

## **KARAMANLI ORTHODOX TURKS WHO IMMIGRATED TO GREECE FROM MUSTAFAPASHA DUE TO THE POPULATION EXCHANGE**

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Adem ÖGER

Nevşehir Üniversitesi Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi

[adem.oger@nevsehir.edu.tr](mailto:adem.oger@nevsehir.edu.tr)

### **ABSTRACT**

Karamanlis, namely Karamanli Orthodox Turks, was a community the majority of which lived in the Cappadocia Region in Anatolia. They spoke Turkish, and used Greek alphabet in their writings. They lived in Anatolia especially in the Cappadocia Region (Karaman, Konya, Kayseri, Isparta, Nevşehir, Niğde, Aksaray, Burdur, Aydın and Karadeniz etc.), İstanbul, Syria and the Balkans. Karamanli Orthodox Turks, who had lived in Cappadocia (Nevşehir, Ürgüp, Sinasos), Derinkuyu (Suvermez, Yazıhöyük, Zile), Niğde (Gölcük, Misti/Misli Fertek, Sementra, Andaval, Hasköy, Aravan/Kumluca, Kurdanos/Hamamlı, Bor), Aksaray (Güzelyurt, Uluğaç), Kayseri (İncesu, Zincidere, Pınarbaşı, Endürlük, Develi) were subjected to the forced emigration to Greece as of May 1st, 1923 in accordance with the “Convention and Protocol relating to Exchange of Greek and Turkish People” signed on January 30th, 1923 between the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Greek Parliament. Today, Karamanli Orthodox Turks living in such settlements like Thessaloniki, Larissa, Eviya Island (Prokopi, Neasinasos, Neapoli, Neagelveri, Cappadocia) Athens, Prea and Halkida have rich oral and written cultural products. Mustaphapasha (Sinassos) town is one of the centers of science, art, commerce and religion of Karamanli Orthodox Turks in the Cappadocia Region. Karamanli Orthodox Turks living in this town have been settled in different regions of Greece as a result of the population exchange. This paper deals with the current social life, ways of protecting their cultures, associations and foundations, customs and traditions, folk songs, poems, lullabies, threnodies etc. by providing information about the history and anthropology of Karamanli Orthodox Turks emigrating to Greece from Mustafapasha.

**Keywords:** Karamanli Orthodox Turks, Cappadocia, Mustafapasha.

## **NÜFUS MÜBADELEDESİNDE MUSTAFAPAŞA’DAN YUNANİSTAN’A GÖÇ EDEN KARAMANLI ORTODOKS TÜRKLER**

### **ÖZET**

Anadolu’da Türkçe konuşan ve yazılarında Yunan alfabesini kullanan Ortodoks Hristiyanlar olarak adlandırılan Karamanlılar, özellikle Anadolu (Karaman, Konya, Kayseri, Isparta, Nevşehir, Niğde, Aksaray, Burdur, Aydın ve Karadeniz vb.), İstanbul, Suriye ve Balkanlarda yaşamışlardır. Karamanlı Ortodoks

