

SOCIETY AND ECONOMY ON THE ISLAND OF RHODES IN WESTERN TRAVEL JOURNALS IN THE 19TH CENTURY

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Öz

XIX. Yüzyıl Batılı Seyahat Metinlerinde Rodos Adasında Toplum ve Ekonomi

Rodos adası, Kanuni Sultan Süleyman zamanında, 1522'de Türk egemenliğine girdi. Bu tarihten sonra adada başlayan Türk hâkimiyeti 1912 yılında İtalya'nın adayı işgal etmesine kadar yaklaşık 400 yıl kadar sürdü. Bu süre içinde adada maddi ve manevi açıdan zengin ve köklü bir Türk kültürü oluştu. Özellikle bir önceki yüzyıllara kıyasla, XIX. yüzyılda Batılı çok sayıdaki seyyah, Türk egemenliğindeki Rodos adasına da giderek gözlem ve tespitlerde bulundu. Batılı seyyahlar, Türk egemenliğindeki Rodos adasında Rum, Yahudi ve Türklerin bir arada hoşgörü ve huzur içinde yaşadıklarını yakından gördüler. Adanın toplum yapısı, ekonomik ve kültürel yaşamına ilişkin çok sayıda ayrıntıyı kaleme aldılar. Onların kaleme aldıkları seyahat metinlerinden Rodos adasındaki toplum dokusuna ve gündelik hayata dair izlenimlere ulaşmak mümkündür. Ancak çok daha önemlisi Batılı seyyahların bu eserlerinden, Rodos adasındaki Türk egemenliğine ilişkin sahip oldukları Doğu imajından kaynaklanan önyargılarının çoğu zaman boşa çıktığının tespit edilmesidir. Bu çalışmada, ağırlıklı olarak XIX. yüzyılda Rodos adasına gelen İngiliz kökenli Batılı seyyahların, adadaki toplum yapısı, nüfus, din, dini ve kültürel yapılar, gelenek, görenek, giyim-kuşam, temizlik gibi gündelik yaşama ilişkin izlenimleri tahlil edilmiştir. Ayrıca Batılı seyyahların, Rodos adasına ilişkin tarım, ticaret, hizmet sektörü, güvenlik, vergi, gemi inşaa faaliyetleri, adanın geçim kaynakları gibi çok sayıda tespitleri de değerlendirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Osmanlı Devleti, Rodos, Batılı Seyyahlar, Türk Toplumunu, Seyahatname*

Abstract

In 1522 Island of Rhodes, entered under the sovereignty of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. After this date, the Turkish empery began on the island about 400 years till 1912 the Italy occupied the island. During this period, a rich and deeply rooted Turkish culture was emerged in the island materially and spiritually. Especially compared to the previous centuries, in the 19th century, many Western travellers visited the island of Rhodes, which was under Turkish rule; they made observations and make some points. Western travellers saw that closely on this Turkish

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ruled Rhodes Island, the Greek, the Jewish and the Turkish people living together in a tolerance and peace. They wrote many details about the island's social structure, economic and cultural life. It is possible to reach the impressions about the texture of the society and daily life of the island of Rhodes from their travel notes, however, more importantly, from these works of the Western travellers, the prejudices of the Eastern image of the Turkish sovereignty on the island of Rhodes are often found to be in vain. In this study, Western travellers of mainly British origin who came to the 19th century to the island of Rhodes, their impressions of the daily life such as social structure, population, religion, religious and cultural structures, customs and traditions, clothes and cleanliness on the island were analyzed. In addition, many observations of Western travellers such as agriculture, commerce, service sector, security, tax, ship building activities and livelihoods of the island were also evaluated.

Keywords: *Ottoman Empire, Rhodes, Western Traveller, Turkish Society, Travel Journals*

Introduction: “On Travel Journals”

Since the ancient times all human beings carried the passion within themselves to see new places and to explore the customs, conventions, traditions and rituals of the people living on the lands he roams. The sense of overwhelming curiosity is most certainly the reason behind it. As the travelers kept systematic records of their observations about the places they traveled, it resulted in the appearance of travel journals¹. Although the travel journals are worthy of listed among the historical resources, it is understood that benefiting from such resources has been an issue of discussion among some historians and the reason behind those finds its root in the attitude adopted by the travelers while writing down the information they collected and their observations. It is true that some travelers transferred arbitrary and biased information as well as depicting the lands that they visited according to their cultural backgrounds and perspectives. The identity of a traveler such as a government officer, religious functionary, missionary, intellectual, scientist; and a man of letters as well as the factors such as one's world view, level of education, beliefs and interest manifest themselves among travelers notes undoubtedly. In this context, it can be inferred that the critical approach towards the issue of benefiting travel journals for historical research should not be hold against the journals itself but against the traveler who put his notes on the paper². In another words, what, how and why the travelers wrote is important as well as what they wanted to tell³.

In researches related to the subject, it is pointed out that the travel journals cannot be considered objective, the travelers undoubtedly affected by their own cultural backgrounds and personalities; and the travel writings can be restructured fictional works as well as they can be based on reality. In short, one

¹ Öztürk 2016, p. 6.

² Ağayev 2010, pp. 106-107.

³ Kılınç 2014, p. 1.

has to be ready to acknowledge that the writings are relative and when the travel journalists were describing “the other” they would have reflected their prejudices most of the time due to the lack of knowledge⁴. It is also known that some travelers exaggerated their observations; and plagiarized some parts of certain works or parts of information that former travels had written down and presented as their own ideas so as to make their work more intriguing⁵. It is understood that the western travel journals were each considered a source of knowledge of the periods they were written on political, administrative, economic, historical, cultural, geographical and they even studied the characteristics of Oriental people -although reflected negativity most of the time⁶.

Consequently, it is possible to claim that the travel journals have such a considerable importance among the resources of a great number of study fields such as city monograph, sociology, anthropology, literature, geography and mainly history that they cannot be overlooked⁷. Considering all the details listed above, when a scientist utilizes travel journals as reference source, he should follow the scientific research method, observe the critical approaches by others and be critical towards the journal in question; and he should be able to distinguish right from wrong or overstatements⁸, prejudices and fiction⁹. This study aims to analyze the observations of some of the Western travelers which they wrote down during their visits to Rhodes island; and their approaches to the Orient and the images they produced in consideration with the other resources of history.

Towards the Orient: “*Journey to Rhodes Island*”

On the route of Western travelers who desired to reach the sacred lands of Christians in the Orient stood Rhodes and this route generally “*followed the track of Rhodes, Cyprus, Jaffa, Tripoli, Beirut, Alexandretta and Aleppo through (...) Chios and Samos*”¹⁰. Karabeynikov and his friends reached the historical pilgrim road used by Christians by following almost this exact same route through İstanbul – Chios – Kos – Rhodes – Cyprus – Syria during their journey they started in 1582. This route used to lead to Jerusalem after reaching the cities of Caseria, Jaffa, Emmaus, Qiryat and Ye’arim. Furthermore, The

⁴ İnan 2017, pp. 2-3.

⁵ Aġayev 2010, p. 107.

⁶ Börekcı 2010, p. 3 and Kartın 2016, pp. 102-103.

⁷ Saylan 2015, p. 7 and Kılınç 2014, p. 1 and also Maden 2008, p. 148.

⁸ Aġayev 2010, p. 108.

⁹ Saylan 2015, p. 7.

