

3. Living conditions in the houses of the islands of the Cyclades during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

Dimitris DIMITROPOULOS¹

I. Introduction

The subject of this chapter is living conditions and household equipment, such as furniture, domestic utensils and other objects, on the islands of the Cyclades during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Its purpose is to relate the quality of life of their residents to the manner in which these settlements were formed, the size, design and construction of the houses, and their furnishings in terms of furniture and equipment and the cost of acquisition.

The main sources of information are notarial documents and other private and communal documents relating directly or indirectly to people's daily lives, testimonies and descriptions by travellers who visited the islands and wrote of their experiences, reports of the Catholic priests and consuls who lived there, as well as chronicles, memoirs and other texts². The historiography of the regions of Greece is frequently confronted by the problem of lack of sources, particularly those that are both sequential and permit quantitative analysis. From this standpoint, the Cycladic islands are better placed than many areas. Within them, organized social mechanisms operated that have left significant written data relating to the organization of local society and economy. At the same time, residents were obliged to make recourse to notaries to declare property transfers and information about property when making their wills, dowry agreements, property transactions, exchanges and gifts. This has allowed the preservation of valuable series of notarial documents dating from the seventeenth, eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries for islands such as Mykonos, Naxos, Syros, Santorini and Paros. In recent years, this material has been the subject of systematic historical research (Liata, 1987; Lazari, 1989; Dimitripoulos, 1997; Karachristos, 1998; Kasdagli, 1999; Paparriga-Artemiadi, 1999; Zei, 2001; Spiliotopoulou, 2006).

¹ Translation into English by Spyros Drainas.

² Thoughts and documentation relative to this subject are included in my studies: Dimitropoulos (1996; 1998).

The locale for our study consists of a geographical unity in the centre of the Aegean, albeit not a very tightly-delineated one because of its insular nature, but one which contains islands with roughly similar geophysical characteristics and a common pattern of historical development (Kolodny, 1974; Asdrachas, 1985; 1988b; Dimitropoulos, 2004). With the exception of Tinos, which remained under Venetian rule until 1715, Ottoman domination over the Cyclades continued from their conquest in 1537-1538 until the Greek revolution and the institution of the modern Greek state in 1821. There were a few disputed areas, which were at the centre of military conflicts during the wars between the Ottomans and Venetians during the seventeenth century (1645-1669 and 1684-1699) and between the Russians and the Turks between 1770 and 1774 (Slot, 1982; Syronos, 1995; Vatin, 2004). After the Turkish conquest the island region of the Aegean was incorporated into the administrative system of the Ottoman Empire, with certain peculiarities imposed largely by the island nature and geographical position of the region (Kolovos, 2006: 34-85). The absence of a Turkish population as well as of the Ottoman authorities, the role and power of Christian communities in the management of tax revenues, the relationship with the world of sea, piracy and trade, mainly conducted by passing European merchant or war ships, differentiate the living conditions of the Christian residents in Cyclades substantially from those who lived under Ottoman domination in the mainland territories.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in this area coincided with the consolidation of the Ottoman occupation in the economy of the islands and the decay of the feudal institutions and relations that had been established during the previous centuries of Latin dominance. Although the insular nature of this area intensified the particular local characteristics of each island society, at this period the inhabitants of both the smaller and the larger Cyclades islands had turned mainly to agricultural and cattle-rearing activities. Opportunities for seaborne commerce, and particularly cargo shipping, can be found on specific islands in each period. They were usually linked to the limited scope for agriculture development and cattle breeding, and lack of rich fishing grounds to foster a serious fishing industry. Thus, the compulsory provision of sailors (*melachides*) for the Turkish fleet or the traditional involvement of the residents of certain islands (such as pilots of Milos) in port and shipping activities did spark the development of home-based commercial shipping. Involvement with shipping and commerce remained a supplementary activity to an agricultural and cattle-breeding economy for all the island regions of the Aegean. Piracy was an important factor for the daily life of the islanders during this period. It went through phases of high and low occurrence but influenced the lives of the people in various ways. The inhabitants were frequently victims of (mainly European) pirate activity, but they also participated in piracy either as members of pirate ships or as participants in the trade in pirate booty across the Aegean (Krantonelli, 1991; 1998; Bealavilas,

1997; Kalliga & Malliaris, 2003; Fontenay, 1985). The end of the eighteenth century constitutes an end point when the economic data about the development of the Greek regions, especially in areas of the Aegean directly involved in shipping and trade, show major changes. Islands such as Mykonos or Santorini developed a commercial transport fleet and were incorporated into the transport networks of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

Figure 3.1. Cyclades according to the map of Barbié du Bocage, 1791



Source. AVRAMEA, A., ASDRACHAS, S. & SFYROERAS, V. (1985), p. 200-201.

II. Settlement formation and living conditions

In 1809, Markos Phillipos Zallony published his book, *Voyage à Tine*, in Paris. Zallony was born on the island of Tinos in 1782 of a wealthy Catholic family, but left at a young age to study medicine and subsequently lived in large urban centres of the eastern and western Europe. In this book the writer provides a full and lively

description of the layout, equipment and living conditions of island houses during the Ottoman rule:

Throughout the island one sees no cottages or cabins; the houses are stone built and quite well constructed; they consist of a ground floor and an upper floor. The ground floor is divided into two parts, of which one, called *kiela* opens onto the street and receives effluent from within and outside; pigs are reared there and in addition it contains the poultry. When one enters these villages whose streets are almost all very narrow and often very dirty, the eye is disagreeably affected when it sees pig sties on all sides, from which fetid vapours are exhaled which infect the air. The second part of the ground floor, called *catoghi*, is separated by a wall; it serves as both a cellar and a store at the same time. It is there that the great earthenware vessels are placed, intended to hold grain, wine, and figs. [. . .] The first floor is kept as living space; its organization varies, depending on the taste and wealth of the owner [. . .] The houses of the people of Tinos always have a room over the stove, which acts as a meeting point and in which the furniture consists of a small sofa, a large walnut table which can seat a dozen people, and several chairs which are set in the corners of the room. Large chests are also positioned in this room [...] where clothes are stored; on the bare walls hang pictures and images, most of which depict saints.³ (ZALLONY, 1809: 114-117).

