

UMIT SANG INTO TO CRETE WATER; CRETE TO THE HEART OF CRETANS

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Abstract

Every Craetan were proud of to be a Cretan. Cretans had Created common behaviors, common senseful positions and a common body language in this area that was close to outside by some contents. Surely, there had been peculiarities and clothing styles which were separating a Roum from Turks, but uniting peculiarites were more than separating peculiarities.

The familiar living like that and common culture had been broken up with the decision of exchange(barter). The army of Mustafa Kemal, according to the agreements (contract) which had been made with the conclusion of removing of Greek forces from Anatolia, excluding the west thrace, like Greek Muslims, Cretan Muslims had been subjected to the exchange, too.

A lot of ships had been dutied by Seyr-İ Sefain to carry the Cretan Muslims who had been waiting for exchange. One of these ships were the “Ümit” which was 55 years old and had succeeded seious works in Turkish Liberation War. Ümit was an old, and worn out ship, it was deserving of retirement already. For all that, Ümit had been used in the work of carrying the migrants. Ümit had been driven about from one dock to another ceaselessly. The tired body of Ümit, finally, had been unable to overcome this dynamism and had left itself to the cold water of Cerete. Hereby, Crete had stayed in the hearts of Cretans and Ümit in the cold Crete water.

The aim of this study is; to introduce this ship, named “Ümit”, and to tell the difficulties of the people who had been pressed to leave from the people whom they had lived a common culture with and from the lands in which they had borned, by means of migration.

Key Words: *Migration, Exchange, Umit, Seyr-i Sefain(an institution which had been watching(controlling) all of the ships of that area(land)), Ship...*

Every Cretan (the people of Crete) people has a Crete love in their heart, and Crete (the city) has the love of Ümit (name of the ship, means “hope” in Turkish). It is difficult to be a migrant, and to carrying the migrants must have been as difficult as being a migrant for a ship aging almost a half century. Crete is



Ship of Umit

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the name of the homeland which had disappeared at horizon with the tears of Cretans, who had to leave it and Ümit was the Turkish ship, unable to overcome this voyage, and had let go her body sink in the water of Kandiye while waiting to start this difficult voyage.

As if the destinies, intersected in the water of Crete...

Ümit sang into the Crete's water and Crete to the hearts of Cretans...

However many changes had been taken place for a long time in daily life of various cities in Crete, towards the end of 1922 steps rushed. Hearts had started to beat deeper. News shocked many ears saying; the armies faithful to Mustafa Kemal Pasha had destroyed the Greek army stabbed by Venizolos to the Anatolia. Turkish cavaliers had been progressing towards to Izmir.

Dismay had balled with excitement and a huge sense of emotion had embraced the hearts. In Crete, while Turks were happy with this news under the rouse, Roums had the anxiety of the probability "*of turks arrival to this land*". Curious eyes were trying to verify the precision of the news. Rumors had swelled by the time but, it was comprehended later that some of the exaggerated gossips were true. While Muslims were praying with excited emotions in mosques, Roums were crossing themselves in the churches with anxiety. On hearing the precision of news, throngs of miserable Anatolian Orthodox had rushed into the whole Greece. It was concluded that rumors, tried to have been hidden with real care were true by the observation of the scenes of the people in the miserable conditions. Anatolian roumity (to be a roum) cropped up to flow to Greece homeland and to the islands around.

Everybody was at the peak of curiosity and anxiety. Improvements were nailing themselves to the people's mind that it was a historical mile stone.

Either Turk or Roum, Cretans were recognizing themselves distinct from the Greeks. This was a situation peculiar to the island. They had developed an identity for themselves called "Cretans". Most of the Turks were unable to speak Turkish. Even the local tongue spoken locally was far away from Greek. Different cultures heaped around this unique identity, while a homogenous union could have been observed between different cultures in every aspect of life without making any discrimination of religion and race. The unrest during the last century in the island where they were born and grown up was tedious. After Greeks gained their independency, Cretan Roums exertion and course actions to bind the island to Greece, along with uncontrolled Greek nationalism, the slaughtered Muslim corpses, countless murderings Roums committed, were engraved in the common memory. Although struggles of Governor Mehmet Ali Pasha, to suppress the riot, had subdued the first attempt, successive and endless insurgences, killings and massacres converted the "Crete Depression" gradually to an international problem, by the global powers taking part in the crises...On one hand reforms and given autonomy by Ottoman Government, on the other hand unsatisfied Greek Nationalism and Roum coarseness... All that had been coming into daylight and had been flowing in the common memory like a film band.

