

The status of Istanbul Greek women in 1940's, 1950's and
1960's

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Unforgettable Constantinople

How lucent she was
But now she is cinctured by cracks
Steal and shiny
Knives are stabbing her

Blood, water flows on the ground
The éclat does not reflect
Sorrowful eyes
Maybe they change appearance

The smile was filled with sorrow
But the faith was stronger
For that, all over the world
No other city was praised like her

Translated Poem by Agape

Αξέχαστη Κωνσταντινούπολη

Καθάρια τι κι αν θα' τανε
Ρωγμές την περιζώνουν
Και ατσάλινα και αστραφτερά
Μαχαίρια που καρφώνουν

Αίμα νερό κυλά στην γη
Μα φλέβες έχουν παγώσει
Λάμψη δεν αντανακλά
Μάτια Λυπημένα
Αντλούν από κατάβαθα
Μήπως αλλάξουν όψη

Το χαμόγελο έγινε συμφορά
Μα η πίστη ήταν Μεγάλη
Γι' αυτό και δεν δοξάστηκε
Στον κόσμο Πόλη άλλη

Original Poem by Agape

To Istanbul Greek Women

Abstract

Although, the emergence of the state of modern Turkey has been extensively studied, studies on the Greek minority of Istanbul and their everyday lives, such as language choices and family relationships, are scarce. The status of women among the Greek minority in Istanbul is especially understudied.

The treaty of Lausanne included the term that the Muslim minority of Western Thrace and the Greek Orthodox minority of Istanbul as well as Imbros and Tenedos (Gökçeada and Bozcaada in Turkish) would be excluded from the population exchanges between Greece and Turkey.¹ Yet, today, the population of the Greek community has declined to 1000-2000 from 100,000 at the beginning of the 20th century.² Since the World War II, a series of anti-minority events took place: *the Varlık tax* (a kind of capital tax), the pogrom of September 1955 and, the deportation of Greek citizens in 1964, all resulted in waves of Greek migration from Istanbul to Athens.

The goal of this thesis is to focus on the Greek women of Istanbul and how all these political events influenced their lives, while also providing an analysis of their language choices and their status in the society of Istanbul. The analyses will be based on a set of letters of written by Sophia to her daughter Elpida who moved from Istanbul to Netherlands in 1954. In addition to these letters, other sources of data include interviews of five Istanbul Greek women, information from the Society of Greeks of Istanbul and books that have collected testimonies, newspaper articles and report of the Greek consul and speeches of Turkish officials. It can be concluded from all these source materials that the Greek women of Istanbul were unequivocally influenced by the political events of 1940's, 1950's and 1960's in distinctive ways.

Key words: Minority, Greek, Rum, Istanbul, Turkey, 20th century, women.

1 Sfetas Spyridon, "The legacy of the Treaty of Lausanne in the light of Greek-Turkish relations in the twentieth century: Greek perceptions of the Treaty of Lausanne," *Balkanica*, 46, (2015): 195-218.

2 Komondouros, Markos and McEntee-Atalianis, Lisa "Language Attitudes, shift and the ethno-linguistic vitality of the Greek Orthodox community in Istanbul", *Journal of Multilingual and multicultural Development* 28(5) (2007): page 365 -384

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Introduction

Most publications, which provide important contributions to the development of the field of Turkish studies and the research of the history of modern Turkey, often provide a history of the minorities of Turkey without going into in-depth analysis of how particular events affect these communities.

At the same time, important books about Modern Greek history have existed only in the history of the Greek territories, excluding the history of the Greek minority of Istanbul, especially after the treaty of Lausanne. For instance, the *Historiography of modern Greece* includes references to the orthodox *millet* without an in-depth analysis of the Greek/Rum minority in Istanbul.³ From these facts it is conceivable that history has treated these people as marginal outcasts that are excluded from the traditional rule of Turkish or Greek history.

However, there is a limited number of books that focus on the Greek minority of Istanbul in the 20th century. The majority of these books focus on the political events that led the people of the Greek majority to migrate. That way, many of the books that refer to the Greek minority of Istanbul focus on the events of 5-6 September in 1955, such as Eirini and Kaiti Sarioglu's *50 Years After the Pogrom of September: Before, Then and After*,⁴ Vasilis Kyriazopoulos' *The Unwritten Genocide: Istanbul, September 1955*, and Spiros Vrionis' *The Mechanism of Catastrophe*.⁵ For example, this latter book provides a convincing argument as to how Adnan Menderes, the Prime Minister of the time, orchestrated the events in the evening of September 6, 1955. There is less than ideal reference to the social and everyday life of Greeks of Istanbul, one exception is the book *The Rums of Istanbul, the Community of Pera*⁶, which provides valuable information about the Greek community of Istanbul and the status of Greek women, including their education, the philanthropist action and the

3 Collective work, *Historiography of modern Greece 1833-2002* (Athens: Hellenic Research Foundation, 2004), 657-67

4 Sarioglou, Eirine and Sarioglou, Kaiti *50 years after the pogrom of September: before, then and after* (Athens: National historic and literary archive, 2005)

5 Vrionis, Spiros *The mechanism of the catastrophe* trans Lefteris Yannoudakis (Athens: Estia editions 2007)

6 Bozi, Soula *The rums of Istanbul, the community of Peran* (Athens: Ellinika Grammata 2002)

entertainment. This book is also valuable for the information that gives about the education and the working position of women as well. However, even this book does not talk about the influence of the political events on women.

We can thus say that there is thus a gap in the literature: How were the Greek women of Istanbul specifically affected by the political events of the mid-20th century? This thesis therefore aims to provide a better understanding of the unique ways in which Greek women were affected by the political events of 1940's, 1950's and 1960s. In order to do so, it benefits from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are of two types: personal letters and interviews with five Greek women, who four of whom left Istanbul while one has never left. The political events will be thus interpreted by the female perspective and how these anti-minority measures influenced women and family life as well.

Consequently, the goal of this thesis is to look into Greek women's everyday life in Istanbul and understand the ways in which they have engaged in their non-Muslim community and the larger Turkish society in Istanbul in the mid-20th century when there was still a sizable population of Greeks in the city. In order to achieve this goal the research question that was formulated is to what extent the political events of the mid-20th century affected the life of Greek women of the non-Muslim Community. More specifically, this thesis aims to answer two research questions, which will be answered in the following chapters:(i) How were the Greek women of Istanbul affected by the political events of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s? (ii) How do the linguistic choices of Greek women reflect and represent their Greek identities that were in part shaped by the political events of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s?

In order to answer the above-mentioned research questions, two types of data were analyzed. First, a set of letters from Elpida's personal archive, which were written by her mother, Sophia, in the 1950s and 1960s, and have been preserved by Elpida in all these years. Elpida was born and raised in Istanbul by an Austrian father with Italian citizenship and Greek mother. When she left Istanbul and got married in the Netherlands her mother sent her letters frequently, where she kept her updated about the everyday life in Istanbul. Since Elpida was not able to read the Greek alphabet the letters were written in the Latin script, known as Francochiotika.

Second, interviews with five Greek women were also conducted for the accomplishment of this thesis. The interviews followed a semi-structured format in order to better capture the experiences and thoughts of each woman. The questions were more general with room for further follow-up questions if necessary. More specifically, five women with Greek origins that were born in Istanbul were chosen: Elpida, also the receiver of the above-mentioned letters, who moved from Istanbul to Netherlands in 1954; Piste⁷, who moved to Athens in 1972; Agape, who moved in

Athens to 1955; Irene, who left Istanbul in 1965 and returned after three years; and Ypomone, who never left from Istanbul. In the thesis the interviewees are referred with pseudonyms in order to protect their personal information. Besides the names carry a very symbolic meaning, since each of them represents a specific virtue; Elpida means 'hope,' Piste means 'faith,' Agape means 'love,' Irene means 'peace' and 'Ypomone' means patience.

This thesis is based on a qualitative analysis of the discourses in the letters and the interviews. The term discourse should be clarified in order to understand this analytical approach. Discourse is used to address to all the forms of communication. Furthermore, discourse analysis claims to highlight how knowledge is illustrated in different narratives and other forms of discourse. This approach is based on the consensus of what is considered truth and changes according to the dominant ideologies of a specific era. That way, discourse analysis is often applied to topics, such as power and hierarchy.⁸

Discourse analysis can be defined as “the close study of language and language use as evidence of aspects of society and social life.” A very important aspect of this analytical approach is that it can be applied in a variety of disciplines in social sciences and humanities. In this thesis, the focus is the language choices of the Greek women in their personal correspondences (i.e. letters of Sophia) as well as the ways in which they recall the past and identify themselves in the present as belonging to a community of Istanbulite Greeks in the present (i.e. interviews with Elpida, Piste, Agape, Irene and Ypomone). Since discourse analysis is able to analyze different aspects of language use and, meanings, it provides a unique opportunity to get insights into the minds of these six women using their own words as windows into the past and the present.

This thesis, adopted the constructivist approach to nationalism as formulated by Anderson. Accordingly, it assumes that nationalism is based on the idea of an imagined community, which required a national state excluding the different ethnicities that often are considered as internal enemies of the state. Therefore, this theory is used in order to interpret the anti-minority events fueled by Turkish nationalism and as understood and interpreted by the women, whose lives have drastically changed due to it.⁹

Last but not least, this thesis assumes that the feminist theory, such that the gendered roles are connected with the patriarchy and the lives of women and men are

⁸ Schneider, Florian “*Getting the Hang of Discourse Theory*” (Politics East Asia May 6, 2013)

⁹ Anderson, Benedict *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, (London: Verso 1991)

unequal.¹⁰ If this is true, then we would expect differences in the way women and men were affected by the political events of the 1940s, 1950s and the 1960s. This thesis aims to uncover at least some the different ways in which Greek women of Istanbul were affected. After all, the Greek community of Istanbul, especially those years, were significantly traditional, kept the “traditional roles” of the two genders. For example, the book “*The Rums of Istanbul, the Community of Pera*” informs us that it was a dishonor for men of the family having their wives work. It was a twist of fate that the Greek women of Istanbul started to work not only due to the changes in the greater society and the expectations from women in a more modern world, but also because they had no other choice than contributing to family income during the political and economic hardship of the mid-20th century.

In order to better contextualize the analyses in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, short biographies of the six Greek women are provided below.

Sophia

Sophia, Elpida’s mother, was the writer of a set of letters that contain advice, recipes, gossips and general information that reveal the everyday life of a Greek woman in Istanbul. Between 1954- 1968 she wrote over 70 letters to her daughter Elpida, who moved to the Netherlands to marry a Dutch man. Sophia was born in Prinkipo Island in 1906, where she was raised. Her mother, Vasiliki, died when Sophia was only seven years old, so she did not have many memories about her and did not talk about her in much detail. Vasiliki also gave birth to Haralampos, who later got married with Antigoni (Burgas).

Sophia’s father originated from the town of Kastoria in Northern Greece, thus Sophia had an orthodox upbringing. She would call her father “*ghero*” (oldman). Despite the fact that her father was a wealthy man, he was very stingy and he did not, therefore, send her to school. Her father had 5 marriages but not all his wives gave birth to children. His first son, uncle Kotsos, was the one who arranged the first marriage of Sophia. Kotsos was also married with a Greek woman from Northern Thrace, aunt Paraskevi whose manners, according to Elpida, were significantly different from the manners of the Greeks of Istanbul, because Greeks of that region did not have a cosmopolitan and urban background.

Sophia’s first marriage was with Demetrio, an Italian orthodox man, who was 10 years older than her. They had a daughter, Elena (Nounouka), who was born in 1923. However, Demetrio was killed during World War II in Bulgaria because of a wound. Sophia would not remember him with nostalgia and affection, since he was especially interested in drinking alcohol and other women. However, her mother-in-law was the one that taught her French.

10 Simone de Beauvoir, *The second sex* first published in France, 1949

Demetrio had an interesting upbringing, since although he was Italian he was not Catholic but Orthodox. Elpida states that his great grandfather, Castilo, was a famous singer that sang to Sultan Abdul Aziz. In order to thank him the Sultan arranged a marriage for him with a Greek woman of a wealthy family, Miss Paspali. However, Miss Paspali requested him to convert to Orthodox before she would marry him and he accepted it. After that, Castilo's son and Demetrio's father, who was named Vladimir, married with a Parisian woman, who would not convert to Orthodox Christianity, so they agreed that their sons would be Orthodox and their daughters Catholics. This resulted in the paradox that Demetrio was Orthodox and his three sisters were Catholics. Hence, Demetrio's daughter with Sophia, Elena, was also Orthodox.

After she became a widow, Sophia got married for second time. At the beginning, her uncle, Kotsos, intended to choose her new husband again; however, Sophia did not agree to this, since she was not satisfied with her first marriage that Kotsos had arranged. In the end, she married Franzin 1930, who was the father of Elpida. Elpida remembers Sophia as a very chic and modern lady of the era with blonde hair and pretty manicure. Sophia spoke the Greek dialect of Istanbul and French.

Elpida

Elpida was born in 1933 in the city of Istanbul; her mother was Sophia and her father, Franz, was also born in the city of Istanbul in 1901, but he was originally from an Austrian town, which was later annexed by Italy; he was thus Catholic. His family had a shipping tradition; the grandfather of Franz was the one that moved to Istanbul, since life was cheaper there. Franz had two brothers, Villy and Rudy and one sister, Lena. Villy first married with an English woman, and after her, with a Greek woman, named Marika that Sophia refers to her in the letters as "the queen while" Rudy got married to Kaliope and departed for the US.

After giving birth to Elpida in 1933, Sophia had a son, Bertyl, in 1934. Hence, Elpida had an older sister and a younger brother. Elpida went to a French school, which is why she was not able to read the Greek alphabet. She remembers teaching herself the Greek alphabet during summer vacations, but each time she would forget it after fifteen days. Therefore, when Elpida got married and moved to the Netherlands with her husband that she met in Istanbul, her mother would send her letters in the Greek language written in the Latin alphabet. Elpida's husband, although he was Dutch, was born in Halkida, Greece and raised in Athens.

Piste

Piste is the second person that was interviewed for the accomplishment of this thesis. She is a woman who grew up in Istanbul and lives in Athens since 1972. Both

of her parents were also Greeks. Her father at first obtained a Greek passport but then he changed his citizenship. She went to the Zappeion Primary School in Istanbul and then she attended sewing courses.

Piste got married and gave birth to three children. She remembers herself thinking about leaving Istanbul for a long period before she decided to finally do it. When she took the decision, she sold her house, and after having the last Christmas in Istanbul, she spent the New Year's celebration in Athens together with her family. The reason was that she wanted a better future for her children without fear. She wanted to offer them security. She admits that if she was alone, she would have stayed. What could happen to her? However, as a mother she had to think about the future of her children. Besides, the memories of the deportation of the Greek citizens in 1964 were still alive.

Apart from that, she had experienced the pogrom of Istanbul in 1955. She recalls how the disturbances started. Her father left the house in order to find her brother, who was currently working in a jewelry shop. She, her mother and her sister remained at home. Her mother asked her to take her younger sister and find refuge in the neighbor's garden, which was a French property. Fortunately enough, a neighbor, who was a Turkish woman, told them that they have to turn on the lights and hang the Turkish flag. When the crowd reached Piste's house and asked her Turkish neighbor where Mr. Anastasis, the father of Piste, lived, she answered them that there were not any Greeks in the neighborhood.

When she decided to leave Turkey to migrate to Greece, she did not reveal it to anyone. Even when she met a Turkish Muslim woman in the train station that would visit her brother in Greece, she asked her why she wants to visit Greece, pretending as if she had abhorrence toward Greece. She preferred to say that she had to go to Germany in order to work.

Life was not easier in Athens; she recalls how everyone would call her a Turk. In Turkey, she was a Greek, but in Greece, she was a Turk. This frustrating situation was not limited to the way she was treated in everyday life; the Greek government also treated her as a foreigner and failed to grant her the Greek citizenship for some time. The society of Istanbul Greeks was pressing the Greek government, and finally when the leader party changed, the Istanbul Greeks got Greek citizenship. After that, she did not renew her Turkish citizenship since she did not want to pay the Turkish government for this service. She waited for a long time to visit Istanbul, and when she finally did, she felt a very strong emotion of nostalgia. Further states that she was able to raise, educate and marry off her two children, but she was not able to buy a house for herself. Life in Greece was not financially easy for her but it was certainly more secure than in Turkey.¹¹

Agape

Agape was born in Istanbul in 1938; her parents were both Greeks with Turkish citizenship. Her father originated from a wealthy Greek family of Tarabya, Istanbul. Agape recalls that her grandfather was a rich trader with 35 houses and 7,000 stremmas of land (=7,000,000 square meters). He studied in the Phanar Greek Orthodox College and became a pharmacist. Her mother originated from Cappadocia and raised in Beşiktaş, Istanbul. She was working as a tailor and as clients very prominent figures of that era as clients, such as Atatürk's sister.

Agape was the only child of her family. She was born and raised in Harbiye. When she was 14, she moved to Cihangir with her family. She went to the primary school of Feriköy. She did not go to High school until she moved in Athens. In Istanbul, she met her husband who was preparing to go to US in order to study mechanics. Their families agreed to marry them off, so he gave his word to her family that he would marry her after finishing his studies.

