

## The History of Anchovy Fishing

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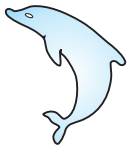
### **Anchovy was an indispensable benediction for the households at the Black Sea...**

Besides the unlimited opportunities offered by nature, the development of Black Sea fishery has also been influenced by some conjectural conditions which are rooted in history. As the heart of the Black Sea, the city of Trabzon has been the most important harbour since antiquity. There was a time when Trabzon was the door for the trade between the Ottomans and the Europeans for a long time. The increasing population could not be met by the local agricultural production although it secured profit by being a transit trade centre due to new production and consumption habits during the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century when trade was being modernized (Emiroglu et al., 2008). In spite of the increasing popularity of tobacco in this region during the last periods of the Ottoman Empire and of hazelnut and tea during the period of the Republic, the local people's interest for the sea, for fishing and for anchovies could never be reduced. The insufficiency of the agricultural production in the region prevented the development of the economy which was based on agriculture and, as the general product of the rural economy, anchovy and corn were the primary food for hundreds of years of the people living at the coast...

This relation, this conventional bond between the agricultural production and anchovies, was interpreted by the then Regional Trade Director of Trabzon, Said Bilal Cakiroglu, in 1964 as follows: "As the sea is very close to the mountains, the land is formed like a narrow strip. Although main products in Turkey such as hazelnut and tobacco are being planted on these narrow strips, they cannot provide a stable salary for the people of Trabzon. Those who know about the life at these coasts know that the people here carry on their back the soil they have lost to the sea in

*the winter months from other places in summer in order to make up their fields again. For that reason, the producers and citizens were forced to turn their faces to the sea and made fishing a custom and an art. Fishing can be found in all the places of the eastern part of the Black Sea. In times when husbandry was possible, villagers who owned a small ship went to the sea in order to provide their subsistence. In this respect, each Trabzon man is interested in fishing. The number of those who contributed to fishing becoming an art and spent their lifetime on this matter is not inconsiderable..." (Cakiroglu, 1964).*

Before the 1980s, when corn was a product of subsistence and reinforced the kitchen of the people living at the coast, anchovy was an indispensable benediction for the households at the Black Sea. While anchovies were being consumed fresh during the fishing season, it was salted and conserved out of the fishing season. In these years, people used to use anchovies which had been fished too much as fertilizer for their tobacco fields and hazelnut gardens. Hamamizade Ihsan Bey, one of the gentry in Trabzon, wrote in his book entitled 'Hamsiname' (1928): "In Trabzon and its environment, anchovy is also used as a fertilizer on the tobacco fields in the years when the fishermen had fished too many anchovies." (Sayilir and Babucoglu, 2007). There is a close relation between the use of anchovies as a fertilizer on tobacco fields and 'Duyun-i Umumiye', which was one of the most important institutions in the last years of the Ottoman Empire. After 'Rej Idaresi' of Duyun-i Umumiye was founded to pay the foreign debts of the Ottomans, it can be understood that together with the increase of tobacco sales especially in Trabzon, anchovy was used as a fertilizer on tobacco fields (Emiroglu et al., 2008).



**“Moloz, Faroz, Yoroz... Everywhere beyond is abroad...”**

There was a time when Faroz was the centre of fishery at the Black Sea. The northwest autumn winds were the sign for the coming of the anchovies to the South and to the shores. Months before, the captains went to the waterfront rocks of Faroz in order to prepare their ships for the new fishing season. In those years, these rocks along the shore were the most important shelters for the ships. Those rocks broke the speed of giant waves, calmed the pomposity of the sea, and protected the houses and fishing dams along the seaside. Each rock had its own name. The most important ones were *Tombullu*, *Uzunlu*, *Boncuklu*, *Mapapli*, *Baskaya*, *Odunlu*, *Ayikayasi*, *Kursunli*, and *Sarganli*.

