

## CARAMANIAN ORTHODOX TURKS WHO IMMIGRATED TO GREECE FROM MUSTAFAPASHA BECAUSE OF THE POPULATION EXCHANGE

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### Abstract

*Caramanians, who were Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians and used Greek alphabet in their writings, lived especially in Anatolia (Karaman, Konya, Kayseri, Isparta, Nevşehir, Niğde, Aksaray, Burdur, Aydın and Karadeniz etc.), İstanbul, Syria and Balkan area. The Caramanian Orthodox Turks lived generally in the Cappadocia Region. Caramanian 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, Uluğağaç), 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, Caramanian Orthodox Turks living in such settlements like Thessaloniki, Larissa, Eviya Island (Prokopi, Neasinassos, Neapoli, Neagelveri, Cappadocia) Athens, Prea and Halkida have rich oral and written cultural products. Mustafapasha (Sinassos) town is one of the centers of science, art, commerce and religion of Caramanian Orthodox Turks in the Cappadocia Region. Caramanian 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 Caramanian Orthodox Turks emigrating to Greece from Mustafapasha.*

**Keywords:** *Caramanian Orthodox Turks, Cappadocia, Sinassos.*

The Turkish-speaking part of the Orthodox Christians, who lived in the Balkans, the Crimea, Syria, Istanbul, and especially that part is living scattered in various parts of Anatolia is called Caramanians, and the language spoken by them also referred as Caramanish. Since replacement of population in spite of their living in Greece, Caramanians speak Turkish and they use Greek letters in writing as in the past. Their population is estimated approximately a million but the question about the origin of Caramanians is not exactly clear yet. (Eckmann, 1988).

Many studies had been done on the origin of Caramanian. As a result of opposition between their language and religion, these studies did not reach a definitive conclusion. There are two basic suggestions on the origin of Caramanian. The first one, argues for their Greek origin. In length of time they were away from the Greek-speaking groups of the Western Anatolia and that is why have forgotten the Greek language (Balta, 1990). According to another vision, the Turks in Anatolia had Turkified some local groups within time. They were not colonizers who migrated from Greece BC. These indigenous people so affected by the Turks, by the way remained only religious differences between them. Despite of they had been Turkified and have spoken in Turkish but they did not change own alphabet. Caramanians may be descendants of them (Cahen, 2000).

The second basic idea propounds that the so-called Caramanians people, are the Christian Turks and they were brought from the Balkans to the Byzantine lands and placed by the Byzantine emperors there nearly five centuries before the conquest of Anatolia, ie, at the beginning of the 6-th century A.D.. in order to stop the tide of Arabic and Persian and protect own territories. The Turkish presence in the Balkans created the danger for the Byzantine Empire and this is a threat to the Byzantine Empire, provided that they would accept Christianity and serve as soldiers in the Byzantine Empire and thanks to their serve Caramanians would settle along the border region, and especially in Anatolia, Cappadocia and by this way would be dispose their danger except for the use of Turkish tribes against each other (Anzerlioğlu, 2009a).

The Byzantines continued to bring the Christian Turks from the Balkans to Anadolu (Anatolia) after the Battle of Malazgirt too. Part of the Turks completely fused in the Armenian community, 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).

Summary of this view is advocated by many researchers, the Caramanians are descendants of some Turkish tribes who were mercenaries of the Byzantine army in the 11-th century. These Turkish tribes did not lose their language, but adopted Christian religion. Caramanians had their individual features in the Ottoman Empire and differed from all the clans: by their belonging to Christians they separated from Muslims, by Orthodoxy from the Catholics and Protestants, they were Anatolian, knew the Turkish language and separated by this peculiarity from Greek (Balta, 1990).

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

- Though we are Greek, but we don't know the Greek language, 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 (Anzerlioğlu, 2009b).

Especially Nigde, Nevshehir, Kayseri and connected with them the provinces of Aksaray, are settlements in densely populated places of Caramanian Orthodox in Turkey. Sinasos (Mustafapasa) in Urgup town of Nevshehir province during the historical period is one of the most important settlements of the Caramanian Orthodox Turks and Muslims where they live together. Mustafapasha before of the exchange of population, is called as Sinasos and was including to Urgup of the province Nevshehir and it is 6 km. away from the town Urgup. Sinasos as a village was depending on the district Urgup what was including to the province of Nigde during the Ottoman period. According to a statement before of exchange, population of Mustafapasha 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 Caramanian Orthodoxies living here is Greek (İoadilis, 1896). Indigenous people of the town consisted of human who came from surrounding villages and settled here. In terms of management Mustaphapasha has a simple council. Its connected places are Urgup prefecture and Konya Governor. Greeks who lived here in a religious point of view depends on Kayseri Metropolitan. Throughout the history the Turks and Greeks lived together in the town and shared the same culture (Malçok, 2012).