In the meantime, the pogrom of September 1955 took place, and therefore, the Patriarchate recommended Agape's mother to send her to Athens. Agape's mother had saved some money and managed to send her to Athens. The settlement there was not easy. Agape was treated like an illegal immigrant and was marginalized by the Greek society because of her origins. She was called a Turk and people would tell her to go back to Turkey. In some cases, they even called the police in order to get her expelled from Greece. After some years, her husband returned from the US and they got married. When he went to the Turkish consulate in order to inform them that he obtained the Greek citizenship, they told him that they are really happy about that. Agape did not change her Turkish citizenship until today. They did not have any children, and they are now living with their cat and the help of a nurse, who takes care of them. Their only relative is their godson.

Irene

Irene was born in Istanbul in 1942; her grandfather originated from Kayseri, meaning he was Karamanlı descent; her maternal grandfather originated from an Aegean island and her maternal grandmother was from Kınalıada. Both of her parents obtained the Turkish citizenship. Her father had a small shirt factory and her mother was a housewife. Irene studied in Zappeion girl school until the 9th class and she continued her studies in a French school of Istanbul. After that, she started to work in Akbank until 1965, the year in which her parents decided to move to Athens, where they had other relatives and friends.

The reason behind this decision was the anti-minority incidents that took place in the mid-20th century. When the *Varlık* tax, which is discussed in the next chapter, was imposed, her father was on his military service, hence he did not have any

property, and thus he did not have to pay taxes. During the September pogrom, which we will also see in more detail in the next chapter, the mayor of the island Kinaliada did not let the protestors come to the island, hence their house was could not be targeted. In addition to that, since they had Turkish citizenship, they were not subject to the deportation of 1964. Yet, all these incidents resulted in a sentiment of insecurity, leading them to decide to move Greece.

In Athens, she easily found a job, thanks to her ability to speak French. Three years after they moved to Greece, her future husband, with whom she had met in Istanbul, came to ask for her parents' permission to get married. Her husband had Italian citizenship, thus she got the Italian citizenship and did not keep the Turkish one. After her wedding, she returned to Istanbul. She was not able to keep working in Akbank because she did not have Turkish citizenship anymore; hence, she started working in an Italian company. She still lives in Istanbul.

Ypomone

Ypomone was born in Istanbul in 1948; her parents were Greeks who originated from Istanbul. Her father worked as a developer and her mother was a housewife. Other than Ypomone, her parents gave birth to four more children. They were considered part of the middle class in the society but they were living a prosperous life. Back then, a single source of income could feed a family of seven. She went to school until 5th grade but did not continue her education, since it required a lot of money. She was raised in the neighborhood of Yedikule.

When the pogrom of 1955 took place she was only seven years old, but she still remembers every detail of that night. The crowd attacked her house and her father had to throw all of his children through the window to the backyard in order to save them. The crowd was trying to burn their house; some of their Turkish neighbors try to stop them telling them: "What are you doing? There are five children in this house". Hence, the crowd did not burn their home, but in order to outbreak their anger, they started throwing fruits until they broke all of their windows.

After the pogrom, their family moved to Pera. She got married when she was 21 years old with an Armenian man, with whom she had met, and they had two children: a son and her daughter. However, gradually all her relatives moved out from Istanbul, since they were feeling insecure. Most of them went to Athens. Even her son moved to Athens when he turned 19, and later his sister followed him. They built their lives in Athens and got married there. In the meantime, her first husband passed away, and later she married her second husband, who is also Armenian. Thus, Ypomone visits her children in Athens frequently but she does not intend to move out from Turkey. She estimates that there are only 500 to 600 Greeks living in Istanbul. She is feeling lonely, but she has made two good friends that are Turkish.

The main body of this thesis is divided in two chapters. In the first chapter, there is a focus on the political events that influenced the presence of the Greek

minority in Istanbul starting with the treaty of Lausanne, which exempted the Greek population of Istanbul from the compulsory population exchange. In addition to that, this chapter aims to explain how the political climate and the anti-minority measures affected the life of Greek women in Istanbul deriving from the input provided by the letters and the interviews. This chapter aims to specifically answer research question 1: understanding the ways in which Greek women of Istanbul were directly affected by the political events of the mid-20th century.

The second chapter focuses on language, a rather complex topic. Because of that it is divided in two sections: in the first there is a lexical analysis of the primary sources, meaning an analysis of within the lines of both letters and interviews. More specifically, in the first section the thesis refers to the at the word level of the primary sources, such as the script, the choices of the words and the language style. In the second section there is a discourse analysis, since there is a focus on what is not written but conveyed between the lines, such as sentiments and ideas. The goal of this chapter is to answer research question 2: understanding the ways in which the Greek women's language choices reflect their Istanbulite and Greek identities which are in part shaped by the political events of the mid-20th century. Finally, in the conclusion the thesis attempts to provide a synthesis of the two research questions, and provides conclusions about the past, the present and the future of women of the Greek minority in Istanbul.

Chapter 1: The anti-minority measures of mid-20th century and their influence on Istanbul Greek Women

During the 19th century, the Istanbul Greek community flourished and took major roles in the economic and social life of Istanbul. Members of this community played important roles in practices of medicine, law and trade. Their participation in the city's economic and social forefront meant financial prosperity and high socio-economic status. While men were the main actors of these accomplishments in various domains of economic life, women played equally important roles in the family. It was common for young women to dream a future, where they build their own family and have children. Thanks to the financial prosperity of the community, Istanbul Greeks had the ability to found schools for girls, such as Zappeion¹² and Zografion School¹³, thus giving many young women the opportunity of education. The main goal of these schools was to introduce art, literature and handcrafting, thus helping create virtuous future mothers and housewives.¹⁴ But, soon women's role in the society would change in part due to a series of unwelcome social, political and economic incidents.

The main goal of this chapter is to present the main political events that took place during the last century and had a major impact on the life of Greek women of Istanbul. I assume that it is impossible to elaborate on the Greek women's status in Istanbul without having understood the status of the Istanbul Greek minority within the larger socio-political context. Therefore, in this chapter a brief summary of the numerous anti-minority measures taken by the Turkish government is provided, starting after the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne and following a chronological order. At the same time, this chapter aims to explain the ways in which these anti-minority measures influenced the status of Istanbul's Greek women. Although the main focus of this thesis is the decades of 1940's, 1950's and 1960's, in order to have a better understanding of the subsequent political events the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), the starting point that caused the forced migration of masses (of Greeks and

12In Greek: Ζάππειον Παρθεναγωγείο (Zappeion Parthenagoghio), the name was given by its founder Evaggelos Zappas. In Turkish: Özel Zapyon Rum okuluSource: *Omgeneia Turkey*
<http://www.omgeneia-turkey.com/education/zapyon.html>

13In Greek: Ζωγράφειον Λύκειο (Zografion Likio), the name derives from one of its benefactors Christakis Zografos. In Turkish: Zoğrafyon Rum LisesiSource: *Zografyon*
<http://sezografyon.gr/zografeion/>

14 Bozi, *The rums of Istanbul, the community of Peran*

Turks), should also be described. Of the anti-minority incidents of the era, the incidents of September of 1955 were particularly catalytic for future of the community and the lives of its individual members. Thus, this chapter aims to explain the ways in which women were influenced by the anti-minority measures taken by the Turkish government in the mid-20th century. More specifically, it aims analyze the changes on the status of women as a result of the political incidents and unfolds how Greek women gradually became more independent not only because of the global changes that were already happening in women's lives but also because of the local political and economic conditions that obligated women to work and provide for the family.

The Treaty of Lausanne

After the Turkish victory in the Greek-Turkish war, the two states signed a convention on 30 January 1923, according to which the borders between Turkey and Greece were established. Thus, Evros River became their continental border in Aegean sea Turkey took under its sovereignty all the islands that are located 3 kilometers from its coast, in addition to Gökçeada Bozcaada and Tavşan, while Greece took under its sovereignty the islands of Lemnos, Samothrace, Mytilene, Chios, Samos and Ikaria. The Dodecanese islands remained under Italian rule.¹⁵

A mutual obligatory population exchange between the two states occurred. That was the first time in the history of humankind, when a population exchange was enforced after the end of a war. Religion was the criterion on which the population exchange was based, namely the Greek Orthodox people of Turkey were obligated to move to Greece, while the Muslims of Greece to Turkey. The criterion on religion was so strict that even Turkish speaking Orthodox Christians had to leave. In the same way, Muslims inhabitants of Greece moved to Turkey.¹⁶

The only exception that was made was about the established Muslim population of Western Thrace and the established Greek Orthodox population of Istanbul, Gökçeada and Bozcaada¹⁷. However, according to the 14th article of the Treaty of Lausanne, these islands would enjoy a special administrative organization in order to protect the native non-Muslim population.¹⁸This exclusion was made because Greece insisted that the Patriarchate should not relocate from Istanbul to Athens. İnönü agreed on this exclusion providing that Muslim of Western Thrace would be

15 The World War I document Archive: *The treaty of Lausanne*
https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne

16 Sfetas, Spyridon *The Legacy of the Treaty of Lausanne in the Light of Greek-Turkish Relations in the Twentieth Century: Greek Perceptions of the Treaty of Lausanne*

17 In Greek: Ἰμβρος(Imvros) and Τένεδος(Tenedos)

also excluded.¹⁹ However, the two countries failed to agree on the exact meaning of the word “established” (in French: ‘etablis’). Hence, the Permanent Court of Justice suggested them that established population should be Greek Orthodox people, who were established in Istanbul before the 30th October, 1918.²⁰ According to the historian Spyridon Sfetas, it was the first time in history, that religion was the only criterion for the compulsory exchange of populations.²¹

The convention about population exchange was followed by the Treaty of Lausanne, which was signed on 24 July 1923.²² The two countries were able to accomplish their aim for homogenizing its nation-state. Regarding the modern Turkish state, the bilateral conclusion expressed the tendency to create a homogeneous state, following the ideology of Ziya Gökalp.²³ At the same time, Turkey defined its boundaries; hence it could preserve peace and focus on the development of the newborn Turkish nation state. In addition to these agreements, concerning the borders and the islands, the Treaty of Lausanne in the articles 37-45 included provisions on the minorities and their status.²⁴

However, the two minorities that were excluded from the population exchange had major differences. While the Greek Orthodox population of Istanbul was an urbanized community that was participating in trade and business, the Muslims of Western Thrace were mostly farmers. The Turkish government therefore perceived the

18 The treaty of Lausanne https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne

19 Alexandris, Alexis, *The historic context of the Greco- Turkish relations in 1923-1954* (Athens: Gnosis 1988) page 33-34.

20 Permanent Court of Justice: 21 February 1925
http://www.worldcourts.com/pcij/eng/decisions/1925.02.21_greek_turkish.htm

21 Sfetas, Spyridon, *The Legacy of the Treaty of Lausanne in the Light of Greek-Turkish Relations in the Twentieth Century: Greek Perceptions of the Treaty of Lausanne* (Balcanica: XLVI, 2015) pages 195-218

22 See more: Lausanne Peace Treaty VI. Convention Concerning the Exchange of Greek and Turkish Populations Signed at Lausanne, January 30, 1923. http://www.mfa.gov.tr/lausanne-peace-treaty-vi_-convention-concerning-the-exchange-of-greek-and-turkish-populations-signed-at-lausanne_.en.mfa

23 Christides, *The septemvriana: Istanbul and Izmir 1955: contribution to the recent history of the Greek Communities*, page 71

24, Christides, *The septemvriana: Istanbul and Izmir 1955: contribution to the recent history of the Greek Communities*, page 52

Greek bourgeoisie as a threat and that's the reason why in the following years the Turkish government tried to diminish this minority group's economic and social power. Besides, the Kemalist doctrine was supporting the idea of "etatism", namely the state-run economy.²⁵

Soon after the Treaty of Lausanne, the Greek minority started experiencing difficulties in the business domain. To begin with, many Greeks were left unemployed, following the government's demand that businesses had to hire a Muslim employee for each position held by a non-Muslim, a measure which was in parallel with Atatürk's wish to Turkify the economy. This was an expensive practice for the businesses because it doubled the costs of employment for a given job. This measure led gradually to the replacement of non-Muslims by Muslims, even when their qualification was not enough for a specific vacancy.²⁶ After an examination, 104 Rum teachers and 52 Greek²⁷ teachers became unemployed because they were found unfit to fulfill the tasks of the new education system.²⁸ This measure caused also a lot of highly qualified women to become unemployed since employers were made to hire Muslim women even when it meant hiring employees with fewer qualifications.

At the meantime, the Turkish government did not allow the repatriation of 40.000 Greek inhabitants of Istanbul, who left Turkey during the Independence War for safety reasons and they were characterized as absents. Hence, their properties were confiscated and their citizenship removed.²⁹ The women of those families had moved with their families from Istanbul and they were temporally staying in Athens, Thessaloniki, Mytilene and other places of Greece. However, the Turkish government did not grant their return mostly because these people were the elite of the Greek Orthodox community of Istanbul. Thus, women had to deal with a violent expatriation and were forced to be away from "home".³⁰

25 Britannica: "Kemalist policies"

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Turkey/Kemalist-policies>

26 Sarioglou, *50 years after the pogrom of September: before, then and after*

27The term "Rum" refers to Turkish citizens of Greek origin and the term "Greek" refers to Greek citizens. See more in the third chapter.

28 The Constantinopolitan society, *The Violations of the Human Rights of the Greek Minority in Turkey* https://www.cpolitian.gr/wpcontent/uploads/2010/04/The_Constantinopolitan_Society_booklet_low.pdf

29 The Constantinopolitan society, *The Violations of the Human Rights of the Greek Minority in Turkey*

In 1932, the Turkish parliament voted the law 2126, which prevented the members of the minority to practice certain jobs. That way, the Turkish government aimed to cope with unemployment among Muslim Turks while also diminishing the economic role of the minorities. More specifically, this law prohibited the practice of the following jobs: musician, barber, photographer, tailor, waiter, carpenter and doorman. About 10.000 Greek citizens were thus left unemployed and had to move to Greece with expenditures paid by the Greek government.³¹ Although this measure mostly affected men who were the main part of the labor force, there was also an impact on women, who had to face their husbands' unemployment and the poverty. In addition to that, the jobs that were included in this law were jobs practiced by women in domain of service, such as workers in hotels, hammams and cafés, dancers and servants.³²

In 1934, the law 2525 enforced the members of the minority groups to obtain Turkish surnames³³ while a campaign with slogan "Citizens speak Turkish" prevented the public use of the Greek language as well as other minority languages. This allowed Turkish speakers to interfere and advise Greek speakers to use the Turkish language.³⁴ Regarding the education, all teachers had to speak Turkish and in 1937, a course about military education was included, as in every Turkish school, and taught by an officer of Turkish army who gradually became a powerful individual in the minority schools, who controlled the curriculum in order to prevent any anti-Turkish instruction.³⁵ These measures intended to affect the identity of Istanbul Greeks and impose homogenization. While they were successful for the most part in the domain of business, employment and education, there was one domain of life they were not able to control: women who preserved the Istanbul Greek identity and traditions in the family. Since most women stayed at home in order to raise their children and look after their family, they continued to use Istanbul Greek language and made sure their

30Alexandris "THE GREEK MINORITY OF ISTANBUL AND GREEK - TURKISH RELATIONS 1918-1974" studies of Asia Minor

31 Sarioglou, *Turkish policy towards Greek education in Istanbul 1923-1974*

32 Law 2126 <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/2126.pdf>

33 The surname law 2525 (Soy Adı Kanunu)
<https://www.lexpera.com.tr/mevzuat/kanunlar/ka801y1934n2741k2525>

34The Constantinopolitan society, *The Violations of the Human Rights of the Greek Minority in Turkey*

35 The Constantinopolitan society, *The Violations of the Human Rights of the Greek Minority in Turkey*

children acquired the language also. They continued practicing the Istanbul Greek traditions, such as the preparations for the most important Christian celebrations: Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and Dormition of Mary, which marked the highlights of traditional Greek practices in an otherwise Turkish society.

In 1941, a new law imposed on Christian and Jewish men, required their conscription into labor battalions (Tr. *Amele taburları*), during World War II, forcing all non-Muslim men between 25 and 45 years old³⁶ to serve in these labor battalions. These men were not trained to use arms but instead made to work in construction work under difficult conditions for over a year. This not only had unfavorable effects on their businesses but also left their wives and families in vulnerable situations. However, they had to carry on and take care of their family. Without their husbands they became the central figure of their families, and had to take important decisions, manage their homes, raise their children and find sources of income for their house needs. They also had to use the existing savings in order to cover their needs or find jobs, however whether they find a job or not was depended mostly on the socio-economic status of a woman's family. For instance, Agape's mother was working as a tailor, but the mothers of the rest of the interviewees did not work.

By examining these anti-minority measures, it is obvious that the Turkish state was trying to gradually diminish the urban class of the minority and replace it with a Turkish urban class. Besides, the Turkish state had the ability to accomplish its goals, since the minority did not have any international support and Greece was oscillating by its own problems including the integration of the new population that came from Asia Minor. However, Turkey was applying carefully and discreetly the anti-minority measures and later took the opportunity to enforce stricter ones. These measures influenced both men and women but in different ways. Women became the preservers of the Istanbul Greek identity, and when men were away, became the protectors of the families. Namely, women gradually obtained a new status in the Istanbul Greek community, by having to combine their traditional roles with new ones.