When the anchovy season approached, the captains started to prepare themselves in the shelters of those rocks days before and gathered all kinds of needs, all their stuff and their nets on the dams here. The small ships along the shore were replaced by hook ships, square sterned ships and sailing vessels. By stormy weather, the fishermen living away from home took shelter and spent their nights here. The anchovy captains used Faroz as a shelter. After taking the anchovies which they had fished during the season to the landing site in Moloz, they turned back for completion. To be a fisher meant to be at sea, to live away from home and to feel longing.

It meant to be away from home and family, not to have a warm soup and to lack tenderness. It meant to collect the fishing net in the middle of the sea, between giant waves, it meant elbow grease, and sometimes pain and tears. Captains who went out fishing did not turn back home for six months. They suffered from being away from home and to be at sea. They put out to sea until the West of Inebolu, Eregli at the Black Sea, Sile and the Bosphorus mouth. At these times, being further than Yoroz meant to the fishers of Moloz and Faroz to be away from home.

### **An old fishing district: Faroz**

In these times, the sea provided the livelihood for impoverished people living at the coast. The poor fishers coming from Hopa, Arhavi, Rize, Fatsa, Ayvasil (Giresun), and Tirebolu, worked as seamen for the captains of Faroz. The '*Han Cafés*' were a popular hangout. The fishers slept on the benches at the beachside of those cafés, they drank, ate, and took shelter there. The owners of those cafés were at the same time captains. The most famous of those captains, whose names are forgotten today, were '*Incenin Sali*', '*Baranlarin Salih Aga*', '*Semsiler*', '*Emin Reis*', '*Kalafat Temel*', '*Hisimaga Teel Reis*', '*Vanlioglu Recep (Denizer)*', '*Mucoglu*' and '*Lologlu*'. Most of those captains also stayed in these cafés and had an eye on their crew. Those captains had been powerful in their times. Each of them had their men in Moloz/ Pazarkapi doing shipment. When the anchovy season started, the shore of Faroz was bursting at the seas and everywhere became cheerful. The fishers gathering in the cafés made merriments every evening and danced and sang to the melody of the kemancha. Those fearless and hooknosed fishermen, who had dedicated themselves to the sea, danced horon and made merry all night long.

Faroz, where only very few traces of its past can still be seen today and which is more than only a district of its city, still functions as a bridge between the past and the future. Although it has lost most of its distinctive features, it has maintained some traces of its own distinctive life style. With its fishery, weaving, coppersmiths, which belong to its long history, with its famous footballers since the 1960s and its kolbasti of modern times, Faroz has become more than just a district and is a class of its own as it has developed its own lifestyle. With its narrow sidestreets, flowing fountains, its masonry constructed, half wooden, two stored, tiled roofed houses and large gardens, grape vineyards, ivies, pink and white wild roses, fragrant honey suckles, all of which are hanging down from the garden walls onto the

<sup>1</sup>Horon is a folk dance of the eastern Black Sea coastal region.



cobbled streets, Faroz takes its viewers back to these old happy days. In fact, Faroz is the district where the warm and friendly neighbourhood culture is lived out in its deepest and most sincere way.

### **The brave Argonaut seamen**

Located outside the provincial centre and between the quarters of St. Sophia Church (*Hagia Sophia*) and *Sotka* (*Hizirbey*), Faroz is one of the oldest and most famous districts of Trabzon. It was founded right next to St. Sophia, one of the holiest and most attractive sites of the Pontic byzantine. The holiness dedicated to these shores had been maintained since hundreds of years ago. At the time of the *Megarali Colonies*, the first settlers at the Black Sea dedicated this sanctuary to the sea gods and goddesses. The famous implacable voyage of the Argonauts who went out to search for the 'golden fleece' also took place at these shores. The 'Argo', the name of which means 'fast' and which had been constructed by a shipmaster called 'Argos', was made in *Colchis* (today Georgia) for the heroes who set off to find the 'golden fleece'. On this ship with 50 oars, a group of brave and strong seamen with *Jason* (*Iason*) as their leader set out on a challenging journey in the treacherous waters of the Black Sea... (Özdemir Özbay, 2002. Nart Magazine, p. 30).

