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THE 1923 GRECO-TURKISH POPULATION EXCHANGE
AND THE END OF ASIA MINOR HELLENISM:
GREEK, TURKISH, AND KARAMANLI NARRATIVES OF
FORCED DISPLACEMENT FROM ANATOLIA

A Master's Thesis

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Bilkent University 2023

To Fatma Nur

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by

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The 1923 Greco-Turkish Population Exchange and the End of Asia Minor Hellenism: Greek, Turkish, and Karamanli Narratives of Forced Displacement from Anatolia

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis traces the memory of the 1923 Greco-Turkish Population Exchange through a selection of narratives from twentieth-century Greek, Karamanli, and Turkish literature. Focusing particularly on the narratives of displacement from Anatolia, this study aims to shed light on the Population Exchange as a means of fabricating a homogeneous national identity, and as a formative event that shaped the nationalist discourses in Greece and Turkey through a strategy of inclusion and exclusion. The first chapter examines Ilias Venezis' *Land of Aeolia* as one of the

foundational texts of the Greek ideology of lost homelands, which constitutes a central component of the late twentieth-century Greek nationalist discourse. The second chapter situates itself in the Greek Orthodox villages of Central Anatolia, whose residents recorded their experiences of displacement in the form of poetry in Karamanlidika (i.e., Turkish in the Greek script). A careful examination of Karamanli poetry undermines the ideology of lost homelands and its assumptions of national homogeneity. The final chapter offers an insight into the period of silence surrounding the Population Exchange in the emerging nation-state of Turkey, and how Sabahattin Ali's short story on a decaying refugee settlement in Western Anatolia, namely "Çirkinçe," breaks this silence in Turkish literature. The experiences of uprooting and resettlement embedded in these texts, I argue, refuse to be incorporated into a single homogeneous narrative, undermining the manipulative efforts of the nationalist discourses on both sides of the Aegean.

Keywords: Population Exchange, Asia Minor Hellenism, Lost Homelands, Forced Displacement, Karamanli Literature

ÖZET

1923 TÜRKİYE-YUNANİSTAN NÜFUS MÜBADELESİ VE
KÜÇÜK ASYA HELENİZMİNİN SONU:
ANADOLU'DAN ZORUNLU GÖÇ ÜZERİNE YUNANCA, TÜRKÇE
VE KARAMANLICA ANLATILAR

Saçkan, Koray

Yüksek Lisans, Türk Edebiyatı Bölümü

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Ağustos 2023

Bu tez, 20. yüzyıl Yunan, Karamanlı ve Türk edebiyatından seçilen anlatılar üzerinden 1923 Türkiye-Yunanistan Nüfus Mübadelesinin belleğinin izini sürmektedir. Özellikle Anadolu'dan zorunlu göçe dair anlatılara odaklanan bu çalışma, dahil etme ve dışlama stratejisi üzerinden Yunanistan'da ve Türkiye'de ulusal söylemi biçimlendiren ve tek unsurlu bir ulusal kimlik yaratma yöntemi olarak kullanılan nüfus mübadelesine ışık tutmayı amaçlar. Birinci bölüm İlias Venezis'in *Eolya Toprağı* romanını, geç 20. yüzyıl Yunan ulusal söyleminin temel

bileşenlerinden birini oluşturan kaybedilen memleket ideolojisinin kurucu metinlerinden biri olarak inceler. İkinci bölüm, İç Anadolu'daki Rum Ortodoks köylerinden sürülen ve zorunlu göçe dair deneyimlerini Karamanlıca (Yunan alfabesiyle yazılan Türkçe) şiir formunda kayda geçiren mübadillerin anlatılarına odaklanır. Karamanlı şiiri yakından incelendiğinde kaybedilen memleket ideolojisini ve tek unsurlu bir ulus varsayımını çürütür. Son bölüm ise yeni kurulan Türk ulus devletinde nüfus mübadelesine dair sessizlik dönemini ve bu sessizliğin, Sabahattin Ali'nin Batı Anadolu'da çürümekte olan bir mübadil yerleşimini konu alan öyküsü "Çirkince" sayesinde Türk edebiyatında nasıl kırıldığını tartışır. Bu tezde incelenen metinlerin temelinde yatan zorunlu göç ve iskâna dair deneyimler, Ege'nin iki yakasındaki ulusal söylemlerin kendi çıkarlarına yönelik teşebbüslerini boşa çıkararak tek unsurlu bir anlatı içerisinde yer almayı reddeder.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nüfus Mübadelesi, Küçük Asya Helenizmi, Kaybedilen Memleket, Zorunlu Göç, Karamanlı Edebiyatı

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INTRODUCTION

“The deaths that structure the nation's biography are of a special kind;” Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities*, remarks, “from ... accumulating cemeteries, the nation's biography snatches, against the going mortality rate, exemplary suicides, poignant martyrdoms, assassinations, executions, wars, and holocausts” (205-206). Between these acts, one can also add forced displacement in the case of the biographies of the modern Greek and Turkish nation states. Anderson's argument perfectly encapsulates the way in which these two states embedded the 1923 Greco-Turkish Population Exchange into their official discourses: “to serve the narrative purpose, these violent deaths must be remembered/forgotten as 'our own'” (Anderson 206). To remember the Exchange as its own, the nationalist discourse in Greece coined the term “Asia Minor Hellenism,” which will be scrutinized in the first and second chapters of this study. While the second option suggested by Anderson, to forget it as its own, has been exercised by the Turkish state: “[the emerging nation-state in Turkey] was quite determined to sweep the population exchange underneath the rug,” Aytek Soner Alpan observes, “this required silencing the refugees of the population exchange and orchestrating collective silence about this event” (209). The silence surrounding the Exchange,

along with how it was broken by a unique voice in Turkish literature, will be examined in the final chapter of my study.

The end of Asia Minor Hellenism, which constitutes the title of this thesis, can be understood on two levels: first, it marks the displacement of Greeks from Asia Minor permanently; second, it refers to the Greek ideology of establishing a homogenous national identity. The credibility of this single Hellenic identity is significantly undermined by the presence of the complex and heterogeneous identities of the Greek Population in Asia Minor, which will be brought to light through an examination of Karamanli poetry in the second chapter. The end of Asia Minor Hellenism, in this sense, connotes the dissolution of the so-called homogeneous Hellenic identity in Asia Minor. “Mainstream Greek historiography, political discourse, and popular representations alike, designate the refugees of the war of 1922 between Turkey and Greece as ‘Asia Minor Hellenism’ since time immemorial,” Giorgos Tsimouris, in “From Christian Romioi to Hellenes: Some Reflections on Nationalism and the Transformation of Greek Identity in Asia Minor,” remarks, “it has been fabricated mainly after the Catastrophe in the context of a hegemonic nationalist discourse, associated with the nation building process in Asia Minor and the Balkans” (279). As the first chapter will demonstrate, the canonical works of modern Greek literature, including Ilias Venezis’s *Land of Aeolia*, have contributed directly or indirectly to this fabrication by triggering a proliferation of the narratives of lost homelands.

The twentieth-century Greek nationalist discourse reconfigured the memory of the Exchange into the intangible loss of a mythical homeland, fabricating a homogeneous trauma to facilitate, in Onur Yıldırım’s words, “the consolidation of the country’s ethnic and national homogeneity” (46). Penelope Papalias, in *Genres of*

Recollection: Archival Poetics and Modern Greece, dates this process to the 1960s, concurrent with the rise of the Holocaust studies and a growing interest in testimonies:

A public discourse on the so-called lost homelands (*hamenes patrides*) of Anatolia would finally emerge in the 1960s, but by then the “Catastrophe” had been recast as an archetypal story of national loss that opposed “Greek victims,” stripped of undesirable signs of linguistic and cultural difference, to “Turkish subjugators. (96)

The narratives of lost homelands in modern Greek literature played a significant role in the formation of this rhetoric, particularly the novels of Ilias Venezis, which laid the foundation of the literary canon of post-Catastrophe Greece: “[*Land of Aeolia*] represents the culmination of the process of mythologization of Asia Minor as a *locus amoenus* or 'place of comfort' in Greek fiction,” Peter Mackridge writes, “[Referring to the works of Venezis and his contemporaries] their importance should not be underestimated, for they are among the texts primarily responsible for instilling the myth of Asia Minor in the Greek consciousness” (236). This myth manifests itself in the form of a nostalgia for Asia Minor Hellenism, a mechanism for distorting the memory of the Exchange and supporting the formation of a single Hellenic identity.

The Karamanli Christians of Asia Minor, and their experiences of the Exchange, undermine the credibility of the myth of Asia Minor Hellenism and the singular Hellenic identity, as the second chapter will demonstrate. The assumption that the Greeks from Asia Minor protected their so-called Hellenic identity under the Ottoman rule fabricated, as Trine Stauning Willert writes, “the dominant national narrative ... of unbroken continuity of Greek culture from Ancient Greece through Byzantine times to the modern resurrection of Greece as a modern nation-state” (9).

The Turkish-speaking Karamanli population from Asia Minor did not fit in with the formation of a homogeneous identity by modern Greece; therefore, their narratives have been excluded from the biography of modern Greek nation-state. Karamanli poetry, in that sense, opens up an uncharted territory to investigate the major fault lines of Asia Minor Hellenism.

The memory of the Exchange on the other side of the Aegean, or the lack of it, plays a strictly limited role in the Turkish literary canon, which will be traced out in the third chapter. “Whereas Greek historians [and intellectuals] from the very outset remembered the Exchange as a turning point in the [ethnic and national] consolidation of the country,” Onur Yıldırım, in “The 1923 Population Exchange, Refugees and National Historiographies in Greece and Turkey,” notes, “their Turkish counterparts, carried away by the foundation of the new state, tended to forget by treating it as hardly more than a footnote” (46). Through a short story on a decaying refugee settlement in Western Anatolia, Sabahattin Ali gave visibility to the social and economic impact of the Exchange in Turkey in 1940s, when no other literary text attempted to address it. “Çirkince,” in this sense, has an exceptional place in Turkish literature, as I will show in the final chapter.

This thesis, then, attempts to trace the memory of the 1923 Greco-Turkish Population Exchange through a selection of works from Greek, Turkish, and Karamanli literature. Focusing particularly on the narratives of displacement from Anatolia, I will explore the ways of remembering (and in some cases, forgetting) the last period of the so-called Asia Minor Hellenism. The narratives examined in this work range from the canonical works of Ilias Venezis to the Karamanli poems forgotten in chapbooks, each offering a unique insight into the experiences of uprooting and resettlement during the Population Exchange.

The chapters of this thesis are organized according to Peter Mackridge's categorization of the narratives of the Asia Minor Catastrophe in "The Myth of Asia Minor in Greek Fiction" and "Kosmas Politis and the Literature of Exile:"

The Disaster manifests itself in three chief forms:

- (a) the evocation of life in Asia Minor or Constantinople before the Disaster
- (b) narratives of war, captivity and/or expulsion
- (c) depictions of the economic, social, and (particularly) psychological difficulties faced by the refugees on arrival in Greece. (227-228)

The first chapter focuses on Ilias Venezis' *Land of Aeolia* as one of the foundational texts of the Greek ideology of lost homelands, which constituted a central component of the late twentieth-century Greek nationalist discourse. Examining the literary tropes of exile and memorabilia along with the generational bond to the land, I aim to trace the patterns of remembering Asia Minor to understand the roots of the nationalist discourse of lost homelands. The second chapter situates itself in the Greek Orthodox villages of Central Anatolia, whose residents recorded their stories of displacement in the form of poetry in Karamanlidika (i.e., Turkish in the Greek script). Their harrowing experiences of resettlement undermine the discourse of lost homelands in Greek literature: the sources of grievance in the new homeland can easily outweigh a sense of mourning for the lost homeland. The final chapter explores the memory of the Population Exchange in Greek and Turkish literature through a close reading of two exceptional narratives: Sabahattin Ali's "Çirkince" and Michel Faïs' *Aegyptius Monachus*, whose ways of remembering the Exchange offer an insight into the formation of collective memory in Greece and Turkey.

CHAPTER I

BEFORE THE EXCHANGE: REMEMBERING THE LAST PERIOD OF ASIA MINOR HELLENISM IN ILIAS VENEZIS' *LAND OF AEOLIA*

In “Kosmas Politis and the Literature of Exile,” Peter Mackridge observed that “The re-creation of the lost homeland through the imagination and the act of writing is constantly stressed by ... practitioners of exile literature. In their writing they produce a new home, which is no longer a geographical location but an imaginary space” (234). These characteristics of exile literature are perfectly applicable to Ilias Venezis’s *Land of Aeolia*, whose re-creation of Aivali (modern-day Ayvalık) in the summer of 1914, shortly before the Asia Minor Catastrophe, invites readers to remember, celebrate, and mourn the memory of a lost world. This chapter attempts to unfold the ways of remembering the last period of Asia Minor Hellenism in one of the best-known works of modern Greek literature. *Land of Aeolia* attained its canonical status by breaking the silence of the Anatolian Greeks who were under the pressure to assimilate into the modern Greek state after the Catastrophe: “[The Greek refugees from Anatolia] felt obliged to play down their collective memories

... and integrate seamlessly into a national mainstream which was circumscribed by the borders of the Greek state,” Bruce Clark, in his prologue to the English translation of *Land of Aeolia*, offers a panorama of post-Catastrophe Greece, “the publication of *Land of Aeolia* helped to break that taboo ... [by giving] the refugees permission to celebrate and mourn ... the lands which they had lost” (15). This chapter, therefore, aims to examine *Land of Aeolia* as one of the foundational texts of the Greek ideology of lost homelands that shaped the late twentieth-century Greek nationalist discourse.

