

LITERARY AND CULTURAL CROSSROADS
IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Literary and Cultural Crossroads
in the Late Ottoman Empire

Edited by
EVANGELIA BALTA

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LITERARY AND CULTURAL
CROSSROADS
IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Edited by
Evangelia Balta

 **BOYUT**

In memory of Turgut Kut



The editor dedicates this volume to the memory of Turgut Kut, as the papers collected here describe part of his involvement as a scholar with Karamanlidika and Armeno-Turkish Studies and the intellectual life of the multi-cultural İstanbul.

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Introduction

This volume aims to continue the effort made by the previous collective volumes devoted to Karamanlidika Studies, which is to place across the discipline of history, cultural studies, and literature each ethno-confessional community of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish-speaking and non-Turkish-speaking, in relation to the cognate practices of the others. It is a collection of studies of non-dominant or less commonly studied groups and some influential personalities among them. These contributions shed new light on overlooked non-Muslim Ottoman subjects by exploiting various primary sources, archival, and narratives in Greek, Turkish (in different scripts), Armenian, Sephardic-Jewish, and several European languages. The volume is a cross-fertilization that contributes substantially to understanding culture as a dynamic process through which the Ottoman ethno-religious groups reciprocally define themselves and others.

Two essays explore the intersection of cultural and linguistic diversity in Ottoman literary history. The study by Edith G. Ambros, Hülya Çelik, and Ani Sargsyan analyses a Turkish folk-tale narrative in Arabo-Persian, Karamanli, and Armenian scripts. They focus on the tale of *Köroğlu* as manifested in different textual versions within the Istanbul tradition. Highlighting a shared literary heritage that transcended ethnic and religious boundaries, this comparative approach reveals the communal aspects of these narratives among Muslims and Turcophone Christians during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The analysis shows that the Armenian script is adept at reflecting the phonetic intricacies of spoken Turkish, while the Karamanli script displays a variety of dialectal influences. By examining two versions of *Köroğlu* from 1872 (Karamanli) and 1875 (Armeno-Turkish) alongside two Ottoman versions in Arabo-Persian script from 1880 and 1908, the study illustrates a rich landscape of linguistic interconnections and script-specific adaptations. The findings advocate a broader inclusion of diverse scripts in Ottoman literary studies, emphasizing the need for further comparative research to uncover lesser-known traditions and enrich our understanding of Ottoman literary complexity. Adopting a different script for writing the Turkish language added an extra element to the identity of those using it, just as it was an element of mutual recognition.

This study is complemented by that of Edith G. Ambros, who, with the example of the *mani*, a very popular genre of short folk poem, presents aspects of the literary congeniality and joint heritage between the cultures of various populations of a bygone Ottoman Empire. Edith G. Ambros uses samples of one-language *manis* written in Arabo-Persian, Armenian, or Karamanli script, as well as macaronic *manis* combining Turkish and Armenian or Cypriot Turkish and Cypriot Greek, which are the proof of

the joint intellectual patrimony of mainland Turks and Armenians, Turcophone Orthodox Karamanlidhes, and Cypriot Turks. The first part of her study is equally interesting: it begins by giving an impression of life in Harput (Elazığ) in the first quarter of the 20th century through some excerpts of narratives recorded in the 1980s in a dialectological study of the area. Turks and Armenians lived together in Harput and surrounding villages for centuries, so Harput arguably saw their cultural affinities, including their common literary understanding.

Osman Cihat Sert's article, with a common focus in particular, deals with the intricate relationship between Judeo-Spanish Joha tales and Turkish Nasreddin Hodja tales and demonstrates the dynamic nature of folklore and cultural storytelling across diverse communities. This case study, which has a background in the large-scale Sephardic Jews' migration to North America, looks at the formation of immigrant identity based on fifteen humorous stories about Joha that were published in the Judeo-Spanish newspaper *La América* in New York.¹ *La América*, the source and topic of many studies, was the instrument of the Sephardic Jews who migrated from Ottoman Mediterranean port cities to the United States of America in the early 20th century. The stories of Joha, a humorous figure in Sephardic literature, converge with the stories of the Ottoman-Turkish Nasreddin Hodja in terms of narrative structure and the stories' characters. Yet the stories of Joha are free of strictly Islamic and Turkish elements. Furthermore, as they were published at the beginning of the second decade of the 20th century, hard on the heels of the Balkan Wars and the outbreak of World War I, the sagacious Joha takes on anti-heroic characteristics and distances himself from the Sephardic Jews' Balkan and Ottoman past. The stories of Joha in the newspaper *La America* construct a new communal identity for the Sephardic immigrants in the United States, emphasizing intercommunal solidarity and integration in their new American homeland. The study by Osman Cihat Sert demonstrates the reemployment of an "Oriental" literature source for "de-Orientalization". It marks a critical stage in the assimilation and Americanization of Sephardic Jew immigrants.