### **Baker Dimitri of Sotka**

At the beach from Faroz to Pazarkapi, and from there until Moloz and Kemer kaya, a high number of rowboats was waiting at the capstans to go to sea. Before the mobilization and exchange, Muslims, Pontians and Armenians lived together in Faroz as it was the case in other villages at the coast. There was a good neighbourhood relationship between Pontic and Muslim fishermen. These were the years when there still was peace and order. They went to sea, cast their nets together and helped each other in bad times. Before dawn, they snatched the bread of 'Baker Dimitri of Sotka', which had just been

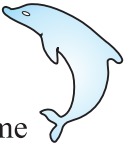
baked, and went to sea. The sea was bountiful. After fishing, the quay in Moloz was full of anchovy barges. There were so many fish that anchovy schools were washed ashore. All the children took their peshtamal, basket, can, and ran to the quay to gather around the small sailing boats...

The captains, who spent their nights in Faroz and went to sea from there, delivered their fished anchovies from the quays of Pazarkapi and Moloz. During the Second Constitutionalist Period of Istanbul, Moloz and Pazarkapi were the most dynamic districts of the province of Trabzon and of the regional economy. A lot of factories, shipbuilding yards, offices and commercial buildings, especially hazelnut factories, carried on their activities in this surrounding. The goods were disembarked by the ships approaching the shore and were transported to the quays by rowing boats. After that, these boats were bound on the boatyard of the Tabakhane stream. Until the 1950s and 1960s, there were no big, well organized, modern harbours at the coast of the Black Sea, which had a pier, and whose backyard was available. There were quays in the sheltering bays of important centres such as Istanbul, Samsun, Trabzon, Inebolu, Rize, Hopa, which were the most important harbour cities. Big freighters did not approach to the shore, but cast their anchor far from it. People and loads were transported to the quays at the shore by barges and boats, and there, they were embarked on and disembarked from the ships. These quays were named differently in different cities, e.g. passenger, gas, flour, and customs quay.

### **Salih Aga<sup>2</sup> of the Barans**

At that period, sea transport was mainly under the control of 'Salih Aga of the Barans in Faroz'. The sailing boats of Salih Aga cruised from Batum until inner Russia and from there until the Azak Sea, and fished seine and fish there. On their way back, they also took goods which





Were not available in Trabzon. The captains fished anchovies in winter, and during the summer months when there were no anchovies, they made trade. In the harbours of Batum and Samsun, they loaded corn, wheat, tobacco and salt on their ships. Besides, Salih Aga also imported yarn. He sold the yarn which he had imported from England to the captains in Faroz. At that time, the captains in Faroz were the only one in these coasts who had seine net for anchovies. The seine nets were hand-knitted at home by women who lived in the villages near the coast. The most famous seine weavers at the coast of Trabzon were from *Zavena* (Salacik) and *Iskefiye* (Carsibasi). After fishgarth, seine was the oldest and biggest fishing tool. The seine net has maintained its size and shape since the byzantine period. While seine net was used to fish one level above the seafloor, the beach seine was used for fishing fish on the seafloor. The size of the seine net and the equipment for fishing differed according to the size of the group of fish to be hunted and according to the depth and streams of the fishing site.

### The Bugler Kalfa Aga

With the start of the anchovy season, the fishermen of Faroz returned to their usual working routine. The ships returning from fishing were full of anchovies. The '*Bugler Kalfa Aga*' blowed his bugle in Faroz in the direction of Kavakmeydan and this sound could be heard in near districts, distant villages, and even at the Karlik Tepe (a local hill). This was the job of Kalfa Aga. In the dawn, he announced with his bugle the coming of the boats, which were loaded with anchovies, to the shore. The sound of his bugle could be heard from the seaside until 2 to 3 leagues in distance. All the people, "*old and young, ran bareheaded and barefoot to see the fish (anchovies)*" (Kayaoğlu vd, 2007). In spite of his old age, Kalfa Aga fulfilled his job with great passion. This work was given him by *Communcation 93*. He was the bugler of the

union. Moloz, Pazarkapi, and Faroz became overcrowded by those who had heard the sound of his bugle. The shore was bursting at the seams with people who had come from districts and villages near or far. But this tumult did not last for long. After that, the captains and seamen enjoyed their fishing. First of all, they warmed their freezing hands and tired bodies at the fire made by woods of valonia oaks. After that, the fresh and living anchovies were cut, salted and arranged quickly on the barbecue. The smell of grilled anchovies spread all over the beach.