Türklerin Anadolu'da en yoğun yaşadığı bölge ise Kapadokya'dır. Kapadokya'da (Nevşehir Merkez, Ürgüp, Mustafapaşa), Derinkuyu (Suvermez, Yazıhöyük, Zile), Niğde (Gölcük, Misti/Misli Fertek, Sementra, Andaval, Hasköy, Aravan/Kumluca, Kurdanos/Hamamlı, Bor), Aksaray (Güzelyurt, Uluğağaç), Kayseri (İncesu, Zincidere, Pınarbaşı, Endürlük, Develi) yaşamakta olan Karamanlı Ortodoks Türkler, TBMM ile Yunan Hükümeti arasında 30 Ocak 1923 tarihinde imzalanan "Yunan ve Türk Halklarının Mübadelesine İlişkin Sözleşme ve Protokol" gereğince 1 Mayıs 1923 tarihinden itibaren Yunanistan'a zorunlu göçe tabi tutulmuştur. Günümüzde Yunanistan'ın Selanik, Larissa, Eviya Adası (Prokopi, Neasinassos, Neapoli, Neagelveri, Kapadokya) Atina, Prea, Halkida gibi yerleşim yerlerinde yaşayan Karamanlı Ortodoks Türkler zengin sözlü ve yazılı kültür ürünlerine sahiptir. Kapadokya bölgesinde, Karamanlı Ortodoks Türklerin önemli ilim, sanat, ticaret ve din merkezlerinden biri Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) (Ürgüp/Nevşehir) beldesidir. Bu beldede yaşayan Karamanlı Ortodoks Türkler, nüfus mübadelesi sonucunda Yunanistan'ın farklı bölgelerine yerleştirilmiştir. Makalemizde, Mustafapaşa'dan Yunanistan'a göç eden Karamanlı Ortodoks Türklerin göç serüvenleri, günümüzdeki sosyal yaşamı, kültürlerini koruma çalışmaları, dernek ve vakıfları, gelenek ve görenekleri ile türkü, mani, ninni, ağıt gibi sözlü kültür ürünleri hakkında bilgi verilerek bunlar tarihi-antropoloji açısından değerlendirilecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Karamanlı Ortodoks Türkler, Kapadokya, Mustafapaşa.

The Turkish-speaking portion of Orthodox Christians, who lived in the Balkans, the Crimea, Syria, Istanbul, and especially scattered in various parts of Anatolia were called Karamanlis, and the language spoken by them is also referred to as the Karamanli language. Karamanlis still speak Turkish and use Greek letters in writing as they did in the past even though they have been living in Greece since the 1923 exchange of population. Their population is estimated to be approximately a million but the question about the origin of Karamanlis stil remains unclear (Eckmann,1988: 89).

Many studies have been done on the origins of Karamanlis. As a result of the opposition between their language and religion, these studies have not reached a decisive conclusion. There are the two basic suggestions on the origins of Karamanlis. The first one argues whether they are of Greek origin. According to this theory, the Karamanlis were away from the Greek-speaking groups of the Western Anatolia and that was why they forgot the Greek language (Balta, 1990). According to another view, the Turks in Anatolia had turkified some local groups over time. They were not the colonizers that migrated from Greece BC. These indigenous people were influenced by their close proximity with Turks and adopted the language of the Turks but continued to practice Greek Orthodox religion. Despite the fact that they had been turkified and spoke Turkish, they did not change their own alphabet, their alphabet being most likely a hold over their religion (Cahen, 2000).

The second basic idea propounds that the so-called Karamanli people are the Christian Turks and they were brought from the Balkans to the Byzantine lands and settled by the Byzantine emperors there nearly five centuries before the conquest of Anatolia at the beginning of the 6th century A.D. in order to stop the tide of Arabic and Persian attacks and to protect their own territories. The Turkish presence in the Balkans posed a threat to the Byzantine Empire and this threat was planned to be avoided by placing those Christian Turks as soldiers in the territories and especially across the borders of Byzantine Empire (Anzerlioğlu, 2009a). The Byzantines continued to bring the Christian Turks from the Balkans to Anadolu (Anatolia) after the Battle of Malazgirt in 1071 when the whole of Anatolia was opened to Seljukid Turkish colonization. Part of the Christian Turks were completely assimilated into the Armenian Christian community while the rest of them in the Greek community maintained their language, Turkish names, traditions and customs (Eröz, 1983; Guler, 2000; Eckmann, 1950; Anzerlioğlu, 2003; Baykurt, 1932).