The Varlık Tax

36 Vrionis, *The mechanism of the catastrophe*, page 74

In 1942, the *Varlık Vergisi*, a type of capital tax, targeted the Turkish laborers, who were not working in the public domain and it included both Muslims and non-Muslims. The law was introduced as a measure that would prevent any profiteering based on the scarcities that the World War II caused. However, the government categorized those taxpayers into groups depending on their religion and the size of their assets. In practice, the non-Muslims suffered from this law significantly more than the Muslims since they were richer than the Muslims in general, but also because the government went after the non-Muslims more strongly for tax money evidenced by the facts discussed below. The tax had to be paid during two weeks after the enactment of the law or within a month with an interest. Those who were not able to pay their taxes had to sell their property. Often times the property of the wife was also sold in order to pay the debt.³⁷ The sales that were carried out between December 28, 1942 and June 30, 1943 so that the debtors could find quick cash to pay the tax debts had a total value of 11,077,949 TL. Of this total value, the proportion of the Greek minority was 1,370,440 TL (12%) while the majority of the total figure also came from other non-Muslims, leaving only 0.8% coming from Muslim businessmen. This figure alone shows how little the Muslim Turks were targeted for tax money.³⁸

Another piece of evidence that shows that the non-Muslim businessmen were the main targets is the fact that all of those who could not pay the required amounts of tax and were thus sent to Aşkale to work in labor battalions, were non-Muslims. These men, regardless of their age, were forced to join the labor battalions in Aşkale, Van and later in Erzurum, where they were made to work for two liras per day. One lira was kept by the government for the payment of the taxes while one lira was given to the individuals for their personal expenditures. It is estimated that in many cases people had to work for 250 years in order to pay the Varlık tax. Working in these battalions was not the end of the story; the property of the debtor and the property of his close relatives would be sold in auctions as it is mentioned above, in order to pay the taxes. The photo in *Figure 4* was taken during an auction where valuable carpets were for sale. The government held a number of such auctions where different kinds of confiscated items were sold.³⁹ It is evident that most of the debtors were doomed to lose their property. At the same time, many of them lost their freedom, since they

37 Ayhan Aktar, *The Varlık tax as an anti-minority measure 1942-43* introduction of the book of Chatzidimitriades, *George Diary of Exile in Erzurum 1943* (Athens Estia 2010)

38 Angelopoulos, George, *The Turkish Capital Tax (Varlık Vergisi: En evaluation (Ejournals 2008)* <https://ejournals.epublishing.ekt.gr/index.php/deltiokms/article/viewFile/2648/2413.pdf>

39 Korkud, Mehmet *Capital Tax Practice According to the Press of the Period* Elâzığ: Fırat University 2018 <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/416399>

were obligated to work in the labor battalions. That way, the forced labor was an extra punishment for them.⁴⁰



[Figure 1: The photograph shows an auction of carpets in order to pay the Varlık tax.⁴¹]

Another important aspect of the enforcement of this law is that by the time there was not a well-organized system for the tax collection and the estimation of the taxes that were corresponding to each civilian. The lists with the civilians that had to pay the taxes were distinguished by one certain criterion: the Muslim Turkish citizens must be in a different list than the non-Muslims Turkish citizens. That way, the government was able to impose a low amount of taxes to Muslims and an exorbitant amount to the non-Muslims. To make matters worse, the tax was also imposed on Greek citizens as well as the *Dönme* Muslims, Jews who had converted to Islam.⁴² Responsible for the application of the law was Faik Ökte, the financial director of Istanbul, since Istanbul was the center of the financial activities of the non-Muslim minorities. World War II favored this situation, since this meant little

40 Vrionis, *The mechanism of the catastrophe*, page 77

41 Omogeneia Turkey, *Varlık Vergisi* <http://www.omogeneia-turkey.com/history/1942.html>

42 Jewish that had converted to Islam

acknowledgement in the international arena; for instance, Greece was at war, and hence it was unable to act in order to protect at least any Greek Citizens.⁴³

The exorbitant Varlık tax caused many members of the Greek minority to lose all of their property and in many cases their freedom. Women were watching their husbands captured without having any chance to react. Since there were also older men subject to work in labor battalions, some of them could never make it back home. Elpida recalls one such person: “Our family dentist had to pay the Varlık tax but he could not afford to pay it, thus he was among those sent to Aşkale even if his sons requested to replace him. His wife never heard back from him, and after losing all their property, she was obligated to leave Istanbul together with her children in order to find refuge in Greece.” She also points out that her mother’s brother, uncle Kotsos, who was very rich managed through his connections to not pay the tax.⁴⁴ On the contrary, Irene recalls that her father was on his military service when the law was imposed, hence he did not pay anything because he did not have money. Agape remembers that her father was sent to Aşkale for two months; during that time she stayed with her mother in Istanbul waiting for him. Her mother asked for the help of Atatürk’s sister, thus her husband could return quicker than the others. In her interview, Ypomone highlights the fact that her parents never talked to her about this tax.

Because of the law, many families have to face poverty; thus, women were in need of joining the labor market as tutors, tailors, and dress makers. Many of these jobs were often practiced in secrecy, since it was not accepted for women to work among urban Greek communities. Generally, it was considered a dishonor for their husband if a woman worked, for the fear that the society would think the man of the house was not able to support his family financially.⁴⁵ Although none of the interviewees who participated in this thesis research had a female family member who started working because her husband was in Aşkale and continued their lives as usual while waiting their husbands to return, it is generally accepted that many women in the community lost their financial status and that’s how they gradually started to work.

Since, more and more women had to work in 1952 the union “Home of working young girls” was established, which was housed in the facilities of the philanthropist sisterhood of Pera.⁴⁶ This union offered an important support to young working women, responding to the needs of that era. When these girls got married, the

43Vrionis, *The mechanism of the catastrophe*, page 81

44Interview with Elpida. 15/1/2019

45 Bozi, *The rums of Istanbul, the community of Peran*, page 264

union would provide them dowry for their new home. There were also courses offered, such as English, French, tailoring, theater and other courses.⁴⁷

Varlık Vergisi not only socio-economically affected the Greek community in Turkey at large and the individual women as participants in the labor market; it also had also an irreversible impact on the emotional well-being of the members of the community. The economic measures of the Turkish government during World War II left the non-Muslims feeling insecure and unable to act or oppose to these measures. Their financial situation and freedom were up to the Turkish state- resulting in waves of migration to Greece or other Western countries with the hopes of a better future.⁴⁸

The Pogrom of September 1955

The following years after the Varlık tax and specifically during the years 1949-1955 the Greek minority revived for a few years and was able to heal the scars of the predatory tax law. However, in the 1950's the relations between Turkey and Greece were getting gradually worse because of the incidents on Cyprus Island. More specifically, the Greek Cypriots were fighting for self-determination against the British domination, and in order to maintain their presence on the Island, Britain undermined the relations between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, by following the "divide and rule strategy". Turkey until recently had been claiming that Cyprus was not a Turkish issue.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, Britain would not give up on Cyprus and therefore started its propaganda by buying the Turkish magazine *Yeni Gün* from his owner Sedat Simavi and equipping it with the best printing machines. One of the major terms in their agreement was that Sedat Simavi had to convince Turks that Cyprus should be annexed by Turkey. As the financial situation in Turkey was getting worse than before, people started blaming the government for neglecting national issues. Hence, it was an easy trick for disorienting Turkish people from the bad financial situation that was taking place in Turkey that period.⁵⁰

46This union was inspired by Patriarch Athinagoras I and was fulfilled with the contribution of ladies L. Spyridonos, E. Agnidou, S. Ketsetsioglou, Tzavouri, Kamili, Ananiadou, A. Kinatzoglou and T. Thanasoglou.

47 Bozi, *The rums of Istanbul, the community of Peran*, page 196

48See more about this issue in the book: Faik Okte *The tragic of the Turkish Capital Tax* London 1987. Turkish: Faik Ökte *Varlık Vergisi Faciası*. Greek Translation: Φαΐκ Οκτέ: Ο ληστρικός νόμος του φόρου περιουσίας των Ελλήνων της Κωνσταντινούπολης

49 Dosdoğru, *Hulusi 6/7 Eylül olaylari* Bağlam Yayıncılık 1993, page 10

According to the report of the Greek consultant Viron Theodoropoulos there were many Turkish newspapers financed by the British. At the same time reporters, such as Ahmet Emin Yalman and Hikmet Bil, who later became members of the group “*Cyprus is Turkish*” (Kıbrıs Türktür), had frequent visits to London. Since 1952, the Turkish newspapers report the maltreatment of Turkish people in western Thrace by Greeks, although the Greek Prime Minister Papagos attempted to pacify the situation.

At the end of the same year two student organizations were established: the National Federation of Turkish students (Türkiye Milli Talebe Federasyonu) and the National Union of Students (Öğrenciler Ulusal Birliği). Both of them were characterized by strong national sentiments. The National Federation of Turkish students declared 21 April as the national day of Cyprus and celebrated the first one in 1954. This was in the same year the organization Cyprus is Turkish was established, which had an important influence on the upcoming incidents as well. Besides, during the national celebration on 30 August 1954 some students attacked the shops of the minority groups and remained unpunished for their criminal activities. The Patriarchate was under pressure to publicly support the Turkish opinion over Cyprus. The situation was getting worse and small attacks against the Greek community started to take place occasionally.⁵¹

While Greece was under instability caused by the illness of its prime minister, the tripartite congress of London took place in 1955.⁵² The British Minister of Foreign Affairs advised its Turkish counterpart to act more intensively in order to exercise pressure over Greece.⁵³ The upheaval on the Island in combination with the economic situation in Turkey that was getting worse resulted in an increase of anti-Greek sentiments in Turkish public opinion causing the relations between Greeks and Turks to deteriorate during the summer of 1955.

On 24 August 1955 Adnan Menderes, the Prime Minister of Turkey, claimed that the Greek Cypriots would proceed to massacre the Turkish Cypriots.⁵⁴ This statement caused reaction among the Turkish population and the “*Cyprus is Turkish*” organization requested permission to demonstrate on September 7. However, the most decisive incident was the fake news that was disseminated via radio and

50 Collective work, *The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul* (Athens: Tsoukatou 1998) page 153

51 Sarioglou, *50 years after the pogrom of September: before, then and after*

52 The incidents of 6-7 September
<http://www.omogeneia-turkey.com/arsiv/id/Septemvriana1955-gr.pdf>

53 The incidents of 6-7 September
<http://www.omogeneia-turkey.com/arsiv/id/Septemvriana1955-gr.pdf>

newspaper that the house where Atatürk was born in Thessaloniki, which was turned into a museum in 1953, was bombed.⁵⁵

More specifically, on September 6 at 13.30 the news was transmitted by the radio that the house of Atatürk was bombed. Afterwards, at 16.00 the broadcasting of the same news took place in the newspaper *İstanbul Ekspres*, on the front page with large font sizes: “Atamızın Evi Bomba ile Hasara uğradı” (“The house of our father has been damaged by a bomb”)⁵⁶



[Figure 2: The front-page of *İstanbul Ekspres* with title ⁵⁷]

Soon after the publication of the *İstanbul Ekspres* newspaper at 16.40, groups of young people started writing slogans against Greece on the walls. The crowd started gathering in the Taksim Square in order to demonstrate at 17.30. Buses, taxis, trains and ships were transporting people to the demonstration; many of them were

54 Tsoukatou editions, *The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul Athens 1998*, page 47 “The speech of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes in the restaurant Liman at 24 August 1955”

55

56 Tsoukatou editions, *The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul*

57 *Biamag Cumartesi: “6-7 Eylül 1955’i Basın Nasıl Gördü?” İstanbul 2013*
<https://m.bianet.org/biamag/medya/149698-6-7-eylul-1955-i-basin-nasil-gordu>

not inhabitants of Istanbul but were coming from Anatolia and Eastern Thrace region in order to protest.⁵⁸

At 18.00 anti-Greek speeches were taking place at the demonstration. At 18.30 the group of protestors arrived at the Greek Consulate, where it later dissolved.⁵⁹ After that, the crowd started to move forward to the streets, such as Istiklal Street, where many Greeks had their stores. Their nationalist sentiments were symbolically represented by the Turkish flag, pictures of Atatürk, or a combination of both, as exemplified in *Figure 3*. The incensed crowd broke the storefronts, plundered the stores, and beat old people, kids and women.⁶⁰ However, the most important characteristic of these incidents is that all this destruction was not spontaneous. The crowd was armed with heavy tools, such as iron bars, cleavers, pickaxes and shovels. The crowd was also well informed about the location of the houses and stores of non-Muslims. It was a well-organized pogrom, a common secret among the Turkish nationals rather than a spontaneous marching that started attacks.



[*Figure 3: Young people gather to protest holding a picture of the Turkish flag.*⁶¹]

According to some testimonies Patriarch Athinagoras was notified about the incidents that would follow by the governor F. K. Gokun, this is another fact that

58 Chrstides, *The septemvriana: Istanbul and Izmir 1955: contribution to the recent history of the Greek Communities*, page 84

59 Sarioglou, *50 years after the pogrom of September: before, then and after*

60 Chrstides, *The septemvriana: Istanbul and Izmir 1955: contribution to the recent history of the Greek Communities*

61 Omogeneia Turkey, *Photo archive of the Pogrom*
<http://www.omogeneia-turkey.com/history/1955/foto.html>

indicates that the pogrom was organized.⁶² In addition to that, allegedly some actors helped the protestors identify the shops and residents that belonged to Greeks. The Muslims were informed to hang the Turkish flag and leave their lights on during the night, so that they would be distinguishable from the non-Muslim houses. The terrified Christians were unfortunately turning off the lights in fear thinking that in this way they would possibly not be noticed. The attacks on the houses had not only economic implications but also social and psychological, since home is viewed as their core. It is after all where you should feel safest. The attacks took place in several neighborhoods of Istanbul rather than a central area: YediKule, Samatya, Beyoğlu, Kurtuluş, Sıraselviler, Yeşilköy, Edirnekapı, Bakırkoy, KalyoncuKullu, Aksaray, Çengelkoy, Kuzguncuk and even in Büyükkada, where the crowd was transferred by boats. Furthermore, all the attacks took place between 7 p.m. and 12 a.m. Along with the destruction of the minority houses and stores (see Figure 4 for a photo of a street where the goods of Greek shops were ruined and looted), major destruction took place in schools, institutes, libraries, churches and even cemeteries of the community.⁶³ The attacks had aimed the destruction of the institutions of the Greek minority.



[Figure 4: Scattered goods after the Pogrom⁶⁴]

62 Tsoukatou editions, *The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul*

63 Omogeneia Turkey, *The incidents of 6-7 September*
<http://www.omogeneia-turkey.com/arsiv/id/Septemvriana1955-gr.pdf>

64 Omogeneia Turkey, *Photo archive* <http://www.omogeneia-turkey.com/history/1955>

At midnight martial law was enforced. However, 9 hours were enough to totally destroy 1004 houses (and partly destroy 2500 more), 4348 stores, 27 pharmacies, 26 schools, 5 cultural associations, 3 newspaper offices, 12 hotels, 11 hospitals, 21 factories, 110 pastry shops and restaurants, 73 churches, 2 cemeteries and the tombs of the Patriarchates in Valoukli Monastery.⁶⁵ According to many scholars the catastrophes that took place were the most organized and widest after the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1453.⁶⁶ The fact that the crowd attacked even the dead bodies that were buried inside the cemeteries demonstrates the extent of the rage of the attackers.⁶⁷

In the following days, the Istanbul Greek community had to face the catastrophe and the destruction. Many families were left homeless since their houses had become ruins. Other families were not able to cover their major needs, especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. In some cases, although their properties were ruined, they still had to pay high taxes.⁶⁸ The Greek consulate noticed a major increase in the requests for moving to Greece and it tried to help with the situation financially, in order to support them staying in Istanbul. However, the empty houses, the insecurity, the memories of Varlık Tax and labor battalions pushed people to leave Istanbul. Even the organizations that were providing free meals were destroyed. As a result, many Greeks were left without food, clothes, beds and heating. Many of them were also left unemployed since their offices and shops had been destroyed. It is estimated that approximately 8.700 Greeks lost their jobs, following the destruction of their stores and offices in Istiklal Street and in Taksim Square.⁶⁹

Neither the Turkish government's aids until the January of 1956, nor the Greek consulate's and the Patriarchate's support was enough to cover the irreparable damages resulting from the events of September 1955. Istanbul Greek women who thus had a leading role in providing aid to the victims of the September pogrom, especially the philanthropist sisterhood of Pera, the only institution completely managed by women that was founded in 1861, was extremely instrumental in providing help to those in need by donating them food, clothes, blankets, medical

65 Sarioglou, *50 years after the pogrom of September: before, then and after*

66 Vrionis, *The mechanism of the catastrophe*, page 289

67 Tsoukatou editions, *The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul*, page 60

68 Tsoukatou edition, *The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul*, page 142

69 Vrionis, *The mechanism of the catastrophe*, page 302

care, psychological support and even temporary accommodation to those who were left homeless.⁷⁰

Although the major goal of the September incidents was the destruction of the minority's property, there were many cases of beatings and some cases of rapes as well. Approximately 30 people lost their lives; many others were injured and raped. Women had to face another danger since they often become rape victims in turbulent periods and wars of incidents. However, rape was recognized as a war crime only in 2016.⁷¹ Therefore, those guilty of sexual assault were not prosecuted as war criminals. Both because of this fact, and the shame that the victim feels together with the importance of virginity for marriage in most societies resulted in most rape victims not reporting such attacks, and therefore causing for the officials to have unreliable data. What's more, the unofficial sources do not include an exact number of the sexual assaults that were committed during the anti-minority pogrom either. According to the American consulate, the number of rape victims reached 60 and while according to the Greek consulate the figure was 200. We know for sure that at least four women lost their lives due to sexual assaults, two who were raped and killed in the Hostel of Working Young Ladies and two others who lost their lives as a result of the violence of their rapes. The age group of the rape victims varies from 6 or 8 years old to 80.⁷²

The Turkish government that was characterized by anti-communism blamed the anti-Greek pogrom on the Turkish communists. Spiros Vrionis also stated that this solution to find a scapegoat was suggested by the commander of CIA, Allen Dulles, who was in Istanbul at that time.⁷³ However, there is adequate evidence that indicates that were orchestrated by the Turkish government since they all started almost simultaneously in multiple neighborhoods. According to the Greek consulate Viron Theodoropoulos, the Turkish Prime Minister Adnan Menderes admitted to the Patriarch that these events had been planned over the last five years.⁷⁴

There are also opinions in personal testimonies that the true promoter of the pogrom was Ismet İnönü, the former president who left presidency to lead the Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party) after they lost the elections in

70 Bozi, *The rums of Istanbul, the community of Peran*, page 196

71 Economist "The international criminal court recognizes rape as a war crime" Mar 22, 2016 <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2016/03/22/the-international-criminal-court-recognises-rape-as-a-war-crime>

72 Vrionis, *The mechanism of the catastrophe*, page 283

73 Vrionis, *The mechanism of the catastrophe*, page 69

74 Sarioglou, *Turkish policy towards Greek education in Istanbul 1923-1974* (Athens 2004)

1950. According to these testimonies, he aimed to weaken the Istanbul Greek community while also disparaging the Democratic Party.⁷⁵ In the interviews, Piste also stated similar beliefs along the same lines, who blamed the opposition party for orchestrating the pogrom behind the scenes to weaken the government.⁷⁶ Piste states that “I believe that Kemalists did not want to lose their political power. That’s the reason why when Adnan Menderes came to power, they wanted to undermine him. Because of that they organized the September pogrom in order to accuse him.”

