Old Town Rhodes who I interviewed for this research did not claim deep historical ties to this place. As described in other contributions to this volume, the built environment of Old Town Rhodes is typically periodized according to eras of Hospitaller, Ottoman, and Italian rule and the Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, and Jewish populations that inhabited the town during those periods. When the United Nations transferred control of Rhodes and the other islands of the Dodecanese to Greece after World War II, the state did not clear Ottoman-era standing structures as witnessed earlier in other Greek cities (Koumaridis 2006), but rather adopted a stance of non-intervention towards buildings related to the Muslim and Jewish communities of Old Town. With the integration of Rhodes into the Greek state and the tourism boom of the late twentieth century, structures of Byzantine and Crusader (Christian) origin were the focus of preservation and commodification efforts. This resulted in the slow deterioration of many Ottoman-era public structures throughout Rhodes. In the early 2000s, European Union funding programs incentivized the structural restoration of several Ottoman-era structures in Old Town, but community and public access to these remains restricted (European Commission 2000, 72; Kaymakçi and Özgün 2015, 59–61; Kizis 2017; Stefanis and Theoulakis 2016, 1416).

The historical majority urban Muslim population in Rhodes decreased considerably in the latter half of the twentieth century due to emigration brought on by the closure of Turkish schools in the 1970s, restrictive citizenship laws, and social tensions exacerbated by the Cyprus conflict, leaving a Greek majority in Old Town (Doumanis 1997, 200; Kaurinkoski 2012). While the Greek state does not collect population data based on religious affiliation, researchers estimate a Muslim community numbering about 5,000 people persists in the Dodecanese (Kaurinkoski 2012, 54), with roughly 2,500–3,000 on Rhodes (Georgalidou, Kaili, and Celtek 2010; Kimourtzis et al. 2017). The centuries-old

Jewish community of Rhodes, located in the easternmost quarter of Old Town, was destroyed in the final months of the Second World War. In July 1944, the occupying German army deported the Jews of Rhodes to concentration camps in eastern Europe, leaving *la Juderia*—Old Town's historic Jewish quarter—empty and in ruins from Allied bombing. Houses that were empty when Rhodes came under Greek governance in 1947 were appropriated by the state as abandoned property and placed in the custodianship of the Archaeological Service. People who took up residence in these buildings over the following years, mostly Greek newcomers from elsewhere on Rhodes and nearby islands, became, and still are, tenants of the Archaeological Service, paying a small monthly sum based on square meterage (Kasdagli 2010, 56–57; Sintès 2012). Today, Old Town Rhodes hosts a shrinking resident population, including decades-long elderly residents, multi-generational families, and expat tenants and property owners.

Here, I adopt the framework of archaeological ethnography to make sense of the temporality and materiality of life in Old Town. Hamilakis (2011, 405–6) conceptualizes archaeological ethnography as a multitemporal and reflexive examination of materiality. This approach anticipates that the material traces of the past resonate in different ways according to the social relations of which they are a part. It acknowledges that the formation of archaeological sites extends into the present and will continue into the future. To grasp the range of practices that constitute everyday heritage in Old Town Rhodes, my research combined photographic survey, ethnographic interviews, and participant observation in organized events carried out over a period of three months in 2016. In my exploration of everyday heritage that follows, I focus on my interactions with three interlocutors.

I resist referring to those whose lives are tightly connected to Old Town as a singular community, or even as a population that can be distinguished by ethnicity, national origin, or socio-economic status. This place has long meant different things to different people—an ancestral homeplace and a temporary stopping point, a place to work but not to live and a place to live but not work. At the outset of my research, I imagined each of my research participants fitting one of the handful of ethno-linguistic profiles long used to characterize the multicultural history of Rhodes. It soon became apparent that I would be omitting the experiences of many if I limited my conversations to individuals who identified as being part of a historically documented ethno-linguistic community in Old Town. While not all people who live and work here have generational attachments to Old Town, they have noteworthy relations to this place and its pasts in everyday life and participate in its ongoing formation.

Making a living on monumentality

Tourism has a long history on Rhodes. When Italy took control of the Dodecanese during the Italo-Turkish war, it did so under the pretense of restoring the European character of the islands and developing them as centers of leisure for Italian and other European elites (Fuller 2007; Maglio 2014; Shachar 2013). Italian tourism development on Rhodes included construction of transportation infrastructure, a luxury hotel (the *Grande Albergo delle Rose*), the Kalithea springs resort, monumental public buildings, and the reconfiguration of Old Town streets and facades to more closely resemble a medieval Crusader town. While Old Town's status as a tourist attraction was firmly established during the Italian occupation, a significant component of Old Town's formation since the mid-twentieth century has been its integration into the Greek national landscape and tourism market. From the 1960s to 1990s, developers rushed to build high-capacity hotels and resorts along the coasts south of Rhodes Town (Panagopoulos 1995). These years also coincided with projects by the state, developers, and entrepreneurs that reorganized and resignified the materiality of Old Town as at once medieval and Greek (Taylor 2022a; Watson 2010).

Working in Old Town is easy, people told me, because of earlier Italian interventions that created a monumental time-space that pulls at tourist desires. Irina*, one of my interlocutors, immigrated to Greece from Russia in the 1990s. After struggling for several months to find work in Athens, she went to Rhodes for a summer having heard about available kitchen jobs in hotels and restaurants. Initially considering it a temporary move, she quickly honed her skills in Greek and English working in restaurants, and later married a Greek man while pursuing a master's degree in French at the University of the Aegean.

Nowadays Irina manages a small hotel in Old Town that her in-laws opened in the 1970s. Her husband's family immigrated to Rhodes from Karpathos in the mid-1970s, and bought a piece of property in Old Town with the aim of establishing both a family home and a business. Her in-laws built the hotel in the courtyard of a larger complex of mixed Hospitaller and Ottoman buildings, near the highest part of Old Town where at the same time many Rhodian Turks were emigrating. A painted sign depicting the city's stone walls and a rose invites guests into the property's small marble-paved courtyard, itself ornamented with trees and flowering plants potted in recycled plastic containers.

Irina explains that the Italians made it easy for people like her in-laws to open small businesses in the latter half of the twentieth century, because the work of creating an attraction was accomplished and tourist infrastructure was already in place. She describes Rhodes as unique in Greece for the massive investment the Italians made in tourist infrastructure that seeded the economy of which they are a part: "You know, in the beginning of the twentieth century, the Italian government, they renovated all of these buildings in Old Town, in Mandraki harbor, and all over the island. It's something that you can't find anywhere in Greece." Her in-laws came to Rhodes because of the established tourism industry that supplied seemingly endless jobs. In contrast, economic conditions had declined on Karpathos in the decades after integration with Greece and tourists had not yet stumbled upon the less populated islands of the south Aegean. She explained:

> They came here because there was a very big tourism industry. […] We'll always have tourism. Maybe a little less some years, maybe a little bit more. But we'll still have it. Every year. It's easy to find a job here, not like other places in Greece. Because for the summer season, there are always opportunities to find something in tourism.

Her characterization of tourism in Old Town as a reliable source of livelihood acknowledges that employment on Rhodes is dependent to a far lesser extent on the public service and allied sectors that were dramatically impacted during the sovereign debt crisis. She specifically suggests that Rhodes's unique configuration of Greek cultural heritage can reliably draw tourists regardless of their primary interests:

> Greece has this huge heritage. And on Rhodes, you know, you have from the ancient times the Acropolis in Lindos, and medieval castles all over around the island. […] Many tourists don't bother going anywhere else in Greece because Rhodes combines everything. Beaches, mountains, heritage, culture, sightseeing. Everything. And I noticed that people, when they arrive to Rhodes, they prefer to stay in the Old Town because it's something different. It's something that they cannot find anywhere else.

Irina never claimed a personal attachment to Greece's "huge heritage," but rather spoke of it as an endlessly giving resource. By contrast she spoke proudly of her family's stories of migration and entrepreneurship, citing the small hotel courtyard where we spoke as an example of a place that reflects her own sense of past, place and belonging. She admitted to me that managing a hotel was not always a fulfilling job. Nonetheless, while she and her husband had jobs outside the hotel that

could provide for their family, they felt a sense of duty to ensuring the hotel's future. Heritage, here, is located in the creation of livelihood in the recent past. The monumental time-space of Old Town is accessory to this pursuit, but is not itself a reference point for making sense of one's present.

Preserving and losing livable place

Most residential buildings in Old Town are at least partly of medieval construction, and retain the architectural modifications and styles that inhabitants added to them through the Ottoman and Italian periods. Examples of these include wooden projecting windows (*mashrabiyya*), pairs of plaster neoclassical columns at entryways, or built-in Italian postal boxes. In contrast to the Italians' stripping of exterior plaster from buildings that they made into museums and scenic streetscapes to expose bare stone and carved elements, most occupied houses are plastered and washed in a coat of yellow, ochre, blue, or white paint, Figure 1. Layering plaster and other external ornamentation onto existing structures was common practice under Ottoman rule, allowing Turkish and Jewish residents to economically adapt their buildings to prevailing architectural tastes shared across communities of the south Aegean .



Figure 1: Painted plaster exterior of an Old Town residence. Photo by E. Taylor.

Whereas vegetation is typically cleared from the stone walls of state-owned and commercial buildings, many residents encourage the growth of creeping vines, surround their properties with plants potted in recycled containers, and even cultivate small gardens in whatever patch of soil they may manage to expose in this densely built and paved area. Some residents leave chairs in front of their houses for neighbors to rest, gossip, or play a game of backgammon, Figure 2.



Figure 2: Exterior of residential buildings in Old Town featuring compact gardens and space for socializing. Photo by E. Taylor.

This is an aesthetic of home-making and neighborliness cultivated over decades of renewed community building in Old Town after the rupture of the Second World War, and signals the modicum of control residents have over small parcels of Old Town. It is also a withering aesthetic. As the number of long-term residents in Old Town shrinks, some of these homes are being redeveloped as guesthouses for tourists or seasonal homes for wealthy expats, which often entails stripping vegetation and plastered exteriors to the bare-stone medieval aesthetic prominent in state-managed buildings.

Giorgos, a life-long resident of Old Town, sells jewelry that he crafts from a shop that he has owned throughout his adult life, just a few doors down from his lifelong home and birthplace. His father was Rhodian and his mother came to Rhodes from nearby Tilos in the later years of Italian rule. "It's not a good life," he told me about living and working in Old Town, "Maybe it's nice to come for two or three weeks. But it's no place to live." Giorgos works seven days a week year-round. His business model is built around tourists that wander off the beaten path and those out for a stroll when the shops on the main commercial arteries are closed, often keeping his shop open until ten or eleven o'clock at night. He is sociable but spends most of his day sitting quietly on a stool, waiting for friends to stop in, for a passerby to ask a question, or for a customer to express interest in his inventory.

Giorgos described how he had grown tired of working with tourists: "Can you imagine? Every day, saying 'Hello, how are you? Where are you from?' All day long. Every day." He sighed and was quiet for a moment after telling me this. Giorgos is of the opinion that the Greek authorities have gotten tourism wrong on Rhodes. He explained that in his youth, before the state embraced mass tourism for economic development, the only touristic part of Old Town was Sokratou Street, which even then had numerous market stalls selling produce, meat, and household goods to local residents. For him, Old Town has become a fantasy world that is simply another attraction for tourists staying at

the large beach hotels. Increasingly, he says, tourists spend no more than an afternoon shopping for souvenirs in Old Town, maybe staying for dinner in the evening, and spend the rest of their holiday at one of the beaches beyond Old Town's walls. He does not see Old Town as a place where residents could feasibly live and make a living, seeing his exhausting work-life as an exception rather than the rule. He characterizes most Old Town residents as scraping by on government pensions and odd jobs while living in undermaintained state-owned housing. Most workers who hold steady jobs in Old Town live outside its walls—making too great an income to rent state housing and too little to purchase property there that would need extensive renovation. He is intensely proud of his son, who recently graduated from university in the U.K. and plans to build his career there, rather than on Rhodes.



Figure 3: Whitewashing around entryways and bases of exterior walls in Old Town. Photo by E. Taylor.

The dissolution of social life in Old Town is felt by its residents sensorially and ecologically. Giorgos recalls a time when the geography of Rhodes could be smelled, heard, and felt. When Sokratou was a real market street, he remembers smelling the seasons through the fruits and vegetables overflowing from vendor stalls. He recalls the smell of sea life emanating from the fish market on leaving Old Town from its northern gates. The sensory-scape of his childhood has been largely displaced by the noise of automobile traffic, suffocating crowds of tourists, and stores filled with mass-produced souvenirs—but not completely. In subtle ways, Giorgos nurtures his relations to his environment, tending to small bits of Old Town according to his own ethics of care.

I approached him one evening after noticing him carry a bucket of paint into his shop. On the pebble street and along the base of the nearby buildings were freshly painted white stripes. Giorgos explained that when he opened the door to the shop early that morning a Rhodian whip snake, feared for its aggressive disposition but appreciated in Old Town as critical pest control, slithered out over his feet. Whitewashing entryways is a widespread practice among Old Town residents for deterring insects, and, I learned from Giorgos, some believe it to also ward off snakes, Figure 3. Painting the street and the bases of adjacent walls late in the evening allowed him to make what he understood to be a necessary intervention in livability while evading the possible surveillance of a passing inspector from the Archaeological Service who might disapprove. He found it obnoxious that residents had to worry about such things but also told me that inspectors typically don't bother investigating such acts unless they see them unfolding.

Residents connect with histories in Old Town through memorial and sensorial pathways, even if their ancestors do not hail from Rhodes. Many residents appreciate the economic value of medieval monumentality and the easily marketable symbols of the Greek nation-state reproduced throughout Old Town, but find their own sense of belonging and place in less ostentatious pockets that anchor them even as they openly speculate about the time when it may not be possible to both live and make a living there. On several of my visits with Giorgos, an older woman sat on her doorstep across the pebble street from his shop. She and Giorgos seldom said anything to each other, but they sat with the same relaxed posture on their quiet street. Their attention was always aimed at the bend in the road where walkers entered and faded from view, and together their eyes followed the odd passing tourist. This was a habit rehearsed through years of repetition. Early in my fieldwork Giorgos introduced me to his neighbor and explained that she had been a presence in his life since he was a child. That evening, as he spoke about feeling lost and overwhelmed by the growth of cruise ship tourism, he frequently glanced and nodded towards his neighbor across the street as a way of suggesting that at stake are not only individual livelihoods in Old Town, but cherished old relations like those between him and his neighbor.

Sophia, an Old Town resident who works for a tour company, described her relationship to Old Town and her concerns about residents' future while we spoke in her kitchen. In the 1980s, after marrying a man from the island, Sophia moved to Rhodes from Athens where she had apprenticed as a silversmith, and ever since has worked in tourism. I asked why she chooses to live in Old Town, and she explained while pointing to the pebble street and buildings out the window, "Because I am obsessed with all of this, with the stones." It would be easy to associate this statement with a kind of preservationist romanticism, seeing inherent value in stone buildings by virtue of their age. As she continued, though, she described Old Town as a kind of vessel that contained worlds where, thanks to its stone architecture and the historical placement of populations within Old Town, a person could at once belong to a vast transnational network and a small intimate community. To illustrate this, she pointed out the window to the intersection of streets in front of her rented house. Three mismatched wooden chairs were lined up against a defunct Ottoman fountain next to a house. In front of the house was a wooden table holding two potted plants. Two stools were placed underneath the table, and next to it was another wooden chair upon which a light blue jacket had been draped. Every morning, a group of elderly men sat in the chairs, catching each other up on the news. "It's a very unique thing," said Sophia, "Years ago, maybe not. But you don't see it anymore, certainly not outside of Old Town. Those men, they used to work on the boats, then their wives died, their children moved away. They watch the news on TV, but other than that nothing outside of the walls is of much interest to them. This is their world. They pay no attention at all to the [touristic] nonsense happening around them."

Sophia's obsession "with all of this, with the stones" is an obsession with Old Town's capacity to hold worlds, past and present. With that obsession comes intense frustration and sadness about the ongoing loss of some of these worlds. She avoids walking through la Judería out of respect for those killed in the Holocaust and the survivors who could not return. She reviles the government's treatment of Rhodian Turks and described contemporary Greek nationalism as embarrassing. "Look around," she said alluding to the ambient material traces of Rhodes's multi-ethnic past, "how can kids only learn Greek history in a place like this?"

She is not hopeful about the future of Old Town. She sees tourism slipping out of local hands with every group of cruise ship passengers that disembarks on a three-hour excursion with no chance to patronize small, local businesses, and every lease signed away to an outside investor. At the time of writing, Sophia has moved to a smaller apartment in Old Town after her former landlord sold the property she was living in to a boutique hotel developer. The website for the hotel that now

occupies this three-story late-Ottoman building, dating to the late nineteenth century, promises to visitors "the feeling that they are living in a castle," echoing the rhetoric of other medieval-centric tourism developers. With the addition of some wrought-iron furnishings, a house that was made a home by its resident's relations to neighbors, histories, and its stones, is commoditized into a tourist product.

In the small courtyard behind her home, Sophia pieced together fragments of architectural stone churned up by her landlord's unending renovations of the shop below her apartment. The stones encircled her garden plants and she stacked them in various configurations to add dimension to the courtyard. Other Old Town residents similarly use found stones and historical objects as plant stands, garden borders, or ornaments. Sophia treaded through Old Town with an awareness of specific pasts and an interest in keeping the people, the stones, and the space of Old Town connected in meaningful and creative ways. In images of the guesthouse that was once her home, her garden has been replaced by a gravel bed, and her curated collection of Old Town stones is absent.

Everyday heritage

In this chapter I have aimed to draw attention to everyday lived relations to past and place that move beyond the dominant narrative of heritage in Rhodes and to speculate what a more diverse, less standardized, and un-managed understanding of heritage might lend to the future of Old Town's pasts. This is not a rejection of the work that heritage professionals do, but an exploration of *what else* heritage is and does for those who inhabit this place. The relations that people create and maintain with Old Town today are different from those that have existed in the past and will shift as time passes. The formation of Old Town did not end in 1912 or 1947. Nor can the meaningfulness of people's relations to Old Town be distilled to the criteria given for its inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, n.d.), even if this inscription has become central to its recognition in the global tourism market.

Writing of the devastation wrought on citizens' sense of place by the fires that have become common throughout Greece in recent years, C. Nadia Seremetakis (2019) underscores the necessity of place in being able to engage outsiders as a collective and to defend the memories archived in the landscape. She writes:

> Place, defined by its human and nonhuman content and activity, is crucial in and for the dialogical process. To engage in an antiphonic dialogue, to address the other, one has to have an address, a place. The creation of a separate space, a place, is a prerequisite for witnessing, witnessing others and being witnessed by others. (Seremetakis 2019, 73–74)

The crumbling buildings of la Judería and the empty houses and public buildings of Rhodian Turks are striking examples of the material aftermath of extreme nationalism, and the further erasure of residents' sense of place persists in the current era of mass tourism. The absence of people and the fading of their materiality of belonging marks the slow erasure of place as it loses its witnesses and becomes unwitnessable. The capacity to signify to outsiders that Old Town was and is a place of belonging for Rhodian Jews and Turks, migrant Greeks, and others from around the world who found home here, is being consolidated into fewer and fewer places—a private Jewish museum, a handful of commemorative plaques, tourist maps that name mosques that are otherwise shuttered and unsigned, or the increasingly rare resident-owned shop. In their everyday formations of heritage, Old Town residents offer lessons in resisting this trend, and in creating the conditions to sustain social life in this place.

* All names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

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"Old Town was and is a place of belonging for Rhodian Jews and Turks, migrant Greeks, and others from around the world who found home here" Evan Taylor.
Photos: T. Tuten

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In Past Tense?
Otherness, Trauma, and Integration of Muslims in Rhodes

Introduction[1]

It was 2015 and 2016 when the Mass Media across the world started conveying images of human despair in the short distance between the shores of Asia Minor and the Aegean islands. It is true that the proliferation of the image of suffering renders it a rather banal statement - to paraphrase Hannah Arendt. Nevertheless, the case of refugees and immigrants continues to this day to attract attention due to the spatial and temporal condensation of such a large population movement. Rhodes island in Greece, while at the forefront of the migration crisis since 2015, has only attracted media attention in the past few years, compared to other islands in Southern and South-Eastern Europe. The initial absence of media attention and the stakes related to that, allowed us to examine, between 2015 and 2017, integration policies for incoming refugees and immigrants, custom made for the local social conditions.

