

Waiting For Death In Some Other Place: Traces In The Memories Of The 'Rums': Remembrance And Nostalgia

Eva Aleksandru Şarlak

**Prof.Dr., Işık University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Visual Arts Department
Head of Cultural Heritage Protection Association in Turkey**

'You won't find a new country, won't find another shore. This city will always pursue you. You will walk the same streets, grow old in the same neighborhoods, will turn gray in these same houses. You will end up in this city. Don't hope for things elsewhere' writes Kavafis as a descendant of a Greek family who migrated from Fener, a small town in Istanbul/Turkey. The sense of belonging can be understood clearly in his verses that refer in search of home.

Within the borders of Turkey different civilizations and cultures have co-existed in the past. The existence of different ethnic, religious and cultural groups has contributed to a pluralistic cultural identity, which decays as a number of reasons have led the vast majority of non-Muslim populations to leave their settlements. Many of them, the Rums, Armenians and Jews, leaving behind a tangible heritage, tried to find their place and their role in their new world where had to adapt and live on.

A tragic experience in the Anatolian land as the witness to many dramatic scenes in the history was the exchange of population between Greece and Turkey, which can be also accepted as the last act in the historical existence of Asia Minor Hellenism in the land where it had lived for centuries. The flow of migration did not end with this traumatic case and Anatolia continued to testify other tragedies that will cause to a continuous Rum migration till today. However the migrated people awarded with a respectable memory transported their intangible heritage together with the movable objects to their 'new' homeland.

The study focuses on the moving heritage of the migrated Rums who established most of their Anatolian cities by preserving their original names in their new land. The article presenting the traumatic effects of the Rum migration aims also to be a collective historiography of the deterritorialized people who moved their narratives, their liturgical and secular objects, their clothing, their recipes, their songs and many more values in their new world. The paper discusses as well many future scenarios on the tangible, intangible heritage and especially on portable liturgical elements of the underpopulated Rum community that still continue to live on their motherland.

* Greeks of Turkey (with Turkish Nationality)