But anyway, they were proud of being a Cretan. Though the decomposing features of last century, there were a common emotional coherence which had been coming from early ages and far from deep inside. Just beside the decomposition, they were in the midst of common sensefull union rooting early ages. Willingly or unwillingly they had created a common body language, sensefull positions and common behaviors in this land which is partly closed to the outer life. They were a part of this island as being Cretan Muslims. They had wanted to spend the rest of their life in these lands. They had their own graveyards where their elder family members had been buried. They had been belonged to these lands with the whole of their mosques, dervish lodges, graveyards, clothings and traditions. Previously, they had been living next to each other in the confided atmosphere of the island without discriminating any Muslim-Christian entity. However they were members of the different religions and cults, including the cults of the same religios they share like Mevlevis, Bektashis, called "*muslim people like us*", they had been sharing a common culture eventually. They had been able to united in a common sense at the time of mourning or entertainment, they had been speaking a common language, and they had been eating common meals. There were many common trousseaus' embroidery motifs (styles). Similarities could have been observed on their clothings. Definitely, there had been some distinctive patterns and clothing features telling apart Roums from Turks. But the simlarities on the costumes were much more than the distinctive patterns. In the intersection of this common area of various communities they were living something in common. For instance, the young boys' letting out a yell in a wedding party or a celebrating night, were the same. While their Christian neighbours were eating pork, they were not eating. However they had liked the lamb much. They were adding lamb to their cooks generously. Roums were eating snails. There were Turks eating snails, too. Some were fond of goat meat. But just like all Cretans, they were giving a big importance to olive and olive-oil. Herbal culture did not have any of discrimination as Roum-Turk or Muslim-Christian. In the backyard of almost every house, there were olive, lemon and other citrus trees. Hardtack was a meal that any Cretan didnt fall short of easily. Having been far from their house for days somehow, in the highlands of Crete, they learned this cooking which is hard to spoil. First the pirates who encircled the island and then the bloodthirstiness of Roum Bandits were the clear reasons of this breaking off. Besides, for the Cretans owning herds and pursuing them on the mountains for months to feed, the attributes of hardtack like the nutrient gained importance, long lasting freshness and little need of preparation made it a very precious food.

What about their herbal dishes?

They liked to eat different courses which they had cooked from vegebales. They generally had been boiling the grasses which they had given various names to. They had not liked to eat by roasting. They had been making their cooks without giving any harm to the color of grass which is cooked in a saucepan. Plants had to be chopped largely and stand alive when they were put in a plate. Their patties were famous. They had been making their patties with pleasure by adding different ingredients, like rice, lamb or chicken meat (making a kind of marmelade) to inside of the plants could be

found anywhere of Crete. Especially, they had had a pastry named “*çullama*”. They had put a special mixture inside of the thin dough lied carefully on the tray. Mainly rice and liver consisting inner mixture of *çullama* was added boiled chicken meat and sprinkles of different plants on demand. By lying thin dough on to the mixture they had put it into the wood oven. Every Cretan was aware of *çullama* and liked it. There were many various cooks like, *şevket-i bostan* (a kind of special food name), maratha with lamb, *mizitro* muffins and *arapsacı* and there were various grasses like; ivy, mallow, nettle, *cibez*), *stifno*, radish grass, *acanthus*, *chicory*, *şevket_i bostan*, poppy, *labada*, *kuşotu*, *sinirotu*(*nervegrass*), *helvacık*, *radika*, sea bean, *kuşkonmaz*, maratha, *tarla çakısı* (meansfield knife), *tarla çivisi* (means field nail). *Şevket-i bostan* had been made of with lamb. Poppy patties with stinging nettle and cere were known almost by every Cretan. They had had a lot of courses peculiar to themselves like radish grass with olive oil, rice with mussel.

The atmosphere and cooks of Crete were very special.

While the culter’s united Cretan identity was such an intese feeling and this stupendous unity was so clear and gross for everybody, what was to happen now? Were the migrations, that sometimes in the past times they had made and sometimes they had been hearing from their ancestors, going to happen? They even had not wanted to think of this possibility, but once the water had got muddy, it had made itself felt to the ones’ brain who had anticipated it.