A summary of this view advocated by many researchers suggests that the Karamanlis were descendants of some Turkish tribes which were the mercenaries of the Byzantine army in the 11th century. These Turkish tribes did not lose their language, but adopted Christianity. Many researchers who agree with this concept state that these Turkish tribes did not lose their language, but adopted Christianity. Karamanlis had their individual features in the Ottoman Empire in that since they were Christian they were separated from Muslim and Orthodox Anatolian communities in that they spoke Turkish but were Orthodox (Balta, 1990).

The following Karamanli verse makes it clear that status of the Orthodox Turks:

Gerçi Rum isek de Rumca bilmez Türkçe söyleriz  
Ne Türkçe yazar okuruz ne de Rumca söyleriz  
Öyle bir mahludi hattı tarikimiz vardır  
Hurufumuz Yonanice Türkçe meram eyleriz.”<sup>1</sup>  
(Anzerlioğlu, 2009b: 176).

---

<sup>1</sup> Though we are Greek, we don't know the Greek language and we speak Turkish,  
We do not write, read in Turkish, do not speak in Greek,  
We have such mixed line of sect our alphabet is in Greek,  
But we describe our aim in Turkish.

Especially in Nigde, Nevşehir, Kayseri and connected with them the provinces of Aksaray, were the densely populated settlements of Karamanli Orthodox in Turkey. Sinasos (Mustafapasa) in Urgup, a town in Nevşehir during the Ottoman period is one of the most important settlements of the Karamanli Orthodox Turks. This was where the Karamanlis and other Ottoman muslim population they lived together. Before the exchange of population, Mustafapasa was called Sinasos and belonged to Urgup. Sinasos as a village that was tied to the district Urgup what was subordinate to Nigde during the Ottoman period. According to the statistics before the exchange, the population of Mustafapasa was 5000: 4000 of them were Greek Orthodox Christians and about 1000 were Muslims. The town had around 600 Greek and 150 Muslim households. In addition, language of Karamanli Orthodoxies living here was Greek (İoadilis, 1896). Indigenous people of the town consisted of people who came from the surrounding villages and settled here. In terms of management Mustafapasa had a simple council. Its connected places were Urgup prefecture and Konya Governor. Greeks who lived here in a religious point of view depended on Kayseri Metropolitan. Throughout the history the Turks and Greeks lived together in the town and shared the same culture (Malçok, 2012: 16).

Mustafapasa became one of the most important cultural, educational, trade, and the shopping centers of the Cappadocia region over 1800 years. There was a boys' school in the town; moreover, a religious college for the upbringing and education of Greek youth, a girls' school and a library with 1500 books in it (Malçok, 2012: 19).

Boys school building was built in 1840. There were ten classrooms, a meeting room, a chapel and a library. Boys School had eight classrooms, and boys between the ages of 6-14 years old were trained here. Pupils got here five basic subjects courses: art education, mathematics, history, religion, and Greek students studied in Greek, Turkish students studied in Turkish. The Girls' School was established in the 1870s, before that, an appointed priest used to teach them and the education fee was paid by the town council, after they were trained by different teachers (Malçok, 2012: 20). Before the exchange, part of the people of the town provided livelihood by the agriculture, while some of them sustained their life by working in different provinces, especially in Istanbul. Viticulture, wine production, animal husbandry and stonework were major economic events of the town people. Particularly, those who went to work in Istanbul were fisher (caviarer), foreman, construction craftsman, painters, merchants and stone masters (Balta, 2007: 187-188).

Sinasos was an important town and for its historical and religious structures attracted attention in that period and some of buildings of the Ottoman period are as follows:

Aios Konstantinos and Eleni Church (1729)  
 Taksiarhon Mihail and Gavriil Church (1841)  
 Paras Pandeimon St. and St. Kevi Churches (1848)  
 St. Efstathios Church (20 th century. Heads)  
 St. Nicholas Abbey (1600)  
 Saint Stephanos Church (11th century)  
 Prodromos St. Johannes Church (19th century)  
 Johannes St. Theologos Church (19th century)  
 Teodorakis Church

Church of St. Varvara (Balta, 2007: 65-91; Malçok, 2012: 16-24)