The ancestral bond to the land of Asia Minor lies at the heart of *Land of Aeolia*. “It had taken the unending labour of my humble ancestors,” the narrator, a child named Petros, introduces the reader to his homeland, “generation after generation, to get rid of that salt water and for the trees and grapevines to grow” (Venezis 5). This generational bond to the land functions as a reminder of the fact that Hellenism shaped Asia Minor for centuries. Many layers of the ancestral bond can be explored throughout the novel, each trace of the debris of the past connoting a different sense of rootedness to the earth. “An organic bond with the natural world” (76), in Peter Mackridge’s words, can be traced back to at least four generations in the narrator’s family tree. Each progenitor cultivated the land to turn it into a habitable place, tending and protecting it from both natural and man-made causes. The formation of the land and the upbringing of the children, including Petros, are narrated simultaneously, and remembering the memories related to children requires tracing the history of the land: “[Petros’ grandfather] is trying to remember which event on the farm was linked to that child, because that was the only way that the sequence of the years made sense to him” (Venezis 12). This interconnectedness merges the narratives of the land and its inhabitants into a single construct.

This organic bond to the land is manifested through the soil, trees, vineyards, and even the weather in the Kimindenia. Like the drops of dew formed on the surface of the leaves in the night, waiting to fall on the ground, the shores of Western Anatolia is a predestined place for Petros and his forefathers: “[Referring to the dew] They needed neither guide nor companion. From the time [they] were born, earth was the magical land where they were destined to go. They knew that place was their destiny, so the earth tugged at them to fall” (Venezis 21). The emphasis on the unbreakable bond between the homeland and its residents foreshadows the unbearable sufferings of the Greeks of Asia Minor due to their expulsion. Before the persecutions of Christian minorities disrupt their tranquility, the summer of 1914 becomes the last period of the unbroken connection between man and nature in Asia Minor: “As the days below the Kimindenia mountains dawned and set,” Petros contemplates, “I began to understand the different meanings of many things there, close to the land and nature: the earth, the trees, the clouds” (Venezis 29). The secret meaning of the land only opens up itself to those who can hear the heartbeat of the soil, like Petros and his ancestors.

Uncle Joseph is among the characters that can feel the pulse of the land. Unlike the narrator whose forefathers shaped the Kimindenia, Joseph is a migrant from Lemnos, which is, in Joseph’s words, a barren land compared to the rich and fertile soil of Asia Minor: “You throw one seed into it and it gives you back five hundred seeds,” he observes, “it is the most blessed land in the world” (Venezis 30). Uncle Joseph’s migration to the Kimindenia exemplifies how the natural wealth of Asia Minor is open to those who can nurture it, regardless of whether they are locals or outsiders. However, this regional wealth also attracts outlaws trying to exploit the labor of hardworking farmers like Joseph. The brigands’ extortion of Joseph’s all

savings on his way to Lemnos prevents him from leaving Asia Minor. From a migrant wanting to make a fortune and return to his homeland, he turns into a permanent resident of the Kimindenia involuntarily. Unable to return to Lemnos, he develops a special connection with the land, which plays a crucial role in consoling him. This consolation gradually evolves into a mastery of shaping the land by grafting trees: “His hands brought about the metamorphosis of thousands of wild olive trees, pears and other kinds of trees,” the narrator states, “he knew every one of them. (...) He even gave them names” (Venezis 32). Uprooted from his homeland, Joseph ironically becomes the master of rooting and grafting trees in his land of exile.

The feeling of belonging to the new homeland is made possible by turning the grafting of trees into an act of remembering what is left behind in the old homeland. Uncle Joseph’s method of adapting to the land provides an answer to the question that Salman Rushdie raises in “Imaginary Homelands:” “How are we to live in the world [as exiles with two identities]?” (18). By carrying the roots of his love and desires from Lemnos to Asia Minor, Joseph memorializes his shattered dreams by naming the trees he grafts after his old homeland: “He called them Maria, he called them Vangelistra, he called them Nikolas and Petrakis – the names of the girl [in Lemnos] who knew the stars, the boat he would never own, and the children he did not have” (Venezis 32). What makes Joseph the master of grafting is that he is able to compensate for his rootlessness by finding his roots in the grafted trees of Asia Minor. Grafting is a way of resurrecting a piece of displaced plant, which finds a new form of life after being attached to another plant. Joseph’s resurrection in the form of a horticulturist after his displacement can also be seen as a process of grafting, undergoing a metamorphosis by cutting his roots from Lemnos and

attaching them to Asia Minor: “And as he studied ... their resurrection in the world, as he shared their life in this way, his own life gradually found a purpose. (...) He became one of them” (Venezis 32).

Despite his metamorphosis, Uncle Joseph’s past haunts him in his dreams, signaling to the reader the fact his resurrection along with the trees in the land of Asia Minor did not dispossess him of his past in Lemnos. Peter Mackridge explains this kind of exilic phenomenon by referring to Octavio Armand’s conception of exile: “People in exile are never completely dispossessed; like snails, they carry their homes everywhere: (...) they live between two shores. Their homes and landscapes live within them” (233). Joseph’s dream sequence in the fourth chapter of the second part brings the two shores of the Aegean together, turning the Aegean Sea into what the narrator calls “the sea river” (Venezis 33), through which Joseph’s dream of buying a trawler in Lemnos comes true: “Through the stillness of the sea river, striking the water slowly with her oars, comes the *Vangelistra*, all freshly painted” (Venezis 33). Joseph’s dream of becoming a captain by owning a trawler in Lemnos is the primary motivation behind his migration to Asia Minor, which he imagined as a passage to be a wealthy captain instead of a penniless fisherman in his homeland. While dreaming to find his fortune in the sea, he finds his roots in the land of Asia Minor, and never returns back to Lemnos. At the end of his dream sequence, his vision of the Aegean Sea transforms into trunks and leaves of the trees he grafts.

Unlike Joseph, who finds his roots in the Aeolian land later in his life, Petros and his siblings inherit the land from their ancestors, and their connection to the soil is build upon their generational bond with the land. When Petros’ grandfather orders Joseph to graft trees in the names of his grandchildren, Petros learns how to listen to the pulse of trees alongside Joseph. This bond is forged by his grandfather’s order

and Joseph's wisdom, turning the grafting of trees into a generational ceremony. This generational continuity becomes another significant layer of the ancestral bond to Asia Minor, a constant trope in *Land of Aeolia*. Petros' connection with the walnut tree at the entrance of their farmstead exemplifies how each generation passes on to the next the heritage of the land: "[When the tree is dying,] Tiny roots and the earth around them [are] the cradle for the new walnut tree that was to come. (...) That is how a new walnut tree would come in the place of the one that was gone" (Venezis 37). It is in the natural order of the things that the attachment to the soil must be preserved, and the idea of uprooting is a deviation from the harmony of nature.

"A man should stay firmly rooted where he is," Stephanos, a saddler from Aivali, contemplates, "All else is folly" (Venezis 56). This idea of never crossing the boundaries of your homeland is taken to the extremes in the story of Stephanos, whose whole world is limited to his shop at the town's entrance. He never attempts to go beyond the hills of Aivali and despises everyone who chooses not to stay at home: "This world is made well, and it ends well in a tree with coloured rags, which is at the same time ship, sea and ocean: the whole world" (Venezis 57). Aivali is a microcosm of the world outside, accommodating everything that can be found beyond its boundaries. "Don't we have a sea in our own country?" Stephanos criticizes the sailors from Aivali on a long voyage to the Black Sea, "Do you like the sea, man? Get a fishing boat and catch eels and sardines in the bay" (Venezis 56). This kind of narrow provincialism is also portrayed in a negative light, and a cruel twist of fate eventually forces Stephanos to leave Aivali and embark on a voyage to Jerusalem. Accordingly, a distinction between voluntary and involuntary exile can be made, the latter of which may not be as tormenting as the former. In Edward Said's

words, “Exile is sometimes better than staying behind or not getting out: but only sometimes” (178).

Tales of exile and homesickness are scattered throughout the novel. Each tale offers a different conception of exile, narrated from the perspective of various species, including a walnut tree and a hungry wolf. What unites these tales of exile is that both animate and inanimate beings are tormented by a terminal loss, that is, the loss of their homelands. “At first the two walnut trees were enchanted, but later homesickness began to torment them,” Petros’ mother narrates the ancestral origins of their walnut tree, “they would remember their homeland, the untrodden mountains of the Caucasus. (...) It took a long time for them to get used to the land of the sea [referring to the Kimindenia]” (Venezis 35). A recovery from homesickness may never be achieved, but the exile learns to live with its sorrow, echoing what Said calls “reassembling an identity out of the refractions and discontinuities” (179). It is only possible for the later generations to fully adapt to the new homeland, which is the case for the walnut tree at the entrance of Petros’ farmstead: “Since it was born in the Kimindenia and only heard ... the distant land of its ancestors as if it were a fairy tale, it never tasted the bitter longing of life in a foreign land, never suffered from homesickness” (Venezis 36). The walnut tree only inherits the memories of his ancestral homeland, connoting Marianna Hirsch’s term “postmemory” (106). Unlike its ancestors, the walnut tree is able to give fruit and provide shelter for Petros’ family.

The bizarre story of Kosmas Livas, a ploughman from Pontos, can be regarded as the strangest tale of exile in *Land of Aeolia*. Moving back and forth between the definitions of exile and expatriate, it is difficult to categorize the cryptic narrative of Kosmas Livas among other stories of exile and homeland. Kosmas’

audience, just like readers, questions his ridiculous reasons for choosing the road of exile: “But do people from your part of the world expatriate themselves so easily?” one of the ploughmen asks, “you got scared and ruined your life for no reason” (Venezis 81). Indeed, Kosmas did not have a tangible reason for leaving his homeland; it was an invisible creature that forced him to the road of exile. “The ghost was gesturing for him to leave, to leave for the west! (...) Only when he reached the border of his country, far-off Pontos, only then did the ghost not come ... any other night again” (Venezis 81). Kosmas spends the rest of his life trying to justify his exile, telling everyone his ghost story, which signals to the reader the fact that whether for trivial or significant reasons, the decision to leave may cause a permanent loss that haunts the exile, like a ghost, for the rest of his life.

What unites these tales of exile is that they foreshadow the upcoming tragedy which would cut off Petros and his family from their ancestral roots. However, before the shadow of the war and the uprooting begins to haunt Petros’ childhood, an unspoiled innocence dominates *Land of Aeolia*. Peter Mackridge describes this state of being as “the carefree and seemingly timeless existence of childhood” (76), a characteristic that is associated with the stories of Asia Minor in Greek literature. Petros’ story is no exception, and his carefree and unspoiled relation with the world is introduced to the reader at the very beginning of the novel: “We were young children then. The good earth gave us grain, the trees gave us fruit; we did not yet know what hunger was. But our pure hearts were a good guide, and all the mysteries of the world could find a receptive place inside us” (Venezis 23). This state of receptiveness opens up many possibilities for exploring the last period of Asia Minor Hellenism, contributing to the rich repertoire of memories that constitutes the fundamental basis of the narrative.

The significance of a safe and secure environment for a healthy childhood can be read between the lines in the first chapters. Far from the dangers of the adult world, a naïve sense of empathy and enthusiasm characterizes Petros' realm. "In the safety of the high walls that protected us, in the shelter of our grandfather, who shaded us like a great tree," Petros reflects on the way he perceives their farmstead and its inhabitants, "we were not like grown-up people, pitiless and indifferent" (Venezis 23). Petros and his siblings can perceive the anguish of hungry jackals while listening to their howling, even sensing their harsh reality in the mountains of the Kimindenia. This perceptiveness to their surroundings allows them to be absorbed in nature, to the extent that they can cry and sob for both animate and inanimate beings. Their intimate connection with the environment is sometimes contrasted with and even ridiculed by adults, including their grandfather: "Outside the wild animals were howling, and inside we were wailing," Petros narrates the reaction of his siblings and his grandfather to the loud howling outside their farmstead, "Grandfather laughed at these outpourings of children's hearts" (Venezis 23). Their soft and tender hearts are unaware of the harsh reality of the world, and more importantly, the pain and suffering that await them.