Regardless of the identity of the instigator, there is one unquestionable fact: the pogrom of September 1955 was not a spontaneous reaction of nationalist Turkish against the Greek members of the society but a well-organized plan to specifically target a minority group and cause permanent damage to their economic and social existence. Agape claim in her interview that “the pogrom was organized, since they had already marked the houses of Istanbul Greeks with three dots: a black, a white and a red. They said that Atatürk’s house in Thessaloniki was hit by a bomb and then crowd was gathered and started shouting that “Cyprus is Turkish”. In my point of view, they intended to attack to the Greek community and they used Cyprus as an excuse. Afterwards, they started breaking and destroying shops and houses.” There are many pieces of evidence supporting this claim, such as the fact that the demonstrators were transferred from many different regions of Turkey. Most of them were farmers from rural areas of Turkey who were unsatisfied with the government and the economic situation. Furthermore, the crowd was armed with tools of destruction and had knowledge of the specific locations of houses, institutes and stores that belonged to the members of the Greek community. Finally, the police forces remained passive when all of this destruction took place. The photo in Figure 5 manifests a fraction of the catastrophe.

75 Tsoukatou editions, *The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul*, page 111

76 Interview with Mrs Piste



[Figure 5: A photo of a broken car after the Pogrom shows the scale of the catastrophe.⁷⁷]

September's pogrom caused irreparable damage to the Istanbul Greek identity. Istanbul Greek women in particular had to face the multifarious losses. Firstly, many of them had to face the financial disaster and the poverty, because of the destruction of their property. In addition to that, Istanbul Greek women had to face the unemployment of their husbands or even their own unemployment, since their stores and offices were destroyed. Except from the economic part of this disaster they had to face the psychological and emotional ramifications, some of them were rape victims, some other got beaten by the crowd and some other did not become victims of any physical, however they had to continue their lives in fears and insecurity. Some of them did not manage to heal their wounds; according to a testimony in the documentary *Adieu Istanbul*, a girl who was raped during the turmoil on September 1955 continued her life in a psychiatric hospital.⁷⁸

Nobody could know when the next pogrom would occur. Because of this insecurity many women thought that it would be better for their children and the future generations to leave Istanbul. In any case, after the pogrom women had to build their life all over again either by staying in their hometown or either by migrating. Furthermore, since the pogrom devastated many institutions of the Istanbul Greek

77 Omogeneia Turkey, *Photo archive*

<http://www.omogeneia-turkey.com/history/1955/foto-diger.html>

78 Documentary *Adieu Istanbul*, Turkey 2013 Interview with Lakiz Vasiliadiz Istanbul

community, such as schools and churches, women had the duty to preserve their identity and impart it to the next generations.

The deportation of Greek citizens in 1964

After the incidents of September 1955 the publication of the newspaper “Eleftheri Foni” was prohibited and in 1956 and 12 members of the Greek association in Istanbul were arrested. Between 1957 and 1959, 57 members of the Istanbul Greek minority were deported. At the same time the Turks were discouraged to shop from stores that belong to the members of the minority communities through anti-minority campaign.⁷⁹

In the meantime, the incidents in Cyprus were getting worse and the Turkish-Greek conflict was escalating. Despite the prior events in the 1940s and the 1950s, there was still a substantial Greek community in Istanbul. However, the Turkish government had another plan in order to diminish the Greek presence in Istanbul. Thus, Turkey declared that 10.224 people of Greek citizenship had to leave Turkey in 24 hours. This decree was based on the article 16 of the Greek Turkish friendship convention in 1930, according to which in emergency situations expulsion should occur directly⁸⁰. There was not any distinction between age groups, in contrary the law applied to anyone with a Greek citizenship regardless of their age and physical well-being.

The deportees were only allowed to take two pieces of luggage of 25 kg in total and 30 dollars.⁸¹ In addition to that according to the decree6/3801 Greek citizens were not allowed to handover their property in Turkey.⁸² Moreover, their revenue from their property was tied down. The result of this measure was the flee of a large part of the Istanbul Greek community, since Greek Citizens were married and related with Greeks with Turkish citizenship. Thus, Istanbul Greek women with Turkish citizenship who were married to Greek men had to choose between staying in their hometown or following their husband.

79 The Constantinopolitan society, *The Violations of the Human Rights of the Greek Minority in Turkey*

80 Kaliber, Alper, *Re-engaging the self/other problematic in post-positivist international relations: The 1964 expulsion of Greeks from Istanbul revisited*. *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 19(3) (2016), 365-386.

81 Omogeneia Turkey, *The deportation of Greek citizenships and the mass flee of Greeks* <http://www.omogeneia-turkey.com/history/1964.html>

82 Omogeneia Turkey, *The karanames* <http://www.omogeneia-turkey.com/history/karaname.html>

Elpida highlights that her mother's friend Marika had to move to Athens, since her husband was deported. In the letters, Sophia also says that she was sad because her friend Aliko had to leave, since she had Greek citizenship. Hence, many Istanbul Greek women had to leave the country in order to be together with their husbands and keep the family united. Irene recalls that although she had met her future husband, she did not share this information with her father and followed her family to Athens. Although Ypomone still lives in Turkey, she explains how after the deportation, many Greeks with Turkish citizenship chose to migrate, thus all her relatives gradually left. That way, many men, women and children had to leave and forget about Istanbul, the place where they were born and raised, the only place they had known as home.

In conclusion, over the last century many political incidents took place, such as the Varlık Tax, the pogrom of September, 1955 and the deportation of Greek citizens, which had a catalytic role in the very existence of the Greek community in Istanbul, since gradually the members of community started to leave from Istanbul in order to settle in Greece or other countries. Although, the political climate is outlined through the literature with the most academics highlighting the fact that the political rivalries between Greece and Turkey had a direct impact in the status of the Istanbul Greek community, the interviews side of Istanbulite women and how they experiences these incidents. More specifically, the primary sources indicate that the social connections of a woman could save her husband's life, for example Agape's mother managed to take her husband from the labor battalions back to their home, on the contrary the wife of Sophia's dentist was unable to save him from the labor battalions and did not find him again. Financial status was also very important, for instance men without any property were not obligated to pay the tax, such as Irene's father who was a soldier when the Varlık tax was imposed. On the other side, Sophia's uncle Kotsos, who was very reach was able to pay off the civil servants in order to not pay the tax.

Additionally, the primary sources point out that the European inhabitants of Istanbul were enjoying a different treatment in comparison with Greek Istanbulites, since Irene had the opportunity to return and stay in Istanbul thanks to her husband's Italian citizenship. In addition to that, Istanbul Greek women were especially worried about the future of their children, for instance Piste took the decision to move to Athens in order to provide a more secure life for her children. On the contrary, Ypomone chose to stay in Istanbul but when her children became adults they decided to move to Greece, this explains the fact that the remaining population of Istanbul Greeks is mainly composed from elders. Hence, the literature provides the political aspect and the primary sources provide the social aspect.

Chapter 2: Language as a reflection of the status of Istanbul Greek women within the political climate of the 20th century.

In this chapter, I will provide an answer to the question as to how the linguistic choices of Greek women reflect and represent their Greek identities that were in part shaped by the political events of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. In order to answer this question, I assume that the political events of mid-20th century irreversibly affected the Greek women of Istanbul in the way they formed their linguistic and ethnic identities. Thus, these experiences made them distinguishable from both Muslim women in Istanbul and Greek women of Greece. In order to support this argument, this chapter examines the ways in which Istanbul Greek women express themselves by their linguistic choices when they talk about their lifestyles and experiences, and how their lives were affected by the political incidents of the past century.

More specifically, this chapter explores a set of written and spoken primary sources, which contain ample linguistic evidence both within and between the lines in the way in which they refer to the political events of the era. Since all primary source materials are linguistic productions of Greek women from Istanbul, the linguistic choices each speaker or writer makes to express herself and the specific themes she chooses to focus on helps us contextualize the political events discussed in the previous chapter and understand how they uniquely affected Greek women and their social status. The primary sources include a set of 72 letters written by a Greek mother, Sophia to her daughter Elpida, who moved to the Netherlands in 1954, and four interviews. One of the interviews was conducted by Elpida herself, who was in the Netherlands when the September pogrom of 1955 and the mass deportation of Greeks in 1964 took place. She was in continuous contact with her family during this time, mostly by exchanging letters. The second interview took place with Piste who moved to Greece in 1972 and therefore experienced the September pogrom of 1955 and the deportation of Greeks in 1964. The third interview took place with Agape, who moved to Athens after the September pogrom. The fourth interview took place with Irene, who moved to Athens in 1965 and returned to Istanbul in 1968 and has lived there until today.

In order to accomplish provide a thorough linguistic analysis; this chapter is divided in two parts. The first part examines the linguistic properties of the primary sources: the word choices and the language style. The second part looks into the

implicated thoughts and feelings of the five women as these thoughts and feelings were drawn upon individual experiences and represented in linguistic form in their productions. The primary sources that were examined for the accomplishment of this thesis have completely unique characteristics in that they provide windows into the ways in which the present was experienced (the letters) and the past was remembered (the letters) by five Greek women of Istanbul.

Reading within the lines: A lexical analysis Istanbul Greek

Sophia's letters

Sophia's letters were the main motivation behind this thesis. What made these letters especially engaging was the fact that they were written during the time when some of the devastating political events targeting the Greek community in Turkey took place. As a matter of fact, the letters begin only a year before the September pogrom of 1955. In addition to this fact, Sophia's script choice is a very rare form of Greek language, Francochiotika, the Latin script used to write the Greek language. Because her daughter had been to an Italian school and thus had never learned the Greek alphabet, Sophia wrote these letters in Frankochiotika, making these letters valuable not only historically but also linguistically.

Due to the political pressure of the time and the fear – and possibly the fact – that, the letters could be opened and checked by the Turkish authorities before they got sent, there are not any extensive descriptions of or frequent references to the political events of the time. Yet, there are still occasional references to the political climate, and a closer look at between-the-lines, provides us with invaluable insights into the realities of the time. This section examines the obvious, the more self-evident linguistic choices of the letters and leaves the focus of the underlying messages to the next section.

While there are only limited references to the political events in the letters, interviews provide us with an opportunity to ask direct questions and receive direct and transparent answers. Because the interviews took place at current time, many years after these events happened, the interviewees are talking about the past knowing what happened after these political incidents and without the fear of possible censorship. Although many years have passed, the interviewees often find it difficult to talk about these incidents and they create a distance between themselves and these past events.

The language style in Sophia letters is very familiar and personal. She talks about her everyday life such as her health, cooking, the weather and how she spends her free time. She also talks about her husband, their neighbors and her entourage. She describes the small pleasures of her everyday life, her hopes for her family and possible concerns about their well-being.

Sophia's letters reflect her need for communication; therefore, there are very sentimental. Most of the letters express the nostalgia that she feels for the good old days of the past when her daughter was living together with her. For example, she recalls how they used to spend Elpida's birthday and how they used to celebrate it as a family.⁸³In addition to that, she gives advice to her daughter about her family life, hence she tries to support her even if she lives far away from her.

The writing form that is used in Sophia's letters has the following characteristics: (i) Firstly, she uses a phonetic method of writing the Greek language, such that there is an almost one-to-one correspondence between a sound and a letter. (ii) Secondly, there is an oversimplification of the spelling. For instance, she writes *se filo* (I kiss you) without using the letter omega "ω" which indicates a verb. (iii) Thirdly, grammatically speaking in many cases, she uses direct object *tha se grapso* (I will write you) instead of indirect object *tha sou grapso* (I will write (to) you) where the indirect object "you" behaves like the direct object.⁸⁴

Her lexical choices indicate the affection that she feels for her daughter, for instance at the end of every letter she sends kisses to her daughter and she signs as "Mami" a diminutive form of the word "mama", and often refers to her husband as "Babi" from the word "baba". Elpida points out in an interview that she never used these diminutives referring her parents in real life. These diminutive forms must be therefore improvisations limited to the personal letter style of Sophia.

Sophia chose to write the letters in Francochiotika, the Latin orthography to represent the Greek language because Elpida could not read the Greek alphabet. Francochiotika was not a pioneering idea of that era; it was the result of the need to write in the Greek language without knowing the Greek alphabet and without having to know the extensive rules of Greek spelling.⁸⁵

In addition to that, Francochiotika was used as a specific writing form of the colloquial Greek language. That means that Francochiotika did not use at any point the more sophisticated version of the Greek language, rather than the vernacular Greek language as it was used by common people. However, since there is not an established system of rules about the Francochiotika, there are many different variations. Sophia could use Greek alphabet while addressing to her husband, a more sophisticated version of writing in Greek. The fact that Sophia was bi-orthographic and multilingual is representative of the multi-ethnic character of Istanbul and the wide usage of Greek language among others such as Armenian, Italian and French. Since

83 Letter, 19/3

84 Letter from Sophia to Elpida, 1958

85 Androtsopoulos, I.K. "From francochiotika to Greeklish" *To vima* newspaper, Nov 24, 2008 <https://www.tovima.gr/2008/11/24/opinions/apo-ta-fragkoxiwtika-sta-greeklish/>

there were many people who could speak Greek but did not know the alphabet, they started writing Greek by using Latin characters. People that used Francochiotika script came mostly from a Catholic background something that is congruent with the usage of Francochiotika script by Elpida's mother, since although she was Orthodox herself, her daughter was Catholic and thus did not obtain the Greek Orthodox education.

Table 1 and 2 below provide how the Latin letters corresponded to Greek sounds in Sophia's letters. It is worth mentioning that these are systematic for the most part with occasional deviations, which may be considered typos or slips of the pen.

Letters of Greek Alphabet	Latin letter used in Francochiotika
A, α	A, a
B, β	V, v
Γ, γ	G, g or Y, y
Δ, δ	D, d
E, ε	E, e
Z, ζ	Z, z
H, η	I, i
Θ, θ	Th, th
I, ι	I, i
K, κ	K, k
Λ, λ	L, l
M, μ	M, m
N, ν	N, n
Ξ, ξ	Ks, ks
O, ο	O, o
Π, π	P, p
Ρ, ρ	R, r
Σ, σ, ς	S, s
T, τ	T, t
Υ, υ	I, i
Φ, φ	F, f
Χ, χ	H, h
Ψ, ψ	Ps, ps
Ω, ω	O, o

Apart from the Greek characters there are some letter combinations as well.

Letter combination in Greek	Letter combination in Latin
Oυ	U or Ou
Oι	I
Eι	I
Aι	E
Eυ	Ef

Table 1 and 2: The correspondence between Greek characters and the Latin characters that are used in the letters written by Sophia in 1950's and 1960's.