Doctor Zallony's testimony may not coincide with the idealised picture postcard image of bright white houses and beautiful small clean villages in the Aegean that has become generally established in the second half of the twentieth century. Yet, Zallony's description is a dispassionate portrayal of the prevailing situation, by a man who despite living far away from the Aegean, had personal experience and knowledge of his subject. Zallony speaks of Tinos as an island whose ancient fortified Main Town (*Xobourgo*) had been abandoned, and the new Main Town, Agios Nikolaos, developed mainly in the eighteenth century (Danousis, 2005: 211-215), while in the houses he describes, one family occupied both floors of a building, something that was not the general rule. Indeed, he is lenient in his judgments, compared with other travellers and short-time visitors, who often describe the hygiene and living conditions in the densely built *Chora* (Main Town) of the Cycladic Islands unfavourably and in shocked terms. It is interesting that one of the most adept scholars of the Greek region in the nineteenth century, the geographer Antonios Miliarakis, referring to Kimolos island in 1901, makes an appeal inconceivable from a modern perspective: 'It would be a prayer answered, if the municipality could find a way for the Castle inhabitants to abandon it and to take it down completely, in order to build airy houses conforming to a particular layout. Today, the inhabitants of the Castle live in the most unsanitary conditions, due to the fact that, besides the filth that this particular construction of rooms and protruding staircases brings about, these slum dwellings are narrow, dark,

³ For the original French text see appendix.

with inadequate ventilation and light, sometimes with the door as the only inlet for air and sunlight' (Miliarakis, 1901: 11-12).

Densely built quarters, narrow access streets, similar types of small-sized houses, often of two storeys, as well as an overall sense of space saving and making use of every available inch of the original fort-settlement, dominated the *Chora* of the Cyclades Islands. The unsanitary conditions, the lack of sufficient air and light, the cohabitation of people and animals in adjacent rooms, the absence of main drainage and organised waste dumps, the cramming of many people in small buildings that rarely had courtyards, as well as inventing novel architectural solutions for the better utilization of limited free space and of the partition walls of buildings, were characteristic of most island dwellings, and give us a radically different sense of living conditions from later idyllic ideas of life on the islands.

This unpleasant picture is often transmitted in passages written by the European travellers who visited the Cyclades at the time. For example the Swedish botanist F. Hasselquist who visited the Aegean during the mid-eighteenth century writes characteristically about the quality of the houses of the city of Milos:

It is inhabited by people whose houses differ from prisons in our country only in that daylight comes through the doorway, and that they are at liberty to come and go at their pleasure.⁴ (HASSELQUIST, 1769: 26).

As for sanitary conditions the English traveller Maihows, who visited Milos in the same period, commented that despite the roads of the island being wide they were a genuine sewage dump (Maihows, 1763: 113). The English Archaeologist William Gell was of the same opinion 50 years later commenting that:

some of the towns of the Greek Islands present one continued mass of quaking filth [...] At Seriphus the streets were in this condition during the whole summer, and the people had the impudence to complain of bad air. (GELL, 1823: 63)

This crowded residential configuration required urban regulations, even in settlements that were too small to justify them (Kolodny, 1983). It led to the creation of a set of rules that determined house building and reconstruction, and of regulations aimed at the smooth functioning and administration of private and public areas. Community intervention manifested itself through general guidelines that were incorporated into customary law and applied by local courts used to solve disputes among neighbours (Tourptsoglou-Stefanidou, 1998; Dimitropoulos, 2001). The

⁴ *'Elle est habitée par des pauvres gens, dont les maisons ne diffèrent de nos prisons qu'en ce qu'elles reçoivent le jour par la porte, et qu'ils ont la liberté d'entrer et d'en sortir lorsqu'il leur plait'*.

implementation of the laws governing succession rights between family members, the spaces shared between the owners of the first and second floor, and the use of common walls were the types of cases most frequently heard in local communal courts (Zepos, 1931: 9-34; Tourptsoglou-Stefanidou, 1998: 316-323). The need to make cohabitation rules, aggravated by close-packed building, was an important factor reinforcing the interventionist and regulatory role of communities under Ottoman rule, beyond the usual matters relating to the administration and the division of taxation.

The connection between the minimal communal free space in the *Chora* of a Cyclades island, the unhampered passage on public roads, and measures to protect the health of the inhabitants were also priorities of the island communities. For instance, the channelling of rainwater and effluents was a recurrent question concerning communal authorities. They would be asked to find solutions, such as the one contained in the communal sentence judgment of the year 1703 from Syros Island. In this document the details of how a wall should be constructed to prevent water leaking into a neighbouring house were set out (Siatras, 1997: 143-144). Similar efforts were attempted in another court judgment of 1826, from the same island, in which the communal authorities admitted that the waste of a house leaked into another one and was causing daily annoyance, injuries and illnesses (Drakakis, 1967: 450).

III. Houses and the cost of acquiring them

The general characteristics of a house in the Cyclades in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, survive in today's main settlements (*Chora*) of the Cycladic Islands. Architecturally, they have been the subject of numerous studies (Papas, 1957; Philippa-Apostolou, 1984; Bouras, 1995; Papaianou, Dimitantou-Kremesi & Fine, 2001; Michaelides, 2003). In contrast, we find few contemporary accounts. A basic fact is that separate storey ownership was permitted and the first or the second storey as well as the flat roof could be owned independently by different proprietors, who all had full ownership.