Petros' first encounter with the meaning of war can be seen as a turning point in his story. Unable to comprehend its connotations, he interprets it as a new kind of game. The concepts of violence, enemy, and hatred are unknown to both Petros and his siblings: "War? What did that mean? None of us knew. We had never heard of such a creature: bird, beast or tree" (Venezis 25). Their charming naivety can be described as, in Mary Galbraith's words, "the predicament of being a child in the midst of adult danger" (337). The danger that introduces them to the meaning of war is an agricultural emergency: it is a war against the hungry animals that feed on the

farmstead's crop yields. However, this event turns into an opportunity to gain familiarity with the harsh reality of the outside world. "We had to make our first steps towards that inexhaustible resource of men: hatred," Petros contemplates, "we came to understand the hard law of the world" (Venezis 27-28). The war against the hungry animals eventually entails a loss of innocence, an irreversible experience for Petros and his siblings, spoiling their naïve and pure realm by introducing them to an unexplored territory of the adult world.

The pure and innocent realm of childhood is so fragile that a pistol shot can shutter its absolute serenity. The shadow of the Great War approaches Petros' farmstead, gradually invading the territories of his childhood. "On that summer morning of 1914, no one could guess how many more, countless as the ears of wheat on the earth, were going to follow it," Petros reflects on the killing of a local Christian hunter by Turkish *zeybeks*, "Dark waves from deep within us brought us news of the end" (Venezis 188). The retrospective narrator refers to the beginning of the persecutions of Christian minorities in Anatolia during the First World War, which set the foundation for the Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922. Peter Mackridge describes this period as "a dress rehearsal for the great expulsion which will take place, with infinitely greater violence, in 1922" (80). Petros senses the agonies that would follow the first pistol shot, triggering the chain of events that would eventually uproot him and his family from Asia Minor indefinitely. When the narrator says, "the Symphony was ending" (Venezis 188) at the end of the second part of the novel, he refers to multiple elements throughout the novel: the subtitle of the Part Two, "Symphony of the Dawn" (Venezis 103); the last chapter of the novel, "On the Aegean as the Symphony Ends" (Venezis 230); and more importantly, the symphony of harmony in the Kimindenia that characterizes Petros' childhood.

The symphony of harmony is silenced by the chaos of the persecutions, irreversibly damaging what used to be the homeland of the Greek Orthodox Christians for centuries. In “The Ottoman Road to War in 1914,” Mustafa Aksakal explains the drastic changes in the ethnic minority policies in the Ottoman Empire during the outbreak of the Great War:

By 1914 the possibility of population exchanges and ethnic cleansing had entered Ottoman strategic thinking. At least for Ottoman leaders like Talat Bey, the interior minister, the presence of large ethnic minorities, especially when backed by a foreign power, threatened the stability and existence of the state. Hence they found it legitimate, even modern and Western, to deal with such minorities in ways that would preclude any future challenges to security. Some 200,000 Orthodox had been expelled from Izmir and Thrace through ... a campaign of threats and intimidation. (44)

Before these expulsions of minorities began in the Ottoman Empire, *Land of Aeolia* emphasizes the multicultural communities of Asia Minor and the hybridity of Christian and Muslim populations. Petros’ farmstead, for example, functions as a roadside inn for all travelers: “There were almost always travelers on this great road,” Petros describes the travelers passing through the road next to their farmstead, “There were Jews, Armenians, Turks, and Christians, poor people, noblemen, peddlers and the sick” (Venezis 47). The farmstead is open for all travelers regardless of their religion or ethnicity, providing them lodging and food without expecting anything in return. It must be noted that there are also brigands and outlaws trying to exploit free hospitality offered by the locals, long before the persecutions began. However, even the outlaws comply with a code of honor, respecting the human dignity of the locals throughout the novel.

The Greek tobacco smugglers, for example, turn into national heroes when the persecutions of minorities break out in Asia Minor. The smugglers, subsidized by

wealthy landowners in the region, provide protection from Muslim settlers by arming the Christian populations. “I’ll pay the whole amount,” says old Vilaras, the patriarch of a rich and important family in the region and the descendant of a brave fighter in the Greek War of Independence, “But I want you and your men to deliver [the weapons]” (Venezis 205). Vilaras gives this order to Andonis Pagidas, the leader of the Greek tobacco smugglers of Aivali. At the outbreak of the persecutions, they are presented as a local militia, whose members are young and brave Greek men trying to protect the Christian locals in exchange for a protection fee. The fact that the smugglers only provide protection by the patronage of wealthy landowners is not directly explored in *Land of Aeolia*, although it is implied that the less prosperous remote villages are destroyed by the arriving Muslims until the Greek smugglers can reach them: “They were Christians from the small villages in the Kimindenia, the ones Pagidas was bringing the weapons to,” the narrator portrays a devastated image of the uprooted Greek villagers, “The Bosnians arrived ... and took their huts and their goods. The Bosnians, together with the armed *zeybeks*, were butchering people and laying waste to everything” (Venezis 224). It can be inferred that the Christian smugglers prioritized the wealthy landowners over the destitute villagers, undermining their image as the heroic protectors of the Christian population.

The search for a heroic figure among the Christians under the rule of the Ottoman Empire dominates the last part of the novel, which begins with the story of Father Oikonomos, or Ioannis Dimitrakellis, the legendary founder of Aivali. The story of Father Oikonomos is used to support the characterization of Andonis Pagidas, the leader of the smugglers, as a heroic and patriotic figure. “Ioannis Dimitrakellis Oikonomos conforms to the type of culture hero,” Ioannis Karachristos explains the significance of Father Oikonomos in the cultural memory of Aivali, “the

memory of Oikonomos was kept alive by the different social strata of Ayvalık, each of which attributed to him different characteristics” (89-90). In *Land of Aeolia*, Father Oikonomos is characterized as the savior of the tyrannized people of Aivali, saving them from, in the narrator’s words, “the torments of Turkish subjugation” (Venezis 203). The narrator presents Father Oikonomos as a role model for Andonis Pagidas, who has the same birthmark as Father Oikonomos: “He was marked, too, just like you!” Pagidas’ mother says, “You will also be a great man!” (Venezis 204). This parallel between Father Oikonomos and Pagidas positions the latter as another guardian of the Christian population in Asia Minor, creating a mythical image for Andonis Pagidas.

Despite his bravery and heroism, Pagidas cannot save the Christian minorities in the region the way Father Oikonomos did; in other words, his mythical characteristics are shattered by the harsh reality of war. At this point, another parallel can be drawn to Petros’ shattered childhood: “Do you know what war is?” he remembers his first encounter with the meaning of war and his inability to comprehend it, “It was then we heard the terrible word for the first time” (Venezis 231-232). The safe and secure environment that defined Petros’ childhood is crushed under the shadow of the war and the uprooting, demolishing their peaceful and quiet existence in the Kimindenia. The cruelty of mankind manifests itself in various forms: at first nature reacts to the news of the upcoming war, then the adults comprehend the dangers and take action, and finally, children begin to realize what is going on around them. “Of all the creatures that live in the Kimindenia, man is the last to receive the news,” the retrospective narrator contemplates, “because man is the most far-removed creature of all” (Venezis 208). Children can observe this rupture between man and nature, but they are unable to process its implications for

their reality until the very last moment. “Now we have to leave our land,” Petros is finally able to comprehend the meaning of war at the end of the novel, “that must be what war is” (Venezis 232).

The tales of exile that are scattered throughout the novel come together to make sense of the experiences of Petros and his family, building up to the final story on a lost homeland, that is, the land of Aeolia. Filtered through the naivety of childhood, the most difficult part of leaving the homeland for Petros is severing his organic bond with nature: “The worst thing is that the beeches will forget us now; the wild oaks and the hoopoes will forget us” (Venezis 209). Until the last part of the novel, the reader observes how Petros’ ancestral roots enable him to develop a special connection to the land; he is a descendant of a generational effort to cultivate and shape the land of Asia Minor. This generational continuity ends with Petros, who is unable to inherit a peaceful homeland shaped by the efforts of his forefathers. “It sometimes happens that way,” Uncle Joseph consoles Petros and his siblings, “It happens that men leave once and never go back. It isn’t in their power to return” (Venezis 210). In the end, Uncle Joseph’s suggestion to graft trees in their names before they leave can be seen as an attempt to immortalize them through the trees and the soil of Asia Minor.

While Petros and his forefathers leave an ineffaceable mark on the land, their memories in Asia Minor will also be unforgettable for the rest of their lives. The uprooting at least cannot erase the legacy of the farmstead from the souls of Petros and his siblings: “The Aegean isn’t only light and sea. It enters men’s hearts,” the narrator reflects on the lasting impact of the region for its inhabitants, “It enters the memory, and from then on nothing can erase it until the hour of death. The Aegean always calls and beckons you” (Venezis 114). The unforgettable memory of the

homeland is explored in many chapters of the novel, among which the most notable is the fairytale of the eels in the Jackal River, near the farmstead of Petros' family. One of the eels accidentally swallows a drop of the voice of his country: "Now it will travel with me," the eel tells his companion, "Now I'll have it inside me: the voice of my country" (Venezis 165). Later, the voice of his country and the heartbeat of their offspring blend into one another, and the mother eel becomes unable to tell them apart. The obvious implication is that Petros and his siblings will be carrying the legacy of their homeland wherever they go, long after they are forced to leave Asia Minor and build a new life on the other side of the Aegean.

In order to remember their homelands, some inhabitants of the Kimindenia collect memorabilia from their villages before their departure. This urge to save at least a symbolic part of their homelands can be seen as an attempt to preserve the memory of Asia Minor before their displacement. The memorabilia vary from the coffin of a saint to a little soil from the land. "Their youths were carrying him on their shoulders," the narrator describes the villagers carrying the remains of a saint from their country, "to have him as their helper and their protector in the new land where they were going to find refuge" (Venezis 224). This attempt to build a new home on the remnants of the lost homeland is a fairly common pattern among the refugees from Asia Minor. Aytek Soner Alban discusses this kind of practices in the Greek refugee settlements after their expulsion from Asia Minor: "A considerable number of these new settlements were named after the refugees' places of origin. (...) [In some cases] the whole city was turned into a site of recollection and commemoration" (225). Accordingly, this emphasis on collecting memorabilia in the last part of the novel offers an insight into the traumatic experiences of the Anatolian

Greeks during the persecutions of Christian minorities in 1914 and the following Asia Minor Catastrophe of 1922.

The last pages of *Land of Aeolia* present the reader the final piece of memorabilia from Asia Minor, which gives the novel its name: “Earth, Aeolian Earth, Earth of my country” (Venezis 243). The fact that the novel ends with the little soil that Petros’ grandfather takes from their farmstead before permanently leaving Asia Minor demonstrates the significance of the ancestral attachment to the soil. The grandfather says farewell to his homeland by saluting its trees, mountains, and its earth: “[He] turns and looks behind him to say goodbye to the trees and the Kimindenia mountains. (...) Then he takes off his cap, kneels humbly, and leans over and kisses the earth that he blessed with his life” (Venezis 239-240). The blessing here must be considered as a reciprocal reward: while the grandfather and his ancestors cultivated the land and blessed it with fertility, the land in return shaped their lives by offering them a sanctuary for generations. Now that the sanctuary has to be abandoned, it marks the end of Petros’ privileged childhood in the harmony of nature: “Let our dreams, gold and blue until this moment, fill with the new wave,” he says to his sibling, “the message of the times: let them fill with red” (Venezis 237).

Among the residents of Petros’ farmstead, only one of them experienced exile in his life before. Uncle Joseph, knowing the horrors of losing his homeland once, refuses to experience it twice: “[Joseph] didn’t leave when another voice, more powerful than death, cried for him to return. (...) Now it is too late. Why should he go now?” (Venezis 240). Joseph’s decision to stay in the farmstead at the expense of his life echoes Edward Said’s comparison between exile and death in “Reflections on Exile:” “Exile is ... like death but without death’s ultimate mercy” (174).

Accordingly, Joseph chooses death’s ultimate mercy over experiencing exile once

again. Despite the efforts to save him from being massacred by Turks, Joseph's determination reflects the incurable pain of uprooting: "The resolution in the sad eyes of the old man is as strong as his love of the land," the narrator describes Uncle Joseph's last words, "No, Master. I am going to stay" (Venezis 240). Considering his mastery of shaping the land by grafting trees, Joseph's decision to stay with the trees that named by himself demonstrates his inseverable bond with the land of Asia Minor.

Outside Petros' farmstead, another resident of the Kimindenia refuses to leave his homeland. Andonis Pagidas, whose transformation from the leader of the tobacco smugglers to a heroic and patriotic figure is completed in the last chapter, chooses to sacrifice himself in order to protect the Christian minorities from the Turks: "Was their captain not going with them?" the narrator asks, "he is leaving them to do battle alone with the multitude that is coming. And to die. He cannot do otherwise" (Venezis 241). This sacrifice eventually fulfills the search for a heroic figure among the Christians under the Ottoman rule: Pagidas as a national hero is saluted by his companions at the end of the novel. It must be noted that while staying to fight the Turks is presented as a heroic act, the other residents' decision to leave their homeland to survive is definitely not implied to be unpatriotic. Echoing Said's definition of exile, the experiences of uprooting can be even more painful than facing death in the homeland.