Two of the studies deal with the work of two Karamanlidhes Rums who lived in the 19th and 20th centuries. These were the self-made Kayserli Kostakis Adosides, one of the first representatives of Greco-Ottomanism, who rose to the highest ranks of the Ottoman hierarchy, and Avraam Papazoglou, who immediately after the Asia Minor catastrophe and the Exchange of Populations tried to create bridges of cooperation on a cultural level between Turks and Greeks. He was the first Greek interested in researching aspects of the history of Hellenism in the Ottoman archives. His historical studies were known to only a minimal circle of Greek Ottomanists, but his literary work was completely unknown.

¹ For instance, some notable examples: Marc D. Angel, *La America: The Sephardic Experience in the United States*, Philadelphia. The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1982; Julie Scolnick, "Advertisements in the Judeo_Spanish Periodical *La América*: A Reflection of the Sephardic Society of New York", *Ladinar* VII-VIII (2014): 291-302.

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Anthi Kara presents a preliminary study on Avraam Papazoglou, who came from a family that migrated from the village of Germir in Kayseri to Istanbul and settled, as did the majority of Turkish-speaking Kermirli migrants in Kontoskali (Kumkapı). Having conducted detailed research in files from Papazoglou's archive, in Greek and Turkish periodicals, she submits in her text the data she gathered from the manifold work of the young Papazoglou. The Karamanli Papazoglou, equipped with the solid education he had received in schools in Istanbul, developed an interest from an early age in the literature and history of Greeks and Turks and worked systematically to create channels of communication between the peoples of the two nations during the difficult years of the 1930s, with the still fresh trauma of the Greco-Turkish war 1919-22, the Asia Minor Catastrophe, and the refugeeism that the Population Exchange sealed. The work and the endeavours of the gifted Avraam Papazoglou, who envisioned scientific and literary collaboration between the two peoples, were cut short by his untimely death. He passed away at the end of 1941 in Thessaloniki during the German occupation. He was only thirty-one years of age.

Eleutheria Zei examines Kostakis Adosides Pasha's two terms as a governmental official in Crete (1858-1868 and 1876-1878), focusing especially on his administrative work as *muteserrif* of Lasithi (1868-1873) and his short term as general governor of Crete (1878). Greek and Turkish Literature has recently become interested in Karamanli Adosides Pasha.² Hailing from Stephana in Cappadocia (today Reşadiye), he served in various positions, rose through the ranks of the Ottoman hierarchy, and, being distinguished for his education and administrative skills, became Prince of Samos and Governor-General of Crete. His work in Crete has been much less studied than his term of office in Samos (1873-74 and 1879-85). As *Vali* of Crete, he achieved not only the pacification of the island but also laid the foundations of its autonomy with the preparation of the Pact of Halepa (1878) between the Ottoman Empire and the representatives of the Cretan Revolutionary Committee, which secured wide-ranging autonomy for the island of Crete. The study by Eleutheria Zei, based on Greek and French archival material, attempts to highlight the significance of the Cretan period of Adosides Pasha, who, due to his work during his tenure on the two Aegean islands, Samos and Crete, is classified among the modernist politicians active in the Eastern Mediterranean. He drew on Ottoman and European theories and practices of governance, turning

² See Leonidas Moiras, "Konstantinos Adosides: His two terms in the Office of Prince of Samos (1873-1874 and 1879-1885)", in: Evangelia Balta (Guest editor), *Following the Traces of Turkish-speaking Christians of Anatolia, The Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures*, 150, vol. 2, Published at The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 2021: 305-323; Kaan Doğan A. Çağrı Başkurt, "Kuruluşundan Karamanlı Kostaki Adosidis Paşa'nın Tayin ve Azline Sisam Beyliği Meselesi(1832-1885)", in: Evangelia Balta (Guest editor), *Following the traces of Turkish-speaking Christians of Anatolia, The Sources of Oriental Languages and Literatures*, 150, vol. 2, Published at The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, 2021: 265-304.