If Sophia is a good representation of the cosmopolitan and multilingual nature of the Istanbul community, then we can expect to find a number of lexical borrowings from other languages of the city in her letters. This is indeed the case. Sophia uses a number of words from Turkish, French and Italian. Since Turkish was the language of the larger society, it is not surprising that Turkish words entered in Sophia's lexicon. French words are also expected to be found in her Greek since it was the lingua-franca among the various non-Muslim communities of Istanbul. Italian words were also expected reflecting the multi-ethnic family of Sophia, where her husband's side often spoke Italian. There are many borrowed words from Turkish language in the letters. For example, when Sophia wants to describe a toddler that caresses women legs, she uses the word *edepsizis*, a Turkish word with the Greek male ending *-is*, which means "naughty, shameless". She also uses the word "yavrenios", in order to describe a toddler as a cute boy, which derives from the Turkish word "yavru," which means "baby." In the letter of 15/12/1954 she says that she was never selfish or childish, for the last word she uses "zezzeka", which derives from the Turkish word "zevzek" meaning "silly, talkative."⁸⁶ In the letter 12/3/1954 she uses the word "hani", deriving from the word "hane" in order to refer to her home.⁸⁷

Sophia uses the word "kepazelik" to describe a friend who got drunk at a Christmas celebration. In a letter of 1965 Sophia describes her husband as *keflis*, from the Turkish word "keyifli" meaning "cheerful." In the letter with the date 6/4/1967 Sophia describes how much money she spent on her therapies by using the word *parades*, the Turkish word "para" for money with the Greek plural *-des*. She also uses the word *insalak*, deriving from the Turkish word "inşallah" in order to express a wish that she wants to come true. (Letter 6/4/1967) In many letters, she uses the word *karifis* (referring to man) or *karifissa* (referring to a woman) describing someone as unfortunate. The former comes from the Turkish word "herif," which means "man" often with a negative connotation in modern times. The latter, on the other hand, does not exist in Turkish and seems to be a calque innovated by the Greek community in Istanbul.

Hence, almost in every letter, Sophia mixes Turkish words in the Greek language. This fact indicates that she uses Turkish vocabulary in her everyday life, especially when she refers to daily things such as money, photographs and home or when she uses adjectives to describe the character of a person. Except from that, in the letters there are many French words that are used by the writer. For instance,

86 Letter of Sophia to Elpida 15/12/1954

87 Letter of Sophia to Elpida 12/3/1954

instead of the Greek word, Sophia uses the term *dantist* when she informs her daughter that she will visit the dentist. In addition to that, when she asks her daughter to keep a secret she uses French phrase *entre nous*. She also refers to her aunt as *tantika* a French word with Greek ending.

When the writer wants to describe a visit, she uses the word *visita* which is a French word with Greek ending. Moreover, she uses the word *adrese* referring to an address.⁸⁸ When she talks about Christmas she uses the French word *Noel*, which is also used in Turkish.⁸⁹ Often, it is difficult to determine whether these French words come directly from French or through Turkish as Turkish also borrowed a number of words from French. Another example is the word *posta* referring to the post or the word *bilieto* meaning the ticket. Another example is the word *otobus* in order to describe the bus. She also uses the word *banka* when she talks about bank which all exist in Turkish too.⁹⁰

In the letter of 15/12/1954 Sophia says to her daughter that she wrote a letter to her, because she felt that she had the responsibility to do so. In this sentence she uses the French word *devoir*, “duty”. In the letter 12/3/1954, Sophia uses the word *le date* in order to refer to a date she was mentioning, instead of its Greek equivalent. The fact that she uses the French article *le* indicates that this use is more than borrowing. It is an example of what linguists call “code-switching,” the insertion of words or phrases from one language into another, a common practice among bilingual or multilingual communities. In the letter 15/8/1958 Sophia says that there is no future in Istanbul, by using the word *avenir*.

Sophia in the letter 27/12/1956 uses the word *moral* in order to say that one of her friends keeps hoping. Then she uses the word *traditionel* to refer to the New Year’s traditional dish. In the letter of 15/4/1968 she uses the word *tension* when she refers to her health condition about blood pressure. In the same letter, she says that she has to visit the *dantist* meaning the dentist. In a letter of 1965 she says that she has to do an *analise* for her health. In addition to that, in the letter with the date 20/5/1960 she uses the word *universite* meaning university. In the letter of 16/5/1963 she uses the word *indepandan*, meaning independent. Note the missing silent “t” at the end of the word, which may be a simple typo or an incomplete knowledge of French spelling.

The extensive use of French words indicates that Sophia used French vocabulary in her everyday life. Besides, she could also speak French and she asks her daughter to write her letters in French. However, she does not use extensively Italian

88 Letter of Sophia to Elpida 5/1960

89 Letter of Sophia to Elpida, 28/11/1962

90 Letter of Sophia to Elpida, 28/11/1962

words. In the letter of 15/12/1954 Sophia says that she needs to find a new apartment, by using the Italian word *appartamento*, with a different pronunciation, namely “*partamento*”. Except from that, she uses some phrases in Italian when she transfers the words of her granddaughter Yael in letter 71 *Nona e mia, anche Nonino, tuti tuti sono di Yael* (Grandma and Grandpa are mine, All of them are Yael’s)

The extensive use of borrowed words indicates not only the multi-ethnic background of Istanbul but also the multilingualism as a distinctive characteristic of the Istanbul Greek community where most individuals spoke at least two languages, since they were raised learning both Turkish and Greek. For example, Sophia states in her letters that her granddaughter Yael is able to understand Greek, Turkish, French and Italian. According to the interviews with Piste and Agape, they speak Turkish and Greek, while Ypomone speaks Turkish, Greek and Armenian. The multilingual environment of Istanbul gave them the ability to learn languages easier. Irene speaks French, Italian and English in addition to Turkish and Greek. Elpida is also highly multilingual: She speaks Greek, Turkish, French, Italian and Dutch and English. She is currently learning German.

However, when it comes to interviews it seems that Piste and Agape who lived in Greece have restricted the number of borrowed words that they use. This fact indicates that people that moved from Istanbul to Greece eventually stopped using borrowed words and started replacing them with Greek words. On the contrary, Elpida uses a lot of French words since French is one of her dominant languages.

Some distinctive characteristics of the Istanbul Greek women’s lexical choices

Language gives a lot of information about its native speakers. The evolution of Istanbul Greek is linked to the identity of Istanbul Greek community. Especially, the word *Rum* defines the Istanbul Greek community and distinguishes them from the rest of Greeks. Besides, the Istanbul Greek language together with Greek Orthodox religion is the most distinctive characteristic of the Istanbul Greek community. In addition to that, Francochiotika script is linked with the Greek Catholic and distinguishes it from Greek Orthodox. Because of that, it seems that language reveals a lot about the group that uses it. For example, the borrowed words from Italian and French show the cosmopolitan character of the Istanbul Greek Community. The borrowed words from Turkish reveal the strong interaction between the Greek and Turkish community.

Furthermore, linguistic choices indicate the level of education that someone obtains. For instance, Sophia’s letters were written in Francochiotika because Elpida did not have an education about written Greek language. That’s why Sophia in her letters uses the verbal form of Greek language (Dimotiki). The frequent use of French words proves that she spoke French as well.

Words also imprint specific historic experiences. By using the word *Varlıki*,⁹¹ Istanbul Greeks refer to the tax of 1942 while for many Greeks of modern Greece this word is unknown. The word *Septemvriana*, which describes the pogrom of September 1955, is also a word that carries historic experiences. The use of these words marks an individual's membership to a unique community as they are unbeknownst to outsiders.

Another interesting fact about the language is that The word selection in Sophia's letters is a good example of the Istanbul Greek language used by women since it reveals a lot of information about women of that era. For example, Sophia uses a lot of diminutives and she never uses any insults. Accordingly, women of that era must have good manners and be very gentle.

Last but not least, the common language and way of expression creates bonds between the members of a community. Because of that, Istanbul Greeks who immigrated continue expressing themselves by using the Istanbul Greek idiom, especially when they meet with other Istanbul Greeks but with a diminished number of borrowed words.

Deictic choices: In letters and interviews

In both letters and interviews it is observable the contrast that these women make between themselves and Muslim Turks by using the "us" and "them". In addition to that Piste in her interview used the word "natives" when referring to Muslims in a sarcastic way, since although non-Muslims were also natives in Istanbul they were treated as foreigners. However, the Istanbul Greeks feel as a separate group not only from Muslim Turks but also from Greece's Greeks. Piste refers to them "they did not give us the Greek citizenship; they treated us as foreigners, in contrast to Greek Cypriots who enjoyed privileges such as free transportation. We had to constantly renew our residence permit." This indicates that for Piste it was not only the Turks of Turkey but also the Greeks of Greece who were "they" in her perspective.

The same says Agape shares similar sentiments: "We were treated as illegal immigrants; Greece's Greeks called us Turks and they were telling us to go back to Istanbul." Moreover, Elpida in her interview use the deictic word "they" to refer to Dutch people: "They cannot understand our history" indicating that although she lived in Netherlands her Istanbul background gives her a distinctive identity. Thus, the use of these deictic pronouns indicates the fact that the Istanbul Greek community feels a distinct group from both Turks and Greece's Greeks. Besides they have different historical experiences, a language variation and different traditions; all these compose their Istanbul Greek identity. Hence, these women use the pronoun "we" only to refer to Istanbul Greek/ Rum community.

91 The Turkish word varlık with the Greek ending -i

In the interviews both Elpida and Piste use the word “Romeika” referring to the language that was used by the Istanbul Greek people. The same is noticed in Sophia’s letters, where there is a wide use of the same term in order to refer to the Greek language of Istanbul.

In Turkish, the same term is translated as “Rumca.” This term in combination with the term Romios and Romia, which are used to refer to Greeks in Ottoman Empire, indicates that people of Greek ethnicity living in Istanbul have a distinctive identity. This term derives from the word “Roman”, and is thus historically connected with the Roman and the Eastern Roman Empire (Byzantine Empire). During the Ottoman Empire the word “Rum” was used to refer to the Rum Milleti (Rum Nation), which included all the Ottoman citizens that were practicing the Greek Orthodox religion.

This language choice indicates the connection between Istanbul Greeks and Ottoman Empire. In addition to that, it makes this group different from the rest of the Greeks. Besides, the Istanbul Greeks have a different history. This difference was also reflected in the way Greeks from Istanbul were treated in Greece, confirmed by Piste’s interview, who emphasizes the difficulties she faced when she moved to Athens: On the one hand, she got raised different; Istanbul Greeks had their own costumes and habits. On the other hand, other Greeks would consider her as a foreigner or as a Turk. In the next section, I provide an analysis of the way in which such thoughts, attitudes and feelings can be found between the lines.

2.2 Reading between the lines: A discursive analysis

We have seen that Istanbul Greeks did not feel a part of a Greek society in Greece, but a distinctive group. At the same time, the other Greeks did not consider them as part of their country. anti- minority incidents of the 20th century in Istanbul wish to leave these events in the past. While Sophia had very little reference to the political events of the 1950s and 1960s in her letters, the interviewees chose to keep their description of these events significantly short. This fact highlights the negative impact that the anti-minority methods had towards the members of this minority group.

Through the descriptions of the interviewees it can be perceived that the urban society of Istanbul had many different classes and relations between the classes were rather limited. Thus, the Istanbul society was strictly divided in different classes and people had a very hypocritical behavior. For instance, Elpida points out “The servants could not be in the same company with rich ladies.” The wealth of a family had a determining role for its members. The marriages usually took place between the members of the same social class. Meaning wealthy men would marry wealthy women. In addition to that, the name of a family had a very important role as well. For instance, Elpida informs us that a girl from a notorious family could marry a wealthy man even if she did not have the same financial status with him, only because she carried her notorious family name. Money had the main role when it came to

marriage. For instance, when Elpida's older sister was in school, she had a flirt with a Greek boy who was a student in Zografion School. However, she could not marry him since her parents had not enough money to give them as a dowry.

Women of wealthy families had a good quality of life. They could have a servant for the house chores. Moreover, wealthy women would hire young girls from villages from Anatolia, who could breastfeed their children. In addition to that, they did not have to work, so they were spending their time on visits by drinking tea, playing cards and gossiping. Many time wealthy women could even have extramarital affairs.

Except from that society of Istanbul was *comme il faut*. Women were giving attention to their look and their image. They were dressing in a very modern style. "*Istanbul women of that time were more chic than Parisian women*" emphasizes Piste. Wealthy ladies were choosing to wear diamond jewelry and expensive furs in order to show off their wealth to the rest of their community. Elpida recalls a friend of her mother, who was dressed very expensively and had a very big house with living room and dining room. Everyone was thinking that her family was very wealthy. However, one time, Elpida passed by her house to leave her a message and saw her dressed in a dirty robe and all the rooms in her house were sealed. All of her family was gathered in grandmother's room, since it was the only heated room. It was very important for families with wealthier backgrounds to keep things that way even if it meant they had to pretend they were rich. Through both the interviews and the letters it can be noticed that Istanbul of the last century had a cosmopolitan and multi-ethnic character. In addition to the Istanbul Greek community, which was consisted by Greeks with Turkish or Greek citizenship, there were other groups as well. More specifically, there were Jews, Armenians and Western Europeans. Every community had its own educational institutes, but they were distributed through the neighbors of Istanbul. That way, the different communities lived harmonically in the same city.

Sophia in her letters talks about her Turkish neighbors, her Jewish friend Albert, and her Greek friend with whom she spent her time in the evenings. Sophia was Orthodox and her husband Catholic. The daughter that she had from her first marriage was also Orthodox but her two other children were Catholics. Her daughter Nounia, an Orthodox, was married with a Jew. Ypomone married with an Armenian. Hence, the mixed marriages between the communities of Istanbul were quite common. Irene in her interview highlights the cosmopolitanism and the tolerance of Istanbul; she explains that she was Orthodox and her husband was Catholic. Thus, every year she and her husband were celebrating both Easters: the Catholic in Istanbul and the Orthodox in Athens. "There was not any fanaticism" she points out.

By comparing the letters and the content of the interviews it seems that they give a different description of Istanbul. On the one hand, in her letters Sophia is very restricted when she talks about the political incidents that take place. However, in a

few sentences she describes how difficult this period was, full of bad feelings such as fear and insecurity. A couple of her friends plan to emigrate from Istanbul as soon as possible. “Today Marika and Akis came to the house; they are getting ready to migrate to Canada, because they got scared here. They are afraid mostly because they are natives here” Sophia writes to her daughter. In another letter she describes how Nunia is afraid to stay alone “Nunia is getting scared with the stories that she heard (6/9/1955).” Because of that, she is content that her daughter, Elpida, lives in the Netherlands. “I am so happy that you are in a beautiful country with a good husband beside you. I feel peaceful and thankful to God that you are happy. I hope that I will see Bertiylo and Nunia married but away from here. Then I will be the happiest mother, because I will know that they are away from this dangerous place.” However she tried to not lose all of her hopes. “It will pass as everything did.”

On the other side, while it is obvious from the letters that Sophia, a Greek mother, was worried about the dangers of Istanbul to her children there, the interviews have a more nostalgic tone, often remembering Istanbul as a great place to be. The interviewees miss the Istanbul that it does not exist anymore. The interviewees focus mostly on their joyful memories and the cosmopolitan character of Istanbul; as time passes, they try to forget and distance themselves from all the bad incidents. Besides, they have lived away from their real “home.” For instance Piste felt especially unwelcomed in Greece. Even Irene, who is still living in Istanbul, highlights how difficult it was for Istanbul Greeks to live in Greece as migrants. “It is not easy for people to leave their homeland. Especially back then when people did not travel very often. They were afraid of the *unknown*.”

Besides, neither Piste nor Agape can forget Istanbul; they keep its memory in their minds. In the documentary *Adieu Istanbul* Marina Kyriakopoulou states that: “Constantinople is not a city but it is a way of living, a feeling. The city speaks to you. Breath that is Istanbul”⁹² Similarly, Agape in her poem says that no other city was praised like her and in her interviews adds that “Although we were banished from our homeland, our souls will return there.” These very sentimental and intense words reveal the strong emotions that these women have for the city, where they were born and raised. Everyone who experienced the September pogrom of 1955, the memories of the incidents are enduring. Anna Dimitriou Doptoglou in her testimony remembers the fear that she felt that night. She was 13 years old and she recalls herself wishing she had wings to fly away to a secure place. She also refers to her Jewish neighbor who declared that the attacks were justified because of the fire in the house of Atatürk. Finally, she thanks a Turk tenant of the building who saved them by giving order to the doorkeeper to prevent any attackers. An anonymous woman recalls an unknown man warning her and her husband to avoid speaking in Greek while their Turkish neighbor after that night got expensive things like furs, since many people who

92 Dieter Sauter “Adieu Istanbul” Documentary

participated in the pogrom took the opportunity to steal expensive goods from the Greek shops.⁹³

Konstantia Georgiadou Vezani was inside her house, when after the suggestion of her neighbor, with whom she used to drink coffee until that night, the crowd attacked her house. They broke the windows but their door did not break so they left them to continue their catastrophic work. She also highlights that they felt like hostages, since they had Turkish citizenship but they were not Turks and at the same time they were not Greeks, they were Rums. Another woman recalls that night that she was pregnant and the crowd attacked her house. They were telling her to go to Athens, since Turks will take over the Greek houses.⁹⁴

An anonymous woman who was in the 8th month of her pregnancy confesses how they stayed out of danger thanks to their doorkeeper. However, her husband -a Greek citizen- was not lucky for a second time, since he was deported in 1964⁹⁵. Iro Athinaïou recalls how the Turkish government obligated her family to leave their house twice with the justification that it was too large. The same happened to other large houses of Rums as well. She also recalls the Varlık Tax and how her father was exiled to Aşkale of Erzurum, since he was not able to pay the tenfold tax. During 1955, she was 22 years old and she was working in a store in Pera, which was completely ruined by the crowd. Her house was saved by the Turkish neighbors who claimed that there were not any Christians in the neighborhood.⁹⁶ Piste was very young when the September pogrom took place. Her father had to leave the house in order to find her brother, who was currently working in a jewelry store. However, she, her mother and her younger sister remained at home. In order to protect them, her mother asked them to go and hide in the neighbor's garden, which was a French property. At last, one of their neighbors, a Turkish woman, informed them that they had to turn on the lights and hang the Turkish flag. Not only that, but when the crowd approached their house asking where the house of Piste's father was, the same neighbor told that there were not any Greeks living in the neighborhood.