House values can be roughly ascertained from an examination of notarial papers drafted on Mykonos during the seventeenth century (Dimitropoulos, 1997: 130-133, 158-159), covering 1,846 land transactions between 1627 and 1700, mostly from the latter half of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately, the documents do not give dimensions, size or quality of the land or houses, but simply mention their sale. As a result, the averages for each category of land show size better than precise monetary value. A similar study of land sales on another Cycladic island, Thira/Santorini, again based on land contracts shows that house prices on the two islands did not differ significantly and, in fact, that there was a significant concentration in the same bands

of house price, particularly for those up to 20 real, which on both islands represented around 70 per cent of the sales.

Table 3.1. Property values based on sales transactions in the second half of the seventeenth century

<i>Type of Property</i>	<i>Number of Sales</i>	<i>Value (in reale)</i>	<i>Average (in reale)</i>
Vineyards	301	4.472,0	14.9
Fenced fields	497	7.031,0	14.1
Fields	225	1.078,7	4.8
Upper storey dwellings	55	1.441,0	26.2
Lower storey dwellings	123	2.029,5	16.5
Dwellings (undefined)	41	750,3	18.3
Lots	42	250,5	6.0

Source. DIMITROPOULOS (1997: 132-133, 159).

Table 3.2. Percentage breakdown of house sale prices in Mykonos and Thira, second half of the seventeenth century

<i>Sale price (in reale)</i>	<i>Mykonos</i>			<i>Thira</i>	
	<i>Upper %</i>	<i>Lower %</i>	<i>Dwelling %</i>	<i>Sale price (in reale)</i>	<i>Dwelling %</i>
1-10	27.2	20.8	28.6	1-9	29.2
11-20	42.7	33.3	42.8	10-19	38.6
21-30	28.2	22.9	17.9	20-29	14.3
31-40	1.9	10.4		30-39	7.2
41-50			10.7	40-49	2.6
51-60		6.3		50-59	
61-70				60-69	5.3
71-80		4.2		70-79	0.7
≥81		2.1		≥ 80	1.9

Sources. DIMITROPOULOS (1997: 132-133, 159) and SPILIOPOULOU (1992: 273). The type of house sold is not indicated.

According to these records the value of the lower floor dwelling (*katogi*) was on average forty per cent lower than that of the upper floor dwelling (*anogi*). This difference in value between the upper and lower floor dwellings is *confirmed* by the community tax logs of the second half of the seventeenth century, in which the residents of the lower floor dwellings paid less for their property than those of the upper dwellings (Dimitropoulos, 1997: 160). The higher value of upper floor dwellings

is also found a century later, in the second half of the eighteenth century, as shown in the examination of a sample of sale documents from the years 1776-1779 from Mykonos (Lazari, 1989: 155-157). This significant difference is due mainly to the fact that the quality of life for the residents of the lower floor was more degraded because they were stifled by the dense construction, had worse ventilation and illumination, suffered from filth and odours, all but living with the animals which fed or passed through the streets of the settlement, and were in close proximity to storage buildings and stables.

It appears that the building plot's value represented about one third of an average house's worth. This observation again reflects more the relationship, and not its exact registration, since our sources, the sales documents, are silent about the size of the houses, their quality, year of construction, and about their position and the proportion of the plot of land suitable for the construction of dwellings.

The average selling price of a lower storey was about sixteen *reale* (Ottoman silver coins) and of an upper storey twenty-six, while a vineyard cost fourteen *reale*, a cultivated field five *reale*. For comparison, in this period a windmill cost one hundred and sixty *reale* (Dimitropoulos, 1997: 422-425)⁵, a cow cost twelve *reale* and a sheep about a quarter *reale* (Dimitropoulos, 1997: 274-275)⁶. A few years later, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, captured slaves were sold on Chios island from thirty to up to one hundred and fifty eight *reale* for women and from seventy to one hundred and eighty *reale* the men (Mayropoulos, 1920: 285-296). Of course, the sale prices of slaves varied, and reflected the economic position of the captured person. For example, in 1682 Venice's Consul on Kimolos paid 300 *reale* to be liberated from the corsairs holding him hostage (Slot, 1975: 159-160). Independently of the hostage's economic condition the liberation of a slave constituted an economic hemorrhage for him and his relatives, often with long-term consequences for the economic condition of his family (Dimitropoulos, 1997: 326-332).

Beyond selling prices, the descriptions of houses in legal papers only indicated whether they were 'lower storey' or 'higher storey', without any other details such as the number of rooms, their total surface area extent, or their layout. Only in rare cases are there particular requirement in sale documents, forcing those sellers to make more detailed descriptions, which show the overcrowding of properties and proprietors as in the following example. In 1681 a woman from Naxos described the houses that she was selling as follows 'one big chamber with its kitchen and its ladder

⁵ This price is based on calculations arising from 20 sales transactions of portions of mills that property took place on Mykonos between 1661 and 1691.

⁶ These prices come from six exchange transactions dating from the decade of 1660, in which note is made of the value of the exchanged animals, expressed in monetary terms.

and also with the lower storey, and down to another ground floor at the side of Mr. Giacometos Grimpias with another ladder that goes up to the terrace of this ground floor and enters in the aforementioned chamber, because it has two doors and two ladders, as we said, the one from the side of Lord Jesus and the other in front of the door of Mr. Giacometos' (Sifoniou-Karapa & Artemiadi, 1990: 330).

IV. The role of the peasants

Descriptions of farmhouses that were used as a secondary residence, a summer dwelling place or a storeroom for harvests and farm tools are even rarer. They are mainly encountered on islands with only one main settlement and are recorded in historical documents under various names, as transferable and taxable real estate. These buildings, with one or rarely two rooms at the most and usually built on hillsides, are still a characteristic adornment of the Cycladic landscape and tourist leaflets.

It seems that those who lived in them then, did not see them in this light. Even in 1920 conditions had not changed and a doctor and historian of Kea island, Ioannis Psillas, was probably exaggerating somewhat when he wrote reflecting the memories of a not-too-distant past: 'Farmers used to live in miserable stables suitable for animals, rather than humans, in which they entered kneeling and crawling depending on how small the door was, which in a way reminded those coming in or getting out, that they should never raise their head' (Psillas, 1920: 212).