Despite the strong emphasis on the cruelties of the Turks against Christian minorities, ethnic stereotypes are clearly dismissed in *Land of Aeolia*. In "Tourkokratia: History and the Image of Turks in Greek Literature," Herkül Millas comments on Ilias Venezis' portrayal of Turks in his novels: "he portrayed the Turkish 'Other' realistically—and quite often positively" (52). Accordingly, in

Chapter Six, when a Scottish character asks her mother whether the people living in the Aegean are as cruel as the Scotts, her mother gives an answer that reflects the novel's attitude towards ethnic stereotypes: "In that respect, all human beings are the same. All of them" (Venezis 227). Even the religious differences, which turn into the parameter of the persecutions of minorities, become blurred occasionally. The Tsitmises that live behind the Kimindenia mountains, for example, practice both Muslim and Christian rituals: "They are a Muslim race and believe in Mohammed," the narrator observes, "but they also believe in the Christian saints, especially Saint George, the horseman" (Venezis 49). The multinational and multireligious population of Asia Minor are presented as peaceful and respectful, while the portrayal of outsiders, mainly the arriving Muslims from Bosnia at the outbreak of the Great War, connotes savagery and barbarism.

It is implied that even the cruelties of Muslim settlers are not inherent. "They are all the same when the terrible demon that lurks in all of us wakes up," Doris, the Scott who comes to Asia Minor to marry a local man, contemplates, "that must be it – the demon, those instincts, must have woken up" (Venezis 227). This kind of instinctual impulses are also the defining characteristic of the locals of the Kimindenia, including Petros and his family. These instincts, according to the narrator, are controlled by an unknown entity, outside the limits of human agency: "beyond what they begin by their own volition, beyond their own desires and actions, there exists a dark force that takes desires and actions into its own hands and sets them in motion in its own way, in the direction it chooses" (Venezis 208). These metaphysical elements throughout the novel signify a sense of spiritualism shaped by the divine entities of nature, including but not limited to the clouds, the mountains, and the trees. Their serene and peaceful existence are not disturbed by the chaos of

men victimizing each other, pointing out to the fact that their realm is outside the reaches of humanity.

The rupture between man and nature manifests itself in multiple ways with the coming of the war. Nature is away from the emotional burden of the war and the uprooting, its unspoiled tranquility is directly contrasted with the state of its inhabitants: “The stars above the Aeolian earth watch serenely, [whereas] the hearts of wretched humans ... [are] open to let in Fear” (Venezis 208). While on a tangible level, the rupture of the residents from their homelands lays the foundation of what later becomes the nationalist discourse of lost homelands in modern Greek literature and historiography. It must be noted that *Land of Aeolia*, whose publication introduced the trauma of lost homelands as a literary trope in 1940s, was written long before the proliferation of the narratives on lost homelands. The questions of the narrator regarding his loss at the end of the novel, i.e., “What is waiting for us in the foreign country we are going to as refugees? What days will dawn for us?” (Venezis 241), have been explored in a great variety of materials and mediums for so long that it turned into a marketing term exploited by the culture industry. “The business of marketing nostalgia to the descendants of the exchanged populations is booming,” Aytek Soner Alpan, in “But the Memory Remains: History, Memory and the 1923 Greco-Turkish Population Exchange,” discusses the commodification of lost homelands in modern Greece in the last decades, “concomitant to this development, a new phase of memory formation and the repackaging of one of the most important events in twentieth-century Greek and Turkish history is now taking shape in the twenty-first century” (231). From television series and movies to tourism tours and even cookbooks, the culture market has capitalized on the

discourse of lost homelands by exploiting the genuine traumas of Anatolian Greeks before and during the Asia Minor Catastrophe.

In the light of this commodification process, *Land of Aeolia* must be positioned outside the booming culture industry considering its publication date (i.e., 1943) and its exploration of the first-hand trauma of uprooting. Although its impact on the proliferation of the narratives of lost homelands is obvious, this gives the reader an opportunity to trace the transformation of genuine traumas into a market trend. In *Greeks without Greece: Homelands, Belonging, and Memory amongst the Expatriated Greeks of Turkey*, Huw Halstead remarks that “the well-established Greek ideology of ‘lost homelands’ (*chaménes patrídes*) ... emerged from a nostalgic longing for place expressed in the memories, writings, and toponyms of Greek refugees displaced by the Greek–Turkish population exchange” (201), among which *Land of Aeolia* can be positioned as a predecessor. To understand the roots of the nationalist discourse of lost homelands, this chapter traced the patterns of remembering Asia Minor in *Land of Aeolia*, examining a wide range of narrative practices on the attachment of Anatolian Greeks to their homeland for generations, which leaves an ineffaceable mark on their collective memory. In the following chapters, I will also address the other significant issues of the Catastrophe that have been outweighed by the discourse of lost homelands.

CHAPTER II

DURING THE EXCHANGE: TRACING THE MEMORY OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT THROUGH KARAMANLI POETRY

Βουρδοῦ φελῆκ
χαντζιέρ πιζλέρ
δαγιανδήκ,
τζικαρδῆκ ἀλλαρή
καρὰ πογιανδήκ,
οὐγκουγιὰ γιαττικ
γενὴ οὐγιανδήκ,
ποῦ γιέρ πιζὲ βατὰν
ὀλατζὰκ σανδήκ.

Vurdu felek hançer bizler
dayandık
Çıkardık alları kara
boyandık
Uykuya yattık yeni
uyandık
Bu yer bize vatan olacak
sandık.
("The Ballad of Kosmas
Çekmezoğlu," Stanza 39)

Fate struck us with her
dagger in the back.
We obdured; we painted all
our clothes black.
We once had dreams that
Çınarderesi at last
would become our
homeland, but those dreams
have past.¹
(Stroebe 217)

This four-line verse from a poem on the 1923 Population Exchange might seem at first to be another narrative of lost homelands from Greek literature. Neither written in Greek language nor related to the nationalist discourse of lost homelands, "The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu" had been forgotten in a small chapbook printed in the 1930s (Balta 74). Written in Karamanlidika (i.e., Turkish in the Greek

¹ Due to layout restrictions and legibility issues, I will only provide Turkish transliterations and English translations of the Karamanli poems discussed in the rest of this chapter.

script), it was excluded from both Greek and Turkish national literatures.

“Karamanlidika poetry, that to be published by Papa-Neophytos Economou in Thessaloniki and Kosmas Çekmezoğlu in Kavala, would remain unknown for years and limited to a refugee audience,” Evangelia Balta, whose publications saved Karamanli literature from being forgotten in the archives of the Center for Asia Minor Studies, remarks, “they are epics describing the sorrow of refugeeism that were released in small, cheap pamphlets, with no place or date of issue” (Balta 28). These largely unknown narratives of the Population Exchange in Karamanli chapbooks offer a unique insight into the first-hand experiences of displacement, unveiling multiple sources of grievance for the Anatolian Greeks during and after their deportation.

Kosmas Çekmezoğlu and Agathangelos, whose poems will be the objects of study in this chapter, narrate their stories of displacement from the villages of Gelveri and Andaval, respectively (the former was renamed to Güzelyurt and the latter to Aktaş following the end of the Population Exchange). Unlike Ilias Venezis’ *Land of Aeolia*, which has its setting in the shores of Western Anatolia, Gelveri and Andaval are situated in Central Anatolia, a region largely overlooked by modern Greek literature (Mackridge 224). Çekmezoğlu’s “The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu” was written between 1923 and 1935 (Balta 74), while Agathangelos’ “Destan Arranged for the Village of Andaval” has no date of issue, as he inscribed it on a commonplace book at an unknown date. Recently, it was discovered by William Stroebel, who published Agathangelos’ poem, and translated it to English, in his article “Longhand Lines of Flight: Cataloging Displacement in a Karamanli Refugee’s Commonplace Book,” making it accessible for a wide audience.

The newspaper *Muhacir Sedası* (i.e., Refugee Voice) circulated in Athens between 1924 and 1927 with the same purpose: making the voice of the deported Anatolian Greeks reach a wide audience in post-Catastrophe Greece. Unlike “The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu” and “Destan Arranged for the Village of Andaval,” Karamanli poems in *Muhacir Sedası* were mostly anonymous. In 2016, Evangelia Balta and Aytek Soner Alpan published a selection of 25 poems from *Muhacir Sedası* with the title *Muhacirname: Poetry’s Voice for the Karamanlidhes Refugees*. “The collection and publication of these unknown Karamanlidika verses on refugeeism,” Evangelia Balta explains her publishing motives, “which echo the very words of the expatriated Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians of Anatolia, is first and foremost a tribute to their memory” (Balta 21). Accordingly, these anonymous poems from *Muhacir Sedası* will be featured in this study to explore the memory of forced displacement.

This chapter, therefore, attempts to trace the harrowing experiences of the displaced refugees whose narratives have been completely excluded from Turkish national literature and largely overshadowed by the discourse of lost homelands in Greek literature. Examining the accounts of displacement and resettlement in Kosmas Çekmezoğlu’s “The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu,” Agathangelos’ “Destan Arranged for the Village of Andaval,” and a selection of Karamanli poems from *Muhacir Sedası*, I will map the network of problems that haunted the refugees in their old and new homelands, both of which can be equally harsh and hostile for them.

2.1. Reallocation of Property

A significant portion of Karamanli poetry is devoted to the properties that had to be abandoned during the Population Exchange. From houses and household goods to farms and vineyards, material losses turn into one of the most prominent sources of grievance for the Greek Orthodox population in Anatolia. In “The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu,” the properties belonging to the residents of Gelveri are either left behind or sold substantially below their value, inflicting a sense of loss about the villagers’ wasted labor and time:

Okumaya başladı yol duaları
Teslim ettik muhacire evi bağları
Erittik yürekte olan yağları
Çoğunun evinde kaldı malları.
 (“The Ballad of Kosmas
Çekmezoğlu,” Stanza 5)

Prayers for the journey ahead were read
aloud as we left our fields and homestead
to the Muhacirs. Our hearts were lead.
Our possessions now belonged to them
instead.
(Stroebe 213)

Çekmezoğlu’s emphasis on the fact that the properties of Gelveri residents were forcibly taken from their real owners and left to the Muslim refugees, which signals a tension between the deported Anatolian Greeks and the Muslim refugees arriving from Greece, will be explored in more detail in the following sections of this chapter. Regardless of who inherits their properties, a deep sense of injustice regarding their losses dominates Çekmezoğlu’s ballad. The practices of property liquidation before the displacement are presented as unfair and dishonest:

Yola çıkarken azizi öptük
Malımızı pazara acele döktük
Avucumuzu açtık gözleri örttük
Çoluğu çocuğu yollara döktük.
(“The Ballad of Kosmas
Çekmezoğlu,” Stanza 7)

As we set out on the road we kissed the relic
of the saint. We sold our goods in haste at
market,
with our heads down and our hands out, and
then started
off. With women and children in tow, we
departed.
(Stroebe 213)

The description of the way Gelveri residents sell their possessions, “with [their] heads down and [their] hands out,” demonstrates their inability to demand a price for the items they are trading at the local market, accepting any offer they can get until their deportation. These conditions reinforce the usurpation of private property belonging to the Christian populations in Anatolia, a crucial aspect of the Exchange that has been mostly overlooked by the nationalist discourse of lost homelands in modern Greek literature and historiography.

The plundering of properties at the Christian villages in Anatolia is also a central component of Agathangelos’ “Destan Arranged for the Village of Andaval,” which offers a crucial insight into the mechanisms of exploitation during the Population Exchange. From the state-sponsored Muslim landlords to the opportunist bourgeoisie near the Christian villages, Agathangelos directly exposes the agents responsible for the exploitation of the deported Anatolian Greeks:

Niğde Teperyanıñ İslamı gelir
bütün malımızı bedelsiz alır
arı Andaval artık türklere kalır
asla aklımızdan çıkmaz n'eyleyim
("Destan Arranged for the Village
of Andaval," Stanza 22)

The Muslims come from Tepeviran in Niğde
and take all our belongings for free. They've
let the Turks take our pure Andaval. This day
will haunt us all our life, what can be done?
(Stroebe 208)

There are many stanzas on the way the Muslim population from Niğde, a town near Andaval, pillaged the properties of Andaval residents, taking advantage of their vulnerable situation. Agathangelos portrays a more brutal image of the Muslim locals compared to Çekmezoğlu, although their grievances are in line with each other. Echoing Çekmezoğlu's descriptions of usurpation, Agathangelos demonstrates how the locals collect their belongings without even asking for a price. The parallels between the experiences of these two Karamanli poets show that the usurpation of property belonging to the Christian populations was not limited to a particular area in Anatolia; it was a widespread problem that constituted a significant part of the sufferings of the deported Anatolian Greeks.