The *Understanding Diversity in Rhodes: Traditional and New Others* (UnDRho) research project received funding from the EEA Mechanism 2009-2014 (GR07/3635), and was implemented by the Department of Primary Education of the University of the Aegean. It focused on the social formation of Rhodes island and the dynamics of diversity at the local level; a diversity represented by the local Muslim community and the Muslim refugees and immigrants that arrive on the island. More specifically, the qualitative characteristics of the Rhodian Muslim's reception of Muslim newcomers have been examined with a view to forming innovative integration policies. The research was designed to test two hypotheses concerning the integration of Muslim refugees and immigrants through the utilization of the cultural diversity of the Rhodian Muslims as an entry point to the island's society. The first one regarded the use of religion, namely the common cultural feature of the two groups, as a connecting point and a stepping stone towards the integration of the refugees and immigrants. The second hypothesis refers to the use of the experienced cultural diversity *per se* as a "convergence point" between the two social groups.

The present article will focus on the theoretical background, the research strategy and the results of the testing of the aforementioned second hypothesis. Before the analysis of the methodology employed, some conceptual clarifications need to be made. The "convergence point" used in the description of the hypothesis is a working concept developed for the needs of the research. It is approached as the moment of empathy that stems from the common experience of diversity and determines the psychological readiness to support the integration of the refugees and immigrants. In the framework of a deductive research strategy, the convergence point concept has been analysed into two researchable questions (Bryman 2004, 8): how the Rhodian Muslims make sense of their

1 This is a revised edition of the paper under the title 'Identifying Diversity in Rhodes Island Greece: Dynamics of Otherness Trauma and Integration' published at the *International Journal of Euro-Mediterranean Studies* in 2017 (10:1). The initial work was supported by the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 within the "Academic Research in Priority Areas - Diversity, Inequality and Social integration" program under Grant (GR07/3635). The authors would like to acknowledge the valuable input of the UnDRho research team and more specifically of Dr. Ioannis F. Papageorgiou, Dr. Dimitris Kypriotis, Dr. Petros Trantas and Stergiani Athanasiou.

cultural diversity; and how this affects their perception of the new diversity represented by refugees and immigrants. The theoretical background informing the process of deduction is rather limited since the particular field of research has not been extensively studied under the light of the same concepts. From a point of view focusing locally, Kaurinkoski (2012) approached the Rhodian Muslims as a social group from a descriptive ethnographical point of view, while Georgallidou (2004) conducted socio-linguistic research. On the other hand, in a recent publication Papandreou (2023) studies a subgroup of the Rhodian Muslim community, namely those of Cretan origin, under the light of traumatic memory. In the wider field, there exists bibliography that focuses on the relations between contemporary migration waves and already settled generations of migrants (see for example Madibbo 2007). Although culturally diverse social groups with historical presence constitute a different case from that described in this bibliography, some interesting analogies regarding the dynamics between inner and outer outgroups are indeed deduced in the chapter regarding the dynamics of trauma.

These researchable questions, along with pertinent questions concerning the first hypothesis, have been taken into consideration in the methodology designed to accommodate the concepts of the research. The population of the research consisted of the Rhodian Muslims over fifty-five years old. That design intended to focus on members of the community with personal memories of the last period in which their religious identity could have possibly attracted actual diversified behaviour rather than just symbolic. Such behaviour, although rare, not widespread and insignificant (two confirmed incidents of damaged property), was found to have taken place in 1974, the year of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, based on archival research of the local newspapers and confirmed by the empirical part of the research (Kokkinos, Kimourtzis, Karamouzis et al. 2016 b). To the extent that the research studied the readiness of the middle-aged and older Rhodian Muslims to support the integration of the Muslim refugees and immigrants, younger members of the community and Muslim immigrants only formed quasi control groups for comparison purposes. On the other hand, refugees have started arriving on the island only two years prior to this research, while due to the migration policy between 2015 and 2017 refugees would remain on Rhodes between a few days and a few months depending on their legal status[1]. Therefore, their temporary presence prevents the formation of a thorough impression of the group dynamics from their side. With those caveats in mind, in order to shed light on the migration side, the researchers interviewed Syrians that have lived on the island for decades as economic immigrants, and served as interpreters at the refugee camp. All sample segments were generated through a snowball technique that resulted in eighteen interviews and twenty-six cases of non-participant observation from January to May 2016.

In terms of method employed, triangulation was achieved through conducting long interviews, in combination with quantitative content analysis and non-participant observation. The main segment of the sample, namely the Rhodian Muslims over fifty-five years old, were interviewed with a combination of Life Narrative (Bryman 2004, 322-323) and semi-structured method. The purpose of the Life Narrative part was to encourage interviewees to perform a retrospection of their lives, allowing them to understand, rationalise, and finally express their own perception of their cultural diversity, in other words the first researchable question of the second hypothesis. Based on that self-retrospection, the interview would proceed with the semi-structured part, defining how the way that Rhodian Muslims make sense of their diversity affects their perception of the new diversity on the island as well as other concepts pertaining to the first hypothesis.

In that research framework, the present article will approach an aspect of the results concerning the second hypothesis. More specifically, it will elaborate on the way that intergenerational differences in the perception of cultural diversity lead to different tentative constructs of social identities among Rhodian Muslims. In that process, the social trauma of the culturally diverse group appears to be a central consideration in the construction of the array of social identities with which it is appointed. The research revealed an incomplete, and intergenerationally diversified, process of social trauma based on the experienced distancing from the cultural capital of the Rhodian Muslim community; a “trauma on hold”. That offers a possible strand of explanation for the reserved empathy of the Rhodian Muslims towards the Muslim immigrants and refugees and renders the “convergence point” hypothesis of the research unsupported. The next chapter will delineate the contours of diversity in Greece and Rhodes from a historical and social perspective. It will be followed by the presentation of the empirical part of the UnDRho project regarding the intergenerational perception of cultural diversity, followed by a brief theoretical discussion of the concept of social trauma before that analysis is projected onto the case of the Rhodian Muslim community. In that section, the case of “trauma on hold” will be analysed leading to the discussion of the integration of Muslim refugees and immigrants in Rhodes under the light of the dynamics of trauma with the local Muslim community.

Diversity in Greece and Rhodes island from a historical perspective

Rhodes island constitutes the longstanding home of a local Muslim community. Nevertheless, the dominant Greek citizen profile is characterised by Greek ethnic origin and Christian Orthodox religion. Therefore, from the country-wide official statistics point of view the existence of such a culturally diverse community in the homogenous Greek society is a peculiarity.

Nonetheless, a closer look at the social formation in Greece would reveal a number of small, but not negligible, groups that differ from the aforementioned dominant profile. Their diversity may be identified on a religious level (Catholic Christians, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Jews etc.) or on the levels of language or race (e.g. Roma people). In accordance with a longstanding legal regime, among these diverse identities relative to the mainstream, only the Western Thrace Muslim community is officially acknowledged under a religious minority status.

A retrospection of this issue requires a focus on the set of 1923 Lausanne treaties between Greece and Turkey that concluded the preceding war between the two countries. Probably the most significant provision of those international agreements was the population exchange that led to the relocation of the Greek Orthodox population from Turkey to Greece and of Muslims from Greece to Turkey (Lausanne Treaty, January 30 1923). The subsequent treaty acknowledged a Muslim religious minority in Greece and a Greek Orthodox minority in Turkey that were exempted from exchange, and their pertinent protective rights (Lausanne Treaty, July 24 1923). In that framework, this treaty also regulated a series of religious, social and economic issues of the aforementioned culturally diverse populations in relation to internal affairs in Greece and Turkey. Interestingly, the minority

1 The gradual abolition of that policy in 2017 meant that the refugees would remain stranded in a legal limbo in a non recognised by the migration authorities facility in Rhodes for years until 2021. Indicatively see press conference held by the volunteers of the facility (Accessed: February 2025): https://www.dimokratiki.gr/04-12-2019/apochorisi-ethelonton-apo-ti-domi-filoxenias-prosfygon-sta-palia-sfageia/

populations identified in the treaty are defined, amongst else, in reference to their particular areas of origin and more specifically Western Thrace regarding the Muslim minority of Greece and on the other hand Istanbul and the Aegean islands of Imvros and Tenedos regarding the Greek Orthodox minority of Turkey. The significance of the Lausanne treaty is that it forms a legal and institutional "future" both for the population that was exchanged between the two countries, as well as the population that was exempted. The very essence of that legal-*cum*-institutional "future" is a new *de jure* identity, namely the status of minority (Avramopoulou & Karakatsani 2002).

Nevertheless, statistical data regarding the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the pertinent population of Western Thrace, as well as other culturally diverse communities in Greece, are not available. The reasons should be identified with the fear and caution with which diversity is regarded, both as a "Trojan horse" and as a menace against the national policies and the public order (Manolopoulou-Varvitsioti 2008, 11 and 37-38). As a matter of fact, it is claimed (Kahl 2009, 162) that the term minority - used only for the Greek Muslim population in Western Thrace - is indeed not well received by the Christian citizens. More specifically, Kahl notes the various linguistic and cultural diversities found across Greece which are widely perceived as manifestations of an absence of ethnic Greek identity or even as a peculiar "anti-Greekness" and disobedience against the state.

Corresponding to that, the dominant historiographical narrative presents a reserved approach towards the embedded cultural diversity of Greek society. In a retrospective study of the way that the Muslim communities are presented in Greek historiography, Katsikas demonstrates that, at least until 1989, the majority of Greek academics avoided any reference to the Muslim population that resided in Greece before 1923, namely before the Lausanne Treaty. On the other hand, the primary socio-historical focus on the Greek Muslims of Western Thrace structures a false image about the life of the culturally diverse communities in the complex environment of the Greek state (Katsikas 2012, 453).

Overall, it could be noted that the Greek national narrative has been formed on the basis of the cultural, national, religious and linguistic homogeneity of the population (Christopoulos 2002). As a result, the policies implemented throughout the 20th century regarding the culturally diverse communities were balancing between treating them as a destabilising factor and as a foreign body (see for example Droumpouki 2016, 165).

The immediate effect of the previously described situation are the methodological problems appearing in the scientific analysis of the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the culturally diverse communities. The indirect influence of the dominant national narrative and fragmented historiography on socio-historical analysis is coupled with the fact that the Greek Statistics Authority discontinued the recording of religious data after 1951. Regardless of these caveats, rigorous scientific research (Christopoulos 2002; Kokkinos, Kimourtzis, Gatsotis and Kourgiantakis 2008; Manolopoulou-Varvitsioti 2008; Benedikter, 2006) has indeed recorded a number of small-size culturally diverse communities in Greece.

The previous analysis applies in the case of Rhodes island as well. In 2022, the local Muslim community completed at least seven centuries of presence on the island. The 1522 siege and conquest of Rhodes by Suleiman the Magnificent (Kanuni Sultan Süleyman 1495-1566) marked an important milestone for the presence of Muslims on Rhodes (Georgallidou, Kaili & Celtek 2013; Tsitselikis 2011, 27; Kaurinkoski 2012, 47-48). Nonetheless, Islam had been present on the island long before that period. Due to the important role of the port of Rhodes along the merchant routes in the Eastern Mediterranean, the presence of Muslims was recorded as early as the 9th century (Savorianakis 2000, 70). The Ottoman siege and conquest of Rhodes and the surrounding islands have been pivotal for the Ottoman operations in the Aegean and part of the Mediterranean Sea between the 15th and 17th century; not only as an extension of the empire's possessions but also as a declaration of a power, which was self-identified as Muslim, namely the Ottoman Empire, to convince for its relentless power by God's will (Efthimiou 1992, 23).

One of the first provisions of the Ottoman administration was the implementation of a settlement program in order to demographically reinforce the island after the deadly siege and the departure of the Knights Hospitaller along with a number of Rhodians to Malta. A different aspect of the same operation was the effort to transform the religious and ethnic balance of the population. Thus, around 2.000 janissaries, 3.000 soldiers and around 150 Jews were initially settled, followed by a new project with different groups from the coast of Asia Minor (Savorianakis 2000, 69). Throughout the Ottoman rule, Rhodes continued attracting special population groups, as part of relevant settlement policies. The most recent, within the Ottoman administration period, was the settlement of six hundred Circassians in 1878 (Savorianakis 2000, 87) and a number of Muslims, of Greek ethnic background, from Crete between 1898 and 1899 who relocated during the turbulent period after the Russian occupation of the island of origin (Savorianakis 2000, 58; Tsitselikis 2011, 38; Andriotis, 2004; Williams, 2003; Georgallidou, Spyropoulos and Kaili, 2011).

Despite those settlements, the population balance on the island remained unchanged and characterised by Greek Christian demographic preponderance. Nonetheless, throughout the Ottoman rule of Rhodes (1522 – 1912) the political and economic ruling class was associated with the Muslim population of Turkish descent. Indicative of that development were the urban limits formed. The first settlers reserved the available housing space within the walled medieval city, the administrative and commercial centre of the island. Thus, the Christian population resettled in urban cores around the walls. The fortifications therefore signified a peculiar geography of two separate worlds (Savorianakis 2000, 42). The protection of the *Insiders* symbolically designated the fear of the numerous *Others*.

Relevant to the separated use of space, a unique ethno-religious segmentation was instrumental to the administration of the Ottoman Empire. The religious communities (*millets*) were the subjects and at the same times the operators of a semi-autonomous administrative system under the purview of which religious affairs along with several aspects of social policy and the educational system were organised (Tsitselikis 2006; Waltzer 1999 & Appiah 2007). After 1912, Rhodes came under Italian rule. Although it initially instituted its own system of religious communities, loosely based on the millet system, the new administration gradually truncated their administrative rights, especially after the turn to the fascist regime and during the tenure of Cesare Maria de Vecchi. The incorporation of the Dodecanese, the island complex that includes Rhodes, into Greece (1948) automatically replaced the Greek citizenship for the Italian "Aegean Islands" quasi-citizenship (Cittadinanza delle Isole dell' Egeo). Nevertheless, special arrangements came into force concerning education and the operation of religious foundations of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faith, which demonstrates an indirect acknowledgement of the cultural diversity embedded in the Rhodian multicultural society (Georgallidou, Spyropoulos and Kaili 2011).

For the Dodecanese island complex, the first and last time that religion constituted a concept to be measured in a census was in 1951. Therefore, the demography of Muslims or of any other religion in Rhodes island, as well as in the rest of Greece, can only be estimated. The available data from

bibliographical sources are far from consistent. What could be ascertained, though, (Papadopoulos 2013; Kaurinkoski 2012; Lantza 2011; Tsitselikis 2006; Dimitropoulos 2004; Savorianakis 2000; Tsirpanlis 1998 and Chiotakis 1997) is on the one hand the violent fluctuation, possibly due to the settlement efforts, and on the other hand the steady reduction of the size of the Muslim population since mid-19th century. The last estimation from 1997 raises the number of the Rhodian Muslim population to 3.000 people (Chiotakis 1997).

The Muslim community of Rhodes is generally a bilingual group, although this is subject to age, spatial differentiations and ethnic origin. With the exception of Muslims of Greek origin that arrived in Rhodes at the end of the 19th century from Crete, who speak only Greek, older Muslims and residents of rural and suburban areas speak a local dialect of Turkish simultaneously with a variety of Greek. Younger generations use a newer version of this language; while children prefer Greek, accompanied by passive knowledge of Turkish (Georgallidou, Spyropoulos and Kaili 2011). Marianthi Georgallidou (2004) connects the particular evolution of bilinguality with the abandoning of the self-consistency and the closeness of the system of social and familial relations. The microstructures of the Muslim social organisation are progressively interrelated and assimilated in the long structures of the wider social and cultural environment of the island (Georgallidou 2004).

Towards that development, a series of causes and consequences cannot ignore the evolution of the special curricula for Muslim students. For centuries under Ottoman administration the educational system was organised and delivered by virtue of the *millet* system. In other words, the educational system(s) was under the purview of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish ethno-religious communities. It was only in 1894 that the central Ottoman government attempted to control the appointment of teachers at the community schools. The decentralised education system was retained by the Italian administration until 1937 when it came under full governmental control, with the Italian curriculum being implemented (Tsitselikis 2006, 523; Lantza 2011, 74). The retrogression continued with the brief spell of British administration (1945-1947) returning to the communitarian educational system (Tsitselikis 2006, 523); while the integration of the Dodecanese into Greece introduced the centrally organised common curriculum throughout the country. Nevertheless, a parallel one was introduced for the Muslim schools with special religious courses, as well as courses both in Greek and Turkish. What is significant is that, although the special curriculum for the Greek Muslim minority in Thrace was prescribed by the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, the parallel curriculum in Rhodes and Kos islands was the result of a certain degree of cooperation between Greece and Turkey. For instance, in 1966 an informal bilateral agreement between the two ministers of foreign affairs provided for the use of school handbooks from Turkey (Tsitselikis 2006, 528), while Rhodian Muslims were studying in Turkey in order to return to Rhodes as school teachers. Political reactions and complaints have been recorded from both sides but the particular relations at the administrative level continued. As relations were fragile, the balance was overturned in 1972 when the Greek military dictatorship reacted to the closure of the Greek schools in Turkey and therefore discontinued the parallel curriculum in Rhodes and Kos.

The retrospective presented so far attests to an implicit *othering* process stemming from long embedded divisionary practices among the variety of cultural diversities present on the island of Rhodes. The following section will approach the qualitative characteristic of the Rhodian Muslim cultural diversity.

Diversity and identity of the Rhodian Muslims

The aforementioned implicit *othering* process is neither a new nor a unilateral process; what is changing is rather the positioning in the power relations of the social groups. More specifically, the position of dominant and dominated social group changed effectively between the Muslim and the Christian community during the first half of the 20th century. Indications of that interchange could be identified in the fluctuations of the educational system, as well as the very establishment of the *sui generis* autonomous system of religious communities, the *millets*. It lasted for centuries during the Ottoman period, rendering it a well embedded feature of the local social formation. Although abandoned early during the 20th century, some of its manifestations are still apparent such as the inscription in the memory of the space (Legg 2005). The walled medieval town of Rhodes had been reserved for the protection of the Muslim and Jewish communities while Christians were forced to leave the castle before dusk. Consequently, during a good part of the 20th century Muslim properties tended to be concentrated in the medieval town or in fertile land around the island that used to belong to the ruling class. A different survival of the communitarian system, merely as a legal oddity, regards the administration of the property of Christian (Ελληνορθόδοξη Κοινότητα [Greek Orthodox Community])[2], and of Jewish (Ισραηλιτική Κοινότητα [Jewish Community]) religious foundations. The institution of the Muslim religious foundations (Βακούφ [Waqf]) was not established in the framework of the communitarian system. Nonetheless, after 1912 came to play a similar role, especially the so-called "public Waqf"[3].

On the other hand, what the relevant bibliography ascertains, and our research confirms, is that the Muslim community in Rhodes presents a cultural diversity that is well embedded in the social dynamics of the island in multiple ways (see also Kaurinkoski 2012; Tsitselikis 2011; Georgallidou, Kaili and Celtek 2013; Georgallidou 2004). They constitute a *sui generis* Other, that is functionally integrated in the contemporary society of the island but not assimilated, despite their centuries long presence. We identified three approaches according to which the Rhodian Muslims make sense of their cultural diversity. That classification corresponds to a generational breakdown of the respondents.

For the older Rhodian Muslims, cultural diversity appears to revolve around memory, as a social construct. In their case the Muslim social identity continuously interconnects with the commemoration of the historical origin of the community's presence on the island. What is more interesting, is the way that this commemoration is communicated. Older members of the community constantly use religious concepts and terms connected to history and through that they make sense of their present social identity. But behind the "religious lines" subtle connotations of the past and current social hierarchy could be identified.

> *Listen, my family is very old here. When Sultan Suleiman conquered Rhodes, 1522, since that time my family has been here. But I have royal blood. Two Pashas… you know a Pasha is a great official. Two Pashas [from my family] are buried in the graveyard in Madraki. Ahmed Pasha and Mustafa Pasha.*
>
> Interview with F.K.

2 Abolished only in 2022 (law 4957/2022).
3 Officially 'Waqf Assets Management Organisation' by virtue of law 4821/2021.

This excerpt from an interview with an old Muslim lady is indicative. In the spontaneous narration of her life, in the framework of the Life Narrative method, she chooses to identify herself through the commemoration of the social hierarchy of the Ottoman past which is further expressed with references to religious terms. Indeed, the graveyard in Madraki hosts Ottoman officials that had fallen in disfavour (Crabites 1933, 78). A different aspect, quite common in the interviews with older members of the community, is the social identification through references to the family property. The following excerpt from the interview with another Muslim lady that lives next to a church is indicative:

> *My friend is very religious; she goes to church. I told her, look Chryssa, tell him* [the priest] *to avoid offending because the Waqf donated land to make that church. I donated a piece of my land too. He* [the priest] *should be grateful and not offending. He* [the priest] *then stopped it. 52 days later during a festivity, he said in the sermon that "we thank the people who donated the land". He said that for me. I told my friend to thank him.*
>
> Interview with F.K.