Nineteenth century scholars criticized the quality of these buildings, and the practice of moving to these farmhouses during certain months of the year, which could result in the social seclusion of their inhabitants and hinder their children's access to education and therefore degraded their lives (Milliarakis, 1880: 226-228; Milliarakis, 1884: 26-27). Regardless of all this, the practice was very popular and it withstood the test of time, since it served the basic needs of the islanders. Having a second house outside the city was also related to the lack of security the islanders experienced, at least until the first decades of the nineteenth century, which forced them to unite inside a densely built, protected settlement. Also, the absence of a great part of the population from the main settlements (*Chora*) during the summer months significantly allowed them to escape from their already unsanitary living conditions as these were aggravated by higher temperatures. At the same time, these houses were used by the farmers as a base near their farms, facilitating access, which was hindered not only by the limited means of transportation and the roads at that time, but also by the fragmentation of farms into many non-adjacent estates multiplying their transport needs.

V. The relationship between dwellings and residents

Independent of the quality of construction and the size of the houses, the community tax logs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries show that there were an adequate number of dwellings. The numerical data on Table 3.3 shows consistently that 1.7-1.8 of the houses within a central settlement correspond to a single tax account. The accounts on these tax logs were put in the name of the head of the family, without further mention of family members. It is likely that they commonly include more than the nuclear family, with other members of the family registered in the parental account while no longer living there. That occurred because the community tax rolls were not a census of the population, but their purpose was the allocation of the island's total tax obligation to the inhabitants. As a result, they were drafted on the basis of the needs and priorities of the community, which served the system of administration and the balance among its members. This practice, however, makes it difficult to attribute individual homes to specific members of each family.

The impressively even distribution of houses across a large number of owners is confirmed by the quantitative data on table 3.4, which presents the number of houses and farmhouses which have been included, per tax account, in a community tax log from Mykonos, dating from around 1680. In fact a small number of family accounts, 8.2 per cent in total, appear not to own a home in the island's settlement. There is a strong presence of family accounts in which one or two homes are registered, while around 22 per cent of the residents appear to have owned three or more houses. The picture is different when we look at rural areas. Here, nearly half of the population appears not to have an agricultural dwelling, but for a significant number of family accounts, reaching 30 per cent, three or more farmhouses are registered⁷. Even though, as already mentioned, the tax accounts on the community logs do not numerically correspond precisely to families, this data shows that at least in Mykonos at the end of the seventeenth century, nearly every family had at least one house within the Chora, and nearly half of the residents had a second house, a farmhouse near their cultivated lands to support agricultural work.



⁷ Farmhouses frequently appear in island sales contracts. In Mykonos during the seventeenth century, farmhouses are mentioned in 44 sales transactions (Dimitropoulos, 1997: 132-133), but on other islands, such as Paros in the eighteenth century, their presence is more frequent (Zei, 1994: 58).

Table 3.3. Tax accounts and dwellings from Serifos and Mykonos, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

<i>Year</i>	<i>Mykonos</i>			<i>Serifos</i>		
	<i>Tax account</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Houses per tax account</i>	<i>Tax accounts</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Houses per tax account</i>
1680 c.	537	996	1.85			
End of seventeenth century	636	1.169	1.84			
1754	913	1.584	1.73	194	336	1.73
1781				238	445	1.87
1790				277	551	1.99
1793	864	1553	1.80			

Source. DIMITROPOULOS (2004: 55).

Table 3.4. Number of houses and farmhouses in Mykonos tax accounts, 1680

<i>Number of houses</i>	<i>Tax accounts</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number of farmhouses</i>	<i>Tax accounts</i>	<i>%</i>
0	44	8.2	0	264	49.1
1	182	33.9	1	111	20.7
2	178	33.2	2	116	21.6
3	92	17.1	3	38	7.1
4	29	5.4	4	7	1.3
5	11	2.0	5		
6			6	1	0.2
11	1	0.2			
Total	537	100.0	Total	537	100.0

Source. General State Archive, Collection of Mykonos, K60. manuscript 134.

VI. Furnishings in dwellings

We will now turn to the furnishings of an island house and consider its furniture and everyday utensils. Marriage contracts, wills, and inventories, the lists of goods and chattels drawn on certain islands on the occasions of marriage, engagement or sudden death, are valuable sources of information, defining the precise purpose these items served. These records allow us to form a good picture, but the way in which movable items are registered in Greek written sources needs to be stressed, with terse phrasing that does not make it easy to identify things. The usual practice was a one or two word reference, a simple enumeration of the assigned goods without further

clarification. The identification of these items is sometimes difficult because a term is no longer in use and the relevant Greek bibliography is poor in terminology and idiomatic words for this period. The difficulties are greatest in relation to clothing, especially women's clothing, because the relevant terms are diverse. Simultaneously, the exclusion of these subjects from Greek historical research has prevented the creation of reliable catalogues of objects, utensils and dresses that identify and document them with certainty.

a. A general characteristic of the typical island house, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was poverty. Often in marriage contracts, many objects are recorded which at first glance can create an impression of affluence. But when we attempt to place them inside the house, an image of poverty emerges. Of course we are not referring to the few wealthy families whose household utensils as well as clothes, as recorded in notarial documents, are richer and more luxurious.

