Cries and Whispers in Karamanlidika Books

Proceedings of the First International Conference on Karamanlidika Studies (Nicosia, 11th–13th September 2008)

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2010 Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

> ISSN 0177-4743 ISBN 978-3-447-06185-8

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Cries and Whispers in Karamanlidika Books Before the Doom of Silence*

Evangelia Balta

The production of Karamanlidika books stopped fatefully with the Exchange of Populations in 1925^1 , the short-lived bilingual newspaper *Prosphygiki Phoni / Mουχατζήρ Σεδασή*², a few Karamanlidika *feuilles-volantes* printed by Greek politicians, when, in order to catch votes, they were obliged to speak the "language of the refugees" (Balta 1997: no 104), all ceased around 1935. Henceforth no Karamanlidika printed matter would circulate, since the Greek State's policy of linguistic homogenization as well as the Turcophones' need to integrate as rapidly as possible into the new *status quo*, imposed the monolingual culture. The Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christian Rums at last became Greek-speaking. But the process was long and painful.

The first generation of exchanged Orthodox Rums remained Turcophone. The men, mainly, learned a few Greek words, those essential for getting by in the daily struggle to feed their families. The second generation, at least the children, who managed to finish primary school in the difficult years before the Second World War, learned Greek there, usually with the "palioelladitis" teacher mercilessly traducing their mother tongue, the language spoken by the children and their family and friends in the refugee neighbourhood. Difficult processes that wounded souls. In 1960–1965, as one of the third generation of the Turcophone refugees, I experienced

^{*} An earlier version of this paper was published as "Karamanlıca Kitapların Çığlıklarıyla Fısıltıları", Toplumsal Tarih 177 (Eylül 2008): 58–61.

Balta 1987b: nos 115, 116, 118, 119, 127. Balta 1997: nos 93, 95, 96, 105, 107.

² Προσφυγική Φωνή / Μουχατζήρ Σεδασή 1924–1926. The newspaper circulated in Greek and Turkish (with Greek characters) in January 1924. At first it was a weekly edition, later daily, and from 5 April 1925 it was printed twice a week. The first two pages were in Greek and the other two in Turkish, entitled Μουχατζήρ Σεδασή.

³ When I went to school I learnt that "palaioelladitis" was the inhabitant of Old Greece, that is who originated from the regions south of Thessaly, which in 1830 had constituted the Greek State, Old Greece. In my childish mind, use of the word "paliolladitis" at home and in the neighbourhood had negative connotations. By analogy with the words "paliokoritso" (bad girl), "paliopaido" (naughty child), "paliolladitis" for me meant the "bad Greek".

the normality of the little Babel of my refugee neighbourhood⁴. For us it was the most natural thing in the world for our grandmothers ($v \in v \in \delta \in \varsigma$) to speak to us in Turkish and Pontic, since that is what they spoke in their "homeland", a transcendental place which, as we learned in school, was not so far away. And it was normal for our parents to speak to their parents in this language, since the "old folks" had never learnt Greek. So, it was only to be expected that we too knew a couple of words, certain phrases, the numbers, in order to buy yoghurt - or ice cream in the summer – from the old Turkish-speaking shopkeeper, a few songs and above all the one with the pastourmas⁵, which we saw the grown-ups dancing at feasts, with the spoons. We learned both the Karamanlidika and the Pontic carols, because that was the only way to earn lots of pocket money and treats in the festive seasons⁶. I also knew the $\Pi \epsilon \tau \epsilon \rho \iota \mu i \zeta$ – the Lord's Prayer – of my grandma Lisafet⁷. I used to murmur it when the bell tolled for vespers, when she took out of her apron pocket a little book with pictures, made the sign of the cross, kissed it and then put it back in place⁸. Twenty years later, when I began to handle such printed matter, I realized that my grandma's little book was an $I\pi\alpha\delta\varepsilon\tau\nu\alpha\mu\dot{\varepsilon}$, a Prayer Book.

In these same years, in the 1960s, Eugène Dalleggio, collaborator of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies, was going round the refugee villages of Euboea, Ahmet Agha (Prokopi), Chalkida, Xerochori (Istiaia), Moursali, and so on, in order to collect Karamanlidika books and archives. The report of his mission, addressed to Melpo Merlier (August 1956), which came to light in the archive of the Gennadius Library, constitutes a source for the anthropology of the Karamanlidika book and certainly merits publication. At that time he was preparing with the Assumptionist Père Sévérien Salaville the publication of the Karamanlidika Bibliography. The first

⁴ A "Babel" such as that described by the Karamanli Dimitrios Constantinos Hadji Aslanis in his play of that name (Βαβυλωνία), which he signs with the by no means fortuitous nom de plume Byzantios (i.e. Byzantine; Byzantios 1836). In our neighbourhood and for a small radius around, tobacco-workers from Thasos, Mytilenians, Pontians, Karamanlides, Thracians, Peramiots were all mixed up, each speaking his own language and idiom.