Crete into the preeminent political workshop of the Ottoman state in the 19th century. The topic is fascinating, as, apart from the individuals studied, it depicts the climate amidst the momentous changes taking place in the Ottoman Empire. Zei shows that local, provincial, and imperial actors had a variety of agendas and interests, which helps us break down the notion of a monolithic state. I hope that the history of the administration of Karamanli Adosides in Crete will soon be supplemented with research based on Ottoman archival material, complementing the picture given by Greek and foreign sources.

The study by Gevorg Kazaryan and Evangelia Balta examines a comedy signed by the composer and musicologist Georgios Pachtikos, known in Greek Literature for his collection of songs from the Greek and Greek-speaking Asia Minor and Balkan regions, which he published in the early 20th century. His play, written in a mixed Greek-Turkish-Armenian language written in Greek characters, describes the state of education in his hometown of Ortaköy (near Geyve), which reflects the state of education in most Anatolian settlements at the end of the 19th century. Firstly, the authors aimed to present this rare cultural sample produced by the symbiosis of Orthodox Greek-speaking, Turkish-speaking Rums, and Armenian-speaking Orthodox Armenians (Hay-Horoms). The plot of the comedy, which presents scenes from the meetings of the community elders of an Anatolian settlement (that is Ortaköy) at the end of the 19th century, is framed by testimonies of refugees about their language and daily life in Ortaköy before its destruction in 1920 by the Kemalist troops. Secondly, Gevorg Kazaryan and Evangelia Balta, treating this literary work by Pachtikos as historical testimony, raise issues related to education in the Greek schools of Asia Minor at the end of the 19th century in their study. For, as Carlo Ginzburg rightly argues, “Both novels and historical work imply a reference to reality, insofar as every narrative, including the most fictitious, has cognitive implications, and in many subterranean ways a challenge for historians, and *vice-versa*.”

Koray Saçkan analyses some of the Karamanlidika poems written by the Exchangeable Cappadocian refugees and composes with their lines a narrative about the forced expatriation from their birthplace imposed on them by the Treaty of Lausanne and about the first difficult years of refugeeism in that inhospitable place where they had to build their new life. Between 1923 and 1925 about 200,000 Greek Orthodox Christians were transferred from Anatolia to Greece and 350,000 Muslims from Greece to Turkey. The study by Saçkan deals with the final chapter of the Turkish-speaking Orthodox inhabitants of Anatolia who arrived in Greece as refugees, presenting their individual view of all the dramatic events they lived through in the lines of the Karamanlidika poems, the final examples of a cultural tradition that sealed their identity. In the following years they would learn to speak Greek, struggling to adapt to the new conditions. The process though was long and painful.

The project by Andrew Peak and Scott Price resulted from the discovery at the anniversary exhibition “Meşgul Şehirİşgal İstanbul’unda Siyaset ve Gündelik Hayat, 1918–1923 (11 Jan. 2023 – 27 April 2024)”, organised by the “İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü”, of a command issued in 1920 by the

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Headquarters of the Allied Forces in seven languages (English, French, Italian, Greek, Armenian, Russian and Turkish). It was the period of the Armistice during which the victorious forces of the Entente occupied Istanbul following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the Germans in World War I. The pamphlet, an excellent example of the polyglot Babel that was the linguistic scene of the Ottoman Empire and mostly its capital, warned the multi-language-speaking ethno-religious groups of Constantinopolitan residents about the severe penalties that would be incurred by those threatening the security of the occupation forces. The last of the seven texts, the one in Turkish, was written in Greek and Arabic characters. The publication of the Karamanlidika text is accompanied by a brief historical introductory note about the years of the Armistice, which marked the end of the Ottoman Empire and turned over a new leaf in the country's history, that of the Turkish Republic.

Stavros Anestidis presents the correspondence between Eugène Dalleggio and János Eckmann, two pioneers of Karamanlidika Studies. The former, together with the Assumptionist père Sévérien Salaville, compiled between 1958 and 1974 a three-volume catalogue of Karamanlidika editions published from 1718 to 1900, and János Eckmann from 1950 to 1964 published a series of linguistic studies on the Turkish language of Karamanlidika texts. The work of these three men laid the first scholarly foundations of the discipline we now call Karamanlidika Studies. Three foreigners, the Levantine Eugène Dalleggio, the Frenchman Sévérien Salaville, and the Hungarian János Eckmann, turned their attention to the unknown textual patrimony of the Turkish-speaking Orthodox populations and made it a subject of Ottoman and Turkish Studies. In the same period, Greek and Turkish literature remained stuck in the late 19th and early 20th century discourses, when Asia Minor (Anatolia) became the bone of contention between Greeks and Turks. The ideological constructs of that period, taken out of the context in which they were generated, were repeated by both sides –and by some to this day– as indisputable truths. However, they bring no serious system of documentation to underpin them. From this point of view, their contribution to the foundation of the scientific discipline of Karamanlidika Studies in the 1950s becomes even more critical.

