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# Functions of Minstrel Poetry under Occupation: A Case Study of Turkish Minstrels and Russian Occupation of Karseli

İşgâl Altında Halk Şiirinin İşlevleri: Rus İşgâlindeki  
Karslı Âşıklar Üzerinde Bir Araştırma

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the local minstrels' styles and their works during the period between 1878 and 1920 when Kars and its environs were occupied by Russia. The mediatic and educational roles of minstrels in organizing the resistance towards the occupation are analysed by sampling.

**Keywords:** *minstrel literary tradition, occupation of Kars, historical epics, functions of literature*

## Öz

Bu çalışmada Kars ve civarının Rus işgaline uğradığı 1878-1920 yılları arasındaki dönemde işgal altında yöre âşıklarının işgal altındaki hareket tarzları, ürettikleri eserler incelenmektedir. İşgal altında âşıkların işgale karşı oluşan direniş cephesinin örgütlenmesinde ve üstlendikleri medyatik ve eğitimsel roller örneklenerek tahlil edilmektedir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** *âşık tarzı edebiyat geleneği, Kars'ın İşgali, tarihi destanlar, edebiyatın işlevleri*

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In spite of Minstrel traditions and oral literary traditions were investigated various aspects, as far as I know, the roles or functions of minstrels and their poetry under a foreign occupation is not evaluated. In this context, the purpose of this paper<sup>1</sup> is to show the functional aspects of The Turkish minstrel Tradition when the three province of Turkey (Kars, Ardahan, Batum) was occupied by Russians between 1878-1918 in the case of Âşık Şenlik and his followers. Those âşıks (minstrels) whose names are known by their poems that are Âşık Cevlânî, Âşık Güftârî, Âşık Esmânî, Âşık Sarı Hakkı, Âşık Sefilî, Âşık Celil, Âşık Sadık, Âşık Remzi, Âşık Cihânî, Âşık Kahraman, Âşık Fırâtî, Âşık Nebî, Âşık Hakikî, Sefil Âşık, Âşık İkrâmî, Âşık Sezâyî, Âşık Havâsî, Âşık Noksânî, Âşık Mazlûmî, Âşık Efkârî, Âşık Huzurî, Âşık Ceyhûnî, Âşık İsmail, Âşık Cemâlî, Âşık Nihânî, and Âşık Zülâlî (Kırzioğlu, 1958; Kartarı, 1977).

First of all, it will be useful to draw a picture of general view of Russian occupation background. After the war in 1877-78 between Ottoman State and Russian Empire, Russians occupied the three eastern provinces of Turkey (Kars, Ardahan, Batum), this area among public shortly called “Karseli” was given to the Russian Empire according to the peace threaty of Ayestefonos as a war indemnities. The Karseli 36.000 m2 and its population was over than 700.000. Russians wanted to integrate this “Turkish” populated land to the Russia as quick as possible, since it was a very strategic passage to Anotalia and a very use full strong hand to the Middle East like Irak or Suriye. Most probably for this reason they started the state funned big development projects. Considering for a new war in future with the Ottoman State, The Russian Empire tried to get the Turkish citizens loyalty for preparation of the future war. They opened new roads, railways, built new buildings. Russians showed a very high tolerance and helped to Turkish people economically. They did not take tax and duty of being soldiers abolished from the Turkish people. The Russians during the first stage of the occupation did not want to force to the Turkish population to immigrate to the Turkey. However they were very tight to control of the border and the customs since the Turkish population of Karseli were not happy even though their economic status got better.

The Russians put high control regulations on customs, to cut the relationships between her Turkish citizens and Turkey. For instance, they did not led to entrance of Turkish publications from Ottoman state except the *Koran* and the *Mevlid-i Şerif*.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, they closed the high rank *medreses* and modernized high schools of the Turk which were known as *Rüştiyes* in the Karseli. The Russians let to be open only the low rank medreses, but they played with the schools curriculum, the schools allowed to just to teach how to read Koran in Arabic, in contrast not to teach how to write Turkish (Kırzioğlu 1958:80-82). This policy was aim to cut the Ottoman State’s influence to her ex citizens, and with this way make them to be open The Russian influence. The colonization were not successful, the Turks were not happy and loyal to the Russian state, moreover the Turkish resistance were getting stronger.

In this conditions, the second stage of Russian colonization is begin the Russian started to coureced the Turks immigrate to Turkey and in contrast coured immigrants from allover Russian Empire to the new occupied lands. This move even made the Turkish resistance stronger. The Turkish underground resistance front was established since the beginning of the Russian occupation by the leading Turkish minstrels and their legendary leader Âşık Şenlik.