The first man to come near to the barbecue was '*Mucoglu Reis*' (Bostan, 2008). Actually, Mucoglu was a typical Trabzon man. The blood of a real seaman was running through his veins. He was born and grew up here, and when he was a child, he ate what the sea gave to his family and so, later, when he was an adult, he also earned his livelihood at the sea. He was one of the most famous and skilful captains in Faroz. With his impatience and impetuosity, and his inner energy he had all the qualities typical of a '*Black Sea Child*'. Sometimes, he burst like the waves at the sea with joy and happiness, and sometimes, he suddenly got angry and burst with anger. Patience and calmness were alien to him. If something went wrong, he began to curse and used all the swearwords he knew. But he was a man of such credulity and gracefulness, that after a few words of excuse, he became soft and calmed down again. His nature was an exact mirror of the nature of the Black Sea.

This way of life of the people living at the sea, which had continued for hundreds of years, was put to an end when in 1916 the Russian attacked the coast of Trabzon... From that day on, peace and order were destroyed. During the years of mobilisation, there was no peace anywhere. The Pontians, Armenian and Turkish people, who had breathed the same air and had filled their jugs from the same fountains for hundreds of years, were now fighting against each other...





### The first fishery shelter and the construction of the first coast road

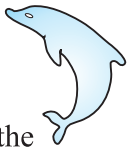
Today, there is only very little left of that old fishery past in Faroz. The fishermen are craving for those old blessed days! Neither the mystic rocks along the shore, nor the natural shelters at the seaside can be found anymore. None of them could adapt to the new living conditions, which changed during a long time period, and gave in to the ravages and were destroyed. The seaside, which was enlarged through filling again and again, was changed into roads, lodgings and settlements, parks, restaurants, and wholesale market halls, and succumbed to the merciless trade economy, which developed especially after the 1980s. During this time, the old great captains kept their hands off the sea one after another. Only very few of them continued their profession. The majority departed this life and got lost in eternity. Leaving so much pain behind them... Those who remained remembered Faroz as it was like in the past and their good old fishermen days and took a trip down memory lane. Muzaffer Bozali has outlived this long past of Faroz and his fishermen days and is one of its oldest citizens. Today at the age of 85, captain Muzaffer still feels those deep traces within his heart and longs for those old times: *“Our family was one of the oldest households in Faroz. In the time we settled here, there were no more than 20 Muslim households in Faroz. Almost all of them earned their living by fishing. My ancestors had learned fishing from the Pontic captains. The Armenians earned their living usually as tradesmen. The business of coppersmiths, smithereens', weaving, the construction business, and bakeries were in their hands. Most of the coppersmiths, boiler smiths and thinners working in Kemeralti and in the ateliers at the coppersmith market were people from Faroz. The craftsman working in those ateliers produced oven vessels which had a handle on the top, copper buckets, kettles, copper vessels, cups for milk and compote, dough basins, frying pans with caps for anchovies, metal drinking cups, shallow frying pans with a cap, pots, and braziers, all in a style characteristic of this region.”*