In 1800 years Mustafapasha is one of important cultural, educational, trade, and the shopping center of the Cappadocia region. There was a boys' school in the town, besides it, a religious college for the upbringing and education of Greek youth, a girls' school and a library with 1500 books in it.

Men's school building was built in 1840. There were ten classrooms, a meeting room, a chapel and a library. Men school had eight classrooms, and boys between the ages of 6-14 years old, were trained here. Pupils get here five basic subjects courses: art education, mathematics, history, religion, and Greek students studied in Greek, Turkish students studied in Turkish. Girls school activated in the 1870 years, before it a appointed priest taught them and the education fee was paid by the town council, after they were training by different teachers (Malçok, 2012). 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 are major economic events of the town people. Particularly, those who went to work in Istanbul are fisher (caviarer), foreman, construction craftsman, painters, merchants and stone master (Balta, 2007).

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

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

Sinasos has also, excellent examples of stonework, including examples of civil architecture; many of them belong to the Greeks. Some of these structures are as follows:

Male 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)

Before the exchange Sinasos was consisted of Kapitalos, Lulas, Gavras, Dergos, Mahatur, Yeni mahalle, Haddock, Kipos, Mesohori, Dolamaça and Galasies. Kipos and Mahatur were only Greeks living places, but in others live Muslims and Greeks. (Balta, 2007).

In January of 1923, when continued the Lausanne negotiations, between Turkey and Greece signed the Convention and the Protocol for the Exchange of Greek-Turkish population and mutual decided to undergo exchanged them except of in Western Thrace and Istanbul, by Turkish nationals living in Greece and with the Greek nationals living in Turkey. All Orthodox Christians living in Anatolia and Muslims living in Greece in this context were forced to a mutual migrate (Anzerlioğlu, 2009).

This migration, what continued within all the national struggle also covered the Orthodox Caramanians Anatolia, who protested to the occupation Anatolia by

Greek army, gathered under the umbrella of the Anatolian Turkish Orthodox Patriarchate in Ottoman Empire and then rebelled anti-government movement of Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Anatolia, took place near recently established Ankara government and Greek Orthodox, (Anzerlioğlu, 2009).

In this context, Caramanian Orthodox Christians living in the different regions of Greece were subjected to forced migration. In the exchange process had employed the London Committee, Sinasos Committee, Athens-Piraeus Committee and the Committee of America. When Istanbul as a central organizing committee organized moving of population of Sinasos to Piraeus, Sinasos committee was busy by sorting, picking up the boxes away wealth of the community and individuals, helped them to separate and record things, lent assistance in safely reaching to Greece (Balta, 2007).

In 1923, in according to exchange Caramanian Orthodox Turks of the town, by road went to Mersin and from there reached Greece. In the first period of migration could not be determined where did the Greeks settle exactly. In 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. Caramanian Muslim 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.

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

In Athens and Thessaloniki created museums, libraries and meeting rooms in the house on the associations style, where have shown the works of culture about Cappadocia and Sinasos. 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 wonder, although Orthodox Caramanian Turks’ language of the Sinasos prior to the exchange was Greek, but their folk song 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.

The following songs sung especially before the exchange in henna nights, are popular in today among Sinasos' living in Greece.

For example:

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 horse

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 (Song of Cappadocia, 2009)

Since the 1990s, cultural contacts well developed and it began to sign protocols of "sister city" among municipalities where live Caramanian Orthodox Turks. 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. Mustaphapasha 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 Caramanian 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 obtain to see their ancestors' living space, as well as the opportunity to live the life and survival of cultural values.

As a result of the exchange, the coterie that openly declared themselves "Turkish Orthodox" at 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 "Caramanian" and Sinasos the Orthodox Turks living in the Caraman, had been forced to migrate to different parts of Greece.

For centuries they nourished on Anatolian culture and lived with Muslim Turks shared the same traditions and oral culture products. After the relocation under economic and political conditions in Greece of the period, they had had to struggle with many difficulties due to cultural differences. They tried to keep alive their

culture and language among a few generations, in the family and society, however, in course of time have begun to lose their culture, especially 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, the "sister cities" by signing the protocols spend various festivals and events. By these activities they find chances of seeing migrated the territory, it life and get opportunity to exhibit own cultural products. Each passing year, strengths as well as increasing of cultural events, helps in protecting and maintaining their cultural identity.



*Figure 1: Nea Sinasos Church / Eviya Island*



*Nea Sinasos Elementary School / Eviya Island*



*Nea Sinasos Association / Eviya Island*



*Nea Sinasos Association / Athens*



*The Museum of Nea Sinasos Association / Athens*





*Nea Sinasos Association / Halkida*



*Folk Dance Team of Nea Sinasos Association / Cappadocia*

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