In *Fluid Books, Fluid Borders: Modern Greek and Turkish Book Networks in a Shifting Sea*, William Stroebe argues that "a careful reading can help the poem channel its anger towards more constructive ends [regarding its image of 'savage Turks']" (368). The difficulty with tracing Agathangelos' anger is that his poem does not distinguish between the Muslim refugees arriving from Greece and the Muslim locals who plunder the properties of the Greek Orthodox villages. While the stanzas connoting the Muslim refugees will be examined in the following sections, the corrupt and greedy image of the local Muslims, such as in the stanza below, is an essential element in the exploitation of Anatolian Greeks:

Niğde’niñ İslamı oldu bir vezir
Rumların malı oldu rezil
fiyat sormasına etmez tenezzül
mahvoldu Rumlar gayri
n’eyleyim
(“Destan Arranged for the
Village of Andaval,” Stanza 25)

Niğde’s Muslims take on airs like they’re
viziers,
they don’t bother with a price, they just
commandeer
our mobile properties, even those most dear
to us. We’re destitute, what else can be done?
(Stroebe 208)

The portrayal of Niğde townsmen as viziers, which precedes the line on their usurpation of properties belonging to Anatolian Greeks, along with the repetition of substantially low prices charged for them, clearly point at the unjust enrichment of Muslim locals at the expense of the deported Greeks. This creates a narrative of the Population Exchange as a process of seizing the prosperity created by the Christian minorities in Anatolia.

The poems from *Muhacir Sedası*, on the other hand, offer a panorama of the other side of the Aegean, where the same processes of exploitation take place regularly. The properties left behind by the deported Muslim population, especially their houses and farmsteads, are plundered by the Greek locals and opportunist state officials. A familiar sense of injustice regarding property distribution dominates the landscape:

Bize ait, Türk evleri zabıtlere virilmiş,
Bir kısmına memurlar de fırsat bulmuş
yerleşmiş
Hatta zengin, Rum, Musavi yerli alçak
kurtları.

Seray gibi evler bağler biz Türklere
bıraktık
Fabrikalar ve dükkanlar daha neler
terk ittik

The Turkish homes that belong us, to
officers they were assigned
Other officials moved in, too, and
grabbed what was left behind
And even local Rums and Jews are
getting rich on what they find.

To the Turks we left our vineyards, all
of our palatial homes

Burda ese vicdansızlar bir odacık
virmiyor
Bugün, yarın git gel, ümitler kalmıyor
Bize ait Türk milkleri bizden niçün
gasp olsun?
İçlerine, zabit, memur, yerli,
zengi[n]ler dolsun?
("Poem #4," Stanza 2-3)

Factories and stores, we left enough
behind to fill up tomes
Over here in Greece, the heartless won't
grant us a single room
Come back later, say officials, caring
nothing for our gloom
Why should Turkish properties be
plundered if they're ours by right?
Should officials and rich locals have our
homes without a fight?
(Balta and Alpan 47)

Unlike Agathangelos' categorization of Muslim locals as the perpetrators and Christian population as the victims, which is perfectly relevant within the borders of Anatolia, Sofuli's poem blurs the boundaries between religious or ethnic categorizations. The cases of Greek locals plundering the properties belonging to the deported Greek Muslims can also be found in *Twice a Stranger: The Mass Expulsions That Forged Modern Greece and Turkey*, in which Bruce Clark remarks that "Wealthy Muslim Salonikans who had left between 1912 and 1922 were not so lucky [compared to the Muslims that retained their wealth]. As soon as they abandoned their property in Greece, it was sequestered by the state or seized by opportunistic locals" (166). The similarity of the mechanisms of exploitation in both countries exposes once again the bureaucracy and state-sponsored landlords, along with the opportunist bourgeoisie, taking advantage of the vulnerable minorities and their abandoned properties. The emphasis on the exploitation of Anatolian Greeks by local Greeks in Sofuli's poem, on the other hand, shows that the plundering of properties during the Population Exchange is not limited to ethnic and religious persecutions; similar processes of exploitation can be seen within the same ethnic or religious groups.

The arriving refugees on both sides of the Aegean confronted with difficult living conditions, mainly inflicted by the members of higher socioeconomic classes profiting from their grievances. Taking advantage of the vacuum created by the departure of masses, wealthy and powerful locals seized the abandoned economic assets before the arrival of newcomers. In *Muhacir Sedası*, a considerable portion of poems are devoted to economic inequalities between the locals and the arriving refugees, targeting the rich and the bureaucrats serving them:

Yerli zengin milyonerleri Türk evinde
otursun!
Biz biçare, muhacırlar, ovalara atılsın!
Sizde asla insaf yok mı ey rical[-i]
hükümet
("Poem #4," Stanza 5)

May some local scum with millions
frolic in the Turkish house!
While we, the refugees, must live on
plains that wouldn't feed a mouse!
O dignitaries of the state, have you no
mercy left at all?
(Balta and Alpan 47)

There are many accounts of the arriving refugees, like the poem above, complaining about how they were forced to settle in the most uninhabitable places in Greece, while the fertile lands left behind by the deported Muslims were acquired by the wealthy locals through bribery and corruption. "The corruption ... had surrounded the reception of newcomers from Greece," Bruce Clark explains, "it had caused the refugees unnecessary hardship and lined the pockets of people who were already rich and powerful" (193). The cooperation between the government and the powerful and opportunist locals can be observed in another poem published in *Muhacir Sedası*, which holds the rich and wealthy accountable for their misery:

Zenginler girdiler gine kol kola
Biri sağa çeker diğeri sola
Muhacirler girmiş bir çıkmaz yola
Kulavuz olacak reis kalmadı.
("Poem #6," Stanza 5)

The rich, they have linked up their arms
once again
One pulls to the right, one the left, what a
strain
While refugees walk down a dead-ended
lane
And no leader is left now to guide us.
(Balta and Alpan 55)

The experiences of the deported Anatolian Greeks after their resettlement clearly result in a shift from accusing the religious or ethnic other to denouncing the corrupt government officials and the wealthy locals for their mishandling of the refugee crisis, bringing economic inequalities at the center of the picture. The same forms of exploitation occur on the other side of the Aegean, as discussed in "Homogenizing the Nation, Turkifying the Economy: Turkish Experience of Populations Exchange Reconsidered:" "The discrepancy between the early departure of Anatolian Greeks and the late arrival of Rumelian refugees had made the pillage easy," Ayhan Aktar refers to a report submitted to the Turkish parliament by the officials responsible for the resettlement in October 1924, "Building materials extracted from the so-called 'abandoned buildings' such as tiles, iron bars, window frames and doors were either sold on the market or used in the construction and repair of the houses belonging to locals" (86). The deported Muslim population from Greece, therefore, had to settle in the houses plundered by the opportunist locals, lacking basic amenities such as doors and windows.

This section can be concluded by an excerpt from another Karamanli poem from *Muhacir Sedası*, perfectly articulating how the burden of the Population Exchange is placed on the refugees without social or financial stability, the real victims of the disaster:

Medeniyet asrında olduk muhacir
Perüşan halimize var mı ki acır
(...)
Sanma ki fakirler zengini yener
Daima felaket fakıra biner
("Poem #10," Stanza 5-6)

Refugees in such a civilized land
Who might have mercy, and who
understand?
(...)
Victory over the rich can't be earned
Always, the needy are those to be burned.
(Balta and Alpan 71)

Regardless of their religion or nationality, the sufferings of the refugees are directly related to the exploitation of their vulnerabilities by the wealthy locals and corrupt bureaucrats. The forms and processes of exploitation in Greece and Turkey show little variation; government corruption and plundering rather than the national and religious differences constitute the grievances of the refugees after the onset of the Population Exchange. However, in William Stroebe's words, "a misplacement of rage" (368) can occur in some parts of the Karamanli poems written by the refugees, which will be examined in the following section.

2.2. The Tension between the Christians of Anatolia and the Muslims of Greece

Despite their shared experiences of violence and exploitation, the Christians of Anatolia and the Muslims of Greece were forced to appropriate each other's land, which provoked hostility between the two groups occasionally. While the Karamanli poems published in *Muhacir Sedası* mainly focus on the social and economic problems of the refugees upon their arrival in Greece, Agathangelos' "Destan Arranged for the Village of Andaval" is solely devoted to, as its title suggests, the village that Agathangelos had to abandon during the Population Exchange.

Witnessing the occupation of his native village by the newcomers from Greece,
Agathangelos laments over his homeland:

Etrafı Melekler ortada Peder
seniñ evlatların nereye gider
vahşi türkler sana [gelip?] neler ider
kaldıñız onlara gayri n'eyleyim
("Destan Arranged for the Village of
Andaval," Stanza 4)

Oh Father, with your angels circled in a
row,
tell me, where will your children go now?
The heathen Turks will come and who
knows how
you'll fare; you're theirs now, what else
can be done?
(Stroebe 207)

The description of the arriving Muslim refugees as "savage" or "heathen Turks" clearly demonstrates his antagonism towards the new residents of Andaval. The roots of his animosity can be easily traced to his wasted labor and time for building and cultivating his homeland, to which he dedicated his whole life. Witnessing the appropriation of his homeland from its inhabitants understandably triggers a misdirected rage against the Muslim refugees. "Deeply wounded by the impending violence that will tear him from Andaval," William Stroebe remarks, "Agathangelos strikes out, more than once, against the 'savage Turks'" (368). This pattern can be observed in many stanzas throughout "Destan Arranged for the Village of Andaval:" Agathangelos, while lamenting over his uprooting, begins projecting his grief and anger onto the newcomers.

Another remarkable example of this antagonism towards the Muslims refugees can be seen in the stanza quoted below, which indicates a fear of desecration of the church in Andaval:

Yalvarıñ ekkliisa cami olmasın
vahşi Millet içeriye dalmasın
ekklisada hiç bir resim kalmasın
zevk ederler onu gayri n'eyleyim
("Destan Arranged for the Village
of Andaval," Stanza 19)

Plead that our church might not become a
mosque.
May the heathen people not set foot across
its threshold. Leave behind no icon or
cross.
They'll make fun of them, what can be
done?
(Stroebe1 208)

The idea that the Muslim "savages" or "heathens" will make fun of their sanctuary connotes religious prejudices; however, the conversion of Anatolian churches into mosques, mentioned in the first line, was a fairly common practice during and after the Population Exchange. A brief history of the conversion of the churches of Ferte1 and Hançerli in Niğde, near Andaval, is provided in "The Evaluation of Architectural Tourism Potentials of Greek Heritage Structures Remained after the Population Exchange in Niğde's Settlements," which proves that Agathangelos' concerns were well-founded (272). This type of disputes on religious grounds dominates Agathangelos' poem, as harming the church in Andaval means destroying an indispensable part of his homeland.

This commitment to protecting the church is perfectly understandable considering that Agathangelos was a priest at the church of Saint Nikolaos in Andaval (Stroebe1 362). He even presents an history of its construction by his ancestors:

Biñ sekiz yüz kırk iki tarihi ise
koymuşlar temelin bir başdan başa
karı çoluk çocuk koşmuşlar işe
g[ayr]et edip yaptırmışlar n'eyleyim

Kimi toprak kimi taşını taşır.
sanki üstlerinde vardır mübaşir
Bilmediler gelsin böyle bir asır
brakdılar bergüzar amma n'eyleyim
("Destan Arranged for the Village of
Andaval," Stanza 12-13)

In the year of eighteen forty-two, then,
they laid the fundamentals from end to end.
Everyone set to work, women and
children.

Their efforts built the church, but now
what can be done?

Some bore soil on their backs, some bore
stones
as if there were a foreman looming over
them;
they had no idea a century like this would
come.

They left us this gift, but now what can
be done?

(Stroebe 207)

Agathangelos' emphasis on his ancestral bond to the church may remind the reader of *Land of Aeolia*; like Petros, whose forefathers shaped the land of Asia Minor, Agathangelos' ancestors built the church with their bare hands, only to be abandoned by their descendants due to the Population Exchange. These factors contribute to Agathangelos' misdirected anger towards the Muslim refugees, who would not carry on the legacy of the church in Andaval and convert it to a mosque after their resettlement. The pain of leaving the village church behind constitutes a remarkable portion of the narratives of Karamanli poets, including Agathangelos' poem; but, as "The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu" attests, it does not always result in an antagonism towards the Muslim refugees.