Agape and her mother were at their home that night, but her father was in Athens for a visit. The crowd came to her house and broke all of the windows.

93 Tsoukatou Editions, *The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul*, page 86

94 Tsoukatou Editions, *The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul*, page 93

95 Tsoukatou Editions, *The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul*, page 108

96 Tsoukatou Editions, *The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul*, page 119

Fortunately, Ahmet –son of a Pasha- with one of his friends came to help them escape. She also indicates that other families were not that lucky, such as her husband’s family: the crowd invaded their house, broke and destroyed everything. Terrible things happened that night: they burned churches, destroyed houses, insulted women. Agape claims that only the Patriarchate knows the exact truth. She also expresses her fear for the content of this thesis and adds that it is better to focus on the positive things.

Irene was thirteen years old and she was living in her house in Kinaliada. When a ship arrived at the port with a crowd of protestors, the mayor of the island did not let the ship anchor in the port. That’s how all the Greek houses of the island were saved from destruction. However, the next day they heard the news of what happened. Ypomone was seven years old when the crowd tried to burn their house but their neighbors stopped them by telling them that there were five children in the house. Her father threw her and her siblings from the window to the backyard. However, the crowd took all the fruits of the nearby grocery store and threw them to their house breaking all the windows. After that they moved to another house.

All these memories express the fear women felt during these events. Most of them agree that until the pogrom they lived harmonically together with Muslims. However, after that night everything changed. The cruelty of the pogrom in combination with the indifference from both Turkish and Greek government filled them with insecurity and despair. They could not hope for a better future; they had to protect themselves and their children. Thus, gradually families took the decision to migrate. After all these years, the wish to forget what happened seems marked their souls. For instance, Agape says “You can be friends with Turks but when it comes to their country, they become beasts. There is so much cruelty in this world and I have experienced it.” Similarly, Piste says “I wish I could forget what happened. It was very tough.”

An important fact drawn by both the letters and the interviews is how Turkish population was seen by the Istanbul Greek women. Even though according to the interviews there were neighborhoods in Istanbul where Istanbul Greeks were gathered, these neighborhoods were multi-ethnic. Thus, Istanbul Greek women used to associate with both Muslims and non-Muslims. Their everyday life included communication with a lot of Muslims, thus they often developed friendships with Muslims or they would just preserve friendly relations with their Muslim neighbors.

However, the only thing that was not socially accepted was the marriage between Muslims and Non-Muslims. In her interview Elpida highlights her mother’s apparent contradiction: On the one hand, her mother was glad that she did not get married with a Muslim man; on the other hand, she took care of her Muslim neighbor when he got ill and she offered him some soup. Piste also in her interview confesses that even if she loves all people and she prays for their well-being, one of her reasons behind her migration to Greece was that she did not want her children to be with Muslims.

These ideas may seem strange and contradictive; however, they reflect the histories of these people, who during the Ottoman Empire learned to live next to each other, but at the same time, each one was under a different system of traditions and customs. Thus, both Muslims and non-Muslims learned to coexist but at the same time they aimed to preserve their distinct cultures.

Regarding the political incidents, Piste in her interview emphasized the lifesaving aid by her Muslim neighbor “Our family was very lucky since one of our neighbors, a Turkish woman, told us to turn on the lights and hang the Turkish flag. Not only that, but when the crowd approached our house asking where the house of Mr. Anastasis is, (my father) the same neighbor answered that there were not any Greeks living in the neighborhood. On the contrary, a testimony in the book “The incidents of September 1955: The Crystal Night of Greeks of Istanbul” describes: “I was inside my house, when after the incitement of my neighbor, with whom I used to drink coffee until that night, the crowd attacked my house. They broke the windows but our door did not break so they left us to continue their catastrophic work. Me and my family felt like hostages, since we had Turkish citizenships but we were not Turks and at the same time we were not Greece’s Greeks, we were Istanbul Rums” (Istanbul Greeks)

Thus, although a very common practice of people is to generalize, Istanbul Greek women in their interviews do not generalize and do not blame all the Turks for the September pogrom and the other anti-minority measures. In contrast, they give a more critical view and they highlight the fact that many times Greek Istanbulites got help from Turks. Hence, they notice that the Istanbul Greek community was the victim of the political climate of that era.

Concluding remarks

In this chapter the main goal was to show how the historical experiences of a community influence their linguistic choices by focusing on the language use of five distinct Greek women of Istanbul. Firstly, the cosmopolitan lifestyle and the multilingualism in their everyday life are imprinted in the borrowed words that they widely use and the fact that the letters are written in Greek language with Latin alphabet making a very rare combination for that time. Moreover, the comparison between “us” versus “them” puts the limits of a community, namely Istanbul Greek women who use the pronoun “we” only in order to refer to other members of the Istanbul Greek community. However, they use “they” in order to refer to all the other groups such as Turks and Greece’s Greeks. This fact is reasonable, since the specific historical experiences have created a distinct identity from all the other groups.

Except from that Furthermore, this chapter has focused on the linguistic characteristics of the letters and the interviews that are larger than individual words: not only how Istanbul Greek women perceive their identity, but also how they feel

about the past incidents, since it seems that none of them have forgotten these experiences and many of them still feel the strong insecurity they felt those years. In addition to that, this chapter shows how they feel about their homeland and the society. Last but not least, there is a focus on how they think about Turks; the interesting fact is that they do not generalize but accept that there are both good and bad people, and focus on the help they got from them.

Hence, this chapter aims that the use of language reveals much information about its speakers. The incorporation of many borrowed words, the comparison between “us” and “them”, their characterization as “Rums” instead of Greeks or Orthodox Turks, the nostalgia about their homeland all indicate that their language has been shaped by the historical experiences of the previous century.

Conclusion

The main subject of this thesis was the status of Greek minority women in Istanbul in 1940's 1950's, 1960's. At first, the focus was given to the political climate in order to understand which factors influenced the Greek women of that era: the Varlık Tax, the Pogrom of September 1955 and finally the deportation of Greek citizens on 1964 had a strong impact on the Istanbul Greek community and women in particular. The second chapter focused on the lexical choices of Istanbul Greek women and how their historical experiences shaped their language and identity.

The past

In the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's, Istanbul was a multicultural society, where, despite the political troubles, people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds were living together. Therefore, Istanbul of that era constitutes an interesting case to study in order to understand the different dynamics of the multicultural society. This thesis presented the different aspects of the life of Greek community in Istanbul and how its status changed in the 20th century. A community of a high financial status, with many social activities and its own linguistic variety was gradually eradicated, since many anti-minority measures were enforced by the Turkish government in order to weaken the minorities, which had an active role in the economy of Turkey. Namely, because of their financial status the minorities- especially the Greek minority- were fronted as a threat for the stability of the state. This fact, in combination with the fact that the minorities were unable to react and find support led to the decrease of the minority populations.

The main focus was on the women of this community, who had a secondary role in the politics and economics, but they had a leading role in the family and the society. Besides, Istanbul Greek women of that era were educated, since most of them had at least primary education. Women that came from a family with a higher financial status were the most educated, since they were able to continue their studies in high school and even university. At the same time, they spoke many foreign

languages, such as French and Italian. On the other hand, women that came from families with a lower financial status were taught embroidery, sewing and other ways in order to earn money. Marriage was a significant moment in their lives, since the financial status of the husband was decisive for their own financial status. Therefore, the parents of a girl would try to find a wealthy partner for their daughter with the help of a matchmaker. However, in many cases, women were able to marry the man they loved if their parents agreed. Women originated from wealthy families were often able to divorce their husband if they had the support from their family. They were also able to have a second marriage.

Women were particularly affected by the political climate of that era, since they had to face changes in their family, such as exile of male family members and financial problems, due to the anti-minority measures. Therefore, they had to become more independent and protect the children and the old men when men were not around. Besides, they had to protect themselves from any attack.

Despite these radical changes they had to act like nothing has happened and that life continues as before. Namely, they had to encourage not only themselves but also the other members of the family to move forward. Because of that women struggled to find solutions in order to protect and secure their family, although they need to give up on something. For example, during the deportation of Greek citizens in 1964, Greek women with Turkish citizenship preferred to follow their husbands to Greece and leave their motherland.

Women of this period had a multi-faceted role. She was the center of the family, while she also made her first steps outside her home. In comparison with the previous generation of women, the Greek women of the 20th century had better chances to get educated, find jobs and choose their future husbands.

The present

Nowadays, the situation has changed a lot; the most important fact is that the Greek community of Istanbul counts approximately 1800 people.⁹⁷ That means that it does not have an active role in the politics or economics of the Turkish state. Most of the Greeks of Istanbul migrated to Greece since they lost their properties. However, today many of them are able to claim their property back and receive compensation.⁹⁸ However, a number of them are not able to claim them because the Turkish government does not include them in the land registry. In addition to that there are many Greek citizens who did not originate from Istanbul but because of the financial crisis in the Greek state, they choose to migrate to Istanbul and build their life there.

97Hellenic Electronic Center: "Greek Minority in Turkey"

http://www.greece.org/main/index.php?option=com_content&id=446&Itemid=400

98 Constantinoupoli.com(2017) Learn if you can claim your property in Istanbul

Besides, mixed marriages between Greeks and Turks are not that rare anymore, since society is more tolerant to this phenomenon.

Women -not only in the Istanbul Greek community- have been more empowered. In addition to that they can have a higher education and practice most of the jobs, while they remain the central figure in the family. Namely, women have many different tasks, but they are also more independent.

Regarding tolerance towards minorities, Turkey has changed its country profile to an international destination for tourists. That way, Turkey has also highlighted its multicultural and cosmopolitan history in order to attract more visitors. Greeks of Istanbul that have migrated to Greece or any other country like to visit Istanbul frequently in order to go for shopping, enjoy the food and generally remember the Istanbul lifestyle. Even the descendants of the Istanbul Greeks who have not lived in Istanbul want to visit it in order to experience this city. Unfortunately, it seems that the Greek language of Istanbul is going to become extinct, since it is mostly used by older people.

The future

Despite any potential political rivalries between Greece and Turkey, common people of both countries will always feel close to each other because of the many similarities that they have. As the years pass by and the society distances itself from the incidents of the previous century, it is easier to perceive the mistakes of the past in order to not repeat them again. Thus, people will be able to understand better and appreciate the diversity.

On the one hand, people should study the history of the past and understand the multidimensional reality of it. On the other hand, they have to respect the diversity and appreciate the minorities. Therefore, in the future people should be aware of any anti-minority measures of the past and their effects. They should not front minorities as a threat but as an enrichment of the society. The dialogue between cultures and civilizations should always be promoted. Besides, the tolerant societies are always the most prosperous.

To sum up, the case of the Greek minority of Istanbul is an interesting part of the modern history of minorities, since it is obvious how a minority can be used as a pressure lever when the bilateral relations encounter a period of turmoil. However, in order to not consider the minorities only as a pressure lever, the effects of the anti-minority measures should be studied in depth. That way, it is possible to understand the transformation of the Greek minority in Istanbul throughout modern history.

A focus should be given not only to the historic facts but also to the impact that these events had on people since by studying the past the mankind will not repeat the same mistakes. Besides, in the year of 2023 the centennial of the Treaty of Lausanne, the agreement that established the base of the Greek- Turkish relations of the Modern Era, will take place. This is a great opportunity in order to honor the minorities by highlighting their historical value and importance.

Appendix 1: 3 significant letters around the time of the September Pogrom and the Greek deportation of 1964

Letter 49, 3/10/1955

Dear Elpida,

Today I received your letter and I am writing to you immediately. I am very sorry that until the day that you wrote the letter you have not received the surprise [that I sent you], I will be very sad if you will not receive it. If you do so, you will be both very surprised. Tomorrow, it is 4th of October, I hope that you will not forget about Frank, here everyone will join us to drink a raki as we always do.

The chairs that we repaired are very beautiful; they have green color and a small white plaid, as for the divan I chose the style alameriken with a beautiful green linen and buttons in the mattress. [Your father] told me that he will buy new chairs for the dining room, but they cost 70 liras each and his money are not enough. Let it be. We keep our patience.

In the kitchen I had a shelf, which one day broke together with all the glasses that I had on it. Now we buy some new when we have money, because they are so expensive.

Today Marika and Akis came to the house; they are getting ready to migrate to Canada, because they got scared here. Besides they are afraid because they are native in this land. It will pass as everything did. I am so happy that you are in a beautiful country with a good husband beside you. I feel peaceful and thankful to God that you are happy. I hope that I will see Bertiylo and Nunia married but away from here. Then I will be the happiest mother, because I will know that they are away from this dangerous place. When you get the packet, please write me some words in order to be sure [that you got it]. The packet is arranged to arrive on 24th or on 25th of the month, because of that I believe that you have already received it until now. Now, I have to leave you to go to the kitchen, it is half past six at the afternoon and we will get gathered one by one. Now I have one more daughter Kalipi, fortunately enough she has me.

Yesterday, Tantika was here and she drank some raki. Albertikos was also here.

Greetings to all of you, I send a kiss to both of you

Mami

Letter 50, 17/10/1955

Dear Elpida,

Last night, I saw you in my dream. Whenever that happens I receive a letter from you, so I hope today to receive one. Yesterday, Tanti came here at the afternoon. We discussed a lot about you, since we are looking forward to learn news about your party. Some days the weather is good, some days it is raining. Today, I will go to Nunia, but I feel lazy going outside. She does not have any work at all. Nunia did not hire Efi, who got engaged with someone that was flirting with her. Efi is very pretty, but Nunia does not have new projects to work on. Efi was a company for Nunia, who now is getting scared with the stories that she heard (6/9/1955).

I am sorry that you did not receive the surprise that I sent you, but the pilot who had brought you the olives was sick and therefore he did not come in Istanbul. Bertyl's friend could not send your gift. Never mind; it was not anything important, just four fresh eggplants from our garden, never mind, now that Mafaldina will visit you, you will be very happy with your gifts. Two days ago, your father sent you something by the post. When you get it, write him a letter. Do not forget your father even if he does not write to you. The next week I will take a photo with little Akis and I will send it to you. He is so cute, genial and well-raised. Without exaggerations he is handsome, Nounia can tell you. Your father really loves him. Akis calls him "*Flanzi*, please come near me". He also wants to eat appetizers and drink beer or raki. The other day, I went with him to Alikí' house. He is not tiring me at all.

When we went back home he told me "Bravo Sophia that you took me for a promenade". Do not that only your sister's-in-law son is cute. Our country has very cute kids as well.

Now I am leaving you, it is morning time and I want to finish with my house chores. Then I will boil some Cichorium that Aise brought me.

Greetings to everyone in the house and give your little boy a hug from me.

I send kisses to both of you

Mami

Letter 60, 9/5/1964

Dear Elpida,

We are so happy now that we have a granddaughter as well; what a pity that I am not by your side to babysit her, I love babies so much. You wrote as that our baby is very beautiful. However, I would not change Pepe with anyone, I also love Johan and your baby very much, I love Nounouka's children too. But Pepe is always in my heart: his cute face, his laugh and his naughtiness. Pepe is mine. The other day Nounouka paid a visit to us. I teased her that she will have three children as well, but she said she would not have more children. Let it be...In a few days we are leaving for the countryside, but for now the weather is still that cold that today we had to turn on the heater. I do not like that much going to the sea, because I do not have a swimsuit and I feel hot while watching other people swimming. But I do it for your father's sake.

How is your baby? Is it good? Be careful not to tire yourself out. Fortunately enough Frank is a good husband and he will help you a little bit. I can imagine his happiness now that he has a daughter. I wish her to live long and prosper and I wish you to see her grown and happy. I do not have many news for now, I am really sad that Alikí will leave, because she is Greek. I spent a good time with her. This year I will not have Pepe with me in the countryside. Fortunately, I will have the company of my two puppets, tell it to Johan. I leave you now; I have not drunk any coffee, because we do not have any coffee again.

Mami

Brother Bertyl

Appendix 2: Summaries of the remaining letters

In the first chapter of the thesis there is a presentation of Elpida's family background. In this appendix there are the summaries of all the letters. In addition to that, three letters were chosen to be translated, since they show the impact of the political events of that era in the life of Sophia and her friends. Elpida the daughter of Sophia and Franz was living in Istanbul until she met her future husband, Frank. In 1954 she moved with him in the Netherlands. The letters are written by Sophia (Mami) and the receiver is her daughter Elpida. The period of that letters is 1954-1969. The summaries follow a chronological order; however some letters did not include any date.

1954

- **Letter 56, 12/3/1954**

Elpida's marriage is approaching and her mother asked her if she found a new apartment to move in.

- **Letter 22, 9/12/1954**

Mami says to Elpida that if she thinks she will not be happy with Frank to write back to her. Mami misses her daughter so much. She is always thinking of her.