¹⁰ Pişkin 2011, p. 81.

information stating that the travellers went from Chios Island to Rhodes and went to Kos Island from there is fallacious as the Kos Island is located in the west of Rhodes. It doesn't seem possible that they would go back to Kos from Rhodes on their journey to Jerusalem and go back to east again. John Sanderson reached Alexandria by following this route consisting of Gallipoli, Lesbos, Chios, Samos and finally Rhodes in 1585 by sailing to the sea off İstanbul¹¹. After he spent the winter of 1610 in İstanbul, the route that Lithgow followed who reached Cyprus over Smyrna and Rhodes was no different than the ones who traveled to the Orient of his antecedents. The island of Rhodes was one of the most important settlements for the Western interests due to its location found on the pilgrimage road in the Orient and its political, economic, strategic and undoubtedly historical importance that it held in the Mediterranean world. Cartwright of English origin who published his travel journal in 1611 didn't include his journey in Mediterranean although he had reached Alexandria by sailing in Mediterranean. He explained this situation in the prologue of his travel journal by declaring that "*I have observed that the Islands situated in Mediterranean (...) and Rhodes which were told about in the works of ancient authors are well known to our nation and as a result I do not prefer to write about these islands*"¹². This statement by the traveler is certainly important with respect to demonstrate how profound the historical interest is of the West in the area that Rhodes is located. It is also known that the same route was followed by both the famous traveler of the 18th century named Frederic Hasselquist during his journey to the Orient who set on the road in search of different plants which he believes the cure for any sickness are kept within them¹³ and François René De Chateaubriand who traveled to Jerusalem and to sacred lands to realize his duty of Jerusalem pilgrimage in the beginning of the 19th century¹⁴.

Consequently, Rhodes was situated on an important cross road of sailing routes from west to east and north to south. It was a convenient stop for Latin and Muslim pilgrims who traveled to the sacred land due to its location on this crossroad. This island was also serving as a shelter from where the Ottoman Empire spied the pirates and protected its ships against peril. The Rhodes island whose strategic importance is incontestable was at the center of active commercial environment in which other islands and Anatolian lands participate. Rhodes was one of the most important stops on the sea route across Egypt, Cyprus and İstanbul found between West and East in the Mediterranean world.

¹¹ Özcan 2009, p. 265 and p. 269.

¹² Pişkin 2011, p. 64-83 and p. 215.

¹³ Doğan 2008, p. 5.

¹⁴ Gözütok 2010, p. 99.

The travelers who visit Rhodes island had the opportunity to observe personally the location and the livelihood of the island thereof. Rhodes was visited by a great number of people for different purposes such as Christians who preferred the sea transportation on their journey to sacred lands to become a pilgrim stopping with the intent of getting food and water supply; and Italian merchants who were engaged in commerce with the ports of Levant¹⁵.

As one of the travelers who were visiting the island, Charles G. Addison saw a group of pilgrims who had just returned from Mecca on the shores of Rhodes. As the traveler stated “*the miserable and poor-looking group of pilgrims*” took a break on their way to Tunisia and cooked beans for supper and rested¹⁶. A similar observation on another group of pilgrims was written down by Charles Boileau Elliott. Elliot wrote that the group of pilgrims who took a break on Rhodes “*ate fish, dried plum stew and drank their coffee*”. Most importantly, the fact that Muslims ate the food that the Greeks cooked “*without any hesitation*” caught his interest¹⁷.

Rhodes with its advantages for commerce and transportation was located in such a strategic region that it attracted the attention of the pirates as well. The western coasts of the Mora peninsula, the coasts starting from Rhodes and reaching Alanya, located on the southern shores of Anatolia, the region between Magosa (Famagusta), Tripoli, Beirut and Limassol were situated in the middle of the region where pirate attacks occurred often. The fact that the travelers were aware of the fact and the fact that there was a potential hazard; and nevertheless, showed the courage to travel these regions is interesting. Certain travel journals tell about how the pirates attack and what happens during such attacks in detail. It is most particularly identified that the pirates used deception strategies by taking advantage of being at the sea; and that the pirates hoisted the flag of a Western country to deceive the merchant ships within the range of vision; and by way of this, the flag deception was frequently used. When Henry Blount was traveling to Rhodes, he saw a ship which hoisted British flag; and with the intention of encountering his own countryman he sailed with a Greek boatman to reach the ship; however, when they approached the ship, he understood that it was a pirate ship which hoisted a British flag only. The traveler was able to go back ashore after he begged the Greek boatman, bribed him and pointed his dagger to his chest. H. Blount was able to escape the pirates just in the nick of time; however, a very short while after he were to be faced with the danger of losing his life due to a storm at the sea. It was out of

¹⁵ Doğan 2008, p. 125 and 127.

¹⁶ Addison 1838, p. 419.

¹⁷ Elliott 1838, p. 169.

luck that his ship didn't sink although there were many others sinking around it. George Sandys also experienced a similar hazardous situation due to a white squall when he embarked on his journey to Egypt from Rhodes and couldn't be able to ride out the storm easily. Moreover, when the ship arrived at the Alexandria port, he saw a couple of flotsams scattered around. He also wrote that most of the ships broke off from their chains when the northern wind hit the mouth of the harbor and twenty-two ships sank down due to the storm¹⁸. The fact that C.B. Elliott wrote about the presence of coyotes, wolves which were mentioned to him and his encounters with the poisonous and deadly scorpions which come of their nests in hot weather indicates that Western travelers took a number of risks on their journeys to Orient and thus it is certainly important¹⁹. Furthermore, it is also inferred from the notes of the travelers that they didn't encounter any hardship imposed by Turkish governance during their visits. Moreover, a traveler who visits Rhodes just in the beginning of the 19th century mentioned the efforts of the Turks to help him with his journey in the sea²⁰.

An Unexpected Sight for the Western Travelers: “*Tolerance on Rhodes Island*”

The traveler Bernard Randolph wrote down that after the Ottomans conquered Rhodes island, the islanders left there and went to Italy and Crete Island; and upon the tolerance shown by the Ottomans and thanks to the privileges and rights they offer, the island was crowded in no time with Greeks who had fled. It is known that Jewish people who engaged in commerce on Rhodes and lived a comfortable life in the era of Knights were forced to convert their religion with ordnance introduced in 1502; subsequently the ones who didn't accept this imperative were forced to leave the island, of whose properties were confiscated after they left. In 1522, when the island was conquered by Turks, Jewish people returned to Rhodes, moreover, Süleyman the First enabled forty Jewish families to settle in Rhodes who formerly lived in Thessalonica. Furthermore, the people who were also known as Sephardim Jews were exempt from certain tax, given privileges and given the right to exercise their religious rituals without constraint²¹.

As most of the travelers who visited Rhodes emphasized, the life on the island after the conquest and especially in 17th and 18th century, became lively where people with various ethnic identities lived together²². The city developed

¹⁸ Pişkin 2011, p. 79, 117-118, 216 and 219.

¹⁹ Elliott 1838, p. 166.

²⁰ Clarke 1816, p. 436.

²¹ Ünen 2013, p. 47 and 168.