Unlike Agathangelos, Kosmas Çekmezoğlu does not dedicate his entire poem to his old homeland; he narrates the agonies of deportation from Anatolia alongside the complications during resettlement in his new homeland. This wide period range

presumably gives him an insight into the mechanisms of the Population Exchange that persecuted both the Christians of Anatolia and the Muslims of Greece. An outright hostility towards the Muslim refugees is avoided throughout “The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu,” even though it expresses very similar concerns regarding the legacy of the village church:

Kapattık mektebi, eklisiyaları Çalınmaya başladık kampanaları Mezarlara gömdük ikonaları Orada braktık ana ve babaları. (“The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu,” Stanza 4)	We locked the churches up, we closed the school and started ringing all at once the bells. We buried our icons in the graveyard, to dwell with our mothers and fathers, whom we left as well. (Stroebe 213)
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Without targeting the Muslim refugees, these stanzas convey a sense of loss inflicted by the uprooting of Gelveri inhabitants from their native village, whose vital components are again consisted of the village church along with the school and the cemetery. The emphasis on leaving the graves of their progenitors behind connotes, in parallel to *Land of Aeolia*, a generational bond to the land severed by the forced displacement. Abandoning the church therefore can be categorized as one of the most difficult aspects of uprooting, and even the Karamanli poems concerning the experiences of the refugees after their resettlement in Greece allude to the abandoned churches in Anatolia.

Besides the conversion of churches into mosques, the removal of the vineyards belonging to Anatolian Greeks becomes another permanent deformation associated with the abandoned village in “The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu,” as the arriving Muslim refugees turn their appropriated vineyards into tobacco fields.

An implication of antagonism arises from the stanza below, but Çekmezoğlu once again refrains from denouncing the Muslim newcomers:

Gelveri'deydi günlerden o gün
Sökülmüş bağlar ekilmiş tütün
Yıkılmış evler harap olmuş büsbütün
Viran olmuş Gelveri köyüne bakın.
(“The Ballad of Kosmas
Çekmezoğlu,” Stanza 3)

In Gelveri that fateful day you look and
see:
the uprooted vineyards and tobacco
fields,
the rotting houses ruined in their entirety,
in shambles our old village Gelveri.
(Stroebe 213)

Following this stanza, the destruction of the vineyards has constantly been reminded to the reader in the rest of the poem; even the agonies of Gelveri residents after their arrival in Greece are described in parallel to their uprooted vineyards: “Like destitute vineyards we became, full of ruined fruits” (Stanza 19). The arriving Muslim population were consisted mainly of tobacco farmers from Greece, which explains the reason behind their removal of vineyards belonging to Anatolian Greeks. In “Lessons in Refugeehood: The Experience of Forced Migrants in Turkey,” Tolga Köker remarks that

Some muhacirs were located in central Anatolia ... where the habitat is completely different from the Aegean basin. Tobacco farmers were allocated vineyards, and vine cultivators were given olive orchards. The arbitrary assignment of refugees to unfamiliar habitats eventually led to the degeneration of agricultural and natural resources: grazing land was denuded, water resources depleted, and the landscape deforested. (204)

It is not possible to know whether Çekmezoğlu was familiar with the agricultural background of the arriving refugees; however, throughout “The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu,” he prefers not to express hostility towards them for their deformation

of his homeland, which indicates a sense of solidarity with the other victims of the Population Exchange.

2.3. Adaptation to the New Homeland

The question then arises: if the experiences of uprooting constitute only the first half of the Exchange, why is the second half, the experiences of resettlement, not addressed equally by the public discourse? Karamanli poetry is a powerful tool for correcting this imbalance. In fact, the majority of poems in *Muhacir Sedası*, which were published a year after the resettlement of the deported Anatolian Greeks, focus on the present rather than the past homeland. A comparison between the experiences of uprooting and resettlement can be found in the following Karamanli poem:

Türkiya'den biz kovulduk hiç kabahat
itmeden
Yurdumuzdan, Yunan deyü Türkler
bizi kovdular
Burdakinlar Türkten beter cümlemiz[i]
üzdiler
Hem boğdılar, hem soydılar, çok
perüşan ittiler,
Canımızı ovalara aç meskânsiz attılar.
("Poem #4," Stanza 1)

We were expelled from Turkey, having
caused no harm to anyone
Our motherland the Turks usurped,
calling us Greek, making us leave
But people here in Greece were even
worse than Turks, would you believe?
They strangled us, they robbed us blind,
and we were left to moan and grieve
Across the plains they scattered us,
without a shelter for reprieve.
(Balta and Alpan 47)

The characterization of the Greek locals as "worse than Turks" is a direct threat to the dominant national narrative of lost homelands, which has been built upon the dichotomy of Greek victims and Turkish perpetrators. Blurring the lines between the former and the latter, many of the poems from *Muhacir Sedası* target the actual

instruments of exploitation, that is, government corruption and plunder culture. The social and economic discrimination of Anatolian Greeks upon their arrival might have helped the Karamanli poets accurately identify the agents of exploitation beyond religious and national boundaries, as the following poems will demonstrate.

The social and cultural differences between Anatolian Greeks and native Greeks manifest itself in various forms, including but not limited to linguistic variations and culinary traditions. Under the pressure to integrate into the dominant culture, one of the anonymous poets from *Muhacir Sedası* invites the natives to respect their differences:

Benim kara dediğime sen istersen
beyaz de.

Benim bahar dediğime sen istersen
ayaz de.

Benim kebab dediğime sen istersen
piyaz de.

İkimiz de bu vatanın evladıyız değil
mi?

İkimiz de Yunanistan'ın ehfadıyız
değil mi?

("Poem #13," Stanza 5)

If you desire, you can say "black" when
what I say is "white".

If you desire, where I see spring, you can
feel winter's bite.

I see kebab, you see chopped onions, and
that is alright.

We both are sons of the same country,
isn't that the truth?

In both our parties, we are Greeks, and
isn't that the truth?

(Balta and Alpan 83)

The Greek ideology of establishing a homogeneous national identity, which is closely related to the myth of Asia Minor Hellenism and its assumption of a shared Hellenic identity between natives and Anatolians, encourages a form of intolerance against the inevitably heterogeneous nature of the arriving Anatolian Greeks.

Penelope Papalias, in *Genres of Recollection: Archival Poetics and Modern Greece*, examines the discrepancy between myth and reality: "Meanwhile the new social rifts created by the settlement of the refugees, who had increased the Greek population by almost a quarter, had not made the events of 1922 seem like shared history," she

refers to the fabrication of a homogeneous trauma by nationalist discourses, “the distinct cultural and linguistic features of the refugees turned them into easy targets for nativist ire, and their ‘Greekness’ was often challenged, as reflected in the derogatory epithets commonly directed at them by ‘natives,’ such as ‘Turkish seed’” (95). The Karamanli poems featured in this section perfectly encapsulate the widespread discrimination and dissect it into smaller varieties (i.e., discrimination on the basis of culinary differences in the third line of the stanza above). Most of the poems discourage natives from ostracizing Anatolian Greeks with a call for mutual respect and solidarity.

Despite their disadvantaged position in post-Catastrophe Greek society, some of the Anatolian Greeks were able to see a glimmer of hope, encouraging others to fight their way through obstacles imposed by native Greeks:

Keldi burda süründü, yüzüne hiç
bakan yoktu
Muhacirsin, defol git deyenler de
çoktu.
Lakin biçare seslenmedi bu lafları
hep yuttu
Eziyete katlandı yağmura da soğuğa
da alıştı
Ümidini yine kesmedi var kuvvetle
çalıştı.

Bu gayretle bir gün olacak
Ticareti sanatı hep muhacir tutacak.
Çalışalım kardaşlar geçmişleri
unutalım
Terakkinin yolunu bir an evvel
tutalım.
 (“Poem #20,” Stanza 2 & 4)

Crawling, he came here, none looked him
in the face
“You’re a refugee, leave without a trace.”
Still, not complaining, he shouldered the
disgrace
Bearing the cruelty, befriended cold and
rain
Hung on to hope, and with vim set out to
gain.

With such perseverance, one day it’ll
come to pass
Refugees getting ahead in trade and crafts
Brothers, let us work, then, and let’s
forget our past
And find the road to progress at last.
(Balta and Alpan 111)

The image of hardworking refugees overcoming the challenges of being an outsider is not only inspirational but also insightful: the only way of survival for Anatolian Greeks is drudgery in a hostile environment, resulting in acceptance of exploitation until they can climb up the economic ladder. Diligence and perseverance are presented as a strategy for removing the social stigmas attached to the refugees, along with a sense of hope for a better future. A careful reading of Karamanli poetry, in this sense, reveals once again how the Exchange turned Anatolian Greeks into the targets of social discrimination and economic exploitation in their new homeland.

This chapter made it clear that despite what the Greek ideology of lost homelands suggests, the sufferings of deported Anatolian Greeks were not limited to their uprooting; their resettlement in Greece was equally painful and problematic. The first-hand experiences in the old and new homelands, as narrated in these Karamanli poems, unfold the complicated network of problems that outweighs their mourning for the lost homeland and urges them to denounce their new homeland. “The Karamanlidika poems [in *Muhacir Sedası*] ... do not grieve for the abandoned fatherland,” Evangelia Balta remarks, “most of the poems speak of the ... the relentless, inhuman present experienced by the refugees in the motherland” (20). The similarity of the mechanisms of exploitation on both sides of the Aegean might potentially foster solidarity between the Christians of Anatolia and the Muslims of Greece, or at least prevent the escalation of hostilities between them, as exemplified by “The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu.” Tracing the memory of the Population Exchange through Karamanli poetry, then, shatters the illusions produced by “the nationalist nostalgia for lost homelands of Anatolia” (Papailias 36).

CHAPTER III

AFTER THE EXCHANGE: BREAKING THE SILENCE ON THE DISPLACEMENT IN SABAHATTIN ALI'S "ÇİRKİNCE" AND MAPPING THE MEMORY OF LOSS IN MICHEL FAÏS'

AEGYPIUS MONACHUS

“Memory, in this case the collective memory of the population exchange, functions not only to remember but also to forget selectively, or to ‘fail’ to recall, or even to ‘disremember’” (Alpan 204). Indeed, this inability to recall the memory of the Population Exchange defined the national discourse in Turkey for decades, while in Greece, as demonstrated in the previous chapters, the memory was distorted by a sense of nostalgia that created an imaginary past, particularly in Greek literature. Turkish literature, on the other hand, followed the silence on the Exchange along with the national discourse, which resulted in, in Aslı Iğsız’s words, “the 65-year Turkish silence surrounding the 1923 Greek-Turkish compulsory population exchange” (451). Until the 1990s, when the earthquakes in the region fostered solidarity between the two states, the Population Exchange had been almost entirely absent from Turkish literary landscape, with a single exception: Sabahattin Ali’s

short story “Çirkince.” Published in 1947, it has been regarded as the first literary work devoted to the Exchange in Turkish literature (Ari 15), an unparalleled documentation of a decaying refugee settlement in the shores of Western Anatolia.

On the other side of the Aegean, Ilias Venezis broke the silence on the Population Exchange with the publication of *Land of Aeolia* in 1943, which I examined in detail in my first chapter. It is no coincidence that the proliferation of these narratives began during or near the end of World War 2, echoing Michael Rothberg’s argument that “collective memories of seemingly distinct histories are not easily separable from each other, but emerge dialogically” (119). Within Michael Rothberg’s conception of multidirectional memory, I argue that the painful experiences during WW2 in Greece evoked the memories of the Asia Minor Catastrophe; and the entwined traumas of these two distinct events can be traced in Michel Faïs’ autobiographical novella *Aegyptius Monachus*. As a descendant of a Greek-Jewish family from Komotini (i.e., Gümülçine) near the Greek-Turkish border (Hatzivasileiou 138-139), Faïs is in a unique position to narrate the remnants of the Catastrophe and WW2; just as Sabahattin Ali, a political dissident whose stories did not conform to the official discourse in Turkey, was an exceptional figure for the memory of the Population Exchange in Turkish literature. A comparative close reading of these two narratives, therefore, can unfold what Aytek Soner Alpan calls “the two opposite ways of engineering the collective memories” (203) utilized by the nationalist discourses in Greece and Turkey.

3.1. The Portrait of a Decaying Refugee Settlement in Sabahattin Ali's

“Çirkince”

Sabahattin Ali's “Çirkince” reiterates the myth of Asia Minor as a heavenly place characterized by fertility and tranquility, reminding the reader of Venezis' *Land of Aeolia*. The village of Çirkince (modern-day Şirince) is presented as one of the most beautiful places the narrator has ever visited during his childhood, nearly a decade before the beginning of the Population Exchange. Childhood memories and the Greek Orthodox villages of Anatolia are associated with each other once again. This time, however, the narrator is an outsider to the village rather than a native Anatolian Greek, and for this reason, he is able to visit the village once more after the Exchange.