These religious and property references are only some indicatively selected from a plethora. The way that the social identity of cultural diversity is implied through history, hierarchy (see for example the "required" acknowledgment to the donor) and religion among the older members of the Muslim community reflects the embedded "survivals" of the *millet* system, namely the social hierarchy formed on the basis of religious differentiation. Indeed, the age of the interviewees implies that they would have lived their formative years either during or just after the official abolition of the *millet* system - when the "institutional memory" is also taken into consideration.

The case of middle-aged Rhodian Muslims, however, is different. Born long after the abolition of the *millet* system but during the parallel curriculum, their cultural diversity informs their social identity through expressions referring to their cultural capital. The latter becomes the core of their differentiated identity. More specifically, the content of the cultural capital, at least for those interviewed, was the issue of the language and in no case the religion. Language incorporates such symbolic meaning for them that what has been repeatedly identified amongst interviewees was not their own connection to Turkish but the concern for the younger generations with the gradually diminished knowledge of the mother tongue. They implicitly seem to experience that situation as a worrying reduction from their cultural capital. Interestingly, that concern is always covered under the plausible benefit of multilingualism and its socio-economic value.

> *If we are talking about every man's mother tongue, it is good to keep it alive. It is not bad irrespective of the country they live in. It is not bad. It benefits both sides. Look, to know a language resembles being another man. Whatever language this is.*
>
> Interview with M. K.

> *I think that children should have a connection with their mother tongue. To know one more language is definitely good from any point of view. If this* [Turkish] *is actually needed today… I don't know how to evaluate, in a positive or negative way.* […] *I believe that it would be good to be taught the language, to know the language. There are… for example Rhodes is a tourist island, there are many people who come from the opposite shores* [Turkey] *as tourists, there is this tourist development in the islands during summer, there are many people from tour operators that ask if there are young Rhodians that could handle the Turkish language very well to help them.*
>
> Interview with S.T.

Younger generations, on the other hand, lack both historical references, namely the *millet* system - even as an "institutional phantom" - and the parallel curriculum. For them the recognition of their cultural differentiation revolves around the manifesting function of religion as a component of their identity and cultural tradition, but not language or religion *per se*. Indeed, young Rhodian Muslims live in a cultural context foreign to them since they don't speak and hardly understand Turkish, while from a religious point of view they belong to the "belonging but not believing" part of the population (Karamouzis 2015; Kokkinos, Kimourtzis, Karamouzis et al. 2016 a) along with the majority of Rhodians. Their religious diversity constitutes a symbolic shell rather than an original existential choice. Exactly because they cannot empathise with that symbolic identity, the external manifestations of its religious content bring them in front of awkward moments. Despite that readily recognisable development, their cultural limbo situation makes the identification of the exact link between their cultural diversity and the content of the social identity rather difficult.

> *After the introduction, just from the name, the other person asks "Sorry, what?". When I tell them about my religion, they look at me in the beginning in a reserved way. Until they get to know me and understand that I am not the stereotypical Muslim who is religious and always there and only believes this and that… until they understand who I really am and get to know me… I faced that and I always face that.*
>
> Interview with I.S.

It appears therefore, that the Rhodian Muslim cultural diversity is being internalised and understood in multiple ways by the members of the community. If that diversity indicates the triggering of an *othering* process, as already explained, the question arising regards the particular way that this process is internalised by the Rhodian Muslims.

Trauma, social identity and the Muslim community of Rhodes

The importance of understanding the insights of the *othering* process from the side of internalisation lies with the particular qualitative characteristics presented in the link between the perception of cultural diversity and the construction of social identities. In that process, the potential existence of social trauma born by a social group signifies, as will be shown in the following theoretical exploration, that it does not just passively receive a social identity but actively contributes to its determination.

Trauma is separated from the experienced incident that stands as the cause of trauma. The experience is not straightforwardly narratable but latent under the form of various subconscious reversions to the past (Caruth 1996). Trauma therefore is independent from time. Once emerged, it languishes social conformism and the need to comply by the cover up of anguish. Therefore, trauma constitutes a breach of the order of time and at the same time a rift of the social order

(Davoine and Gaudillière 2004). An interesting insight is provided by the Freudian perception of the so-called "social trauma". People develop a distinctive quasi-protective relation with social institutions such as the political system or the national community, resembling that between child and mother. They tend to project upon them the anxieties and existential suffering for which they request acknowledgment. In that respect, social trauma represents the rift of that relation. The most common cause for that rift is when the social institutions and especially the state don't assume their protective role or when the social formation victimises or stigmatises social groups (de Tubert 2006).

From a sociological perspective, Alexander examines the conditions under which a fact or an imaginary construction could be included in symbolic structures receiving such socio-cultural significance to become a collective trauma (Alexander 2004, 9). In his epistemological approach, the crucial factor behind a collective trauma is the various meanings appointed *ex post facto* by a society or a social group when in need of forming, transforming or reorganizing their collective identity. More specifically, an incident becomes a trauma when it constitutes the core of the community's historical narrative. Under a temporal perspective, an incident becomes a trauma when the painful inscription in the historical memory is used not only as mental and emotional prism in order to make sense of the past, but also as a direction for the course of the society or social group in the future (Alexander 2004, 10). Alexander holds that meanings, as products of a socio-cultural process, contribute to the creation of identity. At the same time, it is those *ex post facto* meanings, rather than facts, that construct the feeling of shock or fear at a social level (Alexander 2004, 10). Therefore, social trauma is not only separated from the experience but also transferred between generations.

Most importantly, though, Alexander analyses the mechanisms that facilitate the reorganisation of the normative identity narrative of a social, political or racial group around the collective trauma. Among those mechanisms, the most important is the mobilisation of a group to rally around effective and extensive communication networks which gradually form the conditions under which an alternative identity narrative becomes hegemonic. Those conditions, in other words the structural elements of a historical traumatic narrative, include the identification of the cause of the collective pain, of the victimised group, of the reasons behind its persecution, of the consequences of that persecution, of the significance of the persecution, and of the persecutor. All those processes are necessarily mediated by expedience and dedicated research efforts (Alexander 2004, 13-15). The hegemony of the new historical trauma is materialised in the institutional fields of religiosity, aesthetics, justice, communication, and policy making. In the field of religiosity, trauma is understood as theodicy or divine injustice. In the field of aesthetics, trauma is identified in an imaginary state using multiple semiotic codes. In the third field trauma is the disputed stake in the justice administration system. Communication through traditional as well as social media constitutes the fourth field for trauma while the last one is policy making, where trauma is recorded in the bureaucracy and hegemonic ideology and gradually becomes a banality (Alexander 2004, 13-21; Demertzis 2013, 26-29).

As already shown, the multiple aspects of the Rhodian Muslim cultural diversity inform respective internalisation processes. The community in question is far from a coherent single entity and along with the transgenerational differences, social and cultural ones were also identified during the empirical part of the research. The most significant of them is the difference between the majority of the community and the descendants of the Cretan Muslims, who arrived on the island at the end of the 19th century and constitute a separate group not only historically but also linguistically. Based on the interviews conducted, implicit manifestations of the embedded *othering* process can be identified, mainly through practices that mainstream divisions. What differs among generations is the way that those practices are received and how different generations come in terms with them; in other words, the way that they make sense of their cultural diversity. Having in mind that structure, the question arising is if trauma could be identified among the Rhodian Muslims.

Despite the, understandable, denial expressed every time an interviewee was asked directly if he or she has ever experienced *otherness* in Rhodes, the way that they narrated their life history and the everyday social relations outline cases in which their cultural diversity triggers diversified behaviour towards them. Irrespective of the full economic integration of the Muslim community, the generally diversified behaviour or divisive practices vested with the Muslim identity could possibly point towards a traumatic perception of the social interactions. It remains a question, though, if that perception should be acknowledged as a symptom of social trauma. Decisive factors, according to Alexander's approach, that would give meaning *ex post facto* to the primary traumatic incident do not exist. The internal divisions of the community such as, indicatively, the intergenerational differences, demonstrate a community that is far from rallying around a common cause as long as they make sense of diversity in a different way and position their traumatic incident in relatively different fields.

On the other hand, the pervasive sense of cultural capital reduction, especially among the middle-aged members of the community could possibly direct towards a traumatic perception of cultural diversity. The lack of pertinent courses in the official curriculum is narrated as a breach of the cultural continuity and to that degree as a threat to the consciousness of the community's identity. The reason is that language in that case is presented as a conveyor of the cultural memory to the descendants. That conception appoints to language the role of a constitutive element of the collective identity. Nevertheless, the potentially traumatic experience of the gradual disuse of the Turkish language as a mother tongue in public space and more specifically in the educational system, tends to be counterbalanced, at the level of imagery and political correctness, by defending multilingualism, which is instrumental for economic reasons. Multilingualism, therefore, as appears in the previous interview excerpts, becomes the optional method for the Muslim community to indirectly pursue the endorsement of Turkish as a spoken language in the public space.

Both strands of memories/experiences are repelled and inactivated for different reasons in each generation. When reflecting on those potentially traumatic memories, the middle-aged group risks overturning their functional integration in society and the participation in the prosperous economic life of the island. For the younger generation, a hypothesis for the "inactivation of those experiences" regards the awkward moments of the manifesting function of religion as demonstrated before. The symbolic belonging to a cultural capital with which they don't empathise would be renewed every time they would be reflecting on the memories of the awkward moments.

The dynamics of trauma: old Others (Rhodian Muslims) and new Others (migrants)

The discussion about the hibernating trauma of the Muslim community of Rhodes goes beyond a mere phenomenology. Its expediency can be identified with the contemporary drama of the mixed migration flows and the consequent need for integration policies. The common denominator between the two cases, namely the population movement and the administration of cultural diversity is found in *otherness*.

Emmanuel Levinas (1974 and 1991) in his account of the industrialised barbarism of the Holocaust notes that the *Other* is a moral predicate against the *Self* which is based on our common nature as human beings; on our common existential status. Therefore, it is unethical to perceive the *Other* in a mechanistic way, or as a combination of biological and cultural characteristics that constitute the human void of content. In that way, the person is "dehydrated" from the diverse categories that at the bottom line render him or her a person; he or she becomes a "non-person". Günther Anders, a Holocaust survivor himself, supports this view (in Cassin 2015, 101-102) by stressing that "human is humans; it exists only in plural… humans are not the plural of human; every human is a form of humans in singular". Therefore, the concern about the *Other* is not just an ethical one but the, significant for the social relations (see Rosanvallon 2013), need of human nature to resist the conditions that create *otherness* and *Others* and more specifically the obliteration of what renders someone a mere participant of externally imposed categorisations (see also the ethical considerations of migration in Sager 2016).

The issue of extraneous categorisations sheds light on a particular aspect of the *othering* experiences and more specifically that of immigrants and social minority groups. In other words, should there be any conceptual link between outgroups that arrive at a place and the diversified outgroups (Taras 2009; Madibbo 2007) that reside in the same place? Following Giorgio Agamben's approach on refugees, extended for the case of immigrants, it could be argued that the population in movement, abandoned in their cruel or heinous fate, undergo a "state of exclusion" and live a "bare life" exposed to cynicism and indifference and sometimes to violence and dehumanization (Agamben 1998; 1999 and 2005). In that framework, Kymlicka (2001, 275 *et seq.*), regardless of his endorsement of the equal treatment of under-represented groups, identifies conceptual differences in the common administration of the inner and outer outgroups. Social minorities, in an attempt to reinforce their diversity from the assimilative tendency towards the majoritarian paradigm, tend to be more assertive in comparison to refugees and immigrants. His argument seems to be over-focusing on historical and geographical presence of the different categories of social groups (Parekh 2000, 108-109) while disregarding the importance of a common framework, either legal or social.

On the other hand, the interconnection between the two groups has been acknowledged by different scholars (e.g. in Cesarani & Fulbrook 1996) while others have focused particularly on the identification of the relation between them. The potential problems from the unclear conceptual environment lead Toggenburg (2008) as well as Sasse and Thielemann (2005) to begin by clarifying the concepts involved. In their analyses, the two terms participate in a methodological interplay within wider institutional frameworks. Similarly methodological is the approach by Christopoulos (2006) who holds that between the two concepts there exist common methodological perspectives due to the common denominator which is the *othering* process. The historical framework, according to Christopoulos, can and should delimitate the pertinent concepts. Tsimbiridou (2011, 301) applies an anthropological approach and stresses the need for "creative analytical tools" suitable to approach micro and macro analysis regarding both migration and the under-represented social minorities. Tsimbiridou stresses that the integration of the population in movement is faced with a gradual process of "minoritisation". In other words, several levels of exclusions, both practical and symbolic, prevent the outgroups (inner and outer) from full participation in social life (Tsimbiridou 2011, 300-302; Ventoura 2011). Therefore, the points of convergence between social minorities and migration are not only a moral predicate against the demonisation of the *Other*, but also an essential link of their needs with regard to successful integration.

The aforementioned issue of exclusions constitutes the conceptual bridge between the previous analysis and the hibernating trauma of the Rhodian Muslim community. As already mentioned, middle-aged Rhodian Muslims experience the discontinuation of the parallel curriculum as a reduction from their cultural capital, while the younger generations fail to empathise with the externally imposed symbolic representations of their cultural diversity. The same reduction from the cultural capital, along with a number of different exclusions, will most likely be experienced by refugees and immigrants during their integration on the island. The empirical research in the framework of the UnDRho project, however, did not confirm the hypothesis that the experienced diversity could become a convergence point of the two social groups. The reason has been identified with the fact that the cultural diversity of the Rhodian Muslims, as *otherness*, does not connect the past with the future. It has not become the constitutive element of their identity to the extent that it remains a "trauma on hold". By taking into consideration the identity formative function of trauma, it appears that as long as the Rhodian Muslims are only passive bearers of an externally structured social identity they will not identify themselves with an active social role as a community. Indeed, despite the humanitarian approach to the immediate needs of refugees and immigrants on an individual level, Rhodian Muslims cannot see a potential community-level role for themselves in the integration of the Muslim newcomers.

> ***How do you see them?***
>
> *The immigrants? Let me tell you that… it's a pity, they are human beings. It's a pity, but we should be concerned with our situation.* […] *Now you tell me. If I was to help. How many of them should I help?*
>
> Interview with G. A.

> ***Do you think there is space here in Rhodes for them to integrate or to assimilate?***
>
> *There is always space. The point is that… it will take them a lot of time and many years… to find the best, how can I say that… the suitable groups, the suitable… the suitable persons in order to integrate.*
>
> ***Where could they find them?***
>
> *Difficult. Difficult. I mean, in the beginning, they may… until they integrate, they may experience racism, they will hear a lot. Until they assimilate in the society.*
>
> ***Here in Rhodes there is a Muslim community, could it be a different case?***
>
> *It will not be different, because the Muslim community of Rhodes is dispersed. It is virtually inexistent… it is not united. In general, its members don't have the best relations among each other.*
>
> Interview with I. S.

The above excerpt is an interesting account of the relation between the Rhodian Muslim community and the Muslim immigrants that came from one of the younger interviewees. The reserved stance of the Muslims at a community level towards the refugee crisis is confirmed by a Syrian interpreter who volunteers at the transit refugee camp of Rhodes.

> *Look, we had a cooperation with the Waqf* [...] *They have offered help to immigrants that don't have the means to bury their people. Nor opportunity to travel back to their country. But I haven't seen any kind of collective that mentions that it belongs to the Muslim community. Surely, among the people that come and offer provisions etc. there might be some Muslims. You cannot ask anybody "show me what you are..." and nobody says "I am Muslim and I came to offer". They only come as humans to offer.*
>
> Interview with J. N.

Conclusions

Identity, diversity and trauma constitute complex concepts that interweave in a coherent whole. Their complexity is found in a multiplicity of fields. They are equally contingent to the personal as well as social levels making them subject to both micro and macro analysis. They are contingent, however, to history and the conjuncture to the degree that the latter form a *sine qua non* for their analysis. The content of the concepts is shaped by the combination of the particular way in which the personal meets the social on the one hand, and on the other hand the way in which history and conjuncture inductively dictate the wider image. In that framework, the way that individuals and social groups make sense of identity is essential to understanding diversity. Trauma, on the other hand, depends on the way that history and conjuncture affect diversity; if present, trauma will in its own turn be forming the narratives of identity and diversity for both past and future. Thus, trauma becomes a critical point of temporal convergence; a "memory bridge". Exactly because of its transcendental nature that crosses vertically across time, trauma can also be "present". As such, it can indeed form the point of convergence, or moment of empathy, between traumatised inner outgroups and outer outgroups; in other words, between marginalised *Others* and migrant *Others*.

Trauma however is a dynamic social process that can initiate, evolve or halt as it is subject to historical conditions and the social conjuncture. Therefore, despite the existence of a traumatising incident, the temporal lag between the conscious emergence of trauma can render it a "trauma on hold". This is the case of the Rhodian Muslim community. The empirical part of the UnDRho research project pointed to the reasons for which different generations of Muslims in Rhodes bargained for the reduction of their cultural capital in view of their functional integration in the local society. That development provides a hypothesis for the reserved stance of the Rhodian Muslims as a community towards the issues raised by the integration of the mixed migration flows, in contrast with the clear empathy at the individual level. This is of course a deponent, rather than an active explanation of the formulation of their stance, as a community. It explains why Rhodian Muslims don't take a stance. As the process of the social trauma remains incomplete, the community is found in the receiving part of the structure of social identities, preventing it from identifying an active role as a constitutive part of Rhodian society.

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Rethinking Dodecanese Identity

Cross-cultural Patterns and Geopolitical Challenges

Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between the distinctive characteristics of Dodecanese identity and its inherent capacities in a networked world. Rooted in a rich multicultural past, this regional sense of belonging has shaped local populations across various geographical scales and has been successfully integrated with both Greek and European identities. Historically, due to geopolitical, geostrategic, and economic factors— including the Cold War, Greek-Turkish bilateral disputes, and politico-economic mismanagement—Dodecanese identity remained largely confined to a subnational territorial framework. However, the resolution of Greece's political and financial crisis in the late 2010s calls for new interpretations that consider the evolving spaces of power and identity shaped by cultural signifiers and the forces of globalization. In this context, it is crucial to rethink ethnocentric and Eurocentric perspectives, adapting them to contemporary geohistorical realities. From an interdisciplinary perspective, this analysis explores how the unique features and capacities of Dodecanese identity can offer a deeper understanding of current regional and national challenges, highlighting assets that reconcile divergent narratives and geopolitical dynamics.

External Pressures, Internal Considerations

Situated at a key crossroads in southeastern Greece, the Dodecanese archipelago finds itself at the center of geopolitical divisions and recurring regional dynamics, as evidenced by escalating tensions with Turkey, energy agreements, and migration flows. These developments should not be viewed in isolation; rather, they reflect the intricate interplay and complementarities of multiscale interactions.

Since the early 1970s, the Aegean dispute between Greece and Turkey has served as an extension of the Cyprus Question. More recently, strategic partnerships among Greece, Israel, Egypt, and Cyprus—particularly in natural gas exploration and exploitation—alongside ongoing conflicts in the Near and Middle East, have further embedded the Aegean Sea into the broader geopolitical equation of the Eastern Mediterranean. Beyond the direct diplomatic implications for neighboring states, unresolved tensions invite external interference, leading to conflicts of interest on a larger scale. Both bilateral (Greece-Turkey) and multilateral (Mediterranean, Middle East) rivalries have extended across NATO's southeastern flank, drawing in major global powers such as the United States, Russia, and China. The critical role of American diplomacy in fostering consensus—especially during the 1996 Imia crisis and the 2016 maritime security operation in the Mediterranean—along with Russia's and China's strategic and economic penetration of the region, from Piraeus' port to naval bases in Syria and investments in Cyprus and the Dodecanese, underscores the high stakes of this complex geopolitical landscape.

Since 2015, efforts to manage maritime resources and recalibrate regional stability have been further complicated by the urgency of the refugee crisis. By February 2016, nearly one million Syrian refugees and Middle Eastern economic migrants had crossed Greece's maritime borders. National desecuritization strategies, combined with the absence of a cohesive European foreign and security policy, were quickly exploited by professionalized criminal networks with a deep understanding of

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*"How to hold a '**Conversation in the Library**'? Both a challenge and a responsibility to talk about the political and cultural geography of an island and an archipelago deeply rooted in my family's history. Rhodes, my maternal grandparents' homeland, where history, heritage, and fate have shaped identity-building processes through deeply grounded human connections. Endless stories about Ottoman and Italian heritage, local myths and legends, patterns of cross-cultural interactions and trust that my mother, Marianthi, used to tell me, and which made me familiar with the specificities of both Dodecanese geohistory and maritime emotionscapes. If that, a conversation in the library should not be loud and noisy; but rather gentle and introspective. It became clearer to me after a while, Tarik Tüten's kind invitation to participate in this project was not only about multicultural heritage, multilayered history and co-existing communities; it was also about reflecting on the salient relevance of collective memory, on negotiating our differences and, eventually, on who we are and how we would like to be remembered. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this **Conversation**."*

Ioannis Georgikopoulos

regional hubs and transport geography. As a result, the population of the Dodecanese archipelago was abruptly exposed to the destabilizing effects of these evolving crises. This new set of challenges has heightened the region's vulnerabilities, particularly concerning maritime borders and the pressures of globalization. In this context, the question of how to engage with global interconnectedness while fostering a self-confident and consensus-driven identity resurfaces, highlighting the enduring significance of national peripheries in an emerging multipolar world.