Sinasos has also, excellent examples of stonework, including examples of civil architecture; many of them belong to the Greeks such as:

Boys' School (1840)  
 Serafim Rinzovs Mansion (1853)  
 Maraşoğlu Bridge (1865)  
 Girls' school (1872)  
 Ivy Mansion (1876)  
 Mehmet Ali Orhan Mansion (1884)  
 Mustafa War Mansion (1891)  
 Hammam (Bathhouse) (1893)  
 Yellow Mansion (1896) (Malçok, 2012: 37-76)

Before the population Exchange, Sinasos consisted of Kapalos, Lulas, Gavras, Dergos, Mahatur, Yeni mahalle, Haddock, Kipos, Mesohori, Dolamaça and Galasies. Kipos and Mahatur were the places where the Karamanli Orthodox lived, but Muslims and Karamanli Orthodox co-existed in the other neighborhoods than Kipos and Mahatur (Balta, 2007: 25-26).

In January of 1923, when the Lausanne negotiations continued between Turkey and Greece, the Convention and the Protocol for the Exchange of Greek-Turkish population was signed and it was mutually decided on the exchange of population between the Turkish nationals living in Greece and with the Greek nationals living in Turkey except for the Western Thrace and Istanbul. All Orthodox Christians living in Anatolia and Muslims living in Greece were forced to a mutual migration under this treaty (Anzerlioğlu, 2009b: 171).

This migration, what continued within all the national struggle also included the Orthodox Karamanlis in Anatolia, who opposed to the occupation of Anatolia by the Greek army, gathered under the umbrella of

the Anatolian Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate in Ottoman Empire. Then they rebelled against the anti-government movement of Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Anatolia (Anzerlioğlu, 2009b: 174).

In this context, Karamanli Orthodox Christians living in the different regions of Greece were subjected to a forced migration. The London Committee, Sinasos Committee, Athens-Piraeus Committee and the Committee of America were in charge of this migration process. When Istanbul as a central organizing committee organized the exchange of population from Sinasos to Piraeus, Sinasos committee was busy sorting and picking up the precious assets of the community and individuals. They also helped them separate and record things and at the same time they provided assistance in them being safely sent to Greece (Balta, 2007: 181).

In 1923, according to exchange Karamanli Orthodox Turks of the town, by road went to Mersin and from there reached Greece. In the first period of migration it could not be determined where exactly the Greeks did settle. In the subsequent periods immigrants settled in Greece, Athens, Thessaloniki and on the island of Eviya, in the established village called “Nea Sinasos “. The former location of the Orthodox Turks who went out to Greece, completed by the Muslim immigrants from Greece to Turkey. Karamanli Orthodox Emigrants who came from Sinasos to Greece, today live in Thessaloniki, Athens and on the island of Eviya. They are maintaining a name Sinasos by calling established residential area in Greece “Nea Sinasos” and those, who live in different cities through associations and foundations are trying to protect their cultural identity.

They have built their own churches and schools on the Eviya Island in the settlement named Nea Sinasos. In this church all religious and ethnographic materials and carried icons during their migration are exhibited. In the Primary School of Nea Sinasos they have created a museum and expose all ethnographic things carried from Sinasos.

In Athens and Thessaloniki were created museums, libraries and meeting rooms in the house on the associations style, where the works of culture about Cappadocia and Sinasos are shown. Emigrants of Sinasos sharing the same fate, use this association and venues for chats, organizing a variety of events. Language, lifestyles and traditions of this coterie are quite different from Greeks, at first they fought against great difficulties, over time, they have managed partially integrate with new geography and culture. In Athens and Thessaloniki were created museums, libraries and meeting rooms in the house on the associations style, where the works of culture about Cappadocia and Sinasos are shown. Emigrants of Sinasos sharing the same fate, use this association and venues for chats, organizing a variety of events. Language, lifestyles and traditions of this coterie are quite different

from Greeks, at first they fought against great difficulties, over time, they have managed partially integrate with new geography and culture.