⁵ This was the famous song *Konyalı*.

⁶ For those of us dealing with issues of this kind, the title of the lecture delivered by Mark Janse (University of Ghent) in the Gennadius Library, Athens (13 May 2008): "The Resurrection of Cappadocian (Asia Minor Greek)" sounded strange indeed. Late, very late, the discovery of America.

^{7 &}quot;All the children in the world learn, usually from their mother's mouth, nursery rhymes, songs, fairytales, which are the common cultural substrate of their linguistic group", as Louis-Jean Calvet reminds us in his book *The Oral Tradition*, coll. "Que sais-je", Paris 1984, 26.

⁸ The image remains vivid of the battered Προσευχητάριον [Prayer Book] with its cloth spine, a rag of calico sewn by my mother, improvised bookbinding. Later, I handled several books with similar cloth spines sewn with thick thread, trying to keep the pages in place. I am moved by these books badly worn by use, which show their owners' care to protect them by covering them with patches from their own clothes. I am moved also by the marginalia on the blank pages at the end or behind the title page: "... ταριχιντέ Σουλτάνα βαφτίς ολτού", "... ταριχιντέ καρτεσίμ Ποτός βεφάτ ετί".

volume appeared in 1957 and the next two in 1966 and 1973⁹. Editor and proof-reader of the volumes was the wise Iordanis Pamboukis, director of the Library of the Academy of Athens, author of the $\Pi \epsilon \tau \epsilon \rho \iota \mu \iota \zeta$ (Pamboukis 1961), collector of Karamanlidika editions. Iordanis, protector of Karamanlidika, was also the helpmeet in the preparation of the two other volumes of the bibliography, published in 1987¹⁰. He was present in his own unique manner, at once bantering yet encouraging and protecting, very strict but full of love, lots of love.

I feel very fortunate to have met, when I came to Athens in 1977, this small, fascinating constellation of people: the personnel of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies in Navarinou Street, Philippos Iliou at the headquarters of the National Bank of Greece, the aged Dalleggio in his home in Alopekis Street, Pamboukis in the basement of the Academy and in the Pontic neighbourhood of Kallithea, and the engineer Petros Misailidis, a true gentleman of the old school, who was searching the newspapers from Constantinople held in the National Library for traces of his grandfather Evangelinos Misailidis. And I was extremely lucky too, when a decade later another world, from Turkey, came to augment the Karamanlidika coterie, with the arrival, in the summer of 1987, first and foremost of Robert Anhegger of the Doğan Apartmanı. It was then that the publication of the additions to the Karamanlidika Bibliography coincided with the publication in Modern Turkish of the Τεμασάι Δουνιά Happy coincidences and, primarily, happy encounters with a world that has now vanished or has almost vanished. The absence of these people becomes even more poignantly apparent with the invasion of new mores brought by the stock-market of collections and collectors. They were people who believed that some things ought to be safeguarded, recorded in order to stay with us, and they shouldered the onus of their mission, while at the same time fully aware that they were dealing with things of no proven usefulness. People with a solid education, with strict principles as to how scholarship should be conducted, as well as a genuine and infinite joie de vivre. Precious apprenticeships, treasured friendships...

In the years that followed, the company of Karamanlidika "buffs" widened, as new persons joined. Literally! New blood has entered the field, very heartwarming,

⁹ Père S. Salaville's systematic involvement with the ceremonial of the Eastern Church was the channel of contact with the Karamanlidika liturgical books. Impressed by the number of these publications, he decided to compile a bibliography of them, together with Eugène Dalleggio, author of studies in the periodical *Echos d'Orient*. They published three volumes: Salaville & Dalleggio 1958, Salaville & Dalleggio 1966 and Salaville & Dalleggio 1974. Before the appearance of the third volume of the Karamanlidika bibliography, Richard Clogg published two studies on the translations of the Bible into Karamanlidika, and more generally on the publication and distribution of Karamanlidika texts by the British and Foreign Bible Society in the first half of nineteenth century (Clogg 1967, Clogg 1968).