With this new improvements the Greek roughness which had been increasing and sharpening day by day, had run wilder immediately. The postures were firm and sharp. When the strict postures and diplomacies of the politicians added to the so called Muslims’ and neighbours’ they had spent many things with in the past, roughly behaviors to Muslims, Crete turned into a hell for them. Some were merchants and some others were cultivators. They had rooted these lands with their great effort. They had been rooting to past with every death and bringing up new hopes with every marriage. They were like trusts in Crete, where they had clamped together and had lived by earning with their diligent labor.

Someday the news which they never wanted to hear had diffused from ear to ear. The migration was imminent to all the Cretan Muslims just like all the other Greek Muslims but the Turks living in the West Thrace. Hearts were to stop. Throats were in knots and eyes were wet. They were supposed to be exchanged. The commission members, speaking different languages neither heart nor seen before, were going around every villages and keeping records of the properties of Muslim inhabitants of Crete. Many Cretans had already departed when these committees came. The Crete which they born in would be the “Crete” that thay had lived in sometimes. Sorrow had been caved into hearts. Future would be mysteries while the past was leaving bleeding memories in the hearts. All their emotional balance had broken down. Some time later, when Greek authorities started to bring migrants from the mainland, Greece, by burdening them to ships, the situation cleared out to be understood.



A Group From Immigrants

It was the beging of the migration from Crete to Anatolia. And most Cretan Turks turned back to wave and shouted loudly as *“goodbye Crete, my hometown, where I was born”*.

Roads had been grounding under the feet of Cretans. All the family had been falling into streets and flowing towards to the coast. The day came. The ships had come alongside the piers immediately. Hanya, Kandiye and Resmo were the most famous of all.

These ships had come from Turkey with Turkish flags. In these days there were the rumors of blackdeath epidemic in Greece. For this reason, mouse cleaning had been done in inside of every ship before departing from turkey. Every ship had been decontamination as prevention to the virus of plague. Vaccines had been made to every migrant before they got into the ship.

Ships were in their ways now. In lines, sometimes in the same day and sometimes in different times they had begun to carry the migrants. Nilüfer, Giresun, Mersin, Akdeniz, Rize, Bahr-ı Cedit were a few of these ships. With their animals and other packages they could have carried, they settled to the ships. They had been flocking to the deck sides of the ship with wet eyes and knotted throats to see the Crete, through the foaming waves for the last time, disappearing in the horizon. According to the length and the season of the journey the migrant traveled, every ship and each traveler was living a unique adventure in their own. Some ships had come through with the danger of sinking when they had come across with a storm; some had carried the wetted migrants with their wet bodies under the rain and snow since they had not had tarps. In every ship and in every heart there had been different storms. As the ships had been far from the Crete, the longing of Crete had begun already in the heart of every person.

It was the initial days of April, of 1924. In Crete waters, a ship had been waiting for Cretan migrants. The migrants who had combined in groups and had come to the dock were standing reluctantly to board the ship. The 55 years old ship was named “Ümit”. This veteran ship of the Independace War, had contributed both transmigrating of the people to Anatolia and carrying the weapons and ammunition,

rooting from the Soviets. It always had taken role in the work of carrying the soldier, weapon and ammuniton which Turkish army had been lacking. The ship often inspected, had been even seized by English roundsmen once². Now this tired ship, as an important actor of new Turkish navigation ideal, had been rushing to carry the migrants in Crete. The migrants did not board to Ümit with the similar reason of Crete's other docks. It had been wanted to be given the necessary informations about this subject by sending a request essay to the Turkish Carriage Commission³. The reason in the reply was clear: Exchange Ministry had wanted them to carry the migrants by a mixing method of both from rich and poor regions. Moreover, for the destination unknown cities and rurals of Anatolia had been said. They were afraid of the possible dramatic results of their tragedy by having been scattered in an unknown frightening geography⁴.



Umit Ship Which Sank In Crete

When the Cretans had not got on to the ship, Ümit had waited in the docks of Crete for a long time. The ship was steamy like all the other ships of her age. She was using coal to heat the boilers. The Ministry had activated an obligation to all of the ships that they had had to taken their coals from zonguldak. Ümit had burdened its coal from zonguldak and sailed, too. However it was bothering to wait long and to rush from one dock to another. In the end, the coal of some ships which often had had to start and stop their engines had exhausted. Ümit had still not to burden any migrant although it had rushed around oftenly. At the end of this rushing, the ship had begun to wait off shore of Kandiye. The ship which had been lacking of coal had lost

² Serdar Hüseyin Sayar, *Kurtuluş Savaşı Döneminde Denizcilik Faaliyetleri*, Ankara University Turkish Revolution History Institute (unpublished master thesis), Ankara, 2007, p.81, 89 and d; besides look at, Nurettin Peker, *1918-1923 İstiklâl Savaşının Vesika ve Resimleri, İnönü, Sakarya, Dumlupınar Zaferlerini Sağlayan İnebolu ve Kastamonu Havalisi Deniz ve Kara Harekâtı Hatıraları*, İstanbul, 1955.

