Wherever you go in the Aegean, you are in the Greek lands

tions, they are nevertheless a valuable source of information about the Aegean dating from this time.

Catalogo. The place referred to is a rocky islet to the west of Nisyros, not the island of the same name between Europa and Chios. Today it is known as Castellana, the island of the single cactus.

According to Buondelmonti, "until recently" Catalogo was the home of two Greek hermits. Older writers (Buondelmonti, Baschini, Piranesi) relate that the Turks decided to dispose of the monks and made every effort to do so. But the monks were more cunning than the Turks had given them credit for being. What they did was to build a wooden vane; when they saw the Turks approaching, they hauled their boat out of the sea and turned their lid into an irreparable fortre.

It is indicative of this that even in Buondelmonti’s day, along with references to the economic condition of the islet, to their agriculture, trade and fishing, we frequently encounter the phrase "the Turkish hazard", as equivalent in gravity to "the hazard of pirates". What was meant by this can be seen by the story of the island of Calogero, which is related in nearly all the descriptions of the Aegean from this period.

The place-names in these Descritioni dell’Archipelago the question of place-names is treated with considerable care. Not only are the names of the islands and their principal towns given in the Greek form which they had always borne, but much smaller places, some of them merely points on the map, are also given Greek names. This is the case with all the works from the time of Buondelmonti and dalli Scriveri (1480) to the libra-

celatory of the Aegean from the Turkish yoke in the early 19th century.

This shows the continuity of the Greek presence in the Aegean, despite the lowering and destruction of the Turks during the darkest period of history in the Aegean, there is not a corner of the archipelago which is not full of the memory of Greek history and the living presence of the Greeks. The Turks, by way of contrast, left only one memory behind them when they were driven out of the Aegean: a memory of cruelty and barbarism, which has stayed, as is natural, in the minds of the free Greeks in order to highlight the value of their freedom.

Travelers’ journals As for the population of the Aegean, most of our know-
ledge springs from the travelers’ journals of various writers who happened to pass through. Among the earliest of these writers are Mercurian and Mount Athos and Patmos being the most important (though it should be noted that the monasteries of the Aegean described by travelers of the period are mostly still in place and operating today). During the period of Turkish rule in the Aegean, the Orthodox Church may have had to endure the harshest oppression but it continued to be ideologically and culturally monopo-
lar. At that period, as before and after, the Greek Aegean was an Orthodox Christian sea.

The Chorographia

The Chorographia is the personal narratives of travelers of the events and scenes which they happened to encounter: descriptions of the Greek towns, of sieges, his-
torical and statistical information, eyewitness accounts of the martyrdom of Greek monks, and so on (Greece was, of course, the only coun-
try in Europe which continued to produce martyrs of the Orthodox faith).

Faith and at this late date, victims of all Turkish barbarity.

The Chronicon Minor, a bound manuscript scattered throughout the libraries of Europe, contains some of the most fascinating details about life in the Aegean.

Of even greater interest is the work of modern geographers such as the chroniclers who provide guides to the conquests of Rhodes, which is one of the most cyni-

cal and apocalyptic foot-

es to history. Never have fashions and fads been so unified in such a macabre form as in Rene’s text.

The descriptions of the Aegean, whether in the form of maps or of texts, are all de-

fined in one point: that the sole guarantor of peace, civil-

ization and liberty in the Aegean is the people whose home it has been since ancient times — and that is best seen at periods during which the natural unity of Greece and the Aegean has been disturbed.

Rene KAMPERDOUCU

A map of Euromus by G. Rossetti (1496)