As Dieckhoff and Gutiérrez (2011) argue, cultures are not organic, self-contained entities with impermeable boundaries; rather, they are continuously shaped and redefined through processes of borrowing and exchange. At the same time, despite their fluidity, identity systems maintain distinct sets of values, symbols, practices, representations, and traditions—what McNeill (1986) terms "Mythistory", a crucial component of internal group cohesion that carries a legacy of meaning. Reconciling these two seemingly opposing yet complementary perspectives requires a reconceptualization of underexplored infra-territorial and extra-territorial assets. In this regard, peripheral regions and regional identities play a key role, as they often foster diverse strategies of distinction that allow for the socio-historical reinterpretation of meaning-making mechanisms (Paasi, 2011).

Within this framework, the geopolitics of Dodecanese identity presents a compelling case study in examining the intersections of demographic and geographic partition, territoriality, and globalization. Greece and Europe face mounting political, economic, and cultural challenges—challenges that may seem insurmountable if approached solely through dominant economy-oriented methodological frameworks. However, as the historical experience of the Dodecanese suggests, regional and local perspectives can bridge cultural diversity with both national and European consciousness. In doing so, they have the potential to serve as intermediaries in the creation of a stable political and cultural foundation for coexistence.

The Imperial Framing of the Dodecanese Archipelago

From the Doric Hexapolis—a league of six cities in the southeastern Aegean Sea—to the Byzantine naval themes (administrative districts), the Dodecanese islands have consistently played a significant role within broader geopolitical frameworks at various scales (Ahrweiler, 1966). However, it was not until the period of Latin rule (1309—1522) that a more systematic spatial organization and the emergence of a distinct regional consciousness took shape. This transformation was largely driven by the interplay between commercial expansion and defensive strategies, particularly those implemented by the Knights of Saint John to counter piracy and Muslim conquest attempts.

With their capture of the Dodecanese, the Knights became a crucial asset in the Frankish hegemony over Greek seas (Kasperson, 1966). Under papal jurisdiction, the archipelago served both as a geopolitical foothold for further expansion into the Levant and as a European-oriented defensive barrier against the rising Ottoman power. This political and institutional structuring of the islands as military, cultural, and commercial strongholds contributed to the formation of an early, solid identity marker for both the region and its inhabitants.

Simultaneously, social and economic activities played a growing role in shaping the region's symbolic landscape. Economic resurgence fueled population growth, and islands such as Rhodes, Cos, and Symi emerged as vital regional shipping centers. Stability, the gradual involvement of local Orthodox inhabitants in island administration, and their participation in the archipelago's defense fostered greater interaction between the local population and their occupiers. As a result, the islanders became increasingly familiar with the geopolitical narratives of the Order of Saint John, which encompassed myths, symbols, and chivalric legends, as well as a drive for landscape domination manifested in massive fortifications, engineering projects, churches, and convents. The enduring imprint of these elements is evident in recurring identity signifiers that, alongside other regional traditions, continue to shape the contemporary Dodecanese sense of belonging.

Beginning in 1522, the establishment of Ottoman imperial rule profoundly reshaped the sociopolitical structures of the Dodecanese. The new decentralized governance model increasingly relied on locally rooted power elites within a highly diverse sociopolitical landscape. However, political and administrative conditions varied significantly between islands, with urban centers subjected to stricter control than smaller, semi-autonomous territories. For instance, the sociopolitical organization of cosmopolitan Ottoman port cities—such as Rhodes and Cos—was shaped by interconnected economic and personal networks mobilized by a diverse range of cultural communities, including Muslims, Greek Orthodox, and Jews, within a framework of cooperation, interdependence, and occasional conflict. In contrast, rural island societies and smaller islands, predominantly Greek Orthodox, enjoyed greater political autonomy through municipal councils (*demogeronties*) and certain privileges granted by the Ottoman authorities (Georgikopoulos, 2024). In all cases, self-governance was a defining feature of local religious communities under the millet system, as the primary concern of the Ottoman administration remained tax collection and the maintenance of domestic peace and stability.

As in other imperial territories later incorporated into the Greek state (Koliopoulos & Veremis, 2002), localism, religion, and language were key elements of identity for the Ottoman subjects of the archipelago. Religious institutions, such as the Dodecanese Church under the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, played a crucial unifying role, while local loyalties and trade languages further reinforced communal bonds. Additionally, the Ottoman imperial framework fostered a unique form of unity in diversity, facilitating extensive personal and commercial alliances throughout the Mediterranean (Georgikopoulos, 2017). These interconnections exposed Greek Orthodox shipowners and Jewish entrepreneurs in the archipelago to new ideas, production methods, and lifestyles associated with Western influences. As a result, the Dodecanese islands entered the modern era as a maritime crossroads that maintained regional cohesion while adapting to broader geopolitical realities.

The emergence of an independent Greek state (Hellas) introduced a dual identity dynamic. Outwardly, it was tied to a shared Hellenic heritage, trade, and diaspora networks as well as the concept of an "Orthodox Commonwealth". Inwardly, it retained a sense of *Romiós* kinship, rooted in the shared identity of the former Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire (Beaton, 2019). This complex interplay of identities underscored the evolving geopolitical and cultural significance of the Dodecanese within both the Greek national narrative and the broader Mediterranean world.

Aspects of National Identity Building

In the early 19th century, the emergence of the Greek independence movement instilled a sense of national solidarity among Orthodox islanders, influenced by both Russian geostrategic interests in the Mediterranean and the revolutionary climate in Western Europe and North America (Prévélakis, 2006). Enthusiasm for the Greek cause led to harsh Ottoman reprisals against the seafarers of Casos,

Calymnos, and Symi, coinciding with broader internal shifts and the gradual decline of the empire. By the late 19th century, the movement for incorporation into the Kingdom of Greece had become the unifying force among the diverse Orthodox communities of the Dodecanese.

The diplomatic efforts of the archipelago's flourishing diaspora communities—spread across South Africa, British-controlled Egypt, France, Italy, and North and South America—played a crucial role in raising international awareness of the issue. Benefiting from both the spiritual and intellectual networks of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the liberal frameworks of Western democracies, this prosperous and well-educated Greek-Dodecanese diaspora became the financial and diplomatic backbone of what would come to be known as the "Dodecanese Question" (Georgikopoulos, 2020).

Pro-integration (*Ensomatosis*) ethnic lobbying abroad[1] and the patriotic regional sentiment at home—both fueled by the consciousness of an imagined national unity—became persistent advocates of the archipelago's Greek identity and significant pressure points for the Italian administration (1912–1943). Although the Italian authorities initially maintained the privileges of religious communities until 1937, their broader policy sought to impose a centralized governance model that was foreign to the Dodecanesians. While Italy actively developed Rhodes, Cos, Leros, and Castellorizo as major military bases during World War II, local patterns of organization—such as autonomy and the management of land and maritime resources—remained deeply entrenched (Kasperson, 1966). At the same time, exposure to multiscale realities, the enduring presence of cross-cultural interactions, and the strong structure of nuclear family units continued to define Dodecanese society.

The turbulent backdrop of foreign invasion and conquest provided a powerful catalyst for the transition from local and regional consciousness to a modern Greek national identity—often framed as an anti-foreign ideology. At the same time, the Italian administration and its relatively flexible application of national governance standards offered alternative avenues for integrating Dodecanese identity into the competitive post-Ottoman era. The colonial condition brought both advantages—such as economic progress, employment opportunities, civic order, and infrastructure development—and disadvantages, including the threat of brutal sanctions and political repression. Meanwhile, instances of positive social interaction between the rulers and the ruled contributed to the nuanced character of the occupation (Doumanis, 2005). Nevertheless, the Italian regime's attempts to construct a historical narrative linking the Dodecanese Latin past to modern administrative principles ultimately failed to supplant the region's deeper social and cultural foundations of identity.

In this context, Greek nationalism successfully promoted a strong neo-Hellenic myth that transformed the traditional island communities into a homogeneous nation and integrated the fragmented geographical entities into a unified part of the Greek state (*Helleniki Epikrateia*). The incorporation of the Dodecanese into Greece aligned with both the region's historical and cultural identity roots and the geopolitical imperatives of the time, particularly the need for stability in the aftermath of World War II and during the early Cold War. However, this ideological project primarily addressed the islands' Greek-speaking Orthodox majority[2], leaving little space for religious minorities in Rhodes and Cos.

Despite this, the Dodecanese Muslim community managed to maintain its presence, whereas the once-thriving Sephardic Jewish population faced a tragic fate as a victim of Nazi Germany's *Judenpolitik* during the occupation of the archipelago (1943–1945)[3]. Following a brief period of British rule (1945–1947), the union of the Dodecanese with Greece gradually pressured the remaining Muslim community to conform to the homogenizing force of the Greek nation-state (Georgikopoulos, 2016).

Following the 1947 Paris Treaty, the union with Greece led to the implementation of top-down identity strategies aimed at integrating the new maritime periphery into the processes of national homogenization. To understand how the Greek state undertook this effort—both to ensure internal unification and gain external recognition—it is necessary to re-examine the sociopolitical and economic mechanisms that have continuously reshaped the regional identity of the Dodecanese.

The transition from a symbolic sense of ethnicity to the material aspects of national identity was more complex than Dodecanesians initially anticipated. The introduction of patronage politics and standardized, academy-supervised education laid the groundwork for this new sociopolitical reality (Georgikopoulos, 2016). Dodecanese identity became increasingly intertwined—albeit not without difficulties—with the Greek political system, exposing the region to both its benefits and drawbacks. Among the former were political and economic stability, civic participation, and regional representation in the Hellenic Parliament. However, this integration also brought ideological polarization, clientelism, and what Lavdas (1997) describes as "disjointed corporatism". At the same time, having fulfilled its primary goal of unification with Greece, the once-dynamic Greek-Dodecanesian diaspora began to lose its influence, subsumed under the broader image of the Greek presence abroad. For many decades, its role was largely reduced to sending remittances that supported Greece's struggling economy and its chronic balance-of-payments deficit (Koliopoulos & Veremis, 2002).

By the early 1960s, Greece's economic growth and increasing prosperity brought long-awaited formal interactions between Athens and regional interests. However, these developments coincided with growing political instability. The onset of military rule in 1967—though ideologically rejected—had little direct impact on Dodecanese production activities or the region's established patterns of political and economic dependency. Despite successful initiatives for political and social consensus after the fall of the military junta in 1974, shifting political dynamics and a reliance on debt-financed prosperity sidelined many of the periphery's comparative advantages. Over the next three decades (1980s–2000s), Dodecanesians increasingly prioritized personal or group benefits over long-term management of the islands' cultural and natural assets—an attitude that reflected broader national trends. From the early years of its European Union membership, Greece leveraged its geopolitical and symbolic significance to secure financial assistance, yet structural reforms remained largely

1 Especially from the committed and active Dodecanesian League of America and the National Dodecanesian Council, under the highly skilled and effective leadership of Nikolaos G. Mavris.

2 107,292 residents out of a total population of 115,343, according to the 1947 general population census of Dodecanese. Source: National Statistical Service of Greece (ELSTAT).

3 The Italian-ruled Dodecanese was not included in the Greek-Turkish exchange of populations following the Lausanne Treaty of 1923. According to the 1947 census, the members of the Jewish community were estimated at 71 inhabitants whereas those of the Muslim community at 6,368.

unfinished business (Prevelakis, 2017). A critical yet often overlooked consequence of this centralized approach was the deepening of clientelist networks, a decline in local and regional historical awareness, and a loss of economic competitiveness (Georgikopoulos, 2023).

The financial and political crisis of 2009–2019 ultimately exposed the system's vulnerabilities. The Dodecanese, heavily reliant on tourism, was among the hardest-hit regions. For decades, unchecked tourism-driven development—backed by government funding and susceptible to corrupt socio-political networks—led to widespread neglect of the islands' aesthetic, natural, and cultural value. As mass-market sun-and-sand tourism became the dominant economic model, the destination image of Dodecanese cities became less competitive compared to the diversified offerings of other European regions[4].

After decades of ethnocentric introspection and rent-seeking behaviors, the financial crisis served as a catalyst for reactivating the Dodecanese's traditional community-based networks. A renewed emphasis on local strategies of distinction and a resurgence of regional identity have reaffirmed the importance of cultural heritage in shaping the archipelago's human geography. Moving forward, the question remains: how can the maritime heritage of the Dodecanese contribute to redefining both Greek and European maritime identity in today's increasingly unstable geopolitical landscape?

The Resilience of Patterns of Trust and Interdependency

From a geopolitical perspective, regional and local histories, actors, and practices offer valuable insights for rethinking dominant paradigms and adapting them to the challenges of an emerging multipolar world. In this regard, Dodecanese identity serves as a useful framework for understanding the enduring geopolitical significance of pre-modern loyalties and solidarities within a post-modern context characterized by continuous change and fragmentation.

Modern institutions, such as national identity and the European project, play a crucial role in this process. What may initially appear as contradictions—between localism and global integration—can, in fact, be complementary. Today, patterns of local identification and regular cross-border interactions coexist and intersect with broader phenomena such as cosmopolitan localism (Appadurai, 1996) and state-driven globalization (Foucher, 2013). Defined by both continuity and rupture, Dodecanese identity is constantly reshaped by the opportunities and challenges presented by the wider geopolitical landscape, while simultaneously projecting its preserved traditional resources into the contemporary era. This dynamic legacy is reflected in various tangible and intangible forms, including the annual Medieval Rose Festival of Rhodes, which reenacts historical and folk traditions; the steady cross-border mobility between the archipelago and the Turkish coastline; the uninterrupted connection between the Church of the Dodecanese and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople; the transnational network of the Greek-Dodecanesian diaspora; and the multicultural experiences of Rhodes and Cos.

4 Promotion of sustainable tourism activities -involving the preservation and enhancement of cultural and natural heritage, including the arts, gastronomy or the preservation of biodiversity, according to Eurostat's definition – was already the case for French Catalonia (region of Pyrénées-Orientales) and the Tuscany region in Italy.

How can these elements become a strategic asset for both Greece and Europe? As part of the broader Mediterranean consciousness, the Dodecanese exemplifies how communities have historically integrated new populations, offering a model for reassessing the role of peripheral regions in fostering both national and European stability and transformation (Georgikopoulos, 2022). The region, deeply affected by the refugee crisis, has demonstrated resilience by transitioning from initial shock to pragmatic and locally driven solutions. In Rhodes and Telos, for example, Syrian refugees have been employed by local businesses, which facilitated their acquisition of social insurance numbers, fostering social and economic integration. Moreover, the enduring presence of indigenous Greek Muslim communities in Rhodes and Cos, alongside the islands' interreligious urban landscapes—marked by churches, synagogues, and mosques—illustrates the potential for facilitating immigrant integration into Greek and European society (Georgikopoulos, 2018).

Ultimately, the resilience of traditional values appears to foster a strong affinity with pluralism, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence—qualities deeply embedded in the archipelago's historically progressive yet conservative political culture.

From both a geopolitical and economic perspective, the characteristics of Dodecanese identity can contribute to regional stability and development. The cross-border socio-economic exchanges—encompassing cultural interactions, trade, tourism, and shopping—between the Greek islands and the Turkish coastal towns of Marmaris, Izmir, Bodrum, and Kaş (Kaurinkoski, 2013; Georgikopoulos, 2017) illustrate how regional practices can effectively collaborate with state agencies in border management. The growing influence of local and regional stakeholders underscores the importance of bottom-up initiatives capable of mitigating the tensions fueled by stereotypical oppositions—such as those between Greeks and Turks or the broader dichotomy of "the West and the rest" (Ferguson, 2011). This remains a crucial challenge that, if properly addressed, could foster regional stability through mutual socio-political trust[5] and lay the groundwork for bilateral (Greece-Turkey) and multilateral (European Union, private investments, interregional alliances) economic partnerships that promote sustainable development.

Moreover, Dodecanese identity embodies a system of values, norms, and traditions that remains relevant in the context of globalization. Rooted in both territorial and network-oriented socio-political landscapes, these cultural features could serve as valuable assets for Greek and European identities in fostering cross-cultural understanding and openness. While Orthodox Dodecanesians continue to cultivate local strategies of distinction while also embracing national myths, symbols, and traditions[6], other historical realities resurface as reminders of the transition from a dual (Ottoman-Westphalian) system to fragmented structures of pre-modern origin. The Dodecanese Muslim community, for example, primarily identifies with its local and regional heritage rather than with a specific national affiliation. As a result, this population represents a form of Ottoman legacy that remains well integrated into the insular social framework, bound together by shared memories and a collective sense of territorial belonging.

5 Regarding issues such as the Aegean dispute and Turkey's geopolitical doctrine in the Eastern Mediterranean.

6 In the Dodecanese, there is no secular tradition because of the specific geo-historical experience. The combination of religion and nationalism had gone unchallenged as a means of introducing, under foreign occupation, regional identity into modernity.

Beyond their attachment to land, the existence of cosmopolitan and religious networks connects members of the broader Dodecanese community through local, regional, and national Mythistory. The Dodecanese diaspora in Europe, the United States, Africa, and Australia expresses its global dimension through deep-rooted traditional values that have been intertwined with Greek national consciousness and Orthodox Christianity since the Ottoman era (Mavrogordatos, 2003; Georgikopoulos, 2020). The resurgence of regional patriotism and the growing political and economic influence of these communities abroad have also shaped the foreign policies of host countries regarding Greek and European concerns (Sheffer, 2003; Bruneau, 2022), as demonstrated by the Obama administration's crucial mediation efforts during the 2015 Greek political crisis, which sought to prevent a "Grexit".

Moreover, third and fourth generation diasporic Dodecanesians frequently organize family visits to their ancestral homelands, reinforcing or rediscovering their local and regional ties. This practice is also evident among the descendants of Rhodian Jews who escaped the 1944 deportations. Since the early 2000s, organized group visits to the Jewish quarter and synagogue in Rhodes' Old town have become a standardized form of memory tourism for this expanding transnational network (Sintès, 2010). These tangible and symbolic connections to their ancestral homeland remain central to the Dodecanese diaspora, serving as key promoters of regional identity. By establishing and maintaining international, trans-state, and trans-local networks, these communities facilitate the exchange of significant political, economic, and cultural resources, contributing to the advancement of glocal strategies.

From both geopolitical and cultural perspectives, it is increasingly clear that reinterpreting the diverse character of Dodecanese identity could serve as a valuable tool for Greek and European foreign policy and cultural diplomacy. Ensuring security, stability, and progress depends not only on forming strategic maritime partnerships (Stavridis, 2017) but also on recognizing the advantages embedded in the maritime way of life—such as a risk-taking mentality, a drive for discovery and innovation, adaptability, and a strong inclination toward interconnectedness. Dodecanesians, both in Greece and abroad, act as bridges between Western and Eastern realities within the ever-evolving landscape of globalization. Ultimately, the region's multifaceted Mythistory could serve as a strategic asset enabling Greece and Europe to reconcile with complex and often overlooked geopolitical realities and to respond effectively to the pressing challenges of our time.

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Marc-René de Montalembert and his wife **Manuela Scammacca della Bruca** are the founders of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation in memory of their son Marc (1972-1993). As he was of both French and Italian descent, the foundation that bears his name focuses on raising awareness of the richness of Mediterranean cultures among young people of this region and on promoting intercultural dialogue. Marc-René de Montalembert is a retired senior official with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). His professional life was dedicated to international cooperation and development assistance.

*"**Conversation in the Library** is a very welcome initiative of Hafiz Ahmed Agha and Ahmed Fethi Pasha Foundation as it reunites in one collection a number of important contributions about history, art and culture in the Medieval City of Rhodes. So, we are grateful and pleased to participate in this initiative with our account of a modern foundation whose objective is to enhance the conservation and the cultural life of the Medieval City with an example of nature protection and cultural activities for the benefit of all. It shows what can be done at a moment when so many medieval buildings which have been restored at great cost are left closed and unattended: on the contrary it is indeed indispensable to accompany the current mass tourism with cultural education and emblematic promotion of the past and present of this prestigious World Heritage city."*

Marc-René de Montalembert

A Modern Multicultural Foundation in the Medieval Town of Rhodes
the Marc de Montalembert Foundation

**The restoration of an emblematic site:
combining heritage conservation and the promotion of dialogue
among Mediterranean cultures**

Introduction

2025 marks twenty-five years of presence in Rhodes of a new foundation, the Marc de Montalembert foundation – thus a very recent presence in the old historical complex of the Medieval Town and furthermore a French foundation established in Paris. The first step took place in December 1995 when the site on which the Foundation is active was donated by the founders to the City of Rhodes.