²² Doğan 2008, p. 124.

in two areas as Old Rhodes (Castle Interior) and New Rhodes (Castle Exterior). The old town where Turkish and Jewish neighborhoods were found were surrounded by ramparts; the oldest and the largest district was the old town found within the castle; and the neighborhoods located within the castle were named after the mosques that were found in the area. The new town was where the Greeks were settled. New settlement areas which were called as “*Varoş*” meaning “Slum” had begun to appear outside the ramparts due to the increase in population of the town and migration from the villages. Turks and a few Greek families were living in the new *Varoş*. Other *Varoş* areas where mostly Greek people inhabited were called Maras (Maras) by the locals and they were named after the churches that were found in the area. It is understood that the ambassadors and other Europeans were living outside the city, close to the Kumburnu beach and in a well-cared place called Neohori Village. The houses in which Muslims live on the Rhodes island were dominantly adapted from local Mediaeval houses. As the new Turkish settlers of the Island socialized with the local folks and respected their traditions, sincerity began to flourish between two parties after. As a result, it was easier for the new comers to become use to the old houses. From the start of the primer construction, the houses found in the city were made of concrete, having single floor, and a great number of them were painted in white. Wide roads were opened within the ramparts. Construction of new houses didn’t become a necessity on the ground that the number of Latinas who left the Island was approximate to the number of Turks who settled on the Island. Furthermore, the settlement area within the rampart wasn’t considered suitable for further development. Some remodeling was carried out in the old houses; balconies and patios were added; and the attics, halls and wood partitions were expanded, and the number of floors and rooms were increased. The Turkish houses on Rhodes were divided into two groups as the ones looking at their own backyard and the ones facing the street²³.

A great number of travelers looking for the traces of the statement of the famous traveler of 16th century, Stephan Gerlach as “The Turks not only has the habit of constructing new buildings but also ruining the existing ones” faced with compositions of exact opposites. In a travel journal written by the travelers named J. Aegidius Van Egmont and John Heyman who visited Rhodes through the middle of the 18th century, the authors described a dwelling in detail which was constructed in accordance with European style belonging to a Turkish Pasha in Rhodes. It is apparent that the travelers were struck with admiration at the sight of this Turkish dwelling, a palace located by the sea, decorated with

²³ Ünen 2013, p. 42, 44- 45 and 245.

elegant fountains and having a mesmerizing garden²⁴. There were other Turks who lived in old houses apart from the ones who owned such charming houses. As most travelers did, C.T. Newton wrote that the Turks lived in miserable houses on Rhodes²⁵. Moreover, the traveler Cottu points out that the Turks were living in old and miserable houses by stating that the Turks never repaired their whitewashed and painted houses. Furthermore, he wrote that he was invited as a guest in a house of a poor Turkish man and given water and cigarette. Later on, Cottu was invited to a mansion owned by a Pasha and he was highly impressed with the location of this particular white colored and glamorous mansion facing the sea and looking over the gardens filled with fig, orange and palm trees²⁶.

Carlisle wrote that he visited a Jewish home in Rhodes which has a great carved wooden ceiling as one of the mansions in England, and he was offered sweets and *raki*²⁷. Another traveler emphasizes the dwellings with great wooden ceilings and the wealth of the Jewish living on the island²⁸. Other travelers stated that the Greeks who lived far from the center of Rhodes were considerably poor²⁹. A traveler who was happened to be a guest of the British ambassador upon his visit to Rhodes wrote pages on the hospitality of the ambassador. The traveler highlighted that the friends of the ambassador rushed into the house where he was staying to greet him and added that he witnessed some girls among the visitor were talking in Italian and Greek fluently including the wife of the ambassador. The traveler also wrote that most of the Levantines knew three languages including Greek, French and Italian; the ambassador had a wife of Greek origin; and “all the Greek ladies were nice and lady like”³⁰. As Carlisle who wrote about how Greek girls sang and danced during his visit³¹, C.T Newton observed the Greeks who danced “archipelago” and wrote that the whole village danced women and men holding hands by forming an irregular croissant. The traveler also mentioned that the music and the melody played by the fiddler was a reutilized repetition; the dance was a simple act, made up of repetitive basic figures consisting of taking two steps to side and then with the step of the left foot then the right foot. Furthermore, It was included in other

²⁴ Egmont- Heyman 1759, p. 264.

²⁵ Newton 1865, p. 166.

²⁶ Cottu 1844, p. 817-821.

²⁷ Carlisle 1855, p. 105.

²⁸ Newton 1865, p. 158.

²⁹ Egmont- Heyman 1759, p. 270.

³⁰ Addison 1838, p. 419.

³¹ Carlisle 1855, p. 105 and 110.

travel journals that the Aegean Islands are called as “Islands of the Arches” or “archipelago”, which means islands forming an arc³².

However; not many travelers gave detailed knowledge about the population living of the island. According to the evaluations made by M. Cornaille Le Bruyn who visited the island between the end of 17th century and in the beginning of the 18th century, the population of the island was consisted of 12.000 people³³. M. Savary, who visited Rhodes during the middle of the 18th century shared a detailed vital statistic unlike other travelers who came before and after her. As his successors and predecessor did, he uses the expression “Mohammedans” which was more likely to be accepted as politically correct. He mentions five villages in which the believers of Hz. Muhammed lived (referring to the island Turks) and five towns and forty-one villages in which Greeks lived. Savary, recorded that there were 4700 Turkish family, 2500 Greek family and 100 Jewish family living on the Island. The traveler assumed that every family was consisted of five people and calculated that there were 36.500 people living on the island³⁴. In the light of the studies carried out on the Ottoman documents, it is known that through the end of the 18th century, there were 37.500 people living in Rhodes³⁵. Daniel Edward Clarke who traveled to Aegean islands in the beginning of the 19th century wrote that in the recent years the population of Turks on the islands were considerably decreased and the reason was the plague epidemic. The traveler also pointed out the root cause of the population decrease on the islands was the fact that a large number of the male population were recruited for the military to fight³⁶. James Bell, in the first half of the 1830’s recorded the population of the Rhodes island as 20.000; C. Fellows who came to Rhodes before Carlisle, didn’t share any numeric data while presenting information about the population of the island, he only stated that the Greek residents were greater in number in comparison to the others³⁷. Carlisle stated that the population of the island was approximately 20.000 consisting of 12.000 Greek, 6.800 Turk, almost 1.000 Jew and 200 French residents in the half of the 19th century. The traveler observed personally that different ethnic groups lived on the island harmoniously on the island and added that the island people didn’t have any significant problem amongst each other³⁸.

³² Pişkin 2011, p. 83.

³³ Doğan 2008, p. 128.

³⁴ Savary 1788, p. 92.

³⁵ Doğan 2008, p. 128.

³⁶ Clarke 1816, p. 450.

³⁷ Fellows 1852, p. 393.

³⁸ Carlisle 1855, p. 105 and 110; When the Muslim population of 6.467 in the Rhodes *Sanjak* was compared to the total population of 30.609 in 1881-1882, the non-Muslim population

Even though any comments were made by F. Hasselquist on the time of the conquest, he made some evaluations regarding the condition of the Island following the conquest and emphasized that after the Ottoman Empire seized Rhodes from the Knights of Saint John of Jerusalem, the state of the island had been improved in many ways³⁹. John Carne stated that the people living in Rhodes were the ones to be utmost envied of in the region of Levant and he pointed out the tolerance in the region, moreover, he stated that the Christians on the island lived in luxury and prosperity⁴⁰.