The narrator of Sabahattin Ali's story is a first-hand witness of the radical transformation of Çirkince: he wanders around the village before and after the Population Exchange. During his second visit, as soon as he arrives at Çirkince, he notices the tobacco fields planted by the Muslim refugees at first glance: “Coşkun bayramların, spor oyunlarının kutlandığı Hypodrom'un göbeğine muhacirler tütün ekmişler, kenardaki kuru yapraklı bir çardağın altında sıtmadan titreşerek yatıyorlardı” (Ali 93). The hippodrome area, at which the narrator had gazed admiringly in his childhood, turned into a tobacco field after the arrival of the Muslim refugees. This scene, once again, points out one of the fundamental transformations associated with the Population Exchange, echoing “The Ballad of Kosmas Çekmezoğlu” and its stanzas on the tobacco production at the expense of vineyards belonging to Anatolian Greeks. In “Çirkince,” tobacco production is presented as a contagious disease invading the refugee settlements; along with the vineyards in the village, most of the natural attractions have turned into either

tobacco fields or swamps: “Cellat Gölü'nün yerinde şimdi tütün tarlaları ve kanallar görünüyordu. Fakat beş on sene önce açılan bu kanalların, sular bastıkça kenarlarındaki tarlaları kemirdikleri, köşelerinden bucaklarından birer parça alıp tekrar bataklığa çevirdikleri, şekillerinin bozulmaya başlamasından ve yer yer görünen sazlıklardan belliydi. (...) Kim bilir Çirkince'yi de ne halde bulacaktım” (Ali 99-100). This destructive and unsustainable agricultural practice, as demonstrated by the descriptions of Gelveri's uprooted vineyards in Çekmezoğlu's ballad, wipes out all the beauties associated with the Greek Orthodox villages of Anatolia.

The portrayal of the Muslim refugees in “Çirkince” also reminds the reader of Agathangelos' antagonism in “Andaval kariyesi için düzülen destan,” whose depiction of the arriving refugees as a barbaric community connotes a comparable image. A similar attitude towards the Muslim refugees and their agricultural practices is reflected throughout the descriptions of Çirkince after the Population Exchange: “Burası benim otuz sene önce gördüğüm, içinde en güzel günlerimi geçirdiğim yer değildi. (...) Ortalıkta insan görünmüyordu. Belki yirmi seneden beri el sürülmemiş gübre ve süprüntü ile kaldırımları görünmez hale gelen sokaklarda, bazan gözlerinin rengi bile anlaşılmayacak kadar kirli bir çocuk peyda oluyor[du]” (Ali 100-101). The unsanitary living conditions in the village are accompanied by the destruction of the houses and the use of their components for fuel, which can also be observed in the Muslim communities settled in the village of Gelveri (Karatza 307). In this sense, the emphasis on the demolished houses in these narratives can be explained by the Muslim refugees' need for household heating during their resettlement, a fact ignored or dismissed by both texts.

The Muslim refugees are incapable of sustaining inherited villages: the new residents of Çirkince, according to the narrator, contaminated or sold the agricultural lands appropriated from Anatolian Greeks. Without explicitly characterizing them as such, the narrator describes the processes of Çirkince's deformation in the following pages: "Mübadil olarak yerleştirilen muhacirler, tütüncü oldukları için [köyün] incirlerini, zeytinliklerini yok pahasına satmışlar, hatta birçok ağaçları kışın kesip yakmışlar, sonra her biri bir tarafa dağılmışlardı" (Ali 101). Even though the narrator's dismay and anger are directed at the Muslim refugees until the last pages of the story, one of the characters, a Cretan coffeehouse owner in Çirkince, complicates his understanding of the resettlement. The Cretan was relocated to Çirkince fifty years ago, and he was excluded from the forced resettlement as the only Muslim person in the village during the Population Exchange. He intervenes the narrator's contemplations, and begins to explain how the Muslim refugees are the least responsible and most vulnerable agents throughout the Exchange:

Buraya getirip oturttukları mübadillerin de kabahati yoktu. İskeçe'nin, Kavala'nın tütüncüleri... zeytinden, incirden ne anlasınlar? Ağaç dediğin bakım ister, masraf ister. (...) Muhacirler iki sene üst üste mahsul alamayınca ya kestiler, ya sattılar... Zaten tefviz işleri de seneler sürdü. Dünyanın dalavereleri döndü. Gelenlerin çoğu meteliksizdi. Para yedirip işlerini gördüremeyince hepsi bir yana dağıldı. (...) Hakkı olan alamadı, hakkı olamayan binlerce aldı. Ama onlara yaradı mı? Ne gezer!.. Anafor malın kıymetini bilmediler, yok fiyatına elden çıkardılar. Buraların eskiden kalma bir iki derebeyi vardı. Kimi İzmir'de, kimi Ankara'da oturur... Hepsini onlar kapattı... Emvali metrukeden, ağacı on kuruşa, on beş kuruşa zeytin, incir bahçesi satın aldılar. (...) Para da, devlet de ağaların elinde. Bunlarla baş olur mu? (Ali 104-105).

There are notable similarities between the Cretan's words and economic historian Tolga Köker's explanation about the background of the Muslim refugees in "Lessons in Refugeehood: The Experience of Forced Migrants in Turkey," in which he states that the arriving Muslims destroyed the vineyards as their agricultural skills were

only related to tobacco production, and they needed to demolish the houses for household heating (204). Sabahattin Ali's short story also highlights the fact that the unfair reallocation of properties and resources during the Exchange affected not only the Greek Orthodox populations but also the Muslim refugees, identifying the chief instruments of exploitation as; in William Stroebe's words, "not the religious other but the dense network of diplomats, lawyers, statesmen, provincial bureaucrats, land-owners, international treaties, and local proprietary arrangements—what others might call, for short, the state and the market" (369).

Nikolas Kozakoğlu, the protagonist of Stratis Doukas's novella *A Prisoner of War's Story*, is another resident of Çirkince before the expulsion. The parallels between these two literary treatments of the same Greek Orthodox village offer an insightful overview of the catastrophic events in Anatolia in the 1920s. Kozakoğlu becomes a soldier during the Asia Minor Catastrophe in order to protect his village from being plundered by the neighboring Muslim towns. Turks have captured him in İzmir in 1922, a year before the beginning of the Population Exchange. During his attempt to escape from the prison camp, where Greek and Armenian soldiers have been tortured, Kozakoğlu takes shelter in a village near Çirkince by hiding his Greek nationality. When he comes across suitcases full of clothes and furniture at the village barn, he asks the Muslim villagers how and where they have found these items, to which they respond: "Buraya yakın Kirkince diye zengin bir köy vardı. Yunanlılar gidince her şeylerini aldık. Burada gördüğün her şey onlarındı" (Doukas 49). The portrayal of Muslim locals as plunderers, or opportunist neighbors who steal the properties belonging to the vulnerable Anatolian Greeks, stages the tension between the Christian minorities and the Muslim residents of Anatolia.

Disguised as a Macedonian Turk, Kozakoğlu tries to suppress his anger towards the plunderers. The villagers, at one point, unknowingly ask him why he missed the opportunity to plunder the Greek Orthodox villages, to which Kozakoğlu responds: “Cephedeydim ben. Hırsızlık yapmadım, öldürdüm” (Doukas 49). The villagers’ enthusiastic response to Kozakoğlu’s answer portrays a much darker picture of the post-war execution of minorities and plunder culture in Anatolia: “Sen bizden iyi yapmışsın” (Doukas 49). Unlike Sabahattin Ali’s “Çirkince,” *A Prisoner of War’s Story* identifies not only the state-sponsored landowners or the opportunist bourgeoisie but also the Muslim neighbours of the non-Muslim villages as the agents responsible for the plundering of the Greek Orthodox villages in Anatolia.

These two narratives on the devastation and plundering of Çirkince during the Population Exchange, namely, Stratis Doukas’s novella *A Prisoner of War’s Story* and Sabahattin Ali’s short story “Çirkince,” have different approaches regarding the actors involved in the plundering and destruction processes, but both texts agree on the fact that the village of Çirkince had been damaged by the Population Exchange so severely that it became unrecognizable. Ali’s short story ends with the narrator’s reminiscence about his memories of Çirkince before the Exchange, “Burası eskiden ne idi, şimdi ne oldu!.. (...) Cennet gibi yerler virane oldu” (105), while in Doukas’s novella, Nikolas Kozakoğlu, who reaches his homeland after many years as a captive, cannot hold back his tears when he sees Çirkince for the first time after the Exchange: “O bir mahalleye gidiyor, ben bir başka mahalleye. Nereye gittiysek harabe. Evler açık, boş, kapılar baltalarla kırılmış. Sadece çarşıda birkaç Türk ve karakolda nöbetçi kalmış” (Doukas 34).

The portrait of how a heavenly Greek Orthodox village transforms into a decaying refugee settlement in Sabahattin Ali’s “Çirkince” eventually breaks the

silence on the legacy of the Exchange in modern Turkish literature. Although Ali's short story does not go beyond reiterating the myth of Asia Minor and its shattering by the expulsion, it pushes Turkish literary networks to take its first steps towards acknowledging the harrowing experiences of the Exchange.

3.2. Memory, Trauma, and Writing in Michel Faïs' *Aegyptius Monachus*

The act of writing in Michel Faïs' autobiographical novella *Aegyptius Monachus* is associated with an attempt to escape from traumatic memories, to separate the past from the present, and to reconstruct an alternative past where the events that turn into haunting memories can be prevented. The first and foremost condition for this kind of writing is an outright confrontation with traumatic experiences, and the Greek-Jewish narrator of *Aegyptius Monachus* initiates his confrontation with his past through self-reflection. The multi-layered and pluralistic voice of the narrator offers a self-reflexive commentary on his narrative itself, which blurs the boundaries between the author, the autobiographer, and the narrator. Through these metanarrative interventions, the narrator traces the entanglement of three sets of memories in *Aegyptius Monachus*: the shadow the Holocaust in Greece, along with the remnants of Asia Minor Catastrophe, the narrator's deceased family members, and his failed marriage. This section, therefore, investigates the role of metanarrative as a means of representing trauma and the fragmented structure of the narrative as a form of traumatic remembrance.

Writing is the primary method of bringing solace to what the narrator calls "incurable perversion of remembering" (Faïs 9) in *Aegyptius Monachus*.

Remembering has been described as a process of intoxication, disrupting the present

time by merging the past and the present into one another. “The old haunts of shame, boredom, and fear of shame and boredom” (Faïs 17); the narrator describes the way remembering disrupts his present like a haunting figure, “so you can guess just what kind of present day is his present day” (Faïs 18). The only way to escape these haunting memories and to separate the present from the past is writing: “A seductive voice: write, write, write. The same one always” (Faïs 9). This seductive voice can also be seen as the driving force behind the narrative itself, as the self-reflexive commentary of the narrator explicitly demonstrates his desire to write in order to forget: “Everything’s gone before. Forget it. Scritz scratz, scritz scratz, scritz scratz, the pencil over the paper. Tap- taptap- dring, tap- tap- tap- dring, tap- tap- tap- dring, the fingers on the typewriter.” (Faïs 15). This therapeutic aspect of writing is one of the primary motivations behind the narrator’s urge to write.

Writing is also a way of reshaping and reconstructing the past, an opportunity to reorganize or prevent the events that turn into haunting memories. A typical example of these memories is the way the narrator’s parents brought him up, and accordingly, one of his strongest desires is to reverse this situation by becoming the progenitors of his own parents. During one of his dreams at the beginning of the story, the narrator asks his parents: “Just for one day, make me your progenitors, just one day. You’ll see your pride and joy, and you’ll have to rub your little eyes” (Faïs 7). While these dreams can only offer a temporary sense of relief, the act of writing has the potential to create an alternate past where the narrator has the chance to reimagine his childhood: “in your head you’ll write the book that will redeem you from writing,” the narrator addresses the reader, “[and] you’ll meet the parents who will bring you up again from the beginning” (Faïs 14). The narrator’s attempt to

open up a new realm in which he would heal his childhood traumas can only be made possible through writing.

This act of recreating the past can be both rewarding and challenging, as the first requirement of changing the past through writing is to embrace traumatic experiences. The narrator describes this process by drawing an analogy between walking and writing: “I’m taking for a walk the hole that I’m afraid to look into” (Faïs 30). Exploring this inner hole through writing is later likened to dipping a pen into excrement: “You dip the pen, your finger, your nose, your dick into your excretions. With the excrement the more dramatic parts, with the tears the more hilarious ones. And you rewrite what you’ve lived, what you haven’t lived, what you lived once and for all, what you’ll live and go on living for life...” (Faïs 50). Accordingly, the narrator’s approach to writing about himself prioritizes a level of intimacy that is only achievable through delving into the depths of his own visceral experiences. In other words, only those who have the courage to dip their pens into their excrement can have an insight into what they have lived and have not lived.