The seventeenth and eighteenth century marriage contracts of members of powerful landowner families on Naxos offer a characteristic picture of the quantity and variety of clothing that couples would take possession of on getting married (Kasdagli, 1999: 219-229). Brides in particular received a lot of clothing from their parents as a dowry, including bedding and household linens. All these items comprised women's clothing and accessories, as well as household equipment such as sheets, covers, curtains etc. However, it is not totally clear whether brides took all this clothing for use or put it into storage. It is probable that women wore the most valuable of these clothes only in exceptional cases. Their main purpose was to hand down the goods from the mother to the daughter through marriage. These clothes formed a kind of trust that the daughter would also pass on to her own daughter at the appropriate time. Several items of jewellery which were provided as dowry to the children of prosperous families are included among the goods as well. Interestingly some gold European coins, which rarely appeared in daily transactions, were often used as jewellery. Coins were thus separated from their financial value and transformed into prestige symbols with cultural values.

b. The majority of cooking utensils and objects inherited through wills and marriage contracts, were second-hand, third-hand or even older. It is not rare to find frying pans with holes or cracked dishes listed among dowry goods. It is also characteristic that dishes or cutlery in dowries were not supplied in the standard quantities (in sixes, in dozens etc.) but whatever number was available to the parents (for example two dishes, four forks etc.).

c. The lack of furniture is important. Usually only basic pieces of furniture were recorded, a bed, and almost always one or more chests, while endowments

of icons (or less frequently, mirrors) are often mentioned. Visitors to the islands presented a picture of poorly equipped houses. For instance the Jesuit Nicola Sarabat, who passed through Milos at 1735, observed that the only furniture in the houses were chests and wooden chairs, and several bronze utensils, cups, plates and ceramic vessels on the shelves as decoration (Chalkoutsakis, 1985: 24-25). In 1818, when the French traveler Count de Forbin visited the family house of the French vice-consul in Kimolos island (Argentiera), he was surprised by the furniture: ‘They lived in one of the best hovels of Argentiera, which consisted of four cracked and crudely whitewashed walls and furnished with benches and worm-eaten tables⁸ (de Forbin, 1819: 5). The Jesuit missionary Jacques-Xavier Portier’s experience on his arrival in Serifos island in 1701 was miserable, because the accommodation offered to him was: ‘very low and very dark, where there was no opening except the door, and which was so deprived of everything that we could not even have a scrap of straw matting to sleep on’⁹, (Aime-Martin, 1835: 65; Liata, 1987: 46).

In this period the poor furniture in the houses of the Cyclades were not unique but a general characteristic across Greek regions. For example M. Galland, a French traveller who visited Chios, a large and rich island of the north-east Aegean in the middle of the eighteenth century, gives us the following description of the house’s furniture:

The furniture of the Chiots, in the countryside as well as the towns, consists only of a poor bed made of planks placed on two trestles which raise it high above the floor, and fitted with a valance which serves to hide the space underneath the bed: because they use it as a greenhouse or conservatory which is always filled with fruit. Most of the Chiots have nothing on their bed but a mattress: they fold it in half during the day, and hide the bed cover and sheets, folded over seven or eight times, under it place them at the side; so that half the planks of the bed serve as a table or a seat.¹⁰ (GALLAND, 1754: 122).

Despite this lack of basic furniture and utensils, certain small luxury objects (such as saltshakers, peppershakers, pictures etc.), were not local homemade products, but imported from Western Europe allowing a degree of diffusion for these goods beyond the local elites (Asdrakas, 1988a: 231-232). Their occurrence is probably accounted

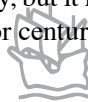
⁸ ‘Ils habitaient une des meilleures mesures de l’Argentière ; c’étaient quatre murailles lézardées, grossièrement reblanchies, meublées de bancs et de tables vermoulus’.

⁹ ‘Une [chambre] fort bas et fort obscur, où il n’y avait d’ouverture que celle de la porte, et qui était si fort dépourvue des toutes choses que nous ne pûmes y avoir un bout de natte pour nous coucher dessus’.

¹⁰ ‘Les meubles des Chiots, à la campagne comme à la ville, ne consistent qu’en un mauvais lit de planches posées sur deux tréteaux fort élevées de terre, et garni d’un soubassement qui sert à cacher le dessous du lit : car ils en font une serre qui est presque toujours remplie de fruits. La plupart des Chiots n’ont à leur lit qu’un matelas. Ils le retournent à moitié pendant le jour, et cachent dessous ou mettent à côté la couverture et les draps pliés en sept à huit doubles; de façon que la moitié des planches du lit sert encore de table ou de siège’.

for by the existence of trade contacts as well as by human curiosity and the desire to own something original, new and different. But, with the exception of some rich families whose entire house furnishings and wares were of Western European origin, the possessions of the majority of residents were haphazard and random, and do not seem to reflect their economic means, or the search for a respectable life style, or to represent a consistent comparative consumption model. The presence of such objects can be detected sporadically in documents from the sixteenth through the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, but not the equally in all the islands. They are mainly found on islands with powerful landowning families, like Naxos and Andros, on islands with significant contact with the west due to presence of a Catholic population, Western European colonists or pirates, like Mykonos, Milos, Paros, Santorini, or Syros, or on islands which had developed intensive commercial traffic with Venice, such as Patmos (Asdrachas, 1972: 124-126). The case of a specific item of everyday usage, the mirror, is typical. Mirrors are found in a few island documents from Naxos and Santorini in the sixteenth century, but from the seventeenth century their presence in dowry agreements and wills from the Cycladic islands increased significantly (Dimitropoulos, 1996: 51-54, 63-66).

Certainly all of these features apply to the majority. If anyone visits the Mykonos or Thira Museums of Folklore today, they will find themselves surrounded by pieces of furniture of exceptional quality and craftsmanship, imported to the islands from Western Europe¹¹. These exhibits and others that can still be found in certain stately homes in Cyclades Islands do not reflect typical furnishings. The material remains on display in museums do not accurately represent the average amount of domestic equipment. Less important objects were lost over time because of the poor quality of their materials, their long-standing and multiple use, but also because of the scant interest shown by younger generations in preserving 'plain, low art objects', particularly when they did not easily fit some widespread stereotypes of traditional rural Greek life. In addition to this, the remarkable tools and utensils of rural island trades preserved in folklore museums usually lack precise dating, and are marked only as 'old-time' or 'traditional'. As a result, the exhibits in existing museums mainly present an image of Aegean glamour and prestige drawn from the involvement of some islanders in trade or shipping, mostly from the end of the eighteenth century. This image is more familiar to us today, but it hardly corresponds to the conditions of poverty in which the islanders lived for centuries.