R. Matton explained this situation with his following remarks “The Turks never aimed to eradicate the national sentiments of the countries they conquered, it was always enough to receive taxes from these nations and to believe in their obedience”⁴¹. Nevertheless, the Turks who lived among the island population had many more obligations other than paying taxes and being obedient. One of them was the military service. Carlisle commented on the discontent caused by fulfilling the duty in the army by virtue of the military service from which most of the Turkish young men settled on the Island never returned. Carlisle who wrote about the complaints of Turks settled on the Island about the non-Muslims for they were exempt from the military duty, couldn’t help himself but wonder “*To what extent was it reliable that the non-Muslims to be included in the Ottoman army*”⁴². What the traveler actually emphasized, the complaints of the Turks about serving in the army and the reasons and the results are extremely important. On the Island of Rhodes some of the Muslim Turks chose the path of “*tanassur*” which meant leaving the Islam religion and accepting Christianity in order to be exempt from military service. Of course, such conversion to Christianity was also influenced by foreign merchants and the part that ambassadors and missionaries played⁴³. In addition, the fact that a Muslim Turk in the island of Rhodes abandoned Islam and converted to Christianity meant a different meaning than freedom of belief. As the Ottoman state government and Islamism considered “religion and nation” as one notion,

outnumbered the Muslim population four to one. Karpat 1985, p. 115-130; During the period following the second half of the 19th century, the number of Muslim people decreased in Rhodes at a rate unseen in any other part of Ottoman Empire and this brought about the risk of losing the Island of Rhodes all together. The situation worsened when some of the Turks fled to mainland Greece or Samos and rejected Islam, in other words apostasy, to escape from being drafted. Tansel 1959, pp.487, 497-499.

³⁹ Doğan 2008, p. 122.

⁴⁰ Carne 1838, p. 54.

⁴¹ Çelikkol 1990, p. 7.

⁴² Carlisle 1855, p. 110.

⁴³ Aslan 2012, p. 58-59.

abandoning Islam also meant that the island Turk was also abandoning the Ottoman nationality⁴⁴. Nowhere in the Ottoman Empire the number of Muslims was decreasing with such rapidity and the fact that the population was so low in numbers increasing the risk of losing Rhodes island. The issue of military service was first to be considered when taking measures to help the increase of Islamic population. As the young men who were recruited in Rhodes were assigned in castles afar from where they had been, they were not able serve the purpose of increasing the population. Therefore, some of the Muslims on the Island were accepting Christianity by visiting places such as Greece and Samos to be spared from being recruited to the army⁴⁵. Furthermore, Daniel Edward Clarke, among the travellers visiting Rhodes Island, also noted that the population of the Turks gradually decreased due to people recruited to the army for battling⁴⁶.

The travelers who came to Rhodes also gave information about the daily lives of the islanders although they didn't include much details. J. Aegidius Van Egmont and John Heyman wrote that only the Turks and Jewish were allowed to live in Rhodes and there were hundreds of Jewish families with two synagogues. The travelers noted that the Jews living in the city were friendly but "*not thrifty*"⁴⁷.

In fact, the travelers were actually stating that the Jews showing off their wealth by being extravagant. In other words, the western travelers were trying to identify the favorable conditions of living that a non-Muslim group had even though that land that was under Turkish sovereignty. The Christian travelers hardly ever mentioned the life style of the Muslim Turks living on the Island. This circumstance has been pointed out in recent studies⁴⁸. However, unlike the other travelers, Cottu visited a Muslims house and wrote all the details of the hospitality he experienced in that house. Many details were a matter of investigation in that house of the old Muslim who hosted him including how the coffee was cooked and how the tobacco was rolled and given. The traveler also recorded his desire to visit Mecca with the children of the old Muslim who hosted him. It is also found between the travel notes that the old Muslim mentioned that he offered his land for sale to the traveler and his companion who guided him for eight thousand dollars somewhere during their conversation. The journals also contain the information that the old paid for his

⁴⁴ Konan 2008, p. 178 and Özçelik 2001, p. 350.

⁴⁵ Özgün 2015, pp. 303-315.

⁴⁶ Clarke 1816, p. 450.

⁴⁷ Egmont - Heyman 1759, pp. 268 and 276.

⁴⁸ Ünen 2013, p. 253.

consumables such as rice, tobacco and coffee from the town by sending his slave to the city with the wood the old man made him cut and loaded on the donkey⁴⁹.

The travelers talked about their observations on the Island's culture without giving much detail. In a travel note written about the Rhodes island, the rituals exercised by a Jewish family regarding the birth of their child can also be found. The newborn was frequently visited, the women guarded the baby during the day and parents took their turn at night until the eighth day after the birth of the Jewish child and on the eighth day the Jewish child was circumcised⁵⁰. F. Hasselquist wrote that "*in Rhodes, a young man who comes of age of marriage was expected to be as agile as to retrieve a sponge from the deep waters to be able to marry a girl*"⁵¹. However, he didn't share the information to whom did the ritual belong. Another traveler wrote that Greek girl married at a very young age of twelve and the Turkish women married much younger than they did⁵².

When Cottu visited a house of a Jewish family in Rhodes, he consistently looked for exotic images of the Orient. They shared a great number of details such as the offerings of the Jewish girls and their clothes. However, it is quite interesting that the utterances made by the travelers about the Jews as "*they worked with an unsatisfied ambition and attended everyone without discerning anyone as Christian or Muslim.*" What is more interesting that the traveler felt the urge to note down that the women who "*covered their hair with piece of clout which looked like hijab*" were actually Jewish, probably because he thought that those were Muslims⁵³.

The importance of the travel journals in respect to the city culture is indisputable; however, it is also known that the travelers unexpectedly stumbled into stereotyping and obsessed over little details while examining certain subject matters⁵⁴. Especially even as the travelers who came to Rhodes provide general information on the natural beauty and history of the city, the fact that they were appealed by an incident or situation that they would encounter is thought to have forestalled them to give detailed information regarding the island in general⁵⁵. A similar attitude is observed in Savary's travel journal. Savary chooses to write about the methods of the Muslim judge exercises in Rhodes to

⁴⁹ Cottu 1844, p. 831.

⁵⁰ Egmont- Heyman 1759, p. 276.

⁵¹ Hasselquist 1776, p. 176.

⁵² Carlisle 1855, p. 110.

⁵³ Cottu 1844, p. 829.

⁵⁴ Kılınç 2014, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Newton 1865, p. 140.

solve the cases in every detail. Nevertheless, what he wrote in his travel journal regarding this issue, it is impossible to get information about the contents of the cases and how they found repercussion among the society⁵⁶. In another travel journal, the writer talks about a suicide incident that involved a girl who fell in love with a young man for pages. As the other journals, because the location of the city in the ancient world, the physical and geographic condition of the castle and the harbor are the issues that were mainly mentioned, this travel note does not include enough details about the island life⁵⁷.

In another travel journal regarding the daily life on Rhodes island, it is stated that the Greeks were so natural, and they have eighteen churches on Rhodes. The Western travelers who noted that the Greek churches were small and aged; and having shared conversations with the priest they also added that “their ignorance was so prevalent that they couldn’t get any information”⁵⁸. It must have been a great disappointment for the travelers, because the fact that they were compelled to emphasize the ignorance of a Greek priest as ignorant is in fact indicates a complete contradiction with their admiration for the ancient Hellenic culture and their representatives. Another traveler tries to compare the personalities of the Greek and Turkish people living on the island even though it turned into a strained interpretation. He claims that there was a striking difference between the personalities of Greek and Turkish sailors. He implies that the Greeks were able to set sail in stormy waters fearlessly, therefore the Greeks were braver than the Turks⁵⁹. Cottu mentions that there were taverns in regions where the Greeks resided and there were drunken men and even incidents of murder were seen in those places⁶⁰.

And some travelers noted the important incidents happening in the island by learning the details. Among these travelers, Lithgow wrote that in the last twenty-five years Rhodes faced with tremendous dangers such as floods due to severe rainfalls for three times and the majority of the residents of the island were harmed due to the floods that started in the recent spring and continued during the summer.