Only in order to protect their cultural identity and for transfer it to younger generations they are firmly embraced with own traditions and oral products. It is interesting to note that, although Orthodox Karamanli Turks' language of the Sinasos prior to the Exchange was Greek, their folk songs were in Turkish. Today, this peculiarity, identity of traditional dishes and folksongs gathers them together, and it is one of the most important elements in their maintaining. In spite of the third-generation today, they do not speak in Turkish, but they sing Turkish folk songs. The following songs sung especially before the exchange in henna nights are popular in today among Sinasos' living in Greece. Only in order to protect their cultural identity and for transfer it to younger generations they are firmly embraced with own traditions and oral products. It is wonder, although Orthodox Karamanli Turks' language of the Sinasos prior to the exchange, was Greek, but their folk songs was in Turkish. Today, this peculiarity, identity of traditional dishes and folksongs gathers them together, and it is one of the most important elements in their maintaining. In spite of the third-generation today, doesn't speak in Turkish, but they sing Turkish folk songs.

Following are the two songs sung especially before the exchange in henna nights, which is popular today among Sinasos' living in Greece:

#### **Ağlama**

Ağlama gelinim ağlama  
Mor yemeniler de bağlama  
Yolcuyum yolumuzdan eyleme

Gelini bindirin ata  
Atlardan inerek basar  
Güveyi de Allah'tan korkmaz

Ağlama gelinim ağlama  
Mor yemeniler de bağlama  
Yolcuyum yolumuzdan eyleme

A. Öger / NEÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi 2 (2012) 28-42  
 A. Öger / Nevsehir University Journal of Social Sciences 2 (2012) 28-42

Gelini bindirin ata  
 Atlardan inerek basar  
 Güveyi de Allah'tan korkmaz (*Song of Cappadocia*, 2009)<sup>2</sup>

### **Aman Aman**

Ben atimi nallandırırım o kadar nalli  
 Nan aman aman hele hele nalli-nan aman aman

Ben yarimi oynatırım dökme de zilli  
 Nan aman aman hele hele nalli-nan aman aman

Kaşları kara gözleri ala biraz boynu ufaktır aman  
 Benleri topaktır aman aman

Geldim yarin bahçesine güller açiliverdi aman aman  
 Eller açiliverdin aman aman

Aramızdan sevda boylu yarım saçiliverdin aman aman  
 Hele saçiliverdin aman aman

Saçları sarı gözleri mavi biraz da boynu ufaktır aman  
 Benleri topaktır aman aman

Geldim yarin bahçesine üç nar adlim yemeye aman  
 Üç nar adlim yemeye aman

İkisini koynuma koydum birini de yare vermeye aman  
 Birini de yare vermeye aman (*Song of Cappadocia*, 2009).

---

<sup>2</sup> This is the literal translation of the song into English.

#### **Do not cry**

Do not cry, do not cry bride  
 Purple scarfs in the binding  
 I'm in the action out of the way  
 Put the bride on the hors  
 Groom will descend of horse and attack  
 He also does not afraid of Allah  
 Do not cry, do not cry bride  
 And do not bind purple scarfs  
 I'm in the action out of the way.  
 Put the bride on the horse  
 Groom will descend of horse and attack  
 He also does not afraid of Allah.

Since 1990s, cultural contacts well developed and protocols of “sister city” started to be signed among municipalities where Karamanli Orthodox Turks lived. For example, Urgup Municipality and Prokopi municipalities, Gelveri (Morphou) with the Municipality of Nea Gelveri, Sinasos Istia with the Municipality, the Municipality became sister cities. Mustafapasha Municipality realized various activities and had signed a protocol with many municipalities where Sinasos’ migrants are living in Greece together. For example, Mustafapasha municipality spends every year in May, “Sinassos’ Hearts Tie festival”. The descendants of Karamanli Orthodox Turks who immigrated to Greece from Sinasos, take part in this festival and exhibit their folk dances, folk songs and traditional entertainment. By this way, they obtained the chance to visit their ancestors’ lands, as well as the opportunity to experience the life and survival of cultural values.