The last study of the volume pursues the history of the Rum residents of Germir / Kermira (present Konaklar) of Kayseri. The essay follows the tradition of related studies on the history of Turkish-speaking Orthodox Cappadocian communities, which have been included in previous collective volumes devoted to Karamanlidika Studies. The authors of the study, Evangelia Balta and Gözde Kuzu Dinçbaş, were motivated by the large number of studies on the surviving, yet still neglected, monuments in the area of Kermira, which was inhabited until the end of the 19th century and the Exchange of Populations (1923) by Rums, Armenians, and Turks. The process of forgetting the traces of the presence of non-Muslims in Anatolia has affected the vast majority of the *Lieux de mémoire*, Pierre Nora's definition of a series of monuments such as churches, schools, mansions, tombs, inscriptions, objects, etc., that encode and encapsulate national memory. However, many other sources of memory will always be found in archives, museums, and even in spolia. Evangelia Balta and Gözde Kuzu Dinçbaş, as the title of their study

indicates, have attempted to compose a narrative concerning the presence of the Rums of Germir in Anatolia from Byzantine times to the Exchange of Populations. The resulting account is based on diverse sources on Ottoman sovereignty (15th–19th century), Karamanlidika codices produced by the function of the Kermira Orthodox community (18th–19th century), unpublished manuscripts, published autobiographies, such as that of Elia Kazan, and the unique and valuable archive of refugee memory of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies. Their lives, as well as those of many other Anatolian labour migrants, were divided between their birthplace and the *gurbet*, the melting-pot of Istanbul and other urban centers in the empire. Men who moved to Istanbul to prosper would send the fruits of their labours to the families and communities they left behind. The wealth they accumulated allowed them to build churches, schools, and mansions in the middle of Anatolia that have stood the test of time. Combining the information from the sources with the example of the history of the Rums of Kermira, the authors explore the link between empire and migration, that is, the interaction between nomads, the network of sedentarization, ethnic make-up, demography, economy, and diaspora, all themes of a “movable Ottoman Empire”.

The works in this volume are the kind of studies which lend themselves to dialogue with Ottomanists but also with scholars who investigate broader issues of migration, urbanization, state building, refugeeism, memory etc. The essays present a series of opportunities of comparative studies and it is my hope that this dialogue can be continued. The contribution of these studies is that they attempt to write the history of the non-Muslim peoples of the empire as an Ottoman history rather than as a chapter of it, thus helping to a better understanding of it. They also draw attention to the shared histories of the peoples of the Ottoman Empire at the points where their cultures converge despite differences in religion, ethnicity, denomination and language.

*

Before I turn over the floor to the contributors, I must thank them for their willingness to contribute to this collective volume and for producing such informative and thought-provoking essays. I must also confess that I am delighted that four students from the “Intensive Summer School of Ottoman and Turkish Studies” (Cunda Island) and Bilkent University contributed to this volume. This raises hopes for the prospects created in a field of Ottoman Studies until recently neglected, relating to the cultural legacy of the various non-Muslim millets in the Ottoman Empire. Indeed, my own interests in Karamanlidika Studies and the textual production of non-Muslim subjects would not have developed as broadly as they have without the stimulus of teaching. I owe a word of recognition for the many insights and kindnesses that I have received over the last thirteen years from my students and colleagues at the Intensive Summer School of Ottoman and Turkish Studies in Cunda, who shared with me their friendship, knowledge, and interest in Karamanlidika Studies. My seminar at Bilkent University during the academic year 2023-24, with the support of TÜBİTAK, enabled me to complete the editing of the volume, which contains studies

INTRODUCTION

on the life of the diverse Ottoman ethno-religious groups and their rich cultural inheritance, textual and material. I owe a great deal to these institutions.

As always, it is to Carol and Maria that I owe the most. I am indebted to these colleagues and old friends who once again have stood by my side. Carol Haros offered me the necessary help with the English language and Maria Stefossi was indefatigable in making the volume layout.

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Evangelia Balta

Bilkent University

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