In those floods, he recorded that the houses of some of the island residents were harmed and much more importantly those floods resulted in the death of people who were sleeping in their beds during the night⁶¹. Another

⁵⁶ Savary 1788, p. 89.

⁵⁷ Clarke 1816, p. 450.

⁵⁸ Egmont- Heyman 1759, p. 264.

⁵⁹ Fellows 1852, p. 394.

⁶⁰ Cottu 1844, p. 825.

⁶¹ Lithgow 1906, p. 160.

Western traveler recorded that what he had gathered from the behaviors of people of Rhodes, he had encountered “Western Civilization” more than anywhere on the other Aegean islands in general⁶².

Among the western travelers Randolph didn't emphasize anything regarding the “tolerance” that the Ottoman Empire showed to the people of the region; Cottu, another traveler never mentioned peaceful environment specifically under the sovereignty of Turks⁶³. Nevertheless, it is possible to detect the societal peace and tolerance that was prevalent in Rhodes easily from the travel notes of many western travelers who visited Rhodes even though they never expressed it clearly as Randolph, Cottu and other few travelers.

Daily Life on Rhodes Island: “Cleanliness, Clothing and Women”

The prejudices regarding that the Turks were unclean was reflected in the works of the Western travelers who visited Turkey in 16th century when they found the opportunity⁶⁴. However, many Western travelers didn't agree with such notion. The Australian traveler Busbecq recorded that the Turks gave great importance to the cleanliness of body, and that “the Turks paid attention to the cleanliness of the body, they were disgusted by the ones who were dirty and unclean, and the understanding that uncleanliness of the body was worse than the uncleanliness of the soul was prevalent in the sight of Turks, and because of that they washed themselves frequently”⁶⁵. F. Hasselquist, stated that “*the Turks needed sponges especially for bathing and cleaning*” after he mentioned that people engaged in sponge diving and its trade in Rhodes, in detail⁶⁶. The fact that the famous Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi emphasized that in Rhodes “*everyone kept the entrance of their house and shop clean and to throw garbage had a punishment in return*” does not provide an opportunity for the notions of dirty or unclean which are among the strongest images of orientalism to be used for the islands. However, it cannot be overlooked that the contrary of this situation was implied most of the time by some of the travelers who visited the island. When he arrived at Rhodes, traveler Cottu gives all the details on the house of a Turkish man living on the Island which was in a miserable state and had only a single room and draws attention to two bed sheets in bad condition and a bed which he implied that it was dirty. Moreover, he wrote that the Turkish landlord offered his visitor to taste the rotten onions, zucchinis and

⁶² Newton 1865, p. 138.

⁶³ Cottu 1844, p. 830-834.

⁶⁴ Çetin 2011, p. 54.

⁶⁵ Altunbay 2015, p. 54.

⁶⁶ Hasselquist 1776, p. 176.

cucumbers scattered on the floor⁶⁷. According to these records, it can be understood that the traveler tried to highlight the images of “dirty and unclean” to refer all the Turkish houses found on the island with what he saw in that Turkish house he visited, however; it cannot be claimed without questioning. The fact that Cottu criticized everything he saw and assumed a displeased attitude during his stay in Rhodes is enough to avert us to reach a final judgment regarding this issue. On the other hand, another Western traveler Carlisle who visited Rhodes a little while after Cottu notes that the houses were generally “well-constructed and clean”⁶⁸. Therefore, at least for now, we may assume that Cottu’s aim was merely to describe the old and poor life of the Turkish landlord. As other Western travelers Carne emphasized the clean and nice-looking houses of the city of Rhodes and especially the great pleasure one can get by walking up and down in its streets⁶⁹.

The travelers who visited Rhodes also included the descriptions of the clothing that assumed by the people on the Island in their journals. Among one of them named William Wittman, who came to Rhodes in the 18th century, wrote that “especially the Greek and Jewish women and the children wore a bundle of handkerchiefs and “the unattractive object” that they wore had an unpleasant appearance. The traveler indicated that the dresses which were probably made of cotton that the Greeks had grown on the island and worn during the festivals and holy days were more pleasant than the others. However, these were not daily clothing⁷⁰. Wittman, who gave partial information about Greek and Jewish clothing, did not provide any information about the clothing of Muslims⁷¹. It should be noted that this situation is similar not only in William Wittman, but also in other travelers visiting Rhodes.

However, the Western travelers analyses the Ottoman women with all her details and falls under the influence of an explicit or implicit orientalist point of view that is prevalent in almost every Western travel journal which marginalizes, despises and insults the Turks as a whole and the Ottoman women in particular⁷². For this reason, sometimes they use concepts that are close to each other and sometimes they use not very specific ones. Even though the narrators of the oriental image may change, they have a close relationship with

⁶⁷ Cottu 1844, p. 828.

⁶⁸ Carlisle 1855, p. 110.

⁶⁹ Carne 1838, p. 54 and Newton 1865, p. 139; Furthermore, C.B. Elliot, in a travel journal when he visited Kos Island which was under the administration of Turks, included the statement that the island “was the settlement where any garbage cannot be found around”. Elliott 1838, p. 170.

⁷⁰ Ünen 2013, p. 167.

⁷¹ Doğan 2008, p. 129.

⁷² İlyas- Uysal 2015, p. 3.

the way their narratives are close to each other, in other words, similar views bring similar expressions⁷³. Indeed, the way that the women dressed and the accessories they used and details such as *fez*, *hijab* and veil attracted the attention of the Western travelers who came to Rhodes. Carlisle writes that people of Rhodes made their own clothes as well as cultivating their own goods⁷⁴. Newton notes that the villagers of Rhodes, both men and women, wore snow white dresses which were roved and woven by their own hands and made by the cottons that grew on their lands. C.T. Newton carefully notes down the use of “*fez*” and “*scarf*” during his visit to Rhodes and states that “as on most of the other archipelago, there was a blend of classic and Turkish fashion”⁷⁵. The travelers named J. Aegidius Van Egmont and John Heyman also writes that the dresses worn by the women in Rhodes were no different from those of the other islands. These travelers saw some women in Rhodes with *hijabs* and concluded that they were Turkish. It is obvious that the perception of the travelers who thought only the Turkish wore *hijabs* ran into a stone wall “when they were told that those women wearing *hijabs* were Greeks”⁷⁶. Furthermore, Cottu tries to satisfy his expectation that were urged by orientalism by mentioning the presence of sailors who hover around the women in veils strolling on the shore and the women who gathers in the house to enjoy “the Arabian nights”. The same traveler also noted that in Rhodes the elder women hid away their faces with their “veils” when he approached them⁷⁷.

⁷³ Bulut 2016, p. 23-24.

⁷⁴ Carlisle 1855, p. 112.

⁷⁵ Newton 1865, p. 184- 185.

⁷⁶ Egmont - Heyman 1759, p. 276.