As a result, the community that openly declared themselves “Turkish Orthodox” during the last period of the national struggle, within the historical process of being designated as a separate identity from the Orthodox Greek so called society “Zimmiyan-i-Fest” or “Karamanian” and Sinasos the Orthodox Turks living in the Karaman, was forced to migrate to different parts of Greece.

For centuries they have benefited from the Anatolian culture and co-habited with Muslim Turks sharing the same traditions and oral cultural products. After the Exchange process under economic and political conditions in Greece of the period, they had to struggle with many difficulties due to cultural differences. They tried to keep their culture and language alive in the families and society, however, they have begun to lose their culture, especially their languages.

For this reason, they created various foundations and associations and tried to protect and develop their cultural identity under these roofs. In recent years, protocols of “sister cities” have been signed and various festivals and events have occurred. These activities offer the young generation with the chance to see the lands that their ancestors had to leave, and to exhibit their own cultural products. Cultural activities held every year help foster the relations by protecting and maintaining their cultural identities.

### REFERENCES

- Anzerlioğlu, Y. (2009a). *Karamanlı Ortodoks Türkler*, Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi.
- Anzerlioğlu, Y. (2009b). "Tarihi Verilerle Karamanlı Ortodoks Türkler", *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 51, s. 171-187.
- Balta, E. (1990). "Karamanlıca Kitapların Önsözleri" çev. H. Milas, *Tarih ve Toplum*, Sayı 74, s. 18-20.
- Balta, E. (1997). *Sinasos*, İstanbul: Bir Zamanlar Yayıncılık.
- Baykurt, C. (1932). *Osmanlı Ülkesinde Hristiyan Türkler*, İstanbul: Sanayiinefise Matbaası.
- Cahen, C. (2000). *Osmanlılardan Önce Anadolu*, Çev. Erol Üyepazarcı, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.
- Eckmann, J. (1988). "Karamanlıca'da Birkaç Gerindium Terkibi", çev. Müjdat Karayerli, *Türk Kültürü Araştırmaları*, XXVI (2), s. 89-94.
- Eröz, M. (1983). *Hristiyanlaşan Türkler*, Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü.
- Güler, A. (2000). "Yunanistan'da Etnik Gruplar I: Dil Grupları", *Avrasya Dosyası*, Ankara, s. 12-21.
- İoadilis, İ. (1896). *Kayseri Metropolitleri*, İstanbul.
- Malçok, B. (2012). *Sinasos*, İstanbul.
- Song of Cappodocia*, Produced By Music Folklore Archive, 2009.
- Yıldırım, O. (2006). *Türk-Yunan Mübadelesi'nin Öteki Yüzü: Diplomasi ve Göç*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları.



**Figure 1: Nea Sinasos Church / Eviya Island**



**Figure 2: Nea Sinasos Elementary School / Eviya Island**

A. Öger / NEÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi 2 (2012) 28-42  
A. Öger / Nevşehir University Journal of Social Sciences 2 (2012) 28-42



**Figure 3: Nea Sinosos Association / Eviya Island**



**Figure 4: Nea Sinosos Association / Athens**



**Figure 5: The Museum of Nea Sinasos Association / Athens**



**Figure 6: Nea Sinasos Association / Halkida**

A. Öger / NEÜ Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi 2 (2012) 28-42  
A. Öger / Nevsehir University Journal of Social Sciences 2 (2012) 28-42



**Figure 7: The Museum of Nea Sinasos Association / Halkida**



**Figure 8: Sinasos Bonds of Love Festival / Cappadocia**



**Figure 9: Folk Dance Team of Nea Sinasos Association**