- **Letter 21, 22/12/1954**

Mami is displaying to Elpida all her objections about her potential marriage. Moreover she elaborates on the reason that Elpida should be more pragmatic with her emotions. On December 18 was Mami's 24th wedding anniversary with Babas (Franz).

- **Letter 23, 6/12/1954**

Everyone is worried about the arguments that Elpida is having with Frank. If Elpida loves Frank she should be patient but if he is stubborn and makes Elpida suffer, Sophia will buy her a ticket to return home.

1955

- **Letter 53, 11/1/1955**

On Sunday Sophia and Franz moved to their new apartment, but they have more repairing to do. Fortunately enough, they have the help of their friends and family.

- **Letter 54, 22/2/1955**

Sophia is very sad that Elpida is ill. She recommends her to be very careful. She should also ask the doctor to visit her in order to get better. If she is not able to write letters, then it is better to not write to her mother. However, she should not keep as a secret her illness.

- **Letter 52, 7/2/1955**

The day before Sophia with her husband visited Nounia and Kakniem. Sophia sends to Elpida the addresses of some extended family members that live in Athens.

- **Letter 25, 12/2/1955**

Sophia congratulates Elpida for her decision to get married with Frank. She mentions to Elpida that Frank is a good person and he will adore Elpida although he has a cold personality.

- **Letter 51, 4/3/1955**

Sophia says to her daughter that she does not have to worry because she does not have the time to write a letter to everyone. She is happy that Elpida has a good relationship with her sister-in-law. Sophia has injections for her rheumatism. Elpida's father promised that when she gets married in the church he will make an announcement in the local newspaper.

- **Letter 46, 20/3/1955**

Elpida's family sends her wishes for her birthday in French and Greek.

- **Letter 26, 17/3/1955**

Sophia wishes Elpida happy birthday and to live happily with Frank for the rest of their lifetime.

- **Letter 24, 27/3/ 1955**

Sophia wishes Elpida for her wedding to always be happy without arguments. She is sure that she will find happiness with Frank. Mami sends her best wishes and kisses even though she is far away.

- **Letter 44, 21/4/1955**

Sophia prepared a stuffed lamb, since she had many guests for the Easter. She is happy about her daughter, because she will travel to Paris. Sophia advises her daughter that she should maintain a good relationship with both her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law. Lastly, she anticipates receiving a new photo of Elpida with her husband.

- **Letter 48, 10/6/1955**

Sophia has a tooth pain and she takes 5 aspirins a day. She also hit her finger and now she cannot sew. However, whenever she is able she sends packets of goodies to her daughter.

- **Letter 43, 29/8/1955**

Sophia sent to her daughter a kilo of olives with the help of a Dutch pilot. She is really sad that Elpida had some health issues. She thinks that a visit of Elpida in Istanbul will be beneficial for her health.

- **Letter 45, 21/11/1955**

It's been a year that Elpida moved away from Istanbul and four years that Nunia got married. Sophia is very satisfied from the new apartment, because it is near to both her husband's office and the tram stop. Nounia sewed for Sophia a "demi-season" skirt suit. The prices in Turkey have been increased.

1956

- **Letter 35, 31/1/1956**

Sophia feels tired and depressed these days, she gets up to do some chores but then she spends her time in the bed. Although, doctor suggested her to go out every day she does not have the mood to do that. Lastly, she describes the gifts that she received for the 25th anniversary of marriage.

- **Letter 37, 2/3/1956**

Sophia is worried about Elpida's health, because she believes that she is very sensitive especially when the weather gets really cold. Elpida's father is very upset with the fact that the space heater in Elpida's house does not work.

- **Letter 39, 30/3/1956**

Sophia and her husband celebrated Elpida's birthday in Arnavutköy and she sends her wishes to Elpida with this letter.

- **Letter 38, 26/4/1956**

Mami would like to hear news from Elpida every week. Sophia and her husband had a small feast in order to celebrate Elpida's father name day.

- **Letter 40, 23/5/1956**

Sophia sends the recipe of kus-bassi (kuşbaşı) to Elpida. Sophia is shocked with the increasing prices in Turkey. Except from that, her dresses are old but Nunia does not have time to make her a new one. In addition to that, Sophia does not like Nunia's husband, because of that she does not want to visit Nunia in her house.

- **Letter 28 25/10/1956**

Elpida is pregnant and Sophia thinks that she will give birth to a girl. The weather was terrible. Nunia was jealous about Elpida not sending her a photograph.

- **Letter 41, 18/11/1956**

Sophia sends different packets of goodies to Elpida with K.L.M. She notices that people save money because there are many problems in politics. However, Sophia is happy because they will buy a telephone for their home. She hopes that she will have the chance to meet her daughter again one day.

- **Letter 59, 27/12/1956**

It got more difficult to send packages to Elpida, because of a new law. The Balik Pazar is empty, since there not many people to shop. Sophia is sure that Elpida had more fun during Christmas time.

1957

- **Letter 29, 14/1/1957**

Sophia is having a diet because she gained more weight, because of that she could not fit in any of her clothes. She is looking forward for the birth of her third grandchild, Elpida's second baby.

- **Letter 36, 24/1/1957**

Sophia feels thankful, because Elpida's mother-in-law is very kind and supportive to Elpida. She is very happy that Elpida gave birth to another child. In addition to that, Sophia is sure that until Elpida receives the letter she will not remember the labor pains that she felt.

After that, Sophia continues the letter using the Greek alphabet, since she addresses to Frank: She congratulates her son-in-law for the newborn baby. She hopes that one day she will have the pleasure to meet Frank's mother and thank her for everything.

1958

- **Letter 10 (1958?)**

Sophia informs her daughter it's been 4 years since she moved to Netherlands, but she will write her a longer letter next week.

- **Letter 15, 19/3/1958?**

On March 20th is the birthday of Elpida. Her mother recalls the celebrations that they had every year when Elpida was living with her parents. Sophia sent to her daughter a packet with gifts, including some okra and some split peas. She also gives her a recipe how to prepare them.

- **Letter 33, 22/5/1958**

Sophia is so happy that Elpida and her family will be paying a visit to them. Nanaki's photographs were great and she looks forward hugging him. Jonis lives in Canada and his family is possibly moving to Canada as well, since life in Istanbul is not easy anymore.

- **Letter 30, 5/6/1958**

Sophia does not want any presents. Her only desire is to meet Elpida's family as soon as possible. Every night, Sophia is dreaming about Elpida's family.

- **Letter 12, 1/8/1958?**

It's been a long time since Sophia heard news from her daughter she hopes that they are all doing well. Weather in Istanbul is soother. As soon as Mami return to Istanbul she will write a new letter to her daughter.

- **Letter 34, 4/8/1958 (This letter is two times in the list: Letter 57, 4/8/1955)**

A long time passed without a new letter from Elpida. Mami is happy because Elpida and her family are all doing well. If Elpida needs anything such as olives or okras se should ask her father. Babis will send her whatever she needs. Sophi asks Elpida to send a letter to her aunt Kalliope. Sophia helped Tantika to find a new housemaid. She is also very satisfied with her apartment in Sisli. However, her husband does not have energy lately.

- **Letter 58, 15/8/1958**

Sophia recalls the time that she spent with her grandson Johan. Christians have a very important celebration on August 15; the Dormition of the Mother of God, because of that Sophia will visit some of her friends and family members. She wishes that Bertyl would stay in the Netherlands, because there is no future in Istanbul, especially now with the new law that increases the prices even more.

- **Letter 42, 18/8/1958**

Sophia describes her everyday life in Sisli. She is glad that her daughter is learning how to sew, because it will help her save some money. She adds that she is happy that Elpida lives in the Netherlands, because it is a safer place than Istanbul, as always she advises her daughter to take care of herself.

1959

Letter 31, 17/3/1959

Sophia sends all her best wishes for Elpida's wedding anniversary and her birthday. The weather is cold but the central heating is working well. Easter is coming so Sophia is wishing her a happy Easter too.

Bertyl continues the letter writing in French: He forgot the letter in his pocket for two days. He sends greetings to Elpida and Frank. He also wishes to her a happy birthday.

Letter 32, 23/7/1959

Bertyl has sailed and Sophia gave him some presents for Elpida's family as he might pay a visit to her. Frank told to Babis that he and Elpida will visit them in 1960.

At the end of the letter Babis adds in French that he is waiting for Elpida's news.

Letter 47, 24/9/1959

Bertyl will visit Elpida in the Netherlands. Sophia is very happy that her daughter has two children and she thinks she should not have more. Sophia needs help with the house chores, because of that Maryam came to help her clean the house.

After that she addresses to Bertyl saying she is happy that he will visit Elpida.

1960

- **Letter 70, 18/3/1960**

Mami asks her daughter to send to Nounia the measurements of Johan in order to knit him a sweater. On Wednesday Aunt Vendredi (Greek: Paraskevi) visited Sophia's house. Mami every time that she reads the newspaper "Thesaurus" she thinks about Frank.

- **Letter 67, 20/5/1960**

Nounouka is very busy lately. Sophia spends her time with the grandchild of her neighbor, Ilham bey. Bertyl has exams in the university. Aunt Paraskevi from Athens invited Sophia to her home; she is willing to pay her the ticket.

1962

- **Letter 16, 16/1/1962**

It is the 31st wedding anniversary of Sophia and her husband. Sophia is saving money to buy presents for her daughter and her grandsons. Sophia lost weight because she was on a diet. Sophia thinks Johan is very delicate. She wishes to host him at her place for 3 or 4 months in the summertime. She believes it will be very beneficial for him, because he will be chubbier, when he returns to his house.

- **Letter 17 (continuation of letter 16), 16/1/1962**

Sophia hopes that her letter finds Elpida and her family well. Life has its good and bitter moments. Sophia is sad because Elpida's family did not spend the Christmas holidays with Sophia and Franz, since Johan was sick.

- **Letter 14: 1962?**

It's snowing in Istanbul and therefore Sophia stays at her home. She keeps herself occupied with the house chores. She also wants to make a coat for her two grandsons Johan and Pepe and she will buy a coat for her daughter as well. She asks Elpida to not write her in francochiotika script because she cannot understand it. It is easier for her to read French.

- **Letter 65, 28/11/1962**

Sophia says to her daughter that she should not be worried about Pepe, many children start to speak in an older age. Besides, he can understand what his family is saying to him. Franz is missing Johan so much and he is looking forward to see him again.

1963

- **Letter 61 (1963?)**

Sophia says that everyone looks very good-looking in the last photograph that her daughter sent to her, especially her two grandsons. Mami feels sorry that she is not able to send the newspaper "Thesaurus" to Frank. Nounia is on the 5th month of her pregnancy. Sophia is happy that Elpida's family moved to a bigger house.

- **Letter 69, 16/5/1963**

Sophia and Franz are looking forward to meet their grandchildren again. Mami asks her daughter to buy a gift for Nounouka. Willys and his wife often visit Sophia and they spend time together. Bertyl is facing difficulties to find a job.

- **Letter 72, 17/8/1963**

It's been a month since Elpida and her family returned to their home and Sophia really misses them. If Elpida needs anything Mami can send it to her with the help of Brigita. Sophia and her husband are still on vacations in Burgas.

1964

- **Letter 20, 11?/3/1964**

Sophia is wishing happy birthday to her daughter. Sophia had a dream about Elpida when she was sleeping. Sophia plans to send handmade presents for the newborn baby girl next week. Sophia writes to Elpida not to get tired and to be careful, since before you notice time flies.

- **Letter 11 (1964?)**

Sophia bought broad beans that her husband really loves to eat. Her health is getting better and aunt Paraskevi will send her some money in order to have her therapy. Today she ate 3 apples and one piece of bread and she drank a tea and a coffee, since she is on a diet. The previous day she had her hair done. She is happy that Johan remembers her and she hopes that Pepe will talk soon. She will take a photo to send it to her daughter. Although she misses her daughter she recognizes that it is better that she is not in Istanbul anymore, since it is not easy to go outside anymore.

Sophia sent to her daughters some handmade shocks and she will make a tablecloth for Elpida together with the help of Nounouka. Tanti will also make some towels. Sophia also says to her daughter that she believes that another child will be too difficult to handle.

1965

- **Letter 63, 1965?**

Sophia feels that she gets older and she has not the same energy to do things, because she gets tired easily. However, she is happy because both Bertyl and Nounouka look after her. Nounouka's daughter is very cute and lovely. Sophia wishes to see Bertyl married as well. She also keeps the newspaper "Thesaurus" for her son-in-law, Frank.

1966

- **Letter 64, 1/11/1966**

Sophia and Franz are now in Burgas. Sophia considers finding a new apartment because she and her husband got tired using the stairs. She is very happy because she has the company of Nounouka's daughter, Yael. She is a little coquette and an

adorable girl. The little girl understands French, Turkish and Istanbul Greek, so Sophia is wondering which language she will choose to use.

1967

- **Letter 68, 6/4/1967**

Bertyl is getting married soon and Sophia wishes to see him having children as well. Franz has high blood pressure but he does not follow the doctor's recommendations. Sophia lost 10 kilos during the period that she was ill. Nounouka's daughter is so adorable girl.

- **Letter 71, After 1967**

Nounouka is really upset that her house is not ready yet and she often fights with her husband. Sophia asks Elpida to write her a letter in order to calm her down. Yael is jealous of her cousin, because she wants her grandparents only for herself. Sophia is very happy and satisfied with her daughter-in-law. She hopes that her son will make her happy. Sophia is afraid that if she gets older he will be grumpy.

1968

- **Letter 62, 15/4/1968**

Sophia is writing this letter the second day of Easter. Mami and Babis really miss their daughter and her children. Sophia has some health issues and she needs to take some pills. Nounouka's child is growing up and understands both Turkish and Istanbul Greek. Franz has some health issues as well. The next day is Franz's birthday and on April 18th is the birthday of Elpida's daughter, Elisabeth.

Letters without date

- **Letter 1 24/1 (before 1964)**

Sophia misses her daughter but she is happy that she found a good husband. She concerns her daughter to look after her health and she informs her that Nounouka

made some baby clothes for Elpida's new born baby. She describes also her everyday life such as that the weather gets colder and that Every Wednesday Sophia visits Nounouka's house together with other friends such as Violeta, Yola and Piste. colder and she talks about her house chores, since Monday is her laundry day.

She describes also how the day that she had visitors she prepared them traditional food such as fish with vegetables in the oven (papaz yahnisi) and vine leaf rolls (dolma). Her husband-Elpida's father- had a cold and because of that he stayed in his room for three days. However, she is happy with him, since at Christmas he complimented her and told her that she is the most beautiful woman.

Letter 2

Sophia is getting ready to move in her country house in Burgas in order to spend the summertime, however the weather changes every day: sometimes it rains and sometimes it is warm. Since her husband is still working he won't be every day there. They are also preparing for the arrival of Elpida, who along with her family will spend some days there. Sophia anticipates seeing her daughter again and drinking coffee with her, while having a chit chat. She will also give to her daughter 500 liras in order to spend them however she wants.

Letter 3

Many days passed without writing a letter to her daughter. Sometimes it's difficult to find time in her every day routine. Sophia has many chores to do such as washing and ironing the clothes, cooking, cleaning the house and sewing. She concerns Elpida that she has not told to anyone that she has money in the bank. She also thinks that Pepe is an adorable child and she looks forward on meeting him.

Letter 4 26/2

Nunuka will make a skirt suit for Sophia. Sophia visited also Alice, who faces financial problems because of the illness of her mother. S and her husband both miss their daughter and their grand children; however they are happy that Johan also sends them some letters. Elpida is pregnant and her parents wish her to have a healthy baby.

Letter 5

One of Elpida's children caught a cold and his grandmother-Sophia- is worried. She advises her daughter to dress him with a woolen t-shirt. Sophia will go to Burgas for summertime, without her husband who is in Canada. Tantika will visit Elpida in the Netherlands and Sophia will send a gift to her daughter via Tantika.

- **Letter 6 , After 1967**

Sophia has some health issues with her teeth and she wants to fix it in order to be beautiful when she will meet her grandchildren. In addition to that she is on a diet in order to preserve her kilos.

Sophia with Nounouka will go to Burgas. Bertyl and Eleni are also doing well. Eleni is a good person and she knows how to cook well. Sophia had a disagreement with “Queen” who commended someone’s age. She is very ... and that’s the reason why Sophia’s husband named her “Bebe Kadunu” however Sophia notices that she has to accept everyone with the good and the bad elements of his character.

Albertikos faced the loss of his sister and now he wants to get married with a young woman but it is difficult to make a match, since he is neither young nor rich. Because of that he hides his age. Sophia recommended him to marry a widow.

Sophia also has a letter correspondence with Piste in Greece and aunt Paraskevi, who although is old and rich does not like to give money to anyone.

- **Letter 7 (December)**

Sophia does the preparations for Christmas. She is happy that her daughter’s family enjoyed the dessert that she sent them. She promises that she will send them another one.

She suggests to her daughter to visit Istanbul for three months during springtime together with her children, since she thinks that it will be good for both of them. She highlights that parents in general should not be selfish, that’s why Sophia and her husband accepted Elpida to go to live in the Netherlands.

Sophia feels that every day she gets older she wishes to live until her grand children will be young men. Nounouka gifted to Sophia a piece of silk fabric and Sophia will make two clothes from that. She also describes the preparation and the food for Christmas. She notices that she does not write very often to her daughter but when she does she has a lot of news.