⁷⁷ Cottu 1844, p. 829 and 836; Furthermore, Lady Mary Montagu, visiting Turkey in early 18th Century noted that the veil worn by women provided freedom for them as the women could do whatever they desire by covering their faces by the veil. Although traveller Lowenthal claims that the fantasy of Montagu seen behind the veil did not reflect the real life of Turkish women, famous traveller Craven writes that Turkish women “enjoyed the freedom behind the veil”. Craven admires the privacy provided by the veil to the Turkish women, and the fact that the men are forbidden to enter *harem* and the idea that the *harem* is a secure and reliable place for women and thinks that the veil protected women not only from the eyes but also from criticism. This gesture practiced by these Rhodian old women before the traveller is essential in respect to demonstrate that the veil was used as a means of “privacy” rather than an image of “eroticism” as from an orientalist perspective. It is not difficult to detect the presence of monomania and misperception regarding the Turkish men who were considered to be lascivious and barbaric as they were described so in the works of Western travelers although exceptions can be found; and when it comes to the issues of sexism and sexuality the West was accepted to be superior. In an essay that George Sandys wrote in 1652, he said “the Oriental woman was lazy and voluptuous”. İnan 2017, p. 5-8.

The famous traveler Carlisle who came to Rhodes did not give such statement, but he wrote that none of the Turkish women worked”⁷⁸. In Western journals, the authors concluded that the Turkish women are kept in the houses like prisoners by men; in fact, it is another subject matter that is mentioned frequently⁷⁹. Furthermore, it may be thought that the women did not have an active role in social and economic life in Ottoman society. However, this situation does not necessarily mean that the women did not engage in any trade activities. Ottoman women were conducting their formal and informal trade activities by way of their male kinsmen or their representatives⁸⁰. C.G. Addison who visited Rhodes in 1838, made an observation on the construction of the houses as they were passing by the neighborhoods where the Turks lived instead of making explicit observations about the Turkish women. The traveler who went on and said, “there were not a soul but us on the street” and mentioned the fact that the street was gloomy, the houses scarcely had any windows, what is more they were surrounded by Turkish cages⁸¹. C.T. Newton uses similar statements. During his stay in Rhodes, he attributed “a mystery to the houses with jalousie of the savage Turks”⁸². Traditionally jalousie which is a type of window covering applied to the windows made up of metals or wood, here signifies the cage. Moreover, this word means jealousy in French. It is hard to image that the traveler did not choose this word unintentionally. Bu using this particular image of the houses, it is beyond doubt that there is a reference to the lives of the Turkish women behind the cage and the practice of sexism. In search of satisfying his curiosity, another traveler took a sneak peak from the ajar of a Turkish house in Rhodes and he puts down what he saw; the magnificent beauty of “the Turkish women”, “the Turkish children playing in the courtyard” and “the curved horned rams”. The same traveler wrote that he saw some Turkish women “coming out to the doorsteps” wearing flower chains on their head⁸³.

Island Economy according to the Travel Journals: “Producing and Sharing together on Rhodes”

According to the notes of the travelers, Rhodes had two safe ports where big and small ships could enter easily, supplied their needs and where a great

⁷⁸ Carlisle 1855, p. 110.

⁷⁹ Çetin 2011, p. 55.

⁸⁰ Yapucu 2009, p. 295.

⁸¹ Addison 1838, p. 418.

⁸² Newton 1865, p. 155.

⁸³ Addison 1838, p. 427.

number of ships could be harbored belonging to the merchants of different countries and ethnicities⁸⁴. One of these ports was the shipyard (Jetty / Galiot) harbor where the shipbuilding bench was located, and the other one was the commerce (Swash/Customs) harbor whose mouth was closed with chains and by which one can access to the interior of the castle. There was a jetty in the northeast of the island. It was difficult to access this port during the winter months due to the extreme shallowness of the commercial port of Rhodes, the lack of protection against the strong winds or the waves formed in bad weather conditions. The ports of Rhodes were of great military and commercial importance as they located on the Egypt – Mediterranean – Straits region⁸⁵. What is more, in Rhodes even the pirates were engaging in commerce sometimes. Traveler Jean Thevenot introduced the Island of Rhodes as a shelter where Turks and Barbaric pirates sold slaves and loads that had been once belonged to the Christians and obtained at the sea according to his observations during his stay in Rhodes. This note that the famous traveler wrote indicates that the islands are places of commerce where not only the merchants but also the pirates sold various goods⁸⁶.

“Laziness” was one of the images that the West sought the ways to attribute to the Orient. In fact, one of the severest expressions of this image was the statement of a German traveler named Dernschwam who visited Turkey in the 16th century that declared “the Turks are lazy, they do not work, they do not know how to work meticulously and with an agenda, their slaves and the Christians work instead”⁸⁷. On the other hand, another famous traveler named Equiano who visited Turkey around the mid-18th century states that Turks are honest merchants and by comparing the commercial trickery of the British and the justice of the Turks states that the superior one is “the other” and there are lessons to learn from “the other” for England to progress. The fact that some of the European writers or travelers took notes of their observations regarding how the Turks spend their time by drinking coffee, chewing tobacco and engaging in “idle” activities also reinforces the notion of laziness which is desired to be attributed to the Turks from an Orientalist perspective⁸⁸.

It is hard to deduct such impressions from the works of the travelers who came to the Island of Rhodes; moreover, a couple of records that are related to

⁸⁴ Doğan 2008, p. 126.

⁸⁵ Yıldız 2013, p. 32-33.

⁸⁶ Doğan 2008, p. 64.

⁸⁷ Çetin 2011, p. 54.

⁸⁸ İnan 2017, p. 4 and 9.

this cannot be considered as satisfying enough to allow such an interpretation⁸⁹. In other words, it is rather obvious that the laziness image that was desired to be created from the cultural images such as coffee and tobacco cannot be deemed real for Rhodes island. The fact that Carlisle stated in his travel journal that there was not a single beggar in the city of Rhodes except a couple of souls with leprosy is already a solid proof to confute the image of laziness⁹⁰. Moreover, the Westerners' visit to Rhodes partially gives away the monomania that the Turks do not engage in trade that is manifested as one of the prejudices of the Western travelers and as an assertive of orientalism. A traveler's words who came to visit Kos island in the middle of the 18th century, which was crowded with Turks and located in the vicinity of Rhodes stating that "some of Turks deal with commerce in contradiction with the conventions of this nation" brings forward the dimensions of this monomania in question⁹¹.

In fact, the Muslims of the island were engaged in various work forces apart from the jobs related to seafaring and fishery such as agriculture and trade. There were also people who did business with Anatolia and owned a shop in Fethiye among them. In Rhodes, the ones who were engaged with commerce were the Jewish community with a strong organization. They were marketing the wine and *raki* whose production was provided by the villagers of Rhodes. Some of the Jews were tradesmen and the Greeks were engaging in commerce or working as craftsman in the slums of the city and they had already become a part of the island economy mostly with their grocery stores⁹². As it was noticed, all the ethnic groups living on the island including the Turks were producing and sharing together from agricultural production to trade and from industry to social services. Production of wine appears to be one of the most appealing to the Western travelers as they were making their observations after the Turkish conquest of the Island. A traveler who came to Rhodes in 16th century drew attention to the abundance of vineyards on the island and recorded that the Island was an important wine production center. Since the beginning of the 16th century, Rhodes imported wine from the centers such as Crete rather than being a wine exporting center during the middle ages. Furthermore, Rhodes gained its fame in the trade market of the region as a market where exchange of various goods such as clothes and metal objects, and with its slave trade rather than the

⁸⁹ Some of the travellers visiting Kos Island, which was among the islands of which are intensely inhabited by the Turks, felt the necessity to depict the Turks sitting on the shade of a tree in the afternoon while drinking coffee and smoking tobacco as "resting" rather than "laziness". Sandwich 1799, p. 205.

⁹⁰ Carlisle 1855, p. 110.

⁹¹ Sandwich 1799, p. 338.