Marc-René and Manuela de Montalembert wanted to honour the memory of their son Marc de Montalembert (1972-1993) who used to stay nearby the small byzantine chapel of Agios Markos (Saint Marc) in Rhodes. They decided to restore the garden behind Agios Markos and to offer it to the church dedicated to their son's patron, and to donate the site to the City of Rhodes.

The transfer of ownership took place in December 1995. The conditions set in the donation act provide for the irreversible preservation of the site. The donors and the Foundation in the name of Marc de Montalembert were to carry the restoration of the site. They have the right of use to ensure the preservation of the site and its use for cultural activities at the initiative of the Foundation.

The Marc de Montalembert Foundation has a multicultural scope focusing on Mediterranean cultures. More specifically it intends to further the knowledge of their diversity and to encourage the awareness that such diversity is their richness. It hopes thereby to contribute to the cause of peace and tolerance in the region. Its main target group is the young generations. Financial support through grants is provided to cultural projects undertaken by young people from the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Interactions among diverse cultural groups are promoted through dialogue and encounters.

This presentation focuses on the Foundation's presence and actions in the Medieval Town of Rhodes. The first part describes an emblematic site with testimonies of successive occupations during the byzantine, the Knights and the Ottoman periods. Such testimonies required careful attention and a very significant effort in their restoration which took four years. The second part is a concise presentation of the activities of the Foundation on its siege in the Medieval town of Rhodes with particular focus on those activities meant to build awareness among the Rhodians of their cultural and nature heritage. The facilities which are available on the restored site are used to host multicultural encounters and seminars and for exhibitions related to cultural projects supported by the Foundation.

I - Concise History of the Site

The best illustrated testimony of the medieval time of the city is the Caoursin codex or codex Parisinus Latinus 6067[1], completed by 1490. It constitutes a unique description of the city which was the headquarters of the Order of Saint John until 1523 when the Knights were defeated by the army of the Ottoman Sultan Soliman[2]. The codex's miniatures provide a detailed representation of the city in the late XV° century. It enables the identification of elements of the urban fabric and remarkable fortress which had been developed by the Knights over two hundred years.

Several miniatures show on the western side of the city the bastion of Agios Giorgios and the walls, the monastery of Agios Giorgios, the church of Agios Markos and a garden lying just behind in between the monastery and the church[3]. This church had a particular significance as the Knights brought into it the precious icon of the Virgin of Fileremos from the countryside monastery at the times of attacks by the Ottomans.

The buildings shown on the miniatures still exist and they are under the Ministry of Culture. A significant programme of restoration has been carried out in the 1990s by the Byzantine archaeological service under the leadership of Elias Kollias with joint funding from the European Community and the Government of Greece. The restoration provided for a unique complex of Byzantine, medieval and Ottoman buildings.

A special feature of this complex is that the garden which was shown as central to it on the miniatures still exists. It is the site of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation's project. The garden has an extension of 1700 square metres. At the centre of the garden are a terrace with a large well, a standing arch and the remains of two more surrounding a basin which can be dated to the Knights' period. North of the basin were the remains of an Ottoman pavilion largely in ruins. While no indication could be found of the complex which they could be part of, the garden was an important element at the medieval time, and it was maintained since then.

In recent times the garden was privately owned and the connections with the surrounding buildings had been closed. It had been used until the 1980s to grow vegetables with the central well and basin providing water through a traditional irrigation system.

In the early 1990s the garden had been left unattended for many years and what remained of the central construction was in complete disarray. Seasonal workers found a shelter in a small room. Garbage of all kinds were being thrown and accumulated in this abandoned piece of land. Being privately owned it was not part of the restoration programme of the Ministry of Culture; discussions had started to turn the site into a tourist wine and dancing place.

1 Guillaume Caoursin: *Obsidionis Rhodiae* 1483-1489, Codex Latinus Parisinus 6067, Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

2 1523 in Rhodes is the year which marks the end of the medieval period and the beginning of the Ottoman one. The Greek Ministry of Culture considers the period of the Knights in Rhodes as the medieval period, followed by the Ottoman period starting with the Turkish occupation of the city.

3 The Byzantine Archeological Service in Rhodes has copies of the miniatures of the Codex Latinus Parisinus but their poor quality does not allow their reproduction in this submission except the plan of the city. Dr. E. Kollias, Conservator Emeritus, referred to these miniatures in his address at the opening of the Foundation on 2nd May 2000. See annex.

Following the donation of the site restoration started in early 1996. It was conducted in close collaboration with the Byzantine archaeological service as it was intended to contribute a significant green landscape to the complex of medieval buildings and the Turkish mansion currently under a major restoration programme.

II – The Restoration Project

It was necessary to proceed in two distinct phases i.e. the restoration of the ruins of the central pavilion, of the arches and of the basin and then the establishment of the garden. Furthermore, the advanced degradation of both the building and the garden imposed a cautious and gradual approach in order to integrate in the restoration work new elements being uncovered. The project revealed itself to be much more complex and demanding than initially foreseen. Furthermore, a deliberate and systematic use of traditional know-how and solutions was to be applied. This influenced the evolution of the restoration as work was progressing.

Work was carried out following an integrative approach as the garden and the pavilion could not be treated as separate elements. Instead, the site was to have a built-in unity in which the space whether external or internal was closely interpenetrating. Such integrated approach was aimed at developing one and the same atmosphere of harmony and peace. From the windows of the pavilion the garden was to be evidenced from different but complementary perspectives. The objective was to avoid the perception of inside and outside and to offer a diversity of possibilities of contemplation. It was to provide an example of continuity in the occupation of the space despite major historical and cultural changes.

Restoration of existing buildings in the garden

The terrace with an **old well** was the main visible element dominated by a fifty-year-old oxidated windmill. The windmill was removed and the top of the rectangular well cleaned and restored to bring it back to its original shape. The terrace had been covered with rough cement. In places the underneath original cover of little stones was apparent. The terrace was fully restored with the typical small pebble cover, traditional in Rhodes ("rhaliki").

West to the well an Ottoman fountain was inserted at the centre of a high wall covered with stucco acting as a separation between the well and **a basin** of rectangular shape. Water would fall from the Ottoman fountain into the basin and from there into an old irrigation canal to the two ends of the garden. The sides and the bottom of the basin were still covered with some remains of old curasani[4]. On the southern side of the basin there was **a very fine arch** of light pink stones from the medieval time through which the cupola of Agios Giorgios can be seen. This arch required no intervention.

During the initial cleaning research was made to ascertain the nature of the wall with the Ottoman fountain as it was covered with relatively recent stucco. **A second arch** perpendicular to the southern one was uncovered with great caution. Only part of the arch was intact, but the keystone was found among the remaining stones of the wall. This and the fact that the base of the arch had not been modified when the wall was built led to the decision to reconstitute the entire arch.

4 curasani: traditional material and technique used in the Mediterranean area to protect and waterproof basins, roofs, walls, cupols. Used from Venice, where it can be meant as "cocciopesto", to the coast of North Africa and the eastern Mediteranean.



Figure 1: The site in early 1996 after a first cleaning

The five missing stones were carved by workers with experience in this kind of delicate restoration. The eastern arch of the basin now stands with the fountain in its centre and the view to the church of Agios Markos and complements the southern arch towards Agios Giorgios.

Opposite to the eastern arch it was decided to remove a more recent line of stones and to bring the western wall of the basin to its original level. This operation uncovered the two stones which formed the base of **a third arch**: the original form of the basin was thus a square 4x4 metres. During the Ottoman time the basin was extended towards north and given its present rectangular shape. Had there been a fourth arch its elements were removed.

The base of the third arch was kept visible to evidence the complex of three arches on the sides of the Ottoman basin as an example of integration over time of the medieval and Ottoman cultures. Research and restoration works did not provide any indication of the original status and purpose of this complex before the modification into the Ottoman basin was arranged.

The sidewall and the basement of the basin were cleaned of the remains of old curasani and covered anew with curasani carefully prepared and applied according to the complicated and lengthy traditional technique. Despite the difficulty to find workers skilled in this technique the restoration of the basin's complex is exemplary of the deliberate recourse to the traditional know-how.

North of the well-basin complex stood what remained of **a building** which seemed a modest peasant house in very bad conditions. The state of these remains was such that the elements of the original building could not be identified at the time when preparing the restoration proposal.



Figure 2: The site in April 2000 after the completion of the restoration

The first operation thus consisted in a major cleaning to remove the trees and the ivy growing in and on the remaining walls and the huge quantity of garbage accumulated over time in the destroyed parts of it. Medieval elements were later uncovered. Important decisions were taken while restoration was in progress to integrate these elements after checking their stability.

The building complex thus uncovered consisted of three main elements:

- An Ottoman pavilion north to the basin and later connected to a small building with a chimney on the side of the terrace; they could date from the end of the XVIIIth-beginning of the XIXth century;
- Two more recent rooms probably built late XIXth century further north in order to extend the original pavilion.
- A large space in between medieval walls and divided by an arch was uncovered right under the two rooms and its level is that of Agios Markos.

The study of the ruins of the **Ottoman pavilion** identified the position of the original windows. Their restoration enhanced the shape of a refined ottoman salon – *hayat* in Turkish - looking on to the basin and to the garden on three sides. Two lines of windows, eleven of large size for the view and above them eleven smaller for the ventilation, were restored with the traditional Turkish wooden frame design. A wooden roof and floor and the furniture consistent with the traditional design completed the restoration. The adjacent small building was restored with special care for some large stone wall elements, which were left apparent. The space between the hayat and this

other old building was covered at the beginning of the XXth century and the two connected through an additional room. The latter was integrated to the hayat in the restoration work resulting in a larger space which exalted the atmosphere of the hayat. It is meant to provide the meeting space for the Foundation.

Of the **two more recent rooms** only one still had a roof and could be inhabited while the larger one had only the sidewalls with a tree growing on a mixture of soil and garbage which were removed. When this underground space was cleared medieval walls were uncovered which were acting as the foundations for the upper ottoman level. The restoration of the two upper rooms was postponed until the work in the underground level was completed. The shape of the original openings and of the walls where they still existed was maintained. The remains of a traditional Turkish wooden balcony on the eastern side justified a new insertion. The same Turkish stile wooden roof and floor as in the hayat was then used. One room was equipped as library and the other as office space.

The removal of the soil and garbage in the **medieval underground basement** uncovered the higher part of a large medieval arch which divided a large room with medieval walls, and a smaller entrance arch together with a well. These corresponded to a medieval dwelling.

No other elements were found which could enable the understanding of its nature and possible connection to surrounding buildings.

A careful restoration work was undertaken to ensure the stability of the medieval arches and walls. It was meant to re-establish the open space thus providing a clear example and evidence of the development of the building and the way successive occupants had used its elements in a continuous manner. Curasani was used to protect the floor against humidity at 1,5 metre below existing soil level. The restored space provided space appropriate for seminars and workshops.

The only addition to the existing buildings was a new space that was created under the terrace on the north-western side of the building. This new room with independent access was to provide for hosting a guest on the site.

Restoration of the garden

Research was conducted to uncover early information and to gather knowledge on the evolution of the site since the medieval time. The first evidence is to be found in the green space represented between the church of Agios Markos and the monastery of Agios Giorgios along the walls in the miniatures of Caoursin in 1480 (see reference above).

In the XIVth century Bosio indicated that the church of Agios Markos was a Franciscan convent[5]. After 1523 it was converted into a mosque by the ottomans. The Ministry of Culture completed the restoration of the original building in 1999.

Little was found instead on the garden at the early time. Bosio indicated that saffron – *Colchicum* - was cultivated. No representation was found so far of a Byzantine or medieval garden in Rhodes except on icons which have essentially a symbolic meaning. However, there are several descriptions particularly in reports from travellers of that period such as Nicolas de Martoni[6]. He wrote in 1394-95 about Rhodes : « *Autour de la ville de Rhodes, il y a des jardins d´orangers, de citronniers et de toutes autres sortes de fruits. Dans chaque jardin, se trouve une grande fontaine et un moulin à vent pour tirer l´eau de la fontaine par une roue qui tourne au vent. De petits vases sont liés à cette roue et l´eau tombe dans un conduit jusqu´à une fontaine aussi grande qu´un pressoir. Ainsi elle est remplie et, le soir, tout le jardin est arrosé de cette eau* ».







Figures 3-5: The garden

5 Bosio Giacomo, Istoria della sacra religione ed illustre milizia di S. Gio. Gerosolimitano, 1594-1602 Roma, Tipografia Vaticana

6 Relation du pélerinage à Jérusalem de Nicolas de Martoni (1394-1395), Edition Le Strange, Revue de l'Orient Latin, tome III, 1895



This description corresponds to the site where water is an essential element of the garden – well, fountain, basin, canal. The well's wall bears the mark of the wooden wheel of the mill to extract water which will then run into the rectangular basin. The remains of a small canal connected to the basin and running parallel to the medieval rampart completed the frame of an irrigation system traditional in the Middle East.

As the garden is located just under the medieval rampart its design was elaborated with special care in order that it can be seen from above the walls as well as by the visitors of the churches of Agios Markos and Agios Giorgios and by those visiting the Foundation.

The view from above the walls catches the structure of the garden. The main direction runs west to east between the two impressive old cypress trees through the basin towards the church of Agios Markos. The other direction runs north to south along the canal with the two cypress trees at the centre and the Church of Agios Giorgios in the back. These two perspectives cross each other between the two cypress trees at the point of connection between the canal bringing water from the basin and that running parallel to the walls.

From the neighbouring churches the garden is seen as a structured element of nature which provides the consistent environmental scenery to the medieval complex and the impression of a closed garden, "hortus conclusus" which existed frequently besides a medieval monastery.

The visitor who enters the garden from the nearby crowded and noisy streets finds a peaceful and silent space. He discovers a variety of squares and paths, which enhance the views to the surrounding medieval buildings with the two cypress trees and the basin with its arches as central reference elements. Walking between squares planted with different tones of green and passing through spaces of light and shade the visitor is invited to a contemplation of harmony.

The **design of the restored garden** is a modern interpretation of both the medieval and ottoman garden. The figure of the square is used across the garden with measures, which are a multiple of the dimension of the arches of the basin. It is repeated through the garden as a set of mirrors. The square of the basin becomes a stone square. Then its dimension is doubled in a frame of white flowering bushes. The same figure of the square this time of an ash green colour blossoms in summer of white colour underlined by the bright green of myrtles.

Below the wall and along the white canal from north to south a mixed border of local species was planted under the existing trees. A path limited by two edges of myrtles draws from the main terrace to Agios Giorgios. Special importance was given to that area of the garden extending towards the church of Agios Markos to exalt the link between the Foundation and the church. Two old myrtles stand on the sides of the stairs which draw from the level of the garden down to that of the church. The remaining space was shaped by squares planted of different Mediterranean species. In September saffron bulbs will flower like in ancient times.

Research on **plants** focused on those which existed in the Mediterranean region at the time of the Knights ; were to be excluded those which were introduced from other continents, since the discovery of America even if considered now to be part of the Mediterranean flora. Research was conducted in old herbaria for this purpose. Varieties of ancient roses were selected and introduced along the walls. Preference was given to species still present in the wild in Rhodes.

Figure 6: The Ottoman water basin with the medieval arch gracefully bearing the inscription stone to honour the memory of Marc de Montalembert.

The garden is visible in all seasons with the various tones of green of the perennials. White is the colour of flowers of all plants in the squares and the border along the walls. The only exception is the red flower of the already existing pomegranates dear to Proserpine.

Work had started in early 1996. By the end of 1999, four years later, the buildings had been restored in full respect of the history of the site and the various stages of its occupation. The preference being given in the garden to plants endemic of the Mediterranean region provided the harmonious landscape to the architectural complex surrounding the site.

The site of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation provides an emblematic example of what a modern foundation can achieve through the complexities of an ambitious restauration work in the Medieval Town of Rhodes. In a presentation letter dated of 29 May 2000 Elias Kollias wrote: "*I have been following the project of the restoration of the building and transformation of the surrounding area and the garden from the outset. On the basis of this experience, I believe that a site where memories of at least five centuries are alive has been not only restored according to the international rules on restoration but, what is more, with prudence, self-restraint, love and ardent yearning.*" Indeed, tribute must be paid to the continuous support and informed advice by Elias Kollias and his colleagues of the 4th Eforate of Byzantine Antiquities.

III - Activities of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation in Rhodes

On May 2nd, 2000, on the day of Agios Markos, after a celebration in the chapel, the site whose restoration had just been completed is inaugurated with the participation of the local authorities: Mr. Giorgos Giannopoulos, Mayor of Rhodes, Mr. Savvas Karaigiannis, Prefect of the Dodecanese region, Fr Païsios auxiliary bishop of Rhodes, Mr. Elias Kollias, Efore of Byzantine Antiquities of the Dodecanese. There was a large participation of friends and of people from Rhodes who were curious to discover this site which had been donated to their city. Most importantly was the presence of the three persons whose sympathy and support of the project had really made possible its implementation: Elias Kollias, Giorgos Giannopoulos and Giorgos Vrouhos, lawyer.

The facilities which resulted on the premises of the Foundation after the extensive and costly restoration were clearly appropriate for the development of activities in line with the mission of the Foundation. Elias Kollias attached great importance to the landscaping role of the garden as a background integrating the surrounding byzantine monuments. And it had been agreed with Elias Kollias that whenever cultural activities were to take place in one of the elements of the site such as the monastery of Agios Giorgios or on the site of the Foundation the participants would have full access to the totality of the site to bring a full perception of its unique architectural and historical nature. Unfortunately, since the completion of its restoration the Monastery of Agios Giorgios has remained closed and unattended.

The Foundation's activities have gradually developed over the years since 2000 with a particular focus on the garden and on the capacities to host cultural activities. Particular attention has always been given to ensure that the people from Rhodes would perceive the Foundation's presence and its activities as taking into account what it could offer them. A concise account is presented below.



Figure 7: The Ottoman water basin with the medieval arch and the fountain with the Monastery of Agios Georgios in the back (above). The garden and the Ottoman Pavillon (below).

The garden: promoting awareness of the importance of Mediterranean species and of nature conservation

From the outset it was clear that the garden provides an important example of the potential of Mediterranean plants in the design of a garden in the context of the Medieval city of Rhodes, and not only! Thus, there was a clear scope for developing a programme focusing on Mediterranean plants and more broadly on nature management and conservation. Two lines of action were implemented.

- **Building awareness among the public**. There are annually three days when the public has free access to the garden: on the day of Saint Marc, generally end of April, the spring "open day" in May and the autumn "open day" in October. The dates are widely communicated in advance. And the gardener is available to respond to queries regarding the identification of plants and their treatment. There is always a very large participation of visitors from Rhodes, in particular families with children. Furthermore, visits are also organized on request for special interest groups.

- **Special programme for the children**. Of special importance is the programme for the children. The Foundation's garden is unique in Rhodes and thus it can play an important educational function. Since the inauguration in 2000 visits of school children and students have taken place. In recent years it has become a regular programme. At the start of the school year the Foundation announces to all schools in the island that their primary and secondary classes are invited to visit the garden. Appointments are to be made with the person responsible for the garden for groups of 20/25 children to visit the garden. He will guide the groups around and he will identify the important Mediterranean species present in the garden. In most cases these species are familiar but un-noticed to the children. He will explain their mythology and the importance of protecting them in the local environment. Some classes will receive some seedlings of species found in the garden that they will take back and grow in their school premises.

In support to the special programme for the children the Foundation published a small book with a poetic and pedagogical scope. The story "*Το μεγαλο ταξιδι του Κιρο*" was written and illustrated by some local friends of the Foundation. In the form of a comic book, it is the story of a small child who discovers the garden and the main plants. Copies are given to the visiting classes, and they are also made available to those interested who visit on the "open door" days. In cooperation with the French Institute in Athens a French version was published and it is available in particular to Erasmus French-speaking groups of students.

Promoting intercultural dialogue through encounters

As a result of the restauration meeting facilities are available and provide a very positive environment. Furthermore, a hosting facility has been added close to the Foundation for up to 16 persons participating in the activities. The Foundation is thus able to promote intercultural dialogue by hosting encounters and meetings with regional participation on a wide variety of cultural subjects.

The first such encounter in September 2003 is worth mentioning: it was the Youth Forum of 7th Symposium of the Organization of World Heritage Cities. The Forum was organized with support from UNESCO, and it brought together 25 young people from a variety of countries who met for three days at the Foundation. They discussed their experiences from their own World Heritage City and their recommendations were presented to the Plenary of the Symposium. The Youth Forum was very successful, and all participants were enthusiastic about the venue. It confirmed the capacity of the Foundation to host such encounters on its premises in the Medieval City of Rhodes.