*“No matter if Pontians, Armenians or Turks, a weaving loom could be found in every household. A wide array of ornate linen, towels, peshtemals, undershirts, and socks were woven with them. The dowry of girls who were going to marry was always ordered from the households of this district. After being expelled from this region, Turkish families continued to practice hand weaving until the 1950s and 1960s. But when modern weaving looms were produced for factories, weaving at home also became history. Until the foundation of the “National Unity Government” in 1960, there were no roads at the seaside. There was a pathway between Faroz and Sotka-Pazarkapi. The transport between the harbour of Faroz and Pazarkapi and between the quays of Moloz was carried out by transporter barges at that time. The Fishery Association in Faroz was founded in 1952. In the year when I became head of this association, I went to Ankara in order to make a petition to the National Unity Government. Then the first thing made in Faroz was a shelter. Until then, the boats were pulled ashore near the rocks. In fact, the first asphalt road was completed in these years, at the beginning of the 1960s. Until then, there was no city road at the seaside. The road starting in the provincial centre at the Maras Cadde, passes Tabakhane and the Zaganos bridges and reached Kavakmeydan, and from here St. Sophia Church. At the right time, our three storied fishing house which was used as headquarters during the occupation of Trabzon by Urusun fell down during the first road constructions. This house had been built by my maternal grandfather. My grandfather captain Emin was a sailor. He transported goods from Istanbul to Batum...”*

### The white foam of wild waves washed the stone walls of tile roofed houses...

Until the early 1960s when the asphalt road was built, the houses in Faroz were seafront. The white foam of wild waves, whose speed was broken by the rocks, washed the stone walls of tile roofed houses. It was a time when technology had not been sufficiently developed yet. Until the end of the 1950s, the sea was very profitable for the fishers. The people of Faroz sampled the fish





people of Faroz sampled the fish such as anchovies, skipjack tuna, and horse mackerel, which were washed to the shore, with their hands. Unfortunately, these were not the only changes to come! After the 1960s with an interval of almost 10 years each, the road enlargement constructions at the seaside destroyed the unique natural beauty of Faroz until nothing was left. Even worse, the 'Black Sea Seaside Road Project' during the first years after 2000 caused the biggest destruction and the historical traces of Faroz were lost forever. The land reclamation towards the sea destroyed the old face of this area forever and shaped a new geography. Apart from this, the settlement structure of this district, its houses, buildings, gardens and streets became object of the merciless rules of the trade economy after the 1980s. This district, which had a high migration from outside, distant villages and small towns, had lost its original characteristics to a great extent.

### Captain Temel

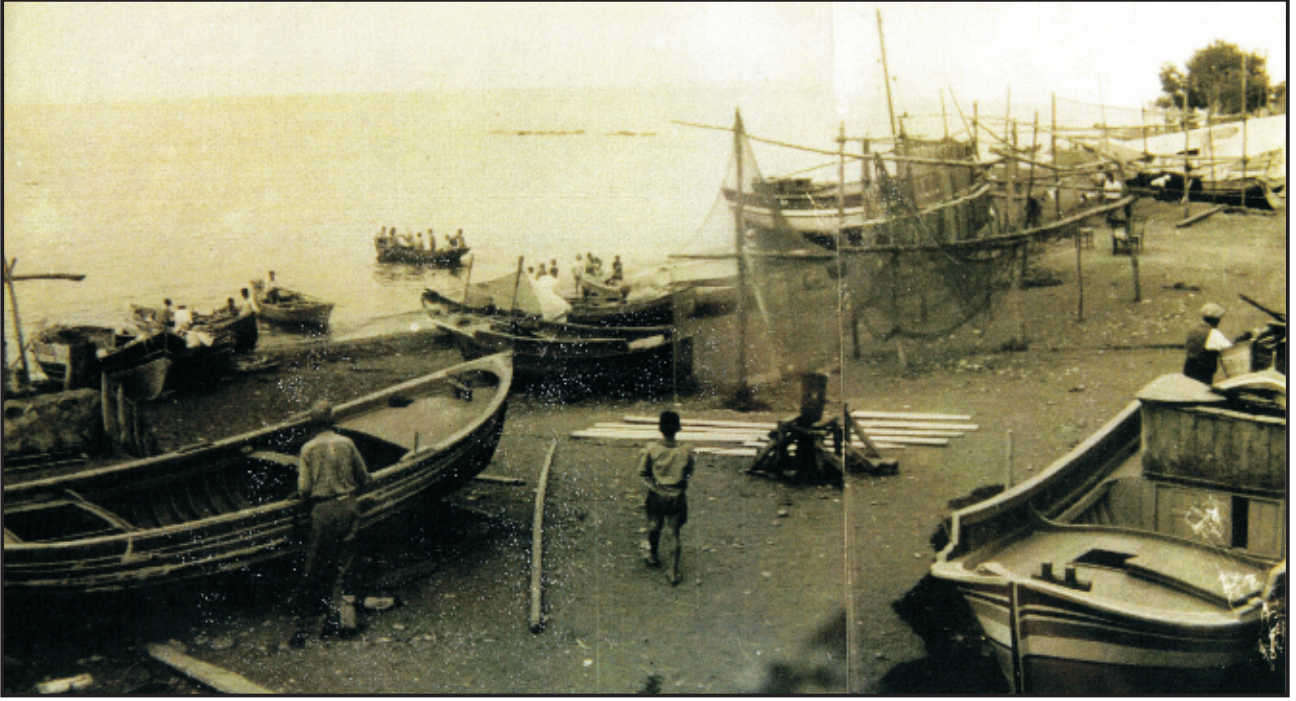
Captain Temel, who had the nickname 'Hisimaga', was of the oldest and most famous fishery families in Faroz. There was no captain above him. He knew the sea very well and was always careful. Looking from Faroz at the horizon of Yoroz, he could tell the weather of the following day. He knew that the south wind was immediately followed by the northwest wind. According to this, he took his precautions and put out to sea... He had two brothers. When the immigrants came and came up against, they also left Faroz as all the other Muslim families did. The three brothers gathered and sailed until they reached Samsun. While other families were troubled with hunger, poverty and illnesses, they had better luck. As they knew the sea inside out, their journey did not last very long. Also after leaving Faroz, captain Temel spent his whole life at the sea. Like others, he had also dedicated himself to this painful way of life. The life of the people at the Black Sea went on like this from generation to generation. They were born into this profession which they regarded as their honour and pride and as a holy heritage. It was their inevitable destiny. And this was exactly the case with the family of Hisimaga.