⁹² Yıldız 2015, pp. 62-77.

goods it produced. The intensive production that the traveler was speaking of was only supplying the need of the domestic consumption⁹³. According to the traveler Tournefort, Rhodes islands was among the important buyers of the wine produced in Chios island. These wines were imported by the Greeks who lived around the area as well⁹⁴. As a result, it is necessary to consider separately the notes of the German tourist of the 16th century named Dernschwam stating that wine production has deteriorated under the sovereignty of Turks⁹⁵ and the notes of Pococke stating that the wine production in the island of Rhodes was rather limited⁹⁶.

As a matter of fact, Rhodes island had been producing wine just to be enough for the domestic consumption since the middle ages. James Bell who traveled to Rhodes wrote that there had been the production of delicious fruits and exquisite wines on the island; however, Rhodes lost all its sacred goods after it came under the Turkish sovereignty. He also added that when everybody had had a chance to become rich thanks to such production, a greater portion of the consumption of the island was in fact dependent on import. Bell stated that the production of olive and cotton was insufficient on the island; and wine, fig and other fruits were of great importance for exportation⁹⁷. As M. Savary also pointed out “the wine produced in Rhodes was delicious and left a wonderful taste in the mouth.” The traveler also suggested that it is required for the wine production to be increased and broad agricultural lands to be planted; and added that the trees of fig, pomegranate and orange had not been planted in a specific order⁹⁸.

Some other Western travelers wrote that the wine in Rhodes lost its fame that it had had during the Roman period; however, it still tasted perfect, and the best wines either red or white were produced by the Jews. It was also mentioned that there were pine trees on the island for the construction of buildings, and a sufficient amount of silk, wax, honey and oil were produced for the inhabitants of the island⁹⁹. Randal W. MacGavock who traveled to Rhodes almost around the same time wrote that the Island had a fertile soil but lately the soil was extremely neglected; and he claimed that “the Island lost its importance”¹⁰⁰.

⁹³ Özcan 2009, p. 269.

⁹⁴ Doğan 2008, p. 125.

⁹⁵ Çetin 2011, pp. 49-50.

⁹⁶ Pococke 1743, p. 238.

⁹⁷ Bell 1831, p. 128.

⁹⁸ Savary 1788, p. 99- 100.

⁹⁹ Egmont- Heyman 1759, p. 270.

¹⁰⁰ MacGavock 1854, p. 294.

Cottu also noted that after the Turkish conquest of Rhodes, the Turks increased the number of the ships of their fleets with the materials they provided from the beautiful forests of the oak and pine covered mountains on the island and they emerged in the race against Christians. He also noted the fact that the main export product of the island was wine; orange, lemons, figs and, almonds that were searched for in Rhodes since the ancient times, were exported to İzmir and Beirut; the Greeks were engaged in grain trade on the island; however, the agricultural production on the island was not sufficient for the population of twenty five thousand. The most striking statement of the traveler is his observations regarding that “the Turks provided nothing to the island and did not cared for its future” as he talks the main elements of the exportation of Rhodes island which were consisted of lumber that were found in the vicinity of the island, dried fruit, olive and nice sponges. Cottu also talked about the presence of thirty ships sailed solo that would be sufficient for the Greeks to engage in trade¹⁰¹. Another traveler mentioned among these observations he wrote on Rhodes that the Island produced enough to supply its own needs and pointed out that were the Greeks given a chance, the yield would be increased¹⁰². F. Hasselquist also stated that the Greeks continued the trade of that not at all significant island with their little boats¹⁰³.

Newton noted that the Rhodes trade was mainly in the hands of the French, and that the commercial mobility on this beautiful island always attracted people of French, Italian, Maltese and Europe origin. The traveler also shared the detail that the owners of the grain reservoirs on the island were Turks¹⁰⁴. In another words, the Turks owned the grain reservoirs and the Greeks controlled its trade. This situation obliged a commercial cooperation between the Turks and the Greeks in the island commerce regarding the issue of agricultural production and marketing. However, the travelers who came to the Island preferred to stay silent for some reason as for providing some clues to point the presence of such cooperation between the Turks and the Greeks.

Grain production in Rhodes did not meet the needs of the island despite abundance of fertile lands; therefore, grains were often imported. M. Savary noted that as the grain produced in Rhodes was hardly sufficient to supply the needs of the inhabitants of the island, grain was imported from the coasts of Asia Minor (southern coasts of Anatolia), that is Caramania¹⁰⁵. The inhabitants of

¹⁰¹ Cottu 1844, p. 834.

¹⁰² Fellows 1852, p. 393.

¹⁰³ Hasselquist 1776, p. 175.

¹⁰⁴ Newton 1865, p. 138 and 154.

¹⁰⁵ Savary 1788, p. 91.

Rhodes were receiving grain at official daily prices from Anatolia, especially from the Menteşe, Hamid and Teke regions¹⁰⁶. As the majority of the travelers emphasized, the island of Rhodes consistently suffered from a shortage of grain.

This was due to the large number of soldiers on the island. The island was supplying grain and meat from Anatolia. Corn was produced on the island; however, as the corn that was produced wasn't enough to supply the need, it was necessary to import yet more¹⁰⁷.

M. Savary also evaluates the price policy regarding the ban on the sale of goods of essential need over the specified price and draws attention to the strict control of this implementation, interprets such condition as "a vile monopoly". The traveler also mentions that the soil is rich and fertile and the presence of corn, olive oil, wine, wax production, and also wood to provide for the ship construction. It was also written that it was the monopolies what prevented the economic growth of Rhodes, and that the state of the revenues perfectly corresponded with the poverty of the Rhodians. The table demonstrated the revenues of the island of Rhodes that was collected by the Ottoman Empire including "capitation tax that is collected from each male inhabitant of the Island, tenths on all produce of the land, customs, tax on houses, on the farms, on cattle, at the gates, the revenues of baths, revenues of salt, on vineyards and, new poll tax on every Greek and Jew"¹⁰⁸.

Almost every traveler who visited the island took notes on the fertility of the soil and quality of the agricultural products. A traveler tells with great pleasure that how he ate the fig from its tree in Rhodes which was the famous fruit of the Mediterranean. The traveler adds that grapes and other picked fruits were taken to the city on the back of the donkeys. The same traveler notes that the soil on Rhodes island was great and fertile and he had never encountered such beautiful land on any land under Turkish sovereignty¹⁰⁹. Another traveler

¹⁰⁶ Doğan, 2008, p. 127.

¹⁰⁷ Egmont - Heyman 1759, p. 263-264. Furthermore, among the products imported by Rhodes Island, cotton and woollen woven fabrics ranked highest in numbers. The island imported a great number of products from İzmir especially flour. And more importantly, as the roads in the island were in bad condition, transporting some products such as wheat produced in the villages was more expensive than importing these. Cattles and animals were also imported from Anatolia. It is also known that some timbers, canvas, and ropes used in ship building were imported as well. Kutbay 2014, p. 47.

¹⁰⁸ Savary 1788, pp. 91- 94.

¹⁰⁹ Addison 1838, p. 420 and 423; In the late 19th century, about 290,000 acres of the 318,948 acres of land in the island of Rhodes, one of the most important agricultural centres of Cezair-i Bahri Sefid Vilayet (The Province of Mediterranean-Aegean Archipelago) was suitable for agriculture. Most of these lands were vineyards, garden plots and orchards. Cezair-i Bahri Sefid Salnamesi, Hijri 1311 (1893), pp. 151- 153. Especially, Rhodes water melons were comparable

who came to Rhodes pointed out that the fruits growing on this island especially orange and lemon were sent to İstanbul and its surroundings while talking about the fertility of the island soil¹¹⁰. The famous traveler Carlisle points out that, despite the large number of olive trees that constituted the natural richness of the island, there were not enough plants in the island to produce oil from these olives¹¹¹.