The discourses on writing, remembering, and reconstructing the past gradually evolve into self-reflexive comments on the novella itself, blurring the lines between autofiction and metafiction. What makes the narrative unsettling is the fact that the boundaries between the author, the autobiographer, and the narrator are permeable, as if they are one entity dissected into multiple selves. When the narrator asks:

Is it me who, on my way to the publishers, jots down in my notepad a phrase from some passerby that I’m never going to see again? Is it me who utters a sentence and someone else, who, crossing my path, jots down something hurriedly and disappears? Am I a duplicate who goes to his publishers and at the same time doesn’t know where he’s

going? Who records in his notebook whatever he says to himself at the very same moment? Or perhaps I'm just a nobody? (Faïs 9)

He immediately questions the idea of a singular self at the very beginning of *Aegypius Monachus*. The multi-layered and pluralistic voice of the narrator, who is also aware of his own creation and signifies the methods of his construction, reminds the reader of Patricia Waugh's definition of metafiction as "fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (2). These narrative interventions in the form of a self-reflexive commentary can be seen as a defining characteristic of *Aegypius Monachus*.

During some of these interventions, the narrator directly addresses the readers and informs them about the structure of his own narrative. A remarkable example of Linda Hutcheon's term "narcissistic narrative," which blends "the formal properties of fiction into its subject matter" (18), can be seen in the narrator's direct address to the readers before narrating a day in his life: "For the moment, take pleasure in him [referring to himself]. Take pleasure in one of his days. [...] Exclusive world premiere. Sincerely, 'kyou" (Faïs 31). These direct addresses not only blur the lines between the formal properties and the subject matter but also develop a sense of intimacy between the narrator and the readers. However, the distance between the reader and the narrator, or the narrated subject (he narrates his own story from the third person point of view at this point) comes into question when the narrator, near the end of the novella, states that "Eventually you're going to have to learn to follow him at a distance. (...) Forget everything you know. He's not even your closest chum for you to open up to, or a game for you to pass your time. He's the straw you drew. Short? Short. Fat? Fat. Hairy? Hairy. Accept him" (Faïs 47). The difficulty of

portraying the narrated subject is explicitly acknowledged with a warning to the readers about the ideal distance to follow the story.

The question of how much we can ever know about someone is central to the ending of *Aegyptius Monachus*. “This is what you have to go through if you begin to add up everything you know and don’t know about him,” (Faïs 47); the narrator warns the readers again in one of his direct addresses, “seven lives aren’t enough. (...) There’s still no end to it. Not to mention that often what you never learn about him is, nevertheless, something you know deep down the way you know the back of your hand” (Faïs 47). Accordingly, it is impossible to offer a complete portrayal of someone in any narrative while the readers might still know the things the narrative cannot include, which signals a reversal of roles: the omniscience of the narrator is temporarily projected into the readers. The narrator’s acknowledgement of the difficulty of choosing what to include in and exclude from the narrative not only offers an honest metafictional portrayal but also invites the readers to think about the creative processes behind the story, which is in line with Hutcheon’s argument that “the most authentic and honest fiction might well be that which most freely acknowledges its fictionality ... [as] the reader can share, with the author, the pleasure of its imaginative creation” (49).

A key theme in *Aegyptius Monachus*, where the formal qualities and the subject matter blend into one another, is the memories of a failed marriage. The narrator delves into this set of memories by satirizing the concept of home at the beginning of his narrative on his ex-wife: “A home, a book, a wife, he says through his teeth. He farts” (Faïs 19). The fart interrupting the imagery of a stereotypical family still cannot save him from digging through his memories of his ex-wife:

“[referring to himself from the third person point of view] I know what a joker he is,” the narrator states, “he’ll put aside the big words before long and set memory’s chainsaw in motion” (Faïs 19). And the memory’s chainsaw triggers the beginning of a long narrative on the relationship between the narrator and his ex-wife.

The narrator’s memories bring his ex-wife’s family into focus, reflecting on the fact that their relationship has always been in the shadow of her parents: “Our love life is our family life. (...) In her memory, ... her father and mother whirl in a dance that they never danced together. And (...) her parents peel away like plaster from the ceiling” (Faïs 21). This immediate parallel between their love life and family life evolves into a desire to fill the gap that is left by what the narrator regards as his ex-wife’s imperfect parents. He summarizes his ex-wife’s childhood as “no lullaby, no caress, no game, no burning, no mirror deeper than blood” (Faïs 21) and defines himself as “her lost family” (Faïs 19). Although the narrator interiorizes his ex-wife’s dependence on him, this perception might not be completely accurate as we learn in the end that the narrator becomes his wife’s “former lover” (Faïs 27) and her “song of tired devotion” (Faïs 27).

The narrator’s description of his marriage as “our love life is our family life” (Faïs 21) carries further connotations that are related to the narrator’s family who were killed during the Holocaust. *Aegyptius Monachus* begins with the narrator’s question to his father during his childhood: “Daddy, were Michel, Clara, Daisy, Isaac, Simandof, and Granny Rivka shot in the head before being thrown into the Danube?” (Faïs 7), to which his father responds, “Listen, Son, before they threw your uncle, your aunt, your three cousins, and your grandma into the waters of the Danube, they roasted them in kosher lard” (Faïs 7). This traumatic memory of his

father's tragicomic account of the way his relatives were executed and thrown into the Danube River becomes uncontrollably intrusive during the rest of the narrative, constantly interrupting the narrator's everyday life. The narrator does not directly witness the execution of his relatives, but its memory is transmitted to him through a careless oral account by his father, turning the narrator's trauma into what Marianne Hirsch calls "postmemory." Growing up with the inherited memories of his relatives thrown into the Danube, the narrator experiences "the trans-generational act of transfer and the resonant aftereffects of trauma" (Hirsch 106).

The attempt to break with the past, mainly with the postmemories of the Holocaust, is disrupted by the resurfacing memories of the narrator's father and his constant struggle to reach his relatives that were executed years before. This futile attempt not only intensifies the narrator's frustration with the inescapable postmemories of the Holocaust, but also motivates him to create an alternate reality in his mind where he can become his father's father: "you become your father's father and, taking an ax, smash the telephone [referring to the phone through which his father tries to call his relatives drowned in the Danube]" (Faïs 5). Accordingly, when the narrator defines himself as his wife's "lost family" (Faïs 19), he also implicitly projects his own lost family onto his wife. And while he summarizes his wife's childhood as "no lullaby, no caress, no game, no burning, no mirror deeper than blood" (Faïs 21), he is also referring to his own childhood, which he later describes as "the deeply buried cassette of his life" (Faïs 14). His divorce from his wife near the end of the story brings up this deeply buried cassette for a reconciliation.

The reconciliation with the past only happens when the narrator, while writing, or in his words, “dipping [his pen] into [his] excetions” (Faïs 49), becomes aware of “what [he] doesn’t realize [he’s] living while [he’s] living it” (Faïs 50). The final function of the narrator’s acts of writing in *Aegyptius Monachus*, therefore, is their driving force to bring him to a reconciliation. “I’ve had my fill of self,” the narrator states at the end of one of his writing sessions, “I’ll return to the Jewish quarter. Had . . . my . . . fill . . .” (Faïs 51). The synagogue he visits at the end of the story offers a compensation for the fact that his parent never clutched his hands during his childhood: “Clutching the circumcised hypophysis, as I’ll never clutch the little hand of a child or grandchild, as my own mother’s or father’s paw never clutched mine, I’ll lead myself into the yard of the demolished synagogue” (Faïs 52). The synagogue gradually turns into a place for not only compensating the narrator’s lost childhood but also remembering the narrator’s relatives who had been killed during the Holocaust, whose names and stories have never been mentioned in the narrative until the last page:

Solomon Kasevi, insurance broker, Moïs Romano, timber merchant, Raphael Karaso, owner of a sesame- oil mill, Solomon Youda, leather merchant, Mordis Kasavi, ironsmith, Mair Dasas, tobacco merchant, Isaac Bensour, hatter, Isaac David, hotelier, Joseph Levi, pharmacist (president of the Israelite Community), Isaac Hasdak, tailor. Samuel Hatzi, dried- fruits merchant, Israel Kazes, moneychanger, Nisem Osmos, glass merchant, René Bensoua, transport company owner, Alboher Behar, maid, Thaleia Sarda, midwife, Roza Negrin, Ventura Perla, housekeeping, Yedo Eskenazy, infant, Abraham Alboher, infant, Joseph Benouzio, infant, Clara Baroka, infant— (Faïs 54).

This complete list of the names that the narrator attempts to forget throughout the novella points out what Richard Crownshaw, in his work “Reconsidering Postmemory,” describes as “the belated return of the past . . . [or] the convolution of time” (233). The narrator’s idea at the very beginning of *Aegyptius Monachus* —

“Eventually you break with the past” (Faïs 5) — turns into, in the end, an acknowledgement of the fact that he will never be able to break with his past.

The act of writing as a method of bringing solace to what the narrator calls “incurable perversion of remembering” (Faïs 9) in *Aegyptius Monachus* eventually turns into a way of reconciling with the irrepressible power of remembering. The attempt to ignore self-defining memories may lead to further traumas and loss, which is exemplified by the narrator’s relationship with his wife that ends up in a divorce. As the shadow of the Holocaust in Greece becomes uncontrollably intrusive and constantly disrupts the narrator’s everyday life, certain tensions come to the surface. The inescapable postmemories of the Holocaust motivate the narrator to create an alternate reality where he can reshape and reconstruct the past through writing. This act of writing, remembering, and recreating the past builds into the text’s own metacommentary, locating the novella on the border between autofiction and metafiction. The picture that emerges from shattering the boundaries between the author, the autobiographer, and the narrator is a rewarding one: the reader is reminded that “as literary fiction creates its imaginary worlds, metafiction helps us to understand how the reality we live day by day is similarly constructed, similarly ‘written’” (Waugh 18).

CONCLUSION

Each narrative discussed in the chapters above delineated its own way of remembering the Population Exchange. The harrowing experiences of uprooting and resettlement refuse to be incorporated into a single homogeneous narrative, undermining the manipulative efforts of the nationalist discourses on both sides of the Aegean. Unlike the intangible and sanitized loss fabricated by the national master narratives, the pain and suffering of the deported Anatolian Greeks, as witnessed in the previous chapters, are concrete and tangible. “Both in Greece and Turkey, nationalism has set the limits of what I will call the permissible past,” Aytek Soner Alpan writes, “the strategic manipulation of the present by the Turkish and Greek nation states [created] the permissible past of each respective nation” (204-205). In order to go beyond the boundaries of this permissible past, we must at first examine how it came into being, and what kind of national literary traditions were being reconfigured in response to the permissible past.

Peter Mackridge’s description of the role of Asia Minor in modern Greek literature is particularly fitting at this point: “Asia Minor in Greek fiction is of course an invention, a mental construction ... a set of mental images articulated through language, rhetoric and representation” (235-236). This mental construction is a central component of the permissible past of the modern Greek nation, which

promotes a pure and homogeneous reconfiguration of Asia Minor. In “The Myth of Asia Minor in Greek Fiction,” Mackridge continues to explore the underpinnings of this imaginary landscape,

It is a commonplace in Greek fiction that Asia Minor is *an evlogimeni gi* (blessed land). Sometimes it is also referred to by the Biblical phrase *gi tis Epangelias* (Promised Land). The connotations of these two phrases are obvious: Asia Minor is a land blessed by God and granted in His infinite bounty to its inhabitants. Significantly, the phrase *gi tis Epangelias* began to be applied to Asia Minor only after the Greeks had been expelled; the implication is that, paradoxically, they only realised it was their Promised Land after their sojourn there had ended. (238)

Accordingly, this study attempted to delve into the recreation of Asia Minor as a mythical place in one of the foundational texts in the canon of modern Greek literature, *Land of Aeolia*, in the first chapter. The myth is then shattered by the first-hand experiences of resettlement in Karamanli poetry, which revealed, in the second chapter, that the multitude of problems in the new homeland of the Anatolian Greeks outlived their mourning for the lost homeland. However, Greek and Turkish nationalist discourses facilitated an artificial formation of collective memory after the Population Exchange, which was exposed and undermined, as demonstrated in the third chapter, by the two unique voices of Greek and Turkish literature, that is, Michel Faïs and Sabahattin Ali.

Build upon a growing body of scholarship on literary treatments of the Population Exchange, including the pioneering works of Peter Mackridge, Evangelia Balta, and William Stroebe, the present study set out to explore the memory of the Exchange, and its reconfiguration into nationalist discourses, through a comparative close reading of a selection of narratives from twentieth-century Greek, Karamanli, and Turkish literature. The picture that emerges from this inquiry leads us back to Benedict Anderson’s exploration of the biography of nations in *Imagined*

Communities: “Nations ... have no clearly identifiable births, and their deaths, if they ever happen, are never natural. (...) The nation's biography cannot be written evangelically, 'down time,' through a long procreative chain of begettings,” he observes, “the only alternative is to fashion it 'up time' ... wherever the lamp ... casts its fitful gleam. This fashioning, however, is marked by deaths ... that structure the nation's biography” (205). By tracing the narratives of displacement, this thesis attempted to shed light on the Population Exchange as a means of fabricating a homogeneous national identity, and as a formative event that shaped the biographies of the modern Greek and Turkish nation-states.

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