- **Letter 8**

Sophia answers to her daughter letters. She is happy that her daughter’s family is doing well and she informs her daughter that she and her husband are also well. The weather is also getting colder.

- **Letter 9**

The weather is cold and because of that Sophia does not go outside. Instead they have visitors in their house. Sophia is ill but she has a therapy which made her feel better and she is sure that in a month she will have fully recovered. In the evening

Nounouka will come to make her a robe. Besides, Sophia does not have anything to do for the rest of the day, since she finished her chores.

- **Letter 13 15/1?**

Sophia returned from Burgas to Istanbul. During her stay in Burgas weather was rainy. She does not have much news. Her husband went also to Burgas the previous day in order to visit someone.

- **Letter 18**

The weather is getting better after 15 days of heavy weather. A new doorman came the last four days. Sophia is having injections because she had some health issues. She got really upset with the central heating that was not working. At last the new doorman switched on the central heating. Sophia embroiders a table cloth for Nounouka and Nounouka will embroider something for Elpida. Sophia will embroider a tablecloth for Elpida too.

- **Letter 1923/7**

Sophia is writing this letter to Tantika. Marika's husband Yanis came back home but he didn't stay. He left after 15 days. He stayed at his sister's house at nights. He thought that Marika was having a good life but she didn't so he left. The doctor said that Vilakis had caught a cold.

- **Letter 27**

All the family was glad to hear the good news about the newborn boy Peter. Sophia has to have an operation of appendicitis. Mami wishes that everything the couple would wish for their children to become true.

- **Letter 66, 19/3/1967?**

Sophia keeps taking pills, because he has health issues. She feels that she gets older. Franz is willing to pay the ticket for Johan in order to spend his vacation with his grandparents. Sophia says that Elpida should be satisfied with her two sons and she should not try for a daughter, since Elpida cannot predict whether she will have a daughter or not.

Appendix 3: Interviews

In this section there are the most important questions that interviewees answered for the accomplishment of this thesis, together with the summaries of their answers. For the accomplishment of this thesis five women were interviewed, each of them comes from a different background and has a different story to tell.

1. Introducing ourselves.

Elpida: I am Elpida and I am living in a small town in the Netherlands, since the mid-1950. I built my life together with my husband and I gave birth to three children.

Piste: My name is Piste and I am living in a central neighborhood of Athens. I was born in Istanbul by Greek parents and I was raised there. I moved in Athens in 1972, I was married and I had already given birth to my two children before I came here.

Agape: My name is Agape and I am living in a neighborhood in Athens, since 1955. I got married here but I met husband in Istanbul. My husband was also a member of the Istanbul Greek community.

Irene: My name is Irene and I am living in Istanbul. I met my husband here but we got married in Greece, thus I obtained the Italian citizenship and then I returned to Istanbul.

Ypomone: My name is and I am living in Ayvalik. I am married with my second husband who is Armenian.

2. How did you experience the multi-language environment of Istanbul?

Elpida: The main language that I was using was French. But I was also using Greek and Turkish. However, I was not able to learn the Greek alphabet. My mother also spoke Greek and Turkish and learnt French during her first marriage. Greek was widely used in Istanbul. Everyone was speaking in Greek to my mother; even a gipsy girl that was visiting my mother was speaking Greek with her.

Piste: I was bilingual, since I was speaking both Greek and Turkish. In the primary school I was taught both Turkish and Greek. French was also used frequently.

Agape: I speak both Greek and Turkish and I really like both of them. When I was a young girl in Istanbul I liked to sing Turkish songs but at the same time because of my education I could read ancient Greek texts.

Irene: I speak Greek, Turkish, Italian and French. With my husband we talked mainly in Greek. But in my everyday life outside the house I used –and still use-mainly Turkish.

Ypomone: I speak Greek, Turkish and Armenian. But in my everyday life I use mostly Turkish, even with my husband. Contrary, when I talk with my children we speak Greek.

3. What was your family background?

Elpida: My father was a Catholic, and my mother was Greek Orthodox. My maternal grandfather originated from the town of Kastoria in Northern Greece

Piste: My father was a Greek with Greek citizenship, but eventually he changed his citizenship and he obtained a Turkish citizenship. My mother was also a Greek without Greek citizenship. My father was not wealthy he had five brothers and one sister.

Agape: I was born in Istanbul in 1938 by Greek parents. My father was from Tarabya and my mother's antecedents were Cappadocian Greeks. I was raised until 14 years old in Harbiye and afterwards she moved to Cihangir. My mother was a tailor and my father was a pharmacist, who studied in Phanar Greek Orthodox College.

Irene: I was born in Istanbul in 1942 by Greek parents. My paternal grandfather came in Istanbul from Kayseri. He was a karamanli, thus his maternal language was Turkish. However, since he was very young when he came to Istanbul he obtained a Greek education. My maternal grandfather was from an Aegean Island, I cannot remember its name- and my maternal grandmother was from Princes' islands. Both of my parents were orthodox Christians. My father had a small industry of shirts and my mother was a housewife.

Ypomini: I was born in Istanbul in 1948 by Greek parents. My family was originated from Istanbul. My father worked as a developer and my mother was a housewife. I have four siblings. At that time a salary was enough to feed a big family. I was raised in Yedi Kule neighborhood, later we moved to Pera.

4. What was your experience on education?

Elpida: At the beginning I went to a French school. After that I had the chance to obtain a university education. After years when I was living in the Netherlands my aunt Paraskevi send me money and I was able to have a master as well. That time it was not common for a woman of my age to get a master diploma.

Piste: I went to Zappeion primary school and then I had sewing courses. After that I worked as a tailor in Istanbul and in Athens. Even today on my free time I repair old clothes. My family did not have the money to send me to high school. By that time, all high schools of the Greek community had annual fees. Generally, wealthier families were able to afford the middle and high school education. Families with a lower financial status were providing the primary education to their children.

Agape: I went to the primary school of Feriköy and I continued my studies when I came to Greece, by going to high school. Afterwards, I worked as assistant of the notary public and then as a shop owner.

Irene: I went to Zappeion girl school till the 9th class and then I continued my studies in a French school, where I practiced more the French language. After that, I worked in Akbank and after I got married I worked in an Italian company.

Ypomone: I went to primary school but only until the 5th class in the primary school of Yedi Kule.

5. Was it common to have arranged marriages or not at the moment?

Elpida: The first marriage of my mother, Sophia, was arranged. However, she did not live a harmonious life with him. That's why when she got married for the second time she chose her husband despite her family's criticism. Sophia remembered how when she faced a financial problem and addressed to uncle Kotsos he answered that he does not care about Sophia's children, since they are catholics. As for me, I felt in love when I met my husband and my parents were supportive enough to encourage me to spend my life with him, even if that meant I had to leave Istanbul.

Piste: My parents had an arranged marriage. The same goes for me. The typical wedding procedure was starting with the arrangement. Sometimes the parents chose the future spouse of their children from their connections and sometimes they were following the recommendation of a relative or a friend. After that the acquaintance of the couple was taking place. In continuing, there was the engagement and after that civil and religious marriage of the couple. Another important part of the wedding was the dowry, as a tailor I made on my own my dowry and I also made the dowry for my sister and my two children.

Agape: By the time it was still common to have arranged marriages but I did not want to have an arranged marriage by the matchmaker. So, I met my husband while walking on the street. My family knew his parents, so before he moved to US in order to study he gave his word that he will marry me.

Irene: When I was young it was quite common to have a flirt, however your parents should give their permission in order to get married. Hence, when I was working in

Ak bank I had a flirt with my husband, who later came to ask my parents' permission in order to get married.

Ypomone: By that time it was still common to have an arranged marriage but if your parent would give their permission you could marry someone who met. Thus, the most important fact was also the permission from our parents.

6. Why did you leave Istanbul?

Elpida: I left Istanbul in order to get married and make a family with my husband who was originated from Netherlands.

Piste: I did not intend to leave Istanbul but when I gave birth to my children I thought that they will have a better future in Greece than in Istanbul. I did it for my children. If I was alone I would have stayed. What would happen to me?

My decision was very sudden. I was celebrating Christmas in Istanbul and the New Year in Athens.

When I took this decision I did not tell it to anyone. I remember at the train station one Muslim woman started talking to me. She was telling me that she would visit her brother in Greece. He was living in Greece and he was very satisfied. He did not have any problems. Even that way, I prefer to tell her that I was leaving Istanbul in order to go to work in Germany.

Agape: After the pogrom of September 1955 someone from the Patriarchate came to our house and recommended to my mother that it is better to send me to Athens. So, my mother saved some money and then she booked me an airplane ticket to Athens. After some time she managed to move with me in Athens by selling some of our property. It was difficult to find enough money, because the buyers were giving us only the ¼ of the price. In addition to that, we could not send money to Greece.

Irene: After the deportation of the Geek citizens on 1964 the number of the community members diminished radically, since many Greek citizens were married with Turkish citizens. Except from that, people were afraid that something else might happen to them. That way, my father decided to migrate to Athens. I was my parents' only daughter, thus my father was very strict. Because of that I was afraid to tell him that I had a flirt with someone, with whom I might get married.

Ypomone: I did not leave from Istanbul; I live temporarily in Ayvalik because our house is being renovated. I do not intend to move out from Istanbul. However, all of my siblings moved to Athens and when my kids grew up my kid moved also to

Athens. They build their life there: they baptized and got married. Thus, I am visiting Athens frequently and my kids also visit me here.

7. How was your life after leaving Istanbul?

Elpida: Netherlands is a very democratic country; although we have a king we have a democratic heart. It was not difficult to me to blend in. However, I still believe that Dutch people have many differences from Greeks.

Piste: Greece was not a welcoming country for me. I was treated like a complete foreigner. I had to wait for years in order to obtain the Greek citizenship. In addition to that people would call me Turk. Every time I was answering to them that I was baptized and married in the Patriarchate.

Agape: My life was very tough in Greece, I was treated like an illegal emigrant and locals used to call me “Turk”. Things got easier as time passed.

Irene: My life was not easy but I managed to find a job in a shop where they needed a French speaker. We had many relatives and friends in Athens since most of the Istanbul Greek community moved in Athens. I feel loneliness some times, but I have two very good friends with whom I spend time.

8. Have you visited Istanbul since you left?

Elpida: Yes I have visited Istanbul many times, but only if I have a good company with me.

Piste: I did not want to go back. I was feeling really angry. I did not even renew my Turkish passport. However before three years I had the chance to go to Istanbul with a group of Greek visitors. The truth is that I really enjoyed my time there. I took a lot of photos and I even had the chance to speak Turkish with local people. Despite my mother’s tomb is there.

Agape: After I left I did not go back for 15 years. But then I decided to go for a visit, thus I visited Istanbul 10 times. In one of my visits I signed a paper that I resign from any claims of my property in Istanbul.

Irene: Three years after I left Istanbul my future husband came to ask my parents for their permission in order to get married. My mother asked me about our plans and I responded to her that we were going to settle in Istanbul, since my future husband had a well-paid job there. At last, my parents gave their permission and we got married in Athens. That way, I obtained the Italian citizenship, since my husband was Italian.

After our wedding ceremony I returned in Istanbul and until today I live here. If I did not marry my husband I would not come back.

9. How do you feel when you remember Istanbul?

Elpida: I feel very nostalgic and sad because I know the Istanbul city, where I was born and raised, is not there anymore. Istanbul has changed a lot since I left.

Piste: I have really bittersweet memories from Istanbul. Comparing with the difficulties that I faced here in Greece I really miss Istanbul.

Agape: I wish I could live again these happy years in Istanbul before the pogrom and spend time with my friends there.

Irene: Istanbul has changed a lot over the last years. The Greek community diminished but many Arab immigrants have settled here. Nowadays, people go out a lot in order to drink their coffee, eat a lunch and meet their friends. The society has changed a lot.

10. Do you believe that things changed after the death of Kemal Atatürk?

Elpida: Istanbul Greeks were mostly Kemalists, since they knew that as long as Atatürk was alive they will be safe. My parents were spending time in the same café that Kemal Atatürk used to go. My mother really admired him, when he met her in the café that they both spent time he had kissed her hand. She also considered him very modern.

When Atatürk died I was very young but I still remember the day of his funeral. One old Greek woman felt down crying in front of the funeral procession saying “Where are you going dear pasha and you are leaving us?”

After Kemal’s death the situation for Istanbul Greeks deteriorated.

Piste: I believe that Kemalists did not want to lose their political power. That’s the reason why when Adnan Menderes came to power they wanted to undermine him. Because of that they organized the September pogrom in order to accuse him.

Agape: Kemal modernized Turkey and gave more freedom to women, after his death Greeks were feeling less safe because everyone wanted to diminish their status.

11. How would you describe the Varlık Tax? Have you heard any stories?

Elpida: I still remember how our family dentist was not able to pay his taxes and was sent to the labor battalions. His family had not any news from him since then. As for our family we managed to avoid paying this tax, since the man who was making the list of the taxpayers cover our papers.

Piste: I remember I had an uncle who was unable to pay his taxes. Because of that he left Istanbul and migrated in order to avoid the labor battalions. In Turkey he was a deserter, that's why he could not return to Istanbul.

Agape: My family could not afford to pay the Varlık Tax, thus my father was sent in the labor battalions. My mother stayed with me in Istanbul. Since she was a very high skilled tailor she used to make dresses for Atatürk's sister, with whom she maintained a very good relation. Thus, it was Atatürk's sister who saved my father from the labor battalions.

Irene: When the Varlık tax was imposed my father was on his military service, thus he did not pay that tax. However, my grandmother had a sister who was living in Prinkipo Island with her husband. That man had to pay the tax, but he managed to find the money and avoid the labor battalions.

Ypomone: My parents did not talk about the Varlık Vergisi; hence I have not heard any narrations about that.

12. How would you describe the September pogrom?

Elpida: I was not in Istanbul at the moment. But all of my family members were there. My mother was not able to tell me a lot of details about the pogrom because she was afraid that someone could open and read her letters.

Piste: I was very young when the September pogrom took place. My father had to leave the house in order to find my brother, who was currently working in a jewelry store. However I, my mother and my younger sister remained at home. My mother told us to go hide ourselves in the neighbor's garden, which was a French property. Our family was very lucky since one of our neighbors, a Turkish woman, told us to turn on the lights and hang the Turkish flag. Not only that, but when the crowd

approached our house asking where is the house of Mr. Anastasis, (my father) the same neighbor answered that there were not any Greeks living in the neighborhood.

Agape: My mother and I were at the home that night. My father was in Athens for a visit. The pogrom was organized, since they had already marked the houses of Istanbul Greeks with three dots: a black, a white and a red. They said that Atatürk's house in Thessaloniki was hit by a bomb and then crowd was gathered and started shouting that "Cyprus is Turkish". In y point of view they intended to attack to the Greek community and they used Cyprus as an excuse. Afterwards, they started breaking and destroying shops and houses. They came to our house also and they broke all of the windows. Fortunately, Ahmet –son of a Pasha- with one of his friends came to save us. Terrible things happened that night: they burned churches, destroy houses, insulted women. Only the Patriarchate knows the exact truth. I heard that they assaulted 300 girls. But it is better to not write it because it is too harsh. It's better to focus on the good things.

Irene: I was thirteen years old, our house was in Kinaliada. When a ship arrived on the port with a crowd of protestors the mayor of the island did not let the ship anchor in the port. That's how all the Greek houses of the island were not destroyed. The next day we were informed about the tragic events that happened. A lot of houses were destroyed and girls were raped. After that night many Greek families started migrating. It was not an easy choice, because that time most people did not travel and they did not know anything about other countries.

Ypomone: I was seven years old but I still remember that night. They tried to burn our house but our neighbors stopped them telling to the crowd that there are five children in this house. In order to save us my father threw us from the window to the backyard. At last, the crowd took all the fruits of the nearby grocery store and threw them to our house breaking all of our windows.

13. What do you remember about the 1964's deportation?

Elpida: One of my other's best friends had to leave from Istanbul since her husband had Greek citizenship. She and her family settled in Athens.

Piste: I remember that period; many families from our environment had to leave, me and my husband were lucky enough to have a Turkish passport. Every Saturday night we had guests in our house. One of our friends who were an army officer told us that we should leave as quickly as possible from Turkey. I got really angry with him but as the time passed I understood that he was right.

Agape: We have already moved to Athens. Besides, we had Turkish passports. Until today I kept my Turkish citizenship and did not obtain the Greek citizenship. But my husband now obtains the Greek citizenship.

Irene: Greek citizens had to leave Istanbul within one week with only a luggage of 25 kilo and 25 dollars in their pockets. Hence, it was after the deportation of 1964 that my father decided to take us and go to live in Athens. We did obtain the Turkish citizenship, however many Greeks with Turkish citizenship chose to leave since their relatives were obligated to leave. Thus, my father sold our house in Kiliada and his factory for a very low price. After that, we moved in Athens, where he opened a clothing store. Ten years after my father died and my mother continued working on the shop for a few months. After the death of my father my mother came to visit me every summer, that way she died in Istanbul and she was buried here.

Ypomone: Things changed radically after the deportation of Greek citizens, people got very afraid and they were feeling insecurity, since they knew that whatever happened to them none could support them. Thus, after the deportation many Greeks with Turkish citizenship chose to move out from Istanbul. Many of my relatives moved then to Greece.

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