Since then, a variety of encounters, seminars and workshops have taken place at the Foundation. They are organized in cooperation with a diversity of institutions such as universities, research centres and programmes and non-governmental organisations – The Rhodes Centre for History and Social Research (the Rhodes Project) is one of these. The conditions are that the subject must be fully relevant to Mediterranean cultures and their diversities, and that they must be participatory in nature and bring together people from a variety of Mediterranean countries.

An important element of the Foundation's programme is the award of annual grants which provide financial support to cultural projects undertaken by young people – under 28 years – from countries bordering the Mediterranean. These projects must be implemented in countries of the Mediterranean different from the country of origin of the applicant. The grants are presented every year in Rhodes on the day of the Foundation and the winners return to present the results according to their nature on the Foundation premises through exhibitions or conferences. By 2024 over 30 nationals from 8 Mediterranean countries have benefitted from such grants.

Last but not least the Foundation hosts in residence writers and researchers who are engaged in a subject related to Mediterranean cultures. Besides the quality of the residence on the premises of the Foundation it is also an opportunity for the residents who come from abroad to discover Rhodes and its unique cultural heritage.

Concluding remarks

In 1995 when the Marc de Montalembert foundation started its activities in Rhodes the authorities who provided support to the project expressed hope that the Medieval City will benefit from a cultural contribution of quality. But many Rhodians did not know what this initiative would consist of and what to expect from it.

Over the years awareness has grown as it was manifest that special care was given to the restoration of a site which was so much part of the long history of the City as testified by the remains present. The garden was also an example of how nature was a crucial element in the cultural heritage.

After 25 years since the inauguration Rhodians come time and again on the "open days" to this emblematic site which provides a unique example of integration of nature in the urban tissue of the Medieval City. Furthermore, thousands of children through the schools programme have come to the garden and their awareness has grown of how important is the contribution of nature to their cultural heritage. This effort of raising their awareness and knowledge is all the more significant and crucial that they are the adults of tomorrow.

The achievements of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation in the Medieval City of Rhodes show the potential of new initiatives which are conducted in close cooperation between the authorities and a private initiative. It was essential but not sufficient: the feasibility of the project and its success relied heavily on the informed and sensitive commitment of individuals: a special tribute must be paid to three persons without whose support the project would not have been successful, not even possible. They are Elias Kollias, former Ephorate of the Byzantine archaeological service, Giorgos Giannopoulos, former Mayor of Rhodes and Giorgos Vroukos, lawyer. The Foundation is now well-known in Rhodes and a group of local friends is now actively involved. This modern multicultural foundation is now well integrated in the Medieval City where it provides an original contribution to its conservation and cultural life. In many respects it is emblematic of the presence of a modern private initiative in the life of a historical site such as the Medieval City.

Hâtime

Hâtime, derived from the Arabic root *χtm* and the word *χātima* - meaning to seal or conclude - refers to the final section of a manuscript or book in Ottoman literary and scholarly culture. Functioning as a textual closure, the ***hâtime*** could serve various purposes depending on genre: in scientific or legal treatises, it might summarize key points; in religious or Sufi texts, it often included prayers, moral reflections, or invocations of divine mercy; and in literary works, it could take on a more personal or poetic tone. While it does not correspond exactly to the modern 'epilogue', the ***hâtime*** offered a structured conclusion—a space where authors could reflect or gesture toward the afterlife of the text. In many cases, it marked not only the end of writing, but the beginning of reception, inviting readers to carry the work, or the ***Muhabbet,*** forward in thought, memory, or practice.



Tarik Tüten serves as the deputy *mütevelli* of the Hafız Ahmed Ağa & Ahmed Fethi Pasha Foundation. He is dedicated to raising awareness of the Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library and securing its recognition as a vital site of Rhodian cultural heritage. His priority is the preservation of the library and its manuscript collection, while fostering access for scholars and all who are interested in the history of Rhodes—including its Ottoman legacy and the broader tradition of Islamic manuscript culture. Tarık Tüten pursued academic studies at Karlsruhe, Stanford, and Berkeley and received a Dipl.-Ing. degree in Mechanical Engineering from Universität Karlsruhe and an M.S. in Energy and Resources from the University of California, Berkeley. He completed his postgraduate work at both Wharton and INSEAD.

"The making of these volumes has been a journey in its own right. The commitment and intellectual passion of the contributors reached an exceptional breadth and depth. Many engaged in a continuous exchange of comments, fueling the **Muhabbet** *through cross-readings and shared reflections. Inspirations sparked across borders and continents, transcending geographies. The spirit of collaboration was marked by genuine generosity, resonating deeply with the foundation's principles of sharing and collective inquiry. This work salutes all who engage in the patient pursuit of truth—not as a fixed destination, but as a shared horizon. The truth seeker is not merely a collector of facts, but a participant in the* **Muhabbet** *across time, space, and discipline; someone who listens, questions, and reconsiders. In this spirit, the Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library remains a home for those committed to unfolding new narratives of the seas, the islands, and the lands—not to claim final answers, but to keep the* **Conversation** *and the* **Muhabbet** *alive, and to seek knowledge in the service of fostering a more convivial and humane world."*

Tarık Tüten

Conversation in the Library

Kütüphanede Muhabbet

WWW anno 1792: Wars, Wells, and Wills

February 26, 1792, was a Sunday. The Treaty of Jassy, negotiated by Prince Potemkin on behalf of Russia until his death, was finally initialed by the Grand Vizier Koca Yusuf Pasha and Prince Alexander Bezborodko. Just a few weeks earlier, Selim III and Catherine the Great, Empress of Russia, had affixed their signatures to formally conclude the Ottoman–Russian–Austrian War. Meanwhile, Enderûn-ı Hümâyûn Rikâbdarı Rodosî Hafız Ahmed Ağa bin Hasan Ağa—the recently retired chief equerry to Sultan Selim III and the son of Hasan Ağa of Rhodes—appeared largely indifferent to the developments on the Russian front. His attention was instead devoted to finalizing the documentation for his charitable endowments. As the Ottoman Empire faced the involuntary loss of Crimea and a significant decline in power, this retired official was resolute in his desire to dedicate a substantial portion—if not most—of his wealth, including the well water from his backyard, to philanthropic causes.

Sunday, February 26, 1792, was destined to be a day of lasting significance for Hafız Ahmed Ağa—a day that would echo through generations of his family, and perhaps, in some quiet way, into eternity. As if bound by fate to history's stage, Crimea lingers in the limelight—unsettled still, and yearning for peace more than two centuries on, even as the 21st century matures into its third decade with more contradictions than its promises.

Hafız Ahmed Ağa was born on the island of Rhodes, likely in the early 1740s. While the exact history of his family on the island isn't fully known, we do know that his father, Hasan Ağa (d. 1772), and probably his grandfather, Abdullah Ağa, were buried in the Murat Reis Cemetery in Rhodes—an esteemed burial ground reserved for the Ottoman notables, used until the early 20th century.

As a boy, Ahmed was recruited in Rhodes to join the Enderûn, the elite palace school located at the heart of the imperial court Topkapı. The name *Enderûn* literally means "inner," derived from the Persian word *andar* and the Latin *inter*. It was more than just a school—it was a rigorous institution that trained future leaders in governance, science, and the military. Many graduates would go on to serve the empire in high offices, including the Grand Vizierate, beginning their careers in junior palace roles.

After completing his education, Ahmed served with distinction under three Ottoman sultans: Mustafa III (r. 1757–1774), Abdülhamid I (r. 1774–1789), and Selim III (r. 1789–1807). He retired in 1789, bringing to a close a long and accomplished career—just as the French Revolution was beginning to reshape the world beyond the empire's borders. To serve at high levels through three successive reigns was no small feat. It was arguably as challenging as winning three consecutive Olympic gold medals. And to survive them all? That would be like winning a fourth. Hafız Ahmed Ağa came close—but he didn't quite reach that fourth medal.

That Sunday morning, Hafız Ahmed Ağa left his home in the *Soğanağa* neighborhood to attend a meeting he had likely been waiting for in great anticipation. *Soğanağa*, located along the Divanyolu—the ceremonial avenue that led to the Imperial Palace—was one of Istanbul's prestigious residential areas in the 18th century. It was home to senior state officials, high-ranking civil servants, respected religious scholars and wealthy merchants connected to the Ottoman court. For Ahmed Ağa, who had spent his entire career either studying at Enderûn or serving in the shadow of Topkapı Palace, *Soğanağa* must have felt like home—both socially and spiritually.

Walking the streets of *Soğanağa* today, it's hard to imagine the elegance and stature this neighborhood once embodied. Unless you possess both a deep interest in history and personal or ancestral ties to the area, it's difficult to conjure the past from what now surrounds you. Rows of drab concrete buildings, hastily and poorly built after the 1950s, dominate the streetscape. Not a sliver of soil remains exposed to support a tree or a patch of green. Shopfronts are crammed into the lower floors, often run by a colorful mix of ethnicities that reflect the region's enduring diversity. Among this architectural disarray, a few tired remnants from the 1920s and '30s stand scattered, abandoned and decaying, their cracked façades and empty upper floors hinting at a time when aesthetics still mattered. Sadly, they are no match for the grandeur that once defined the area. Even the mosque that gave the neighborhood its name—*Soğanağa* Camii—has lost its former dignity. Originally constructed in 1600 and subjected to multiple reconstructions over the centuries, the mosque underwent its most recent restoration in 1997. This intervention, however, introduced design elements—most notably an entrance constructed from polyvinyl chloride—that stand in stark contrast to its historical character. Were there a contest for the most unfortunate architectural alteration in Istanbul, this restoration might well be one of the leading candidates. It stands now as a disheartening symbol of lost elegance.

To catch even a glimmer of the area's former refinement, one must venture further. Walk down towards the sea, past the Armenian Gregorian and Protestant churches, the Syriac Catholic church, and the Greek Orthodox church, until you reach what was once the Byzantine Kontoskalion harbor—now reduced to a mere parking lot. Or turn back and head up towards Divanyolu, where echoes of imperial processions still linger in the stones.

Setting aside the present-day soullessness of *Soğanağa*, with all its concrete monotony and architectural neglect, the adjacent neighborhoods still hold remarkable traces of Ottoman heritage—within a 500-meter distance of the *Soğanağa* Mosque. In Hafız Ahmed Ağa's time, this part of Imperial Istanbul stood as a vibrant crossroads of cultures and histories where one could find a stunning concentration of mosques, churches, madrasas, libraries, fountains, and, of course, the Grand Bazaar—a testament to the empire's layered past and cultural depth.

Amid these architectural palimpsests and historical riches, one building in particular must have captured Hafız Ahmed Ağa's attention: the Köprülü Library. Modest in size but rich in legacy, it still stands with quiet dignity on Divanyolu, just across from the serene tomb complex of Sultan Mahmud II, where notable statesmen like Ahmed Fethi Pasha and Said Pasha also rest.

The library, founded in the 17th century by one of the Ottoman Empire's distinguished statesman lineages, was the vision of Fazıl Ahmed and Fazıl Mustafa Pashas, sons of the Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha. Together, this remarkable father-and-sons trio of Albanian origin held the empire's highest executive office for nearly a quarter of the 17th century. The Köprülü Library was the first independently established *vakıf* library in the Ottoman Empire—an unprecedented move at the time.

Whether or not Hafız Ahmed Ağa was consciously influenced by this pioneering institution, its presence would have resonated deeply with someone of his background and values. It is not unreasonable to believe that the Köprülü Library helped set a precedent, encouraging other philanthropists to establish dedicated *vakıf* libraries not only in Istanbul but across the empire throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

On that quiet Sunday, February 26, 1792, Hafız Ahmed Ağa set out with purpose in his step and reflection in his heart. The streets of *Soğanağa*, once noble and hushed under the weight of imperial history, now bore witness to a man intent on leaving his mark in history not through conquest or command, but through benevolence. His meeting that day was with the esteemed representative of the *Kadı*, Seyyid Abdurrahman *Efendi*—a man entrusted with recording acts that shaped destinies. The *vakfiye* (endowment deed), that sacred charter of giving, had likely already been penned with careful thought and reverence. It was on this very day that the ink would meet paper in finality—unfolding Hafız Ahmed Ağa's vision, a legacy of devotion and generosity destined to resonate far beyond his time.

The object of Hafız Ahmed Ağa's endowment, as inscribed in the lines of his founding *vakfiye*, was a simple yet profound gift: a fountain drawn from the well nestled in the quiet courtyard of his home in *Soğanağa*. This act of charity—opening the flow of his private waters to the public—found its form in a fountain gracing the outer wall of his garden, a silent sentinel offering life to the neighborhood.

To offer water may seem a humble gesture, a trivial legacy. Yet in the Istanbul of the late 18th century, where water was scarce, neighborhood fountains were lifelines. For the many who lived without, Hafız Ahmed's fountain was more than stone and water—it was sustenance, a mercy carved in marble.

Only a year and a half after the founding of the *vakıf* (foundation), his manuscript library opened its doors on the island of Rhodes. The closeness in time suggests that the library's construction had already begun when the endowment was sealed on the 26th of February, 1792. The design of the Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library, later solidified through an amendment (*zeyl vakfiye*) dated November 18, 1793, bore traces of the serenity of the Köprülü Library in Istanbul—a likely muse for his architectural vision.

It is believed that soon after his retirement in 1789, Hafız Ahmed returned to his birthplace, the island of Rhodes, and set in motion the construction of his library. In the same *vakfiye*, a constellation of properties—real estate in Izmir—was listed, pledged to sustain the *vakıf* across time. The scale of this endowment speaks to a future-minded generosity, ensuring that the library, its caretakers, and its charitable works would be nourished in perpetuity long after he passed away from the world.

Izmir, a city far from both Istanbul and Rhodes, served not only as a waypoint on his journey—likely part of a long route by land, perhaps leading to the harbor at Marmaris—but also as a wellspring of income. His most valuable properties there lay in the Greek quarters. Chief among them was the *Rumhane*, a building where Greek families lived as tenants, and which served as the heart of his financial foundation. This choice reveals a careful mind—diversified, strategic, and attuned to the rhythms of risk and return.

In Ahmed Ağa's days, travel across the empire's vast lands was a privilege few could afford or attempt. The roads belonged to merchants with firmans, judges on the move, pilgrims heading for sacred soil, ambassadors, state-appointed physicians, soldiers, and those escorting the condemned. For others, the journey was not allowed or steeped in hardship. Men journeyed on foot or horseback, sometimes for months. Women, rarely, followed only for pilgrimage, in the company of kin. The wealthy traveled with retinues and guards, their passage marked by heavy costs and weary nights.

To choose Rhodes, far from the heart of the capital, as the home for his library, was no small decision. It meant arduous voyages and a deeper, recurring sacrifice. Yet Hafız Ahmed Ağa, in his quiet wisdom and determined devotion, pressed forward.

He was a man of vision—a soul drawn not to ease but to purpose, not to grandeur but to goodness. His heart was vast enough to carry the weight of legacy, and generous enough to share it with the world. Well, almost… or rather, not entirely.

As we learn from the diligent archival sleuth and Ottoman historian Efthymios Machairas (Volume I, pp. 126-139), the venerable great-great-great-grandfather Ahmed was not solely a man of ideals but also an insatiable entrepreneur—a kind of tycoon of his era. His web of influence stretched from the Balkans to Haifa, from the Black Sea to Rhodes. He amassed considerable wealth through concessions granted by virtue of his closeness to the inner circles of the Sublime Porte, wielding such power that, perhaps inevitably, the gods —or fate, or politics—saw fit to bring his meteoric rise to an end.

A Gentleman's Guide to Immortality

If one were to inquire into the Leitmotif--the ethical and intellectual motivations--behind Hafız Ahmed Ağa's endowment of a manuscript library on the island of Rhodes, an insightful entry point might lie in a well-established principle within Islamic ethical thought: the *zekât* of knowledge.

Just as material wealth in Islamic jurisprudence is subject to *zekât*—an almsgiving intended to purify one's possessions and support communal welfare—scholars across Islamic intellectual history have extended this concept to the realm of knowledge. That is, knowledge, like wealth, is seen not as a private commodity, but as a virtue entrusted to individuals with the obligation to share and disseminate it.

Through this lens, Hafız Ahmed Ağa's act of founding a library in the late 18th century can be interpreted not solely as an elite or philanthropic gesture, but as the institutionalization of an ethical obligation or conscious preference. By endowing a library, he opened private erudition into public access—offering future generations texts in literature and across disciplines including theology, jurisprudence, medicine, astronomy, logic and history. The library, therefore, functioned not merely as a physical collection of manuscripts, but as a vehicle of ethical continuity and epistemic justice.

Furthermore, placing the library in Rhodes—geographically peripheral yet strategically and culturally significant—echoed the Ottoman tradition of decentralizing knowledge production beyond the imperial center. In this respect, Hafız Ahmed Ağa's project aligns with the broader logic of *vakıf* institutions, which aimed to democratize access to education across the empire.

The Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library welcomes the visitor with a dignified, living silence. For those familiar with manuscripts, it is a known silence—not absence, but presence; not emptiness, but reverence. For the novice, this stillness becomes quickly sacred, a hush in which the soul listens before the eyes begin to see.

To hold a manuscript is to touch a fragment of civilization, a sliver of humanity preserved in ink and parchment. Each folio carries the breath of the devout, the brilliant, and the patient. Some of these works are so exquisitely composed—so refined, so luminous in their artistry—that one cannot help but be moved. Emotion rises not only from beauty, but from the sheer continuity of hands and hearts that have passed through time to meet you in the margins.

It begins with the calligraphy—not mere writing, but architecture in motion. A sacred geometry of letters unfolds across the page. Naskh (*Nesih)*, Thuluth (*Sülüs)*, Nastaʿlīq (*Taʿlîk)*, Riqʿah (*Rik'a)*, Dīwānī (*Dîvânî*), Siyāqat (*Siyâkat)*, Kufic (*Kûfî*): each script a visual rhythm, a choreography of discipline, elegance, and devotion. To the untrained eye, these lines may appear decorative or ornamental; to the initiated, they are breath made visible, language raised into liturgy. The pen does not simply write—it reveals.

A manuscript is not merely a courier of content. It is an opus of body and soul, where word meets form, and form meets spirit. The paper bears the scent of age and ink, the edges singed softly by time. The leather binding, masterfully hand-crafted, holds more than pages—it holds centuries of care and it holds values that never deteriorate. The copyist's precision, his marginal *muhabbet* with the author, the reader and himself, the illuminator who did not write words but made the ones written by others shine with gold leaf from Egypt or Sudan, lapis lazuli, the brilliant ultramarine pigment from Badakhshan, and saffron from Khorasan or Kashmir—all converge to create an object that breathes between worlds: textual, visual, spiritual.

To be in the presence of such a work is to witness the refinement of human expression into something near divine.

In a time when we scroll and swipe, the manuscript reminds us of slowness, of devotion and of care. A manuscript has a meaning that takes time and a truth that takes respect.

And so, we see and read—not just with the eye, but with our whole being. We enter the page like we step foot in a sanctuary. We go through the text, the lines and the verses like we walk in a flower garden. We listen to the voice of the scribe, the breath of the calligrapher, the whisper of gold and lapis lazuli in the margins.

This is not just history. This is inheritance of timelessness.

Continuity in Custody: A Library Unbound

Remarkably, the library has endured through multiple political regimes—from Ottoman to Italian, German, British, and lastly Greek sovereignty. Its persistence affirms the strength of the founding idea: that knowledge, like wealth, fulfills its highest purpose not when it is preserved, but when it is shared.

The Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library, like the city of Rhodes itself, stands as a witness to the complex and often turbulent history of the island's multicultural society in the twentieth century. Over the course of several decades, Rhodes underwent a series of profound political transformations, transitioning from Ottoman to Italian, German, British, and ultimately Greek rule. These changes were not merely shifts in governance; they had far-reaching implications for the identities, affiliations, and daily lives of the island's inhabitants.

One of the most devastating consequences of these historical upheavals was the destruction of the Jewish communities of Rhodes and Kos during the Second World War. On 23 July 1944, under Nazi occupation, the entire remaining Jewish population of the Dodecanese was deported to Auschwitz. The outcome was catastrophic: only 151 survived, marking the near-total eradication of a once-thriving Sephardic community.

To comprehend the magnitude of these transformations, one might consider the hypothetical life trajectory of a Rhodian born at the turn of the twentieth century. Such an individual would have commenced schooling under the Ottoman Empire (*Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmâniyye*), pursued secondary education under the Italian administration (*Regno d'Italia*), experienced the trauma of the Nazi occupation, lived briefly under British military governance, and entered retirement in the Kingdom of Greece (*Βασίλειον της Ελλάδος*), ultimately witnessing the consolidation of the modern Hellenic Republic. This singular life course encapsulates the broader historical arc of Rhodes—marked by imperial collapse, fascist expansion, genocide, and the eventual emergence of democratic governance. The island's history in this period thus reveals not only the fragility of co-existence but also the enduring resilience of its communities amid the dislocations of modernity and shifting political and legal regimes of the empires and the nation-states.