¹⁰ Balta 1987a and Balta 1987b. The third volume of additions was to circulate ten years later, Balta 1997.

¹¹ Anhegger & Günyol 1986. In the decade 1980–1990, Robert Anhegger was involved exclusively with Karamanlidika Studies and published numerous papers. I cite indicatively Anhegger 1979–80 and Anhegger 1983.

very encouraging. Studies began to be published on grammars and lexicons, on anthologies of poetry and music, and dissertations began to be written¹². Studies on one or two Karamanlidika periodicals appeared (Balta 1996, Balta 2005, Benlisoy 2006), the first commentaries on Evangelinos Misailidis's *Τεμασάι Δουνιά* were written (Stathi 1995, Kechagioglou 1995–1996). Certain preliminary assessments were cautiously expressed on the publishing production of the Karamanlides (Balta 1997–1998). A Karamanlidika book of the historical geography of Anatolia, published in 1899, was translated into Greek (Kalphoglous 2002). Articles started to appear on protagonists of Karamanlidika publications, bibliographical reviews were published¹³. Concurrently, doctoral theses and postgraduate dissertations focusing on Cappadocia presented valuable material on the Turcophone Orthodox Christian Rums¹⁴. The time had now come for the first *compte rendu*, for an invitation to gather and discuss. We needed to organize a conference. The ideal venue for holding such a meeting was Cyprus, where Greek and Turkish are spoken, which imposed rules and conventions of coexistence.

The First International Conference of Karamanlidika Studies was convened to examine the silences and the whispers of the Karamanlides, the voice and the silence of the Karamanlidika books in the two centuries of their presence in the Ottoman Empire, thus pointing out the reasons for the final fateful silence. Cultural diversity¹⁵, what cultural theorists define as a spectrum of discreet systems, behaviors, values and attitudes whose cultural content is given a priori, defines what we mean and what we understand when we characterize Ottoman society as "multicultural". In the Ottoman Empire a culture was formed that functioned, as far as political circumstances allowed, as a galaxy comprising satellite peripheral cultures which were simultaneously in reciprocal contact with each other and with the whole. A segment of this multi-ethnic, multi-lingual society, the Turcophone Orthodox Christian Rums, defined themselves inter alia with their Karamanlidika books. Alongside them were the Armenians, with the corresponding but much richer and longer-lived production of Armeno-Turkish books¹⁶. Among the Jews too, despite the dominance of Ladino, there were some intellectuals who tried to spread knowledge of the Turkish language by producing journals such as El Üstad, in Turkish with Hebrew letters

¹² Stathi 1994, Kappler 1991 (republished in Kappler 2002b: 9–38). See also Behar 1994, Behar 2002, and Stathi 1997. See the doctoral theses: Papanikolaou 1988–1989 and Kappler 2002a.

¹³ Tarinas 1991, Stathi 2004, Erol 2004. The first attempt at a bibliographical review is Gavriel 2000.

¹⁴ As an example I cite Benlisoy & Benlisoy 2000 and Benlisoy 2002; Renieri 1993 and Renieri 2002. See also Anzerlioğlu 2003, Zerva 2005 and Zerva 2007. In the meanwhile, studies on the commercial activities of members of the Karamanli community in the Balkans began to be published, see Turcitu 2006.

¹⁵ Cultural diversity is a term used by Bhabha 1994: 19–39, in order to define one of the ways of conceiving culture.

¹⁶ For Armeno-Turkish literature see Berberian 1964, Pamukciyan 2002, Kutalmış 2003 and Özkan 2003.

(Levy 2001: 23). Ethnic groups that were very different from each other in religion or faith, although speaking the language of the master, each wrote this language in their own alphabet, the alphabet of the books of its religious tradition. Ethnic groups which, beyond any other affinity and transaction in everyday life, also crossed paths in sectors of spiritual life. The same titles, particularly during the reign of Abdülhamid II (1876–1909), printed in different script – Ottoman, Armenian, Greek, circulated for the needs of the ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire, and in many cases were printed in the same printing houses¹⁷.