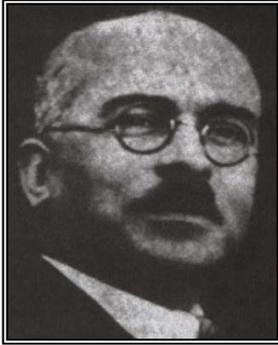
³ The writing belong to the date of 20.3.1924; BCA, 030/10-123/877-5.

⁴ The details of these subjects can be seen in the work, named as; (*İzmir'den Bakışla-Türk Ticaret-i Babriyesi ve Mübadele Gemileri -Lozan'dan Kabotaja-*, İzmir, 2008), it was published by İzmir Commerce Association and was written by us.. Again look at, Kemal Arı, *Büyük Mübadele, Türkiye'ye Zorunlu Göç (1923 - 1925)*, History Foundation Yurt Publishing, (Tarih Vakfı Yurt yay.), İstanbul, 4th press, İstanbul, 2007.

her maneuver ability. The captain of the ship, Hüseyin was remediless. With the rising waves and the effect of the circulation (flowing) the ship had drifted and had had to run ground by taking serious injures. The ship had parted in two from her stern side with the effect of stranding. She began to sink facing with the furious water. She was taking water. After the Ümit had driven ground they could not send a recovery ship to the region because of the on going the storm.

It had become the most exciting news of that age by Ümit's partly stranding around Crete. In media the captains of ships were being blamed. After the event, an İstanbul newspaper had written the title of; *"the captains to our city would account, it would be then understood, whether they were guilty or not. The head captain gave his report to the administration"* ⁵.

The curious eyes were searching for the reason of the ship's running ground which was going to take the migrants, in the lines of newspapers. According to the newspaper's declaration, after some time when the Ümit which was belonging to Seyri Sefain, had sunk in Crete, as soon as the captains and some other seamen of the ship had come to Istanbul by Mersin ship, they had gone to the 'Seyri Sefain Directory', the biggest ship management of that age. Sadullah (GÜNEY) who was an old admiral was the head of this authority. The captain presented his report which was explaining the



Sadullah (GÜNEY) Bey
(1883-1945)

reason of the wreck and ship's stranding. According to the captain's report, the ship was in an old age and in a rotten position. The storm had caught them in an unexpected time and the ship which had not been able to cope with the pressure of water and wind and then had parted in two, though all struggles had sunk into the water in a short time. After the coming of Hüseyin bey to İstanbul, an investigation committee, containing the high civil servants of Seyri Sefain Directory, was constituted. The captain's report was examined. The witnesses of the wreck had been listened one by one. It was thought that the examining of the wreck would finish in a short time. At the end of the investigation, if the staff had been found guilty, the relationship of Hüseyin Bey with the authority was going to cut and his captainship licence was to be taken from him. An inquiry by court was possible, too. Sadullah Bey had said that about the staff of Ümit to the journalists: *"In the report of staff, all guilt was attached to the sea and storm. We hope that the real would be like this. Now, Ümit was hopele. There was no way of saving her. Even saved, the ship was not able to be utilized. Had she sold before she sang, its price would not make any more of her wreck price. Considerin that the ship was more than 55 years old she was almost one of the oldest ships having been used. In Europe the maximum usage of a ship of good quality, was 20 years at best. Nevertheless we had not given up to send the Ümit steamboat, deserving the very right of rest, the works of trivial. Now we're unstitching all parts of this shipwrecked, from top to bottom"* ⁶.

⁵ *İleri*, 11 April 1924.

⁶ *İleri*, 11 April 1924.

In Crete, Ümit had let her old body to the Kandiye water to rest. The common question in every person's mind was: What if there had been thousands of Cretan Muslims in the ship while sinking?

The ship had sunk but there were no dead.

This was the only thing that healing the hearts...

Crete and everything about Crete was buried into the hearts of ten-thousands and it was Ümit which had buried and stayed into the furious waters of Crete with his old body.