This passage through successive sovereignties left imprints not only on political affiliations but on cultural memory, linguistic practice, and historical consciousness—traces that remain inscribed in the palimpsests of the city and in the quiet and humble endurance of places like the Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library.



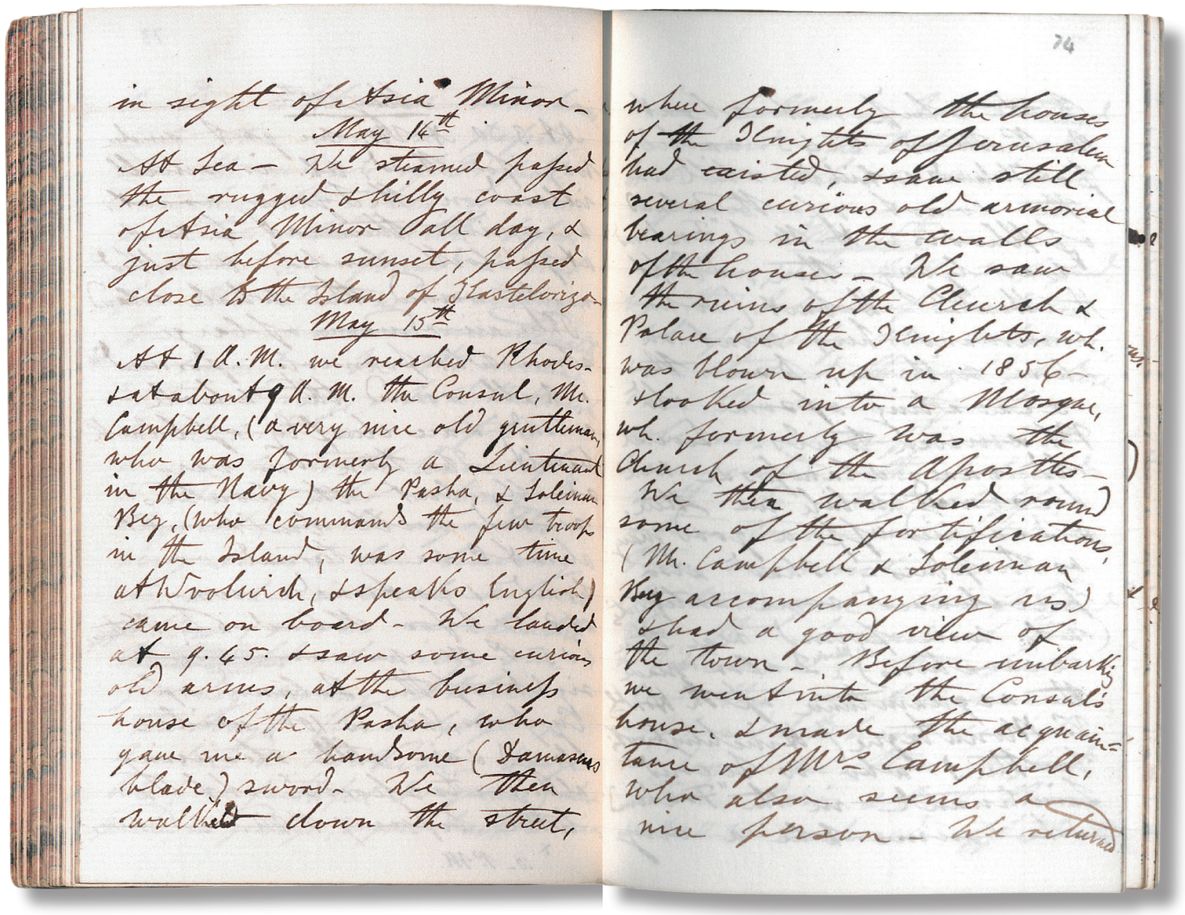
Ottoman-era postcards sent from Rhodes to Amsterdam, 1904, 1905 feature Rhodian landmarks such as Agios Nikolaos, Fethi Pasha's Clock Tower, and the Street of the Knights. Notably, the postal markings include stamps from Chios and Istanbul, indicating the itenerary taken en route to the Netherlands.
Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library archive.



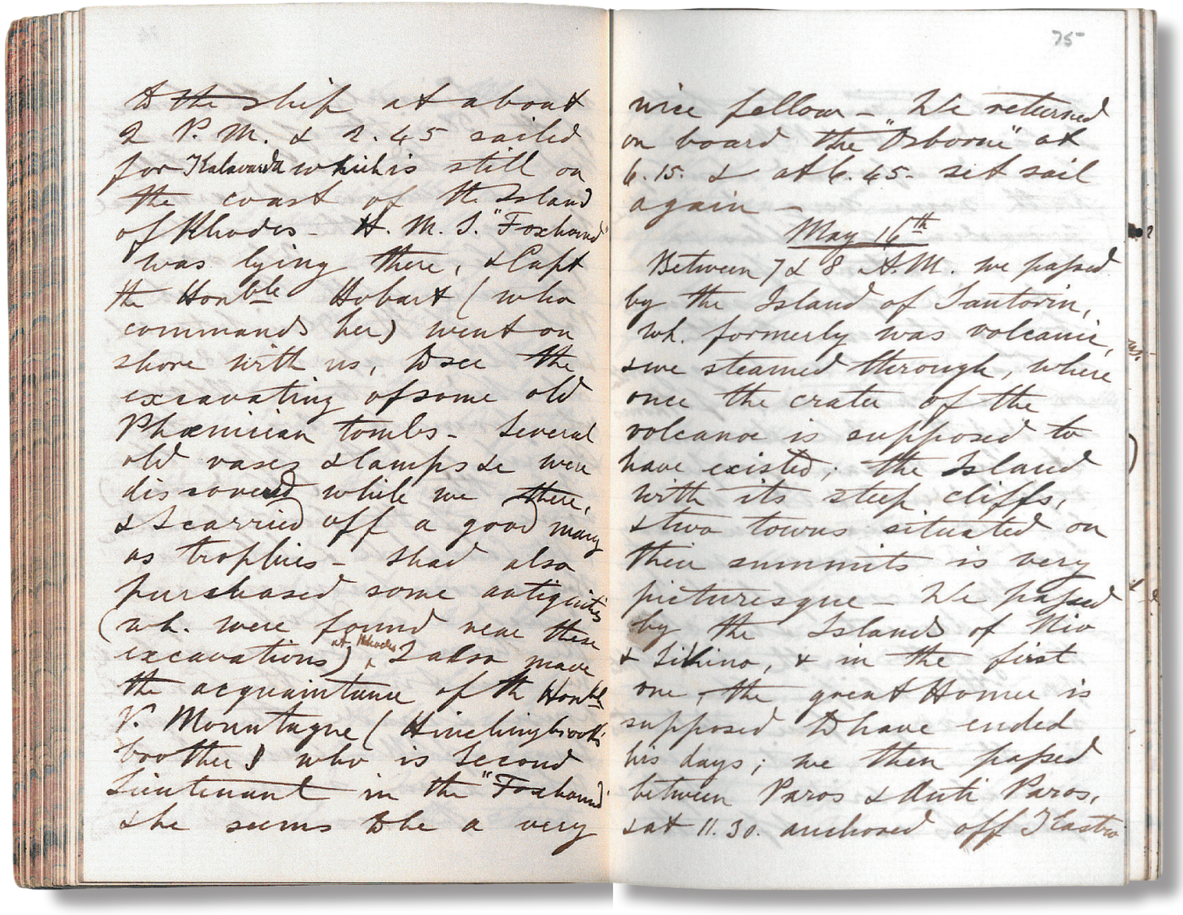
Postcard with the iconic *Il Grande Albergo delle Rose*, with Italian postmark and Italian stamps, 1933 (top).
Letter posted from Rhodes, still with the Italian postmark but with British stamps, 1945 (middle).
Postcard from Rhodes to the US with a Greek postmark and Greek stamp, 1950 (bottom).
Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library archive.

A flashback to the nineteenth century in Panagiota Psarri's article draws us into a magnificent panoramic photograph taken in 1862 from the de Naillac Tower, overlooking the harbour of Rhodes (pp. 156-157). This now-lost tower bore the name of Philibert de Naillac, the influential Grand Master of the Knights Hospitaller who led the Order from 1396 to 1421. In 1402, de Naillac famously 'repurposed' stones from the Mausoleum of Halikarnassus—one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World—for the construction of the Sanctum Petrum, today known as *Bodrum Kalesi*. The iconic tower in Rhodes, a legacy of his tenure, suffered extensive damage during the twin disasters that struck the island in 1856: the earthquake of October 12 and the gunpowder explosion of November 6. The Ottoman administration ultimately dismantled it in 1863.

The singular photograph taken from this vantage point—striking in both composition and historical resonance—prompted an inquiry into its origins, revealing a remarkable intersection of photography, diplomacy, and imperial travel. That same year, 1862, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (1841–1910)—known familiarly as "Bertie" and later crowned King Edward VII—embarked on a grand tour of the Eastern Mediterranean. His mother, Queen Victoria, whose June 1838 coronation Ahmed Fethi Pasha was expected to attend as Ottoman representative, orchestrated the voyage as a formative experience to prepare her heir for the responsibilities of imperial rule—a role he would eventually assume four decades later.



Excerpt from the travel journal of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, 1862.
p. 73b-74a
Courtesy of the Royal Archives | © His Majesty King Charles III, 2025.



Excerpt from the travel journal of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, 1862.
p. 74b-75a
Courtesy of the Royal Archives | © His Majesty King Charles III, 2025.

The journey was undertaken aboard *HMY Osborne*, the first steam-powered royal yacht, originally launched in 1843 as *HMY Victoria and Albert*. The itinerary began in Trieste in February 1862 and included stops in Venice, Alexandria, Baalbek, Cyprus, and Rhodes before reaching Constantinople. Among the royal entourage was Francis Bedford (1815–1894), one of Britain's leading early photographers, specially commissioned to document the tour. This marked the first official instance of a royal or state representative being accompanied by a designated photographer.

Bedford captured more than 190 images over the course of the voyage, including three in Rhodes, each a striking convergence of documentary precision and artistic expression. He employed the wet collodion process, then at the cutting edge of photographic technology. This involved coating glass plates with collodion—a viscous solution of nitrocellulose—mixed with light-sensitive silver salts. The plates had to be exposed while still wet, typically within 10 to 15 minutes of preparation, and developed immediately in a portable darkroom, which was installed in a compartment aboard the *Osborne*.

On May 15, 1862, *HMY Osborne* anchored off Mandraki Harbour for an overnight stay. During his time on the island, the Prince of Wales toured the medieval Old Town, still bearing the scars of the 1856 disasters. He was accompanied by the British consul, Mr. Campwell, and an Ottoman officer identified as *Binbaşı* (Major) Süleyman Bey. He also met with the Ottoman governor of Rhodes, who presented him with a sword of Damascus steel—a gesture both symbolic and diplomatic. Through the research of historian Abdulhamit Kırmızı, the governor has been identified as Tayyarzâde Atâ, an accomplished administrator and historian in his own right.

Bertie's reflections on Rhodes, including his meetings and observations, were recorded in a travel journal he maintained throughout the journey. Preserved in the Royal Archives, the journal was first published in conjunction with the *Cairo to Constantinople: Early Photographs of the Middle East* exhibition at The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, curated by the Royal Collection Trust. With their permission, four pages from Bertie's Rhodes entry are reproduced in this volume. In his own hand, the Prince offers a restrained yet perceptive account of his brief stay—an emblematic moment in his personal development and a valuable lens into British perceptions of the late Ottoman world.

Thus, the photograph taken from the de Naillac Tower in 1862 is more than a historical image; it is a portal into a richly layered moment that weaves together the memory of Rhodes, the emergence of photography as imperial documentation, the aspirations of the British monarchy, and the enduring presence of late Ottoman provincial governance.

*

It is the twenty-first century now. John Robert Barnes is in a quiet conversation within the aged walls of the Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library. His voice, steady and reflective, carries the weight of years spent among manuscripts, marginalia, *defters* and dust—years devoted to studying the library's collection on behalf of the Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese. Across from him, his listener remains attentive, not only to the words themselves but to the presence behind them. Jean de La Bruyère once wrote that the true charm of conversation lies less in the brilliance of one's own ideas than in the ability to awaken the wisdom of another. To his companion, John is not merely an expert; he is a living conduit to the library's soul. His deep, comparative study of the *defters*—the inventory registers—their classification systems, the taxonomies of knowledge embedded in their pages, and the subtle biographical traces of the library's founders, all render him more than a researcher. He is an interpreter of legacies, a quiet steward of intellectual heritage. The manuscripts, long silent, seem to speak again through his readings—echoing the aspirations of those who first gathered them, categorized them by the branches of science, and preserved them for future seekers. In this exchange of minds and memories, the past is not distant. It is present, palpable, and alive. On several occasions, John would come from Lindos, and we would sit together in the library—where I listened to his humble wisdom. Gülten Hanım, whose cooking John remembered well from decades past when he spent long days working in the library, would prepare meals for us once again.



John Robert Barnes at his desk in Lindos, 2024.
Photo: T. Tuten

Thanks to Christos Maliarakis and Erik Bruns, Savvas Pavlidis, and Ioannis Papageorgiou—Rhodian friends and scholars—we gradually developed a shared sense of purpose. Through thoughtful conversations, a collective vision emerged for how best to support the foundation and revitalize the library.

And then, one December evening in Istanbul, in a quiet exchange with Cemal Kafadar about printed books and manuscripts, something crystallized. I realized that my conversations—with John, Christos, Erik, Savvas, and Ioannis in the library, and with Cemal about the library—were no longer just moments of reflection. They were a call to action, a seed of something tangible.

In June 2024, it found its name: *Conversation in the Library* and *Kütüphanede Muhabbet.* Over two thousand emails and a year later—thanks to the generous contributions of seventy distinguished scholars and a storyteller—the publication you now hold was conceived and brought into being.

Gendered Legacies in the Margins

Hafız Ahmed Ağa may well be considered a feminist of his time, or at the very least, a man unusually progressive in his views on women's authority and stewardship. In his *vakfiye* dated 1792, he explicitly stipulated that, should he predecease his mother, the administration of his *vakıf* should pass to her. And should his mother pass away before him, governance would fall to his wife. In an era when women were rarely granted formal leadership roles, Hafız Ahmed's testament stands out as a remarkable recognition of female agency, autonomy, and capability.

Whether due to his express wishes or to the enduring strength of the women connected to the foundation, it is striking that the Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library and its associated charitable activities have historically been shaped by women. This legacy has served as a personal source of inspiration for my involvement in various initiatives under the foundation's auspices, including the production of these very volumes.

Three women in particular—Ayşe Hatun (Hafız Ahmed's mother), Saliha Hanım (his wife), and Şemsinur Hanım (his daughter-in-law, the wife of Ahmed Fethi)—played formative roles in the narrative of the foundation, either in its inception or during its early years. Their lives, though shaped by the limitations and injustices of their time, were marked by resilience, influence, and a quiet but undeniable power.

Nektaria Anastasiadou, in her characteristically subtle and evocative storytelling, brings to life the figure of Şemsinur Hanım (Volume I, pp. 36-53). Her story is one of both trauma and transformation. A survivor of the 1822 Chios massacre—a tragic and brutal episode during the Greek war of Independence—Şemsinur was among the tens of thousands of islanders from one of the most cultivated societies of eighteenth-century Greece who were enslaved or slaughtered. Whether the massacre was framed as retaliation for the terrible Tripolitsa massacre of Muslims and Jews in 1821 or as a punitive lesson to other insurgent communities, it remains a historical atrocity—a stark violation of human dignity.

Şemsinur, then a child or a young girl, was sold into slavery in Istanbul, where she entered the household of Saliha Hanım. From that moment, a new chapter began—not only for her, but for the family whose story would eventually intertwine with that of the foundation. Her marriage to Hafız Ahmed's son, Ahmed Fethi Paşa, an Ottoman diplomat and statesman of considerable renown, positioned her within a different social reality. Yet she never entirely escaped the imprint of her early experiences. In her person, the histories of war, displacement, survival, and adaptation are deeply inscribed.

It is worth reflecting on the irony and beauty of a foundation rooted in scholarship, memory, and civic virtue having been shaped in such intimate ways by the lives of women—some born to privilege, others to suffering, but all defined by an enduring sense of presence and purpose. The Hafız Ahmed Ağa Library stands today not only as a repository of knowledge, but as a quiet monument to the often-unacknowledged labor of women in shaping cultural institutions.

Their stories—fragmented, sometimes veiled, but unmistakably vital—continue to guide the foundation's spirit, offering a model of governance rooted in dignity, wisdom, and care. In recalling and honoring them, we recover not just names, but values, and affirm the foundational place of women in the historical and ethical architecture of this institution.

Muhabbet as Quiet Ethics of Narration

Hafız Ahmed Ağa's seed, planted in Rhodes, blossomed into something greater than he could have imagined. And yet, even then, he seemed to speak across time, stirring the hearts of those not yet born. It is he who, centuries later, draws the authors of these volumes together—not merely to honor his memory in word and page, but to build bridges across salty waters, rising above the confines of national narratives. In our *Conversation*—or *Muhabbet*, we have chosen a path that avoids prejudice, manipulation, and the dehumanization of the other, embracing instead, a language that unites and a will not to conquer or win, but to heal.

Healing is not an afterthought; it is a necessity woven into the fabric of co-existence. When it comes to historical traumas—those fractures born of massacres, enslavement, forced migration, deportations, war, pogroms, ethnic erasure, genocides, and silence—the path to healing becomes both more complex and more essential. Much like a forest after a fire, the charred ground conceals seeds of renewal, but the ecosystem must rebalance with care and time.

Wounds of historical traumas linger in the cracks of villages, in the landscapes and buildings—schools, mosques, churches and synagogues, and libraries included—that once bore witness. They persist in broken spirits, in what is remembered, and in what has been forgotten.

Too often, we find solace in the idea that the responsibility for healing lies elsewhere—in the state or in the government who are supposed to be our agents and of whom we become subjects, or in political parties, Gramsci's mediators of hegemony, or perhaps in the future itself. This is a comforting illusion. True healing cannot be subcontracted. It is not a service to be rendered, nor a hashtag to be shared. It is an intimate labor, a collective act of courage—undertaken not by those who seek to rule, but by those willing to remember, to remain grounded and 'cool'.

The work of reckoning with the past must be borne by those who are open to read and listen—close to the ground, close to the archives, close to the stories whispered between generations. It is often those without institutional power who make the meaningful gestures, acts of awareness, remembrance and recognition. And then there are those who dedicate themselves to the long labor of truth-seeking—scholars who bring to these volumes not only their knowledge and analytical rigor, but a quiet refusal to surrender to the seductive pull of forgetting. Their work is a form of resistance—measured, persistent, and essential. The authors in these volumes are caretakers—of memory, of culture, of heritage and of each other. In that role, there is dignity. In that labor, there might be healing.

In her 1958 treatise *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt wrote:

> "Love, by its very nature, is unworldly, and it is for this reason rather than its rarity that it is not only apolitical but anti-political, perhaps the most powerful of all anti-political forces."

Drawn by the vision and humble generosity of Hafız Ahmed, the authors of the articles in these volumes have gathered like kindred spirits around an 18th-century manuscript library on the island of Rhodes. From this place steeped in memory and meaning, they send forth ripples of *Muhabbet*—that tender communion of hearts and minds—towards shores far beyond the reach of printed pages. For *Muhabbet*, like love, may well be the most powerful of all anti-political forces.

Takrizât

In the literary and intellectual traditions of Arabic and Ottoman manuscript cultures, ***takrizât*** (Arabic: *taqrīẓāt*, singular: *taqrīẓ*) take a distinctive space as paratextual expressions of scholarly approval and social endorsement. More than ornamental praise, these texts served critical functions in legitimizing, disseminating and embedding manuscripts within the scholarly networks of their time.

In the manuscript culture, ***takrizât*** referred to not so uncommon, brief, often stylistically elevated, refined genre of laudatory commentary penned by respected scholars, jurists, poets, or Sufi masters to praise a work.

Functionally, ***takrizât*** operated as early forms of scholarly validation. Much like modern academic prefaces, reviews, or endorsement blurbs, they affirmed the intellectual value of a text within an established epistemic community. In a time when authorship, readership, and authority were deeply communal and relational, such endorsements were integral to a text's reception and its circulation across madrasas, tekkes, libraries, and private collections. A single ***takriz*** by a prominent figure could grant a manuscript considerable prestige, inviting further readership and replication. ***Takrizât*** also reflected the collaborative ethos of manuscript production. These clusters of voices transformed the manuscript into a social document—attesting not only to the labor of the author but to a wider intellectual community's engagement with the work. As such, ***takrizât*** were not merely marginalia or prefatory ornaments—they were documentary traces of the manuscript world's communal dynamics and systems of trust.