¹¹ A small furniture presentation of the Mykonos Museum: KYRIAZOPOULOS (1988).

VII. Conclusion

This brief account of the Cyclades during the period of Ottoman dominance, has taken place in a historiographical space which has yet to be adequately charted. The diverse notarial documents which have been saved from a substantial number of Cycladic islands, some dating from the sixteenth century, but which multiply in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, constitute a rich and diverse source, which in some cases offers a useful run of documents and provides an adequate picture of the manner and conditions of life of the residents of the Cyclades. This evidence has yet to be exploited fully, although recent years have witnessed significant publication activity, including the publication of notarial codices (Psarras & Campagnolo, 2010; Imellos & Psarras, 2011). From these documents it is apparent that persons of different social and economic status and various occupations used notaries to compose documents relating to their wealth, the property and movable assets which they wanted to transfer to their descendants. Indeed, codices such as those of Naxos, large numbers of which have been preserved from Chora and its smaller villages, show that the habit of recording the wealth of the residents with notarial documents was widespread both in the urban and the rural regions of the island. As a consequence, we have a picture which, if not complete, can be clarified the systematic recording and processing of the data and the multiplication of studies which make use of the relevant archival material.

Bibliography

AIME-MARTIN, Louis (1835), *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses concernant l'Asie, l'Afrique et l'Amérique*, vol. 1, Paris, Société du Panthéon Littéraire.

ASDRACHAS, Spyros (1972), *Patmos entre l'Adriatique et la Méditerranée Orientale pendant la deuxième moitié du XVIII^e siècle d'après les registres de Pothitos Xenos*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Paris, École Pratique des Hautes Études.

ASDRACHAS, Spyros, (1985), 'To ellīniko archipelagos mia diaspartī polī' [*The Greek Archipelago. A Dispersed city*], in Chartes kai chartografoi toy Aigaíoy pelagoys [Maps and Mapmakers of the Aegean Sea], Athens, Olkos, p. 235-248.

ASDRACHAS, Spyros, (1988a), 'Nīsiōtikes koinotītes: oi forologikes leitoyrgies (II)' [*Insular Communities and Fiscal Functions*], Ta Historika 9, p. 229-258.

ASDRACHAS, Spyros, (1988b), 'Ta nīsia' [*The islands*], in Oikonomia kai nootropies [Economy and Mentalities], Athens, Hermīs, p. 234-244.

AVRAMEA, Anna, ASDRACHAS, Spyros & SFYROERAS, Vasilis (1985), Chartes kai chartografoi toy Aigaíoy pelagoys [Maps and mapmakers of the Aegean Sea], Athens, Olkos.

- BELAVILAS, Nikos (1997), *Limania kai oikismoι sto Archipalagos tis peirateias, 15os-19os ai* [Ports and Settlements in the Archipelago of Piracy, 15th-19th c.], Athens, Odysseas.
- BOURAS, Charalabos (1995), 'Architektonikī kai poleodomia stoys paradosiakoy's oikismoys toy Aigaioy' [Architecture and Urban Planning at the Traditional Settlements of Aegean], in *To Aigaiο. Epikentro Hellīnikoy politismoy* [Aegean. The Epicentre of Greek Civilization], Athens, Melissa, p. 201-216.
- CHALKOUTSAKIS, Yannis (1985), 'Mia agnōstī episkepsī -to 1735- stī Mīlo' [An Unknown Visiting on Milos (1735)], *Mīliaka*, 2, p. 24-25.
- DANOUSIS, Kostas (2005), 'Ī Tīnos sta chrōnia tis Toyrkokratias' [Tinos during Turkish Occupation], in Markos FOSKOLOS (ed.), *Tinos. Historia kai politismos* [Tinos. History and Civilization], 1, Tinos, Dimos Exōmbourgou, p. 199-250.
- DE FORBIN, Louis (1819), *Voyage dans le Levant*, Paris, Delaunay.
- DIMITROPOULOS, Dimitris (1996), 'Stoicheia gia ton oikiako exoplismo sta chronia tis othōmanikīs kyriarchias. Ī periptōsī toy kathreftī' [Data about the Domestic Equipment during the Ottoman Occupation. The Mirror Case], *Ta Historika*, 24-25, p. 37-66.
- DIMITROPOULOS, Dimitris (1997), *Ī Mykonos ton 17o aiōna. Gaioktītikēs scheseis kai oikonomikēs synallagēs* [Mykonos in 17th Century. Land Possessions and Economical Transactions], Athens, Institute for Neohellenic Research / National Hellenic Research Foundation.
- DIMITROPOULOS, Dimitris (1998) 'Archeiaka tekmiēria kai kykladikos chōros (16os-archēs 19oy ai.)' [Archives Documentation and Cycladic Area (16th-beginning of 19th centuries)], in Lina MENDONI & Nikos MARGARIS (eds), *Kyklades. Historia toy topiōy kai topikēs histories. Apo to fysiko perivallon sto historiko topio* [Cyclades. History of Landscape and Local Stories. From Natural Environment to the Historical Landscape], Athens, Institute of Greek and Roman Antiquity / National Hellenic Research Foundation, p. 319-342.
- DIMITROPOULOS, Dimitris (2001), 'Domīsī kai koinotikī paremvasī sta nīsia toy Aigaioy, 17os-archēs 19oy ai' [Construction and Communal Intervention at the Islands of the Aegean, 17th-early 19th c.], *Mnīmōn*, 23, p. 37-65.
- DIMITROPOULOS, Dimitris (2004a), 'Les Sociétés insulaires de la mer Egée au temps de la domination ottomane : routes communes et trajectoires séparées', *The Historical Review/ Revue historique*, 1, p. 113-125.
- DIMITROPOULOS, Dimitris (2004b), *Martyries gia ton plīthysmo tōn nīsiōn toy Aigaioy, 15os-archēs 19oy aiōna* [Testimonies Regarding the Insular Population of the Aegean Islands, 15th-early 19th c.], *Tetradia Ergasias*, 27, Athens, Institute for Neohellenic Research / National Hellenic Research Foundation.
- DRAKAKIS, Andreas (1967), 'Ī Syros epi Toyrkokratias. Ī dikaiosynī kai to dikaion' ['Syros during the Turkish Occupation. Justice and Law'], *Epetēric Etairēias Kykladikōn Meletōn*, 6, p. 63-492.