Some travelers that visited Rhodes also emphasized the importance of the sponge in the island economy. In Rhodes, sponges were retrieved more than any place in the Mediterranean¹¹². The bigger buyer of the sponge on the island was the Turks, and the retrieved sponge was particularly demanded to be used for bathing. This object that became a subject of the trade in the middle of the 18th century was one of the significant products that was sent to Anatolia¹¹³. The famous traveler Cottu wrote that the Jews who were influential in the commercial life of Levant, were also controlling the trade of wine and sponge in Rhodes¹¹⁴. Among the Island's revenues of export sponges had a considerable impact and Rhodes assumed a role of a stop for the sponge trade. The sponges gathered from the islands from the nearby islands which were not eligible for agricultural production such as Tilos, Kalimnos and Halki were distributed from Rhodes.

Rhodes had an important position as a market for both small islands and sponges sent to other Ottoman and European ports¹¹⁵. Sponge diving was an important economic activity in the Mediterranean world of the 19th century, but this trade meant more than that for the economic wealth of the island of Rhodes¹¹⁶. England, France, Italy, Germany and Austria were the primary countries demanding the sponges especially retrieved from Simi, Kalimnos and Rhodes. Thanks to the machine sponge diving which was started to be practiced, there was a significant increase in the sponge trade in the years between 1865 and 1880 on the island of Rhodes¹¹⁷. Moreover, the commercial importance of the sponge, which was one of the natural resources of the Rhodes island, opened a new competition field for the foreign investors. The British

to Diyarbakır watermelons in size and taste, while grapes, melons, eggplants, tobacco and pumpkins were in great demand. Öreç 2006, p. 480

¹¹⁰ Egmont - Heyman 1759, p. 263- 264.

¹¹¹ Carlisle 1855, p. 112.

¹¹² Hasselquist 1776, p. 175.

¹¹³ Doğan 2008, p. 126.

¹¹⁴ Cottu 1844, p. 813 and 820.

¹¹⁵ Kutbay 2014, p. 46.

¹¹⁶ Tansel 1973, p. 422.

¹¹⁷ Özgün 2014, p. 159.

Sponge Company, operating in Rhodes, was founded on a much larger scale than its counterparts and the owners of which were the supporters of Catholic institutions on the island of Rhodes, namely Duçi and Mas families. Having got a license to practice sponge diving, Duçi and Mas company were making deals with the divers, providing them with credits and paying for the tax for the retrieved sponges¹¹⁸.

Another important export material in the island economy was timber. Cottu noted that the ships which were arriving from İstanbul bought timber for the capital¹¹⁹. L. Mayer wrote that the Ottoman state had a shipyard in Rhodes for the construction of war ships and timber was supplied from the large forests of the Island to be used in here and the keels were especially made out of oak trees. The traveler also pointed out to the ignorance in selecting the suitable trees be used in the construction of a fleet and cutting them down in the season¹²⁰. F. Hasselquist noted that tar and other small nautical equipment, and mainly cotton that were essential for the ship construction were exported from these ports and in relation to that ship builders were needed, and these builders came to Rhodes from Anatolia. Wittman noted that ship builders came to the Island from Anatolia especially from Karaman whereas the Greeks mended the British and Swedish ships¹²¹. The main sources of living of the Rhodes island which fell into the province of *Cezayir-i Bahri Sefid* was agriculture, stock farming and sponge diving. Rhodes island had the largest agricultural land within the provincial borders and as a result, fresh fruits and vegetables were constituting a major part of the revenues of the island. Actually, this was closely related to advantage that the island climate provided. Thanks to the moderate climatic conditions, fruits and vegetables were ripened much earlier than the places as Anatolia and Egypt as a result, the Rhodian farmers were able to put their products on the market at least a month before when compared with the other regions thus, leaving them with a high profit. The core buyers of the fresh fruits and vegetables which were produced on the island were Russia, İstanbul, İzmir, Odessa and Egypt. Dried fruits, olive oil, onion, potato, wine and liquor, leather and fur, honey and wax maintained their top places among the other export products of Rhodes. The most profitable export products of the Island were orange, lemon and silk. In consequence of the diseases, there were severe drops in fruit production and silkworm breeding, moreover, the production of these goods was halted for a short while. As of 1890's, the production of both

¹¹⁸ Özgün 2013, p. 436.

¹¹⁹ Cottu 1844, p. 819- 822.

¹²⁰ Mayer 1803, p. 13.

¹²¹ Ünen 2013, p. 238.

good saw a revival and started to be exported again. The other economic activity of the island stock farming was conducted in grazing lands. Goat, sheep, buffalo, and donkeys which were called pony were bred on the island¹²². Luigi Mayer draws attention to the fact that “the economy of Rhodes was depended on the trade and the people of the Island worked for that with full effort”¹²³.

It is hard to stumble upon an incident or an event that disrupted this commercial harmony among the notes of the travelers. Consequently, considering the sincere observations of L. Mayer, it is possible to reach the conclusion that people who worked for the island economy and had the culture of producing together and sharing lived in Rhodes harmoniously.

Conclusion

What was it that attracted Western travelers to the east in spite of the many dangers such as pirates, sudden storms in the seas, possible ship accidents, black deaths, plagues or poisonous scorpions at the cost of death? Was it just curiosity or an adventure? Or did they want to become a pilgrim like Chateaubriand or seek scientific knowledge like Hasselquist? The answer to these questions changes according to the aim of the traveler who came to the Orient. However, no matter what the purposes of the travelers coming to the Orient, their observations increased the keen appetite of Orientalism.

While orientalism aims to examine the Orient in a broad sense from including its language, culture, literature, religion, daily life and economy, the fact that Western travelers preferred to remain silent on these issues on the island of Rhodes indicates the presence of an intentional attitude. The travelers preferred to act confused and remain silent in the face of the events they encountered, rather than providing specific depictions regarding the issues such as education, health, prosperity or comfort of the people inhabiting the island or regarding the daily lives of the Turks.

While some travelers reflected the fact that the Turks lived in peace with the other inhabitants of the Island to their notes with such excitement, some preferred not to make any comments whether favorable or unfavorable. The fact that the material cultural properties from every civilization existed side by side on the islands which were under the sovereignty of Turks was another issue that the travelers never commented on. The Turks who remained as the sovereign power on the island of Rhodes, were not very prosperous but they certainly were not lazy.

¹²² Kutbay 2014, p. 43 and Yıldız 2013, p. 43.

¹²³ Mayer 1803, p. 11.

Additionally, the Turks were not unclean, but their houses were old. They get well with other nations and there was no such evidence that they were barbaric or merciless. Were the travelers been looking for barbaric, lazy and oppressive Turks in Rhodes, what they found was Turkish people who approached with tolerance and respect to history, different religions and people with those believes, and the people around.

“The culture of coexisting” built by the inhabitant of the islands by producing and sharing; and the part that the Turks played in the island economy usually astonished the travelers. It can be deduced from almost all the travel notes of the Western travelers that the Turks were not “barbaric” but “gentle and tolerant hosts” living on the island of Rhodes, should one read between the lines. The cleanliness of the city in the island of Rhodes, the bath culture, the receptivity of western culture must have led Orientalism to a dead end.

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