I have purposely not used the phrase "adopting the language of the master", because "how and when these communities became Turkish-speaking" remains an open question for research (Tsalikoglous 1970). Certainly the issue of the origin of the Turcophone Orthodox Christians of Cappadocia exists as an historical problem. However, I do not consider that these issues have been investigated in depth. Their negotiation, usually a recycling of words, stops at the formulation of hypotheses, schemes, theories. A phenomenon of such complexity cannot be confronted with summary verdicts. An ambitious program of research is required. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the existence of Turcophone Orthodox Christian populations in central Asia Minor, known already in the fifteenth century, was not counted as anything unusual in the pre-national framework of the multilingual, multinational, multicultural Ottoman Empire. The issue of Turcophone Orthodox Christians came to a head in the early twentieth century, when Asia Minor became the bone of contention between Greeks and Turks, who both laid claim to it. Then the problem of the continuity and the heritage of the ancient civilizations in the land of Asia Minor, and the question of the historical depth of the presence there of peculiar communities, such as the Turcophone Orthodox Christians, became critical. As is well known, the collective imagination is succored always and in every case by myths of origin. And when in history the realities of nationalities are vague, complicated, contradictory, the imagined myth of origin feeds polarizations. The immediate consequence of arbitrary deductions without the use of historical method and tools of historical scholarship was the polarization of the bibliography concerning the origin of the Turcophone Orthodox Christian population of Asia Minor. The field is still popular in the rhetoric developed by the national historiographies of both Greece and Turkey (Balta 2003: 26-31).

What the historian should be interested in first and foremost is to investigate the identity-consciousness of the Turcophones themselves in historical time and space, in Cappadocia in the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, as well as in the major urban centers of the empire, where they sought a way out through migration, and to follow the manifestations of this identity (Clogg 1999). In other words, of interest are the expressed opinions of a literature that was created, as well as detecting the view of the Karamanlides themselves. And from this perspective Kara-

¹⁷ Characteristic is the case of Agop Boyaciyan, who prints Karamanlidika, Armeno-Turkish, and Osmanli books, among others.

manlidika book production is an exceptional source. A document of Ottoman sovereignty, the Karamanlidika book transmits elements of the Ottoman world and of Orthodoxy during the *longue durée* of the first pre-national stage, under the umbrella first of Orthodox Church circles and later of missionary activity. From the midnineteenth century and after, Karamanlidika printed matter functioned additionally as a vehicle for transporting cultural goods produced in Europe or, more rarely, as a builder of bridges between the Ottoman world and Greek education.

The new edition of the Karamanlidika Bibliography which I am currently preparing, with references to the bibliographies of Ginis-Mexas (1939-1957), Ph. Iliou (Iliou 1997, Iliou & Polemi, 2006), Özege (1971–1979), and the Stepanyans (Stepanyan 1985 and Stepanyan 2005), records the corresponding publications in Greek, Ottoman, and Armeno-Turkish, with the aim of pointing out the reciprocal interactions in the literary-bibliographical side of the loans and the counter-loans. Nonetheless, the emphasis should be placed elsewhere. It is not enough to study each literature separately, which is, of course, something that still needs to be done. A desideratum is the study of these three literatures, Karamanli, Ottoman, Armeno-Turkish / Dačkeren, in their diachronic and synchronic dimensions, not only because they are part of a whole, but also because this is the only way in which their intersections and peculiarities in periods of important political and social changes within the Ottoman Empire can be enhanced. Furthermore, in the case of the Turcophone Rums, possible influences from the institution of the modern Greek State are investigated too. The choices of each literature are articulated with the perception of these changes, and as choices of cultural identity they interpret aspects of the self-determination of the corresponding ethnic culture, in periods distinguished by the quest for identities and the awakening of national consciousnesses.

So, if the Karamanli "Polypathis", the Tεμασάι Δουνιά of Evangelinos Misailidis, as the late Penelope Stathi showed us initially, is not identified totally with the original by Grigorios Palaiologos, then what happens in the case of the popular publications Kιόρογλου and Σάχ Ισμαϊλ, which circulated in multiple editions and in three literatures (Kut 1984a and 1984b)? And to give a more significant example, a historiographic essay on Constantinople: What parts of the publication Kωνσταντινιάς παλαιά τε και νεωτέρα, ήτοι περιγραφή Kωνσταντινονπόλεως... φιλοπονηθείσα παρά του Αρχιεπισκόπου Σιναίου Κυρίου Κωνσταντίνου..., which first appeared in Greek, in Venice in 1820, are not included in the Karamanli text of 1863? Does the Osmanli text of 1872 follow the Karamanli one? Is it perhaps translated from the original Greek or does it follow the texts of the French edition of 1846 and the English edition of 1868¹⁸? Behold a splendid domain for studies of comparative grammatology, for philologists and literary historians who are interested in finding the channel of communication. Johann Strauss (2003: 53), referring to the novels that Evangelinos

¹⁸ For the Karamanli edition, see Salaville & Dalleggio 1966: no 142. For the Greek editions, see Sklavenitis 1980–1982: 355–357. For commentary on the comparison of translations of the publication in various languages, see Petropoulou 2001: 277, note 10 and also Erdem 1997.