- FONTENAY, Michel (1985), 'L'Empire ottoman et le risque corsaire au XVII^e siècle», *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*, 32, p. 185-208.
- GALLAND, Julien Claude (1754), *Recueil des rites et cérémonies du pèlerinage de la Mecque, auquel on a joint divers écrits relatifs à la Religion, aux Sciences et aux Mœurs des Turks*, Amsterdam.
- GELL, William (1823), *Narrative of a Journey in the Morea*, London, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown.
- HASSELQUIST, Fredrik (1769), *Voyageurs dans le Levant, dans les années 1749, 50, 51 et 52*, Paris.
- IMELLOS, Stefanos & PSARRAS, Stefanos, (2011), *Notariakes praxeis Filōtiōy Papa Stefanoy Arōnī (1716-1742) [Notary Acts of Filoti by Papa Stefanos Aronis (1716-1742)]*, Athens, Syllogos Filōtitōn Naxou.
- KALLIGA, Charis & MALLIARIS, Alexis (2003), *Peirates kai koyrsaroi [Pirates and Corsairs]*, Athens, Hestia.
- KARACHRISTOS, Ioannis (1998), *Familie, Verwandtschaft, Heirat und Eigentumsübertragungen. Das Beispiel der griechischen Insel Syros (1750-1820)*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Vienna.
- KASDAGLI, Aglaia (1999), *Land and Marriage Settlements in the Aegean. A Case Study of Seventeenth-Century Naxos*, Venice, Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post Byzantine Studies – Vikelea Municipal Library of Iraklion.
- KOLODNY, Émile (1974), *La Population des îles de la Grèce. Essai de géographie insulaire en Méditerranée Orientale*, 3 vols, Aix-en-Provence, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.
- KOLODNY, Émile (1983), 'Les Types d'habitat contemporains et leur évolution dans les îles mineures de l'Égée', in *Cyclades (Matériaux pour une étude de géographie historique)*, Paris, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, p. 149-161.
- KOLOVOS, Elias (2006), *I nīsiōtikī koinōnia tīs Androy sto Othōmaniko plaisio. Prōtī proseggisī me vasī ta eggrafa tīs Kaireiōy Vivliothīkīs (1579-1821) [The Insular Society of Andros in the Ottoman Context. A Preliminary Approach based on the Ottoman Documents from the Kaireios Library (1579-1821)]*, Andros, Kaireios Bibliothīkī.
- KRANTONELLI, Alexandra (1991), *Historia tīs peirateias stoys mesoys chrōnoys tīs Toyrkokratias 1538-1699 [The History of Piracy during the Middle Ages of Turkish Occupation, 1538-1699]*, Athens, Hestia.
- KRANTONELLI, Alexandra (1998), *Hellīnikī peirateia kai koyrsos ton 18o aiōna kai mechri tīn Hellīnikī Epanastasī [Greek Piracy and Corsair from the 18th Century until the Greek Revolution]*, Athens, Hestia.
- KYRIAZOPOULOS, Vassilis (1988), *Ta palia epipla toy Laografikoy Moyseioy Mykonoy [The old furniture of the Folklore Museum in Mykonos]*, Athens, Sylloges.

LAZARI, Sevasti (1989), *Économies et sociétés des îles de la mer Egée pendant l'occupation ottomane. Le cas de Mykconos*, unpublished PhD thesis, Paris 1-Sorbonne.

LIATA, Eftychia (1987), *I Serifos kata tīn Toyrkokratia (17os-19os ai.) [Serifos during the Turkish Occupation (17th-19th c.)]*, Athens, Idryma Erevnas & Paideias tīs Emporikīs Trapezas tīs Hellados.

MAIHOWS (1763), *Voyage en France, en Italie et aux îles de l'Archipel ou lettres écrites de plusieurs endroits de l'Europe et du Levant en 1750*, vol. 4, Paris.

MAYROPOULOS, Christos (1920), *Toyrikika eggrafa aforōnta eis tīn istorian tīs Chioy [Turkish Documents concerning the History of Chios Island]*, Athens, Typografeio Petrakou.

MICHAELIDES, Constantine (2003), *The Aegean Crucible Tracing Vernacular Architecture in Post-Byzantine Centuries*, St. Louis, Delos press.

MILLIARAKIS, Antonios (1880), *Ypomnīmata perigrafika tōn Kykladōn nīsōn kata meros. Andros, Keōs [Descriptive Memoranda of Cyclades. Andros, Kea]*, Athens, Afoi Perrī.

MILLIARAKIS, Antonios (1884), *Ypomnīmata perigrafika tōn Kykladōn nīsōn kata meros. Amorgos [Memoranda of Cyclades. Amorgos]*, Athens, Afoi Perrī.

MILLIARAKIS, Antonios (1901), *Kimōlos [Kimolos]*, Athens, Typografeio Sakellariou.

PAPAIOANNOU, Konstantinos, DIMITSANTOU-KREMEZI, Aikaterini & FINE, Maria (2001), *To paradosiako spiti sto Aigaio. I genikē architektonikē diarthrōsī toy kai ī typologia tīs mesa apo antiprosōpeytika schedia [The Traditional House in the Aegean. The General Architectural Articulation and Typology through Distinctive Drawings]*, Athens, Idryma Panagioti & Efīs Mixelī.

PAPAS, Constantin (1957), *L'Urbanisme et l'architecture populaire dans les Cyclades*, Paris, Dunod.