Dominique Eddé is a Franco-Lebanese writer born in Beirut. A trained historian, she pursued studies in Beirut and at the Université Paris Sorbonne, where she was supervised by Dominique Chevallier. A novelist, essayist, and cultural thinker, she writes primarily in French and is known for her richly layered prose, political insight, and philosophical depth. Her work often explores themes of memory, exile, identity, and the entanglements of East and West.

Eddé has authored numerous novels, essays, and literary portraits, including *Lettre posthume* published in 1989. Subsequent works include *Pourquoi il fait si sombre?* (1998), *Cerfvolant* (2003—translated into English as *Kite*), *La lettre et la mort* (an interview with André Green), *Le crime de Jean Genet*, and *Kamal Jann* (translated by Ros Schwartz), as well as an essay, *Edward Said : le roman de sa pensée*, which was published in 2017 by La Fabrique. Eddé's most recent novel *Le Palais Mawal* was released by Albin Michel in 2024.

As a public intellectual, Dominique Eddé has regularly contributed political essays to the international press, particularly on the Middle East, identity, and resistance. She delivered the opening lecture at the Institut du Monde Arabe in March 2025 for the "History Days" congress, urging us to remain humane before heroic.

"This book is more than a book. It is a living, breathing space—a site of encounters shaped by the voices of some seventy authors. At its center stands a library, founded around a fountain on the island of Rhodes in 1793 by Hafız Ahmed Agha, and preserved through time—first by his wife Saliha Hanım and his son Ahmed Fethi Pasha, and then, generation after generation, by their descendants.

Within its thick stone walls, nearly two thousand manuscript volumes have been sheltered and safeguarded to this day. Bound in leather and stored in numbered cardboard cases, these works have endured the passage of time with remarkable resilience.

At the heart lies the genealogy and destiny of an Ottoman—and later Turkish— family. The narrative expands outward: from intimate family memory to collective history, interweaving scholarly archives with private ones. As the pages unfold, a world in motion emerges—through shifting power structures and intercommunal ruptures—culminating in a devastating moment in the Chios Massacre of 1822 and continuing toward the Bosporus.

This world is restored like an old ancestral house—by a team of craftspeople whose roles and skills complement one another. Some rebuild the structure, piece by piece, placing it back into the broader story of war and peace. Others trace its fault lines, animate its silences with hypotheses, and move delicately through the terrain of perhaps... perhaps not.

Tarık Tüten, the great-great-great-grandson of Hafız Ahmed Agha, while assuming the responsibility of the Foundation, has conceived this work as a series of thoughtful exchanges—between scholars and enthusiasts, erudition and intuition. He has taken on the role of conductor, with the precision of the engineer he is and an innate sensibility for respect, harmony, and friendship.

One enters this book as one would step into the idyllic courtyard of the library—lingering in places, taking in the expanse of the gardenscape through the smallest detail, watching the past gradually flow into the present and cast new light upon it.

What emerges is a theatrical atmosphere, where we glimpse both the behind-the-scenes labor and the final performance. This book is a vivid illustration of what khatim—the Arabic word for "completion" or "seal"—can mean as a union of rigor and humility, craftsmanship and permanence. It is a model of resistance in a time marked by violent transformations and collective helplessness.

Having had the privilege of being close to his mother, Leylâ Tüten, who passed away during the making of this volume, I would like to evoke her presence here, which quietly permeates the pages of this book.

Until her final days—approaching the age of one hundred—she remained endlessly curious, eager to keep learning. Less conscious of what she already knew than of what she might still discover, she embodied a rare and generous form of intelligence.

She possessed, more than anyone I have known, that deep refinement which lies in never being self-satisfied—in continually listening, observing, learning. A mélomane, a polyglot, and open to all cultures and disciplines, she embodied the very best of both Asia and Europe.

Behind her delicate creations—sculptures, paintings—was an artist who quietly stepped aside, allowing the work to speak. She knew how to balance gravity with lightness, lucidity with harmony, know-how with know-what.

All these qualities—passed down to her son—are present throughout this book. The destiny of this remarkable family is revealed slowly, page by page, like a silver-gelatin photograph coming into focus, just before the blacks and greys settle into their final depth.

I can only imagine the quiet emotion she might have felt—her admiration, free of pride—for a work so aptly named. Muhabbet was the word we used in Arabic, our mutual friend Dina Haidar and I, everytime we visited her: a word evoking affection, intimacy, and meaningful conversation.

From Şemsinur, the former slave who became the first wife of Ahmed Fethi Pasha, and then to their descendants—Güzîde, Saîde, Sâmiha, and her daughter Leylâ, whom I have just recalled—this book gives women a space that official history so rarely allows. It is no small achievement.

The fictional portrait of Şemsinur, written by Nektaria Anastasiadou, ends with the image of a balcony. And it is precisely this space—perched between inside and out—that best captures the temporal and spatial dimensions offered to the reader by this book. A sheltered, elevated place, open to the breeze. A time apart, where the ticking of the clock is suspended, where conversation flows, and the past moves gently into the present and back again.

In the troubled history and geography of this region, islands—whether Greek or Turkish— occupy a central place. Here too, they appear as balconies from which the world is observed, as guardians of the rûh, the soul, as the word is known in both Arabic and Turkish.

What better way to preserve the soul of a book than through the presence of the hands that once traced its words in ink? And what more fitting tribute to those hands than to breathe life back into their time—while honoring the mystery that time still holds?"

Christine Philliou is Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley, where she chairs the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures and directs the Modern Greek and Hellenic Studies Program as well as the Turkish, Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Studies (TOPOS) Program, both of which she founded. Her book, *Biography of an Empire: Governing Ottomans in an Age of Revolution* (2010) shed light on the Greek Orthodox Christian elite of Phanariots and their role in Ottoman governance at the turn of the nineteenth century, in the age of the Greek War of Independence and on the eve of the Tanzimat Reforms. In *Turkey: A Past Against History* (2021), she turned to the closing decades of Ottoman history and the transformation to Republican Turkey and traces the history of the concept of *muhalefet*, meaning both opposition and dissent. This she did through the life and works of Refik Halid Karay, a perennial claimant to the status of *muhalif* who spanned the fall of the Ottoman Sultanate and the construction of the Republic. In both books, she applies a post-national lens to the key eras and origin stories of the Greek and the Turkish nation-states, showing us that there is so much more to the historical experience of Greeks and Turks than their national histories would allow for. More recently, she founded the İstanPόλις digital collaborative (istanpolis.org), where she and a team of scholars conduct granular analysis of neighborhood-level communities in Ottoman Constantinople/Istanbul between the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence and the end of the Ottoman era (1821-1923). She is a winner of the Sakıp Sabancı Prize, recipient of numerous grants such as a National Endowment for the Humanities Collaborative grant, and publishes widely in academic and popular journals.

"This collection is nothing less than a portal into a forgotten world, leading the reader into a dazzling history and a new kind of imagination for Ottoman, Greek and Turkish history. In one sense, the contributions revolve around an actual library–that founded by Hafız Ahmed Ağa and Ahmed Fethi Paşa in Rhodes–which is already interesting as a relic of the Ottoman past in Rhodes, now finding itself in the modern state of Greece. But it is much more than an interesting study of an Ottoman library stranded on a post-Ottoman island. It offers us a series of lenses, or overlapping vistas, onto the lives and careers of the library's founders, often provided by their descendants as well as by scholars from a range of specializations. It provides broader contextualization of reading, libraries, and political economy of power in the post-classical Ottoman Empire; offers a focus on one woman who had a fateful relationship to the library, its founders, and the islands of Chios and Rhodes as well as neighborhoods such as Eyüp, Tophane and Kuzguncuk in the Ottoman capital; and detailed considerations of the contents and built structures and spaces of use in the library.

The second volume offers a different kind of wide-angle lens and offers us yet another string of scholarly pearls on the history of Rhodes in the longue durée, from antiquity through the ages and empires that bring us through the Ottoman and Italian eras, and ultimately the Greek present. Each snapshot is as careful, empirically rigorous and thought-provoking as the whole collection is staggering in depth and range. This is a portal onto a dynamic and complex world of people, and manuscripts, and homes and islands, all centered around a microhistory of a library and its founders.

Beyond the specific contribution of this collection to scholarship, which is tremendous, we cannot ignore its contribution, which is perhaps even greater, to Greek and Turkish societies. This is a model of post-national history, attuned to all of the conflicts, contradictions, and meandering lines of interconnection between the supposedly separate Greek and Turkish nations. Muhabbet–conversation, chat, affection–and its not quite exact counterpart of συζήτηση–discussion–together capture both the allure and the challenge of merging Greek and Turkish perceptions of the Ottoman past. And what more beautiful case study of the shared and complex Ottoman heritage of Greeks and Turks than a library?

I congratulate Tarık Tüten for this monumental achievement and for fostering the inspiration that bursts forth from these pages!"

Molly Greene studies the history of the Mediterranean Basin, the Ottoman Empire, and the Greek world. Her interests include the social and economic history of the Ottoman Empire, the experience of Greeks under Ottoman rule and the early modern Mediterranean. After earning a B.A. in political science at Tufts University (1981), Professor Greene spent several years living in Greece and then completed a Ph.D. in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton (1993), where she studied Ottoman history. Upon graduating she joined the Princeton faculty with a joint appointment in the History Department and the Program in Hellenic Studies. Her first book, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (2000), examines the transition from Venetian to Ottoman rule on the island of Crete, which the Ottomans conquered in 1669. Challenging the assumption of a radical rupture with the arrival of the Ottomans, Greene shows that the population of Crete had been drawn into the Ottoman world long before the conquest and that important continuities linked the Venetian and the Ottoman periods. Her second book, *Catholic Pirates and Greek Merchants: A Maritime History of Mediterranean 1450-1700,* was published in 2010 and was a co-winner of the Runciman Award for that year, given for the best book in English on any aspect of Hellenism. At the center of the book is the relationship between Catholic piracy and Greek commerce in the early modern Mediterranean. In 2015 she published *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, 1453-1768: The Ottoman Empire,* part of a multi-volume series on the history of the Greek people from antiquity until the present day.

*"**Conversation in the Library** or **Kütüphanede Muhabbet** is a highly original contribution not only to academic research but also to academic community. **Muhabbet**, which I think is best translated as convivial conversation, was a key concept in Ottoman structures of sociability. Fittingly, then, these two volumes bring together over sixty scholars to introduce to the world the extraordinary manuscript library of Hafiz Ahmed Ağa, as well as the history of Rhodes in its medieval, Ottoman, colonial and Greek contexts. Hafiz Ahmed Ağa was a native of Rhodes who inaugurated his library in 1793. The library is the only Ottoman library – whether in Turkey or abroad - which is still in the possession of the founder's family. Tarik Tuten, who is the seventh generation of the family, is a resident of both Istanbul and the Dodecanese and is the current custodian of the library. He has been instrumental in the production of these two volumes as well as reviving the lost art of **Muhabbet** by bringing so many scholars – from Greece, Turkey and elsewhere – together. From a deep dive into Ottoman libraries and manuscripts to broad reflections on how Rhodiots, and Dodecanese islanders more generally, have understood history, these two volumes bring to light a lost world whose repercussions are still with us today."*

Loukas Tsoukalis received his doctoral degree from the University of Oxford where he taught for many years. He returned home as Professor of European Integration at the University of Athens and was subsequently elected as the first holder of the Eleftherios Venizelos Chair at the European Institute of the London School of Economics. He was also for long head of the economics department at the College of Europe in Bruges. He has held visiting professorships at the European University Institute in Florence, King's College London, and the Kennedy School at Harvard University. He has advised former presidents of the European Commission and the European Council. He is now Professor at the Paris School of International Affairs (Sciences Po), Emeritus Professor of the University of Athens, and President of the board of the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), Greece's leading think tank. Author of many articles and books translated into several European languages. In 2021, Oxford University Press published a Festschrift in his honour with contributions by leading personalities from academia and politics across Europe. His latest book *Europe's Coming of Age* was published by Polity Press in 2023.

"An Ottoman foundation with a library in Rhodes that dates back to 1793 and houses a rich collection of old manuscripts. An island with a long history of invasions and foreign occupations, also periods of multiethnic peaceful coexistence. Two volumes containing contributions from scholars from very different backgrounds on a wide range of topics, all the way from the study of Ottoman manuscripts to the massacre of Chios and the Greek war of independence, the history of both the foundation and the library, multilingualism under the Ottoman empire and a Pasha writing poems in Greek, the long presence of the Knights of St John and their strong imprint on the island, Jewish and other communities, Italian rule until the end of the Second World War followed by Rhodes and the Dodecanese becoming part of Greece. All contributions to these two volumes draw inspiration from the rich and highly diverse legacy of Rhodes, of which the Hafiz Ahmed Ağa Library is part.

A seventh-generation custodian with great respect for the treasure he has inherited and a dream for the future. He opens the doors of the library and invites people in, aspiring to give new life to a historical monument by creating a welcoming space for scholarly work and cultural exchange. Tarik Tüten has been the driving force for this publication. He has brought many scholars together who ended up sharing his dream. The ***Conversation in the Library*** *is a generous offering to mutual understanding, dialogue and cooperation: a true gem."*

Konrad Hirschler is Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Hamburg and spokesperson of the Cluster of Excellence Understanding Written Artefacts. His research explores the cultural and social history of the pre-modern Middle East, with a focus on Arabic manuscript culture, libraries, reading practices, and historiography from the 12th to 16th centuries. He previously held academic posts at the University of Kiel, SOAS, and Freie Universität Berlin. His books include *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands and Medieval Damascus: Plurality and Diversity in an Arabic Library*. He is a section editor for the *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three* and was elected to the Hamburg Academy of Sciences in 2023.

"This is an unusual book in the best sense of the term. It is dedicated to a very special library, the Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library on Rhodes, the only continuously functioning Ottoman library still managed by the endower's family. ***Conversation in the Library*** *demonstrates that writing a library's history can be much more than merely chronicling its books. Bringing together a fascinating range of authors, it offers numerous insights and reflections on what this library might have signified throughout its history up to the present day. This book invites the reader to explore the library from many perspectives, including individual biographies, imperial histories, buildings, and books. Lovingly produced and utterly captivating, it comes highly recommended for anyone interested in the entangled past and present of the Eastern Mediterranean."*

Soli Özel is a scholar of international politics, Turkish foreign policy, and comparative democratization. His research and teaching focus on global affairs, the Middle East, and the evolution of political Islam, with a particular interest in Turkey's place within shifting international orders. He holds a BA in Economics from Bennington College and an MA in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He has taught at multiple academic institutions, including UC Santa Cruz, the University of Washington, Northwestern University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Johns Hopkins SAIS, Boğaziçi University, and Istanbul Bilgi University. He has also served as a visiting lecturer at Harvard, Yale, Georgetown, and Tufts University. Soli Özel is a former Bernstein Fellow at Yale Law School's Schell Center for Human Rights and a Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin. He has been affiliated with the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna as a Europe's Futures Fellow and has participated in research at the Institut Montaigne in Paris and the EU Institute for Strategic Studies. In addition to his academic work, Özel has contributed extensively to public discourse as a columnist and commentator. His writings have appeared in both Turkish and international media, including Foreign Policy, Journal of Democracy, Internationale Politik, and The International Spectator. Özel is a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) and he continues to engage in dialogues on diplomacy, democratic backsliding, and regional geopolitics, maintaining an active role in both scholarly and policy-making communities.

"What a comforting, warmly embracing and seductive title these two volumes have! ***Muhabbet*** *is a word that is so much more than its primary and superficial meaning of conversation. It is a word full of undertones and meanings that reflect the core, soul and audacity of this project too. Of course, it means conversation or an exchange between two persons, but this is no ordinary conversation. It is a sharing of views, feelings, thoughts that at its best is deep, meaningful and full of layers. This is why the closeness of a relation between two friends/individuals who are invested in one another is encouraged as in the expression "muhabbetiniz bol olsun" (may your* ***muhabbet*** *be deep and rich). Only intimates or close friends can truly have this kind of rapport or communication. The word also means affection and it exudes tenderness. The unearthing of such meanings or putting the accent on those is precisely what this book does. Tarık Tüten, the book's editor, is the seventh-generation custodian of a unique library that the cosmopolitan Mediterranean island of Rhodes with its rich history, once part of a cosmopolitan empire is lucky to host. If Tarık were not a friend, and had I not known the effort, dedication, patience and love that were invested in its production I would still be in awe of the two volumes that we as readers have in our hands.* ***Kütüphanede Muhabbet*** *is a treasure in more ways than one. Its very title along with its content, the* ***muhabbet*** *between its texts and authors and perspective puts to rest the clichés, prejudices, frozen dogmas or the distortions that reading history from nationalist perspectives entrap us in. We owe gratitude to Hafız Ahmet Ağa, all the men and women among his descendants for having safeguarded this treasure with deep* ***muhabbet*** *for all of us and future generations."*

Meclis-i Muhabbet

Comprising both the contributing authors of these volumes and the historical, intellectual, and cultural figures they have brought into the ***Conversation***, this list gestures toward a broader scholarly dialogue—one that stretches across time and discipline. Like the marginalia of Ottoman manuscripts, it reflects a spirit of reverence and inquiry, gathering a convivial community of minds. The ***Meclis-i Muhabbet*** invites the reader to wander not only through arguments and analyses, but also through the company we keep when we write, cite, and remember.

Names of the contributing authors are marked in color.

As Hafız Ahmed Ağa and Ahmed Fethi Paşa - the hosts of the ***Muhabbet*** - are the central figures discussed across the volumes, their names have been excluded from the *Meclis* to avoid redundancy.



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Derkenâr

In Ottoman bureaucratic and manuscript culture, the Persian-derived term ***derkenâr*** —literally "written on the side"—was more than a marginal note; it was a vital instrument of memory, continuity, and commentary. In the bureaucratic realm, it referred to annotations on state documents that recorded prior decisions, legal precedents, or financial conditions. These notes, often written in a finer script at the document's edge, linked new petitions to earlier rulings, allowing officials to act within the framework of institutional memory.

In the world of manuscripts, ***derkenâr*** became a space of intellectual exchange. Authors (*müellif*) drafted additions, corrections, or clarifications in the margins; scribes (*müstensih*) and readers contributed glosses or variant readings. These marginal notes rendered each manuscript unique, capturing the layered history of its transmission. Over time, a single text might accumulate generations of interpretive voices, turning the page into a 'conversation' across eras.

While ***derkenâr*** has traditionally appeared as marginalia on inscribed pages, the empty pages that follow serve as stylized margins of ***Conversation in the Library – Kütüphanede Muhabbet***. These open spaces invite the reader not only to read, but to respond. Every ***derkenâr*** taken, every note inscribed, becomes part of the work's evolving life. In this way, each copy holds the potential to become singular—shaped by the hands and minds that engage with it.





Derkenâr
Marginal notes
Σημειώσεις στο Περιθώριο

Derkenâr
Marginal notes
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Marginal notes
Σημειώσεις στο Περιθώριο



Ketebe

In the manuscript tradition of the Ottoman Empire, the ***kitab*** (book) was not merely a vessel of textual content, but a carefully produced cultural artifact. Each manuscript bore the traces of its making—physical, intellectual, and devotional. Among these traces, the ***ketebe***, in this usage a quasi-colophon, stands as a distinct and revealing marker of a manuscript's completion. Typically situated at the end of a codex, the ***ketebe*** represents the scribe's formal statement, documenting both the act and the context of copying. Etymologically derived from the Semitic triliteral root K–T–B, which conveys meanings related to writing, inscribing, or recording, ***ketebe*** performs both practical and expressive functions. It generally includes the name of the copyist, the date, and occassionally the place of production. In some rare cases, it may reference the patron of the manuscript or the setting in which it was produced, such as an endowed library, a madrasa, a dervish lodge, or a palace workshop. Beyond these essential data, colophons often incorporate formulaic invocations reflecting the humility and piety commonly associated with scribal labor. While concise, the ***ketebe*** plays a critical role in contextualizing the manuscript as a historical object.

Through this paratext, the otherwise anonymous act of transmission acquires an authorial signature. The presence of personal remarks, poetic fragments, or expressions of physical or spiritual fatigue occasionally found in ***ketebe*** inscriptions also reveal the scribe's lived experience, rendering each manuscript unique. From a codicological perspective, the ***ketebe*** is of considerable value. It offers concrete information that enables scholars to date and localize manuscripts, reconstruct networks of scribes and patrons, and chart the movement of texts within the empire. The cumulative analysis of ***ketebe*** entries across collections opens pathways for understanding broader dynamics of manuscript production, including regional practices, affiliations with libraries, madrasas or waqfs, and stylistic conventions.



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