Misailidis published in installments in his newspaper *Anatoli*, wondered whether they were translated from the Greek or the French edition, and notes: 'Unfortunately, no studies yet exist which elucidate the dependencies or the mode of adaptation of works available in different scripts'. A splendid domain exists also for philologists and literary historians who are interested in finding the channel of communication between the literatures, as well as for historians who want to explore the dynamic between Karamanli and Grecophone Cappadocia. I am reminded that from the midnineteenth century there was also a publishing production of indigenous Grecophone historiography addressed to the Karamanlides, with authors such as Cyril, Patriarch of Constantinople, Serapheim Rizos, Georgios Afthonidis, Anastasios Levidis, Pavlos Karolidis, and so on.

Let us now come to the language of the Karamanlides. What do we observe in their language? How does it evolve, how is it shaped in the two centuries of its printed form? There is a lamentable dearth of studies after the pioneering ones by J. Eckmann¹⁹. Where do the Turkish of the Karamanli and the Turkish of the Armeno-Turkish printed matter converge and where do they diverge? The Cappadocian E. Tsalikoglous, in a text he deposited in the Centre for Asia Minor Studies in 1961, observes: "The Armenians too had published books with Armenian characters in Turkish ... The Turkish dialect of these writings should be compared with the Turkish dialect of our people rather than of the linguists. I think that they must not reach linguistic conclusions without studying also the writings of the Armenians"20. It would be exceptionally interesting to clarify whether, to give another example, the Karamanlidika edition of the Düstur²¹ (Code of Laws of the Ottoman Empire) is a simple transcription of the corresponding Osmanli edition or whether an attempt has been made to popularize and simplify the Ottoman text. Does the printed matter published by the missionaries differ only in the typographical letters used? Is the Turkish language of the Karamanlidika, Armeno-Turkish and Osmanli printed propaganda promoted by the Bible Society in Anatolia the same? These and other questions of the same sort could be asked which, although starting from Karamanlidika Studies, widen our field of observation necessarily to the whole of Christian Anatolia and the Ottoman Empire in general.

The aim of a conference such as this one should be to narrate the always plural and complex stories of the Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christian population and its cultural product, Karamanlidika printed works. And to remain with these last, in which I am particularly interested, since the overwhelming majority of them are translations, paraphrases or adaptations, I think that they should be examined pri-

¹⁹ I mention as examples Eckmann 1950, Eckmann 1958. The number of recent studies on linguistic issues is extremely limited, see Miller 1974, Tietze 1987, Kappler 2002a, Kappler 2003, Kappler 2006.

 ²⁰ Centre for Asia Minor Studies, file FLOITA 195^a. The text is headed: "Η ομιλούμενη γλώσσα εις το Ζιντζίντερε. Τα Καραμανλίδικα" [The spoken language in Zindjidere. Karamanlidika].
 21 Salaville & Dalleggio 1974: no 170. Özege, in his bibliography, records before the Karamanli

²¹ Salaville & Dalleggio 1974: no 170. Ozege, in his bibliography, records before the Karamanle edition the corresponding Osmanli one of 1861, see Özege 1977 (vol. IV): no 18832.

marily as documents of the manifold and hierarchical relations between the cultures, as documents even of the construction of a printed language and a literature that flourished from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century. If translation is contact between two languages, and consequently between two cultures, then it is not simply a linguistic process but is *par excellence* a creation of a historical conjuncture with cultural connotations and osmoses. And since the Karamanlidika books are very often free renderings or adaptations that take into account mainly the needs and the cultural circumstances of the recipient, and not the language of provenance, then they are translations not from one language into another, but from one culture into another.

So, there is much necessary and fascinating work ahead of us. In this conference, as well as in the others which we hope will follow, we are asked to pose questions concerning the production of Karamanlidika printed works and manuscripts (another research field that is still *terra incognita*), the reasons that determined this production, its quantity and its quality. We are asked to discuss the subjects who produce it and assimilate it, because the role of the historian is to x-ray the ideological processes that are hidden behind collective behaviours and mentalities. A conference aims more at posing questions than at giving final answers. It opens a file; underlines some phenomena; submits certain ideas-proposals; stimulates debate about the Karamanlides and Karamanlidika printed works. This will be its justification.

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