PARARRIGA-ARTEMIADI, Lydia (1999), *I nomikī prostasia tīs gonikīs perioysias stī Mykono (17os-18os ai.) [The Jurist Protection of the Paternal Property in Mykonos (17th-18th c.)]*, Athens, Academy of Athens.

PHILIPPA-APOSTOLOU, Maria (1984), 'Les Villages de la mer Égée d'un point de vue historique (1350-1800)', *Storia della Città*, 31-32, p. 49-57.

PSARRAS, Stefanos & CAMPAGNOLO, Matteo (2010), *O notarios tīs Naxoy Stefanos T(r) oympinos (1712-1738) [The Notary of Naxos Stefanos T(r)oubinos (1712-1738)]*, Athens, Nomarchiakī Autodioikisī Kykladōn.

PSILLAS, Ioannis (1920), *Historia tīs nīsōy Keas [The History of Kea Island]*, Athens, Hestia.

SIATRAS, Dimitris (1997), *Hellīnika koinotika dikastīria kata tīn Toyrkokratia [Greek Communal Courts during the Turkish Occupation]*, Volos, Dīmos Volou.

SIFONIOU-KARAPA, Anastasia, RODOLAKIS Giorgos & ARTEMIADI, Lydia (1990), 'O kōdikas toy notarioy Naxoy Iōannoy Mīniatī 1680-1689' [The Codex of Ioannis Miniatis, Notary

of Naxos, 1680-1689], *Epetīris toy Kentroy Ereyntīs tīs Istorias toy Hellīnikoy Dikaioy*, 29-30 (1982-1983), p. 125-1312.

SLOT, Ben J. (1975), 'Katholikai ekklēsiāi Kimōloy kai tōn perix nīsōn' [Catholicism in Kimolos and Neighbouring Islands], *Kimōliaka*, 5, p. 51-293.

SLOT, Ben J. (1982), *Archipelagus Turbatus. Les Cyclades entre colonisation latine et occupation Ottomane c. 1500-1718*, 1-2 vols, Istanbul, Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul.

SPILIOTOPOULOU, Maria (1992), 'Stī Santorinī toy 17oy kai 18oy aiōna: agorapōlīsies akinītōn' [Real Estates in Santorini, 17th and 18th c.], *Ta Historika*, 17, p. 243-274.

SPILIOTOPOULOU, Maria (2006), *I Santorinī stīn Toyrkokratia. Koinōnikes kai oikonomikes praktikes sto plaisio tīs oikogeneias* [Santorini during the Turkish Occupation. Social and Financial Practices related to Family], unpublished Phd, University of Crete, Rethymno.

SVORONOS, Nikos (1995), 'Mia anadromī stīn historia toy Aigaiakoy chōroy' [A Retrospection at the Aegean History], in *To Aigaiο. Epikentro Hellīnikoy politismoy* [Aegean. The epicenter of Greek civilization], Athens, Melissa, p. 33-72.

TOURPTSOGLOU-STEFANIDOU, Vassiliki (1998), *Perigramma Vyzantinōn oikodomikōn periorismōn. Apo ton Ioystiniano ston Armenopoylo kai ī provolī toys stī nomothesia toy Hellīnikoy kratoy* [An Outline of Byzantine Construction Limitations. From Justinian to Armenopoulos and their Projection at the Legislation of the Greek State], Thessalonica, Etaireia Makedonikōn Spoudōn.

VATIN, Nicolas (2004), 'Iles grecques ? Iles ottomanes ? L'insertion des îles de l'Égée dans l'Empire ottoman à la fin du XVI^e siècle', in Nicolas VATIN and Gilles VEINSTEIN (eds), *Insularités Ottomanes*, Paris, Maisonneuve & Lapose, p. 71-89.

ZALLONY, Marcaky (1809), *Voyage à Tine ; l'une des îles de l'Archipel de la Grèce*, Paris, Arthus Bertrand.

ZEI, Eleytheria (1994), 'O gamos, o thanatos kai ī akinītī perioysía stīn Paro ton 18o aiōna: prōtes proseggíseis' [Marriage, Death and Land Property on Paros Island during the 18th c. A Preliminary Approach], *Ta Historika*, 20, p. 53-70.

ZEI, Eleytheria (2002), *Paros dans l'archipel grec, XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles : les multiples visages de l'insularité*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Paris I-Panthéon-Sorbonne.

ZEPOS, Panayiotis (1931), *Idioktīsia kat' orofoy* [Property on Floors], Athens, G. Fexis.

Appendix

Appendix 3.1. The original French of Zallony's description of Cycladic housing

‘Dans toute l’île on ne voit ni chaumières ni cabanes ; les maisons sont en pierre et assez bien construites; elles sont composées d’un rez-de-chaussée et d’un premier étage. Le rez-de-chaussée est divisé en deux parties, dont l’une, appelée *kiela* et ayant vue sur la rue, reçoit les immondices du dedans et du dehors ; on y élève des pourceaux, et de plus elle contient le poulailler. En entrant dans les villages, dont les rues sont d’ailleurs presque toutes fort étroites et souvent très sales. Il est désagréablement affecté lorsqu’il aperçoit de tous côtés des étables à cochons, d’où s’exhalent des vapeurs fétides qui infectent l’air. La seconde partie du rez-de-chaussée, appelée *catoghi*, est séparée par un mur : elle sert tout à la fois de cellier et de magasin. C’est là que sont déposés de grands vases de terre destinés à conserver le blé, le vin et les figues. [&] Le premier étage est réservé pour le logement ; sa distribution varie suivant le goût et la fortune du propriétaire; [&] Les maisons des Tiniens ont toujours au-dessus du magasin un salon qui sert de lieu de réunion, et dont les meubles consistent en un petit sofa, une grande table de noyer qui peut tenir une douzaine des personnes, et plusieurs chaises qui occupent les coins de l’appartement. On place aussi dans le salon des grandes caisses [&] où sont renfermés les vêtements ; sur les murailles nues se voient des tableaux et des images qui représentent le plus souvent des saints.