The descendants of Hisimaga are one of the very few old fisher families of Faroz who are still alive today. Today, there is only very little left of

the magnificent old fishery times of Faroz but the profession is still continued in the third generation... One of Captain Temel's sons, Captain Murat, who was born in 1931 and is still alive today, regrets that there is unfortunately nothing left today of the old good fishing times, of the fishing shelter in Faroz and the copper coloured coasts. *"I was born in Samsun. My father returned to Faroz when I was five years old. After he had returned, he tried to earn his living by fishing. Later, he was captain on big ships, and on "capital ships" of 10-15 metres size, 10-12 tons. He did not know the meaning of the word "stop". He had always been working. In winter, he was a fisher, in summer; he worked as a captain on transporter ships. He suffered a lot. When he died in 1956, he left only a lot of hardship and connoisseurship of this profession as heritage for us. He never stopped being an honourable man. Then he passed his flag on to us. These shores are not the ones we remember from our childhood. They have filled the sea and at the same time there are ships everywhere. Since we did not learn another profession, being a fisher was the only way for us to earn our living and we continued this job. In remembrance of him, we have named our ship after him. The day came when even captain Temel had to defer to the new technology. At the end of the 1990s, the old fishermen of Faroz finally gave up and moved away. They either moved to bigger cities or gave up their profession. We are the last of the old fishermen of Faroz. But since the beginning of the 1980s, villagers have left their homes and sold their animals and moved to Faroz. Since then, peace has been completely disturbed. The rules of the sea have been flouted. There is no respect of and love for the sea, the fish and the captains...and those who leave us don't come back again. Now, we comfort ourselves by remembering the old days... We have no expectations for the future... I grieve about the times when we went fishing dolphins, enormous cods, Atlantic bonitos, turbot which were as big as a tray without calculating..."*

In spite of all these misfortunes, the people of these coasts, who have dedicated their lives to the sea, those tall and slim, sharp nosed people with sea blue eyes, have never lost their endless hopes and love for the sea, the Black Sea, and anchovies and have always carried them in their hearts...





*Faroz fishing harbor; Beginning of the 1920s (from Muzaffer Bozali Albums)*

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