Âşık Hasan Şenlik [1850-1913] was born in Suhara village of Çıldır of Kars when he was 14 years old by having a dream which has “offering bade and his love” motif which is considered an initiation to the minstrel tradition.<sup>3</sup> He became an outstanding baryier of the tradition. When the Russian Empire attacked to the Ottoman State without declaring the war the Kars area as a border land with Russia was the first land occupied by Russia, Âşık Şenlik was 27 years old and a very famous minstrel, he composed a poem (destan) and many people delivered it by hand copies. Âşık Şenlik aimed by the poem to make Turkish people moral better and encouraged them to fight back to Russian occupation. The poem soon became the anthem of the voluntarily units of cavalry of Karseli that was organized to fight with Russians. By the way it is notable that this poem still today one of the song that is perform by the âşıks of Karseli during their public performances, as the last song and basically serving as a closing formula of the âşık ceremonies. Moreover, as it will be seen below its patriotic theme puts a nationalistic frame of the regularly âşık performances which were organized for entertainment. In this context it is clear that the poem functions as a reminder of the province’s recent past and has a role as a very important local identity maker. In addition to this the poem became the trademark of the local minstrels that consider Âşık Şenlik their founder father and enjoy to underline the freedom fighter position of him and they claim that they are the real speaker of the people forever.

The poem of Âşık Şenlik is known as “93 Koşması” is a destan and consist of seven stanzas, could be translated as:

*People who is Moslem should know, and hear,  
That, we will not give the motherland to the enemy unless we die.  
Not only the Russians but also whoever wants to attack us, even if they should join  
together  
That, we will not give the motherland to the enemy unless we die.*

*Ehli İslâm olan eşitsin bilsin /Can sağ iken yurt vermeniz düşmana  
İsterse Uruset ne ki var gelsin/Can sağ iken yurt vermeniz düşmana  
\*\*\**

*Put on the war dress and prepare the sword,  
The horizons are full clouds of the war  
O my dear brave one, the day of getting the fame is born.  
That, we will not give the motherland to the enemy unless we die.  
Gurşanın gılcı geyinin donu/Gavga bulutları sardı her yanı  
Doğdu goc yiğidin şan alma günü/Can sağ iken yurt vermeniz düşmana  
\*\*\**

*People who are soldiers that is ready for fight  
You thought that is easy to take fortress of Kars  
Cavalry would take sword on them  
That, we will not give the motherland to the enemy unless we die.*

*Asker olan bölük bölük bölünür/Sandınız mı Kars kalası alınır ?  
Boz atlar üstünde kılıç çalınır/Can sağ iken yurt vermeniz düşmana  
\*\*\**

*During the day of fight the enemy looks a place to escape  
The one who is brave puts his chest forward to his enemy  
Don't forget that all of ancestors souls will join to us  
That, we will not give the motherland to the enemy unless we die.*

*Gavga günü namert sapa yer arar/Er olan göğsünü düşmana gerer  
Cemi ervah bizlen meydana girer/Can sağ iken yurt vermeniz düşmana  
\*\*\**

*They did not see Ottoman's power yet,  
You who have faith prepare for fight  
Ride on horse , cut their heads, kill the Russians  
That, we will not give the motherland to the enemy unless we die.*

*Hele Al'osmanın görmemiş zorun,/Din gayreti olan tedarik görün.  
At tepin, baş kesin, Kazağı gırın,/Can sağ iken yurt vermeniz düşmana  
\*\*\**

*The origin of Russian is boar  
They are wilds of forest and son of fisherman  
Attack to that flock of pig like wolf  
That, we will not give the motherland to the enemy unless we die.*

*Beni efserdir bilin Urusun aslı,/Orman yabanisi, balıkçı nesli.  
Hinzir sürüsüne dalın kurt misli ! /Can sağ iken yurt vermeniz düşmana  
\*\*\**

*Şenlik says don't stop, ride on horse  
Take your sword and attack on enemy  
By doing that the fame of Ottomans will get even more  
That, we will not give the motherland to the enemy unless we die.*

*Şenlik, ne durursunuz atlara binin,/Sıyra kılıç düşman üstüne dönün.  
Artacaktır şanı bu Al'osmanın/Can sağ iken yurt vermeniz düşmana  
(Özder, 1977: 14, 15).*

However the war between Ottoman State and Russian Empire was over and Ottoman State lost three provinces. Turkish people that was living on lost provinces under the Russian rule and conditions that outlined above called those years “Forty years of black days” (Kırk yıllık karagünler). The minstrels of provinces composed hundreds of poems<sup>4</sup> and the nature of the minstrel poetry they consist of various motifs and themes that almost whole aspects of

Turkish culture was mentioned in them. Of course such mentions in the minstrel poetry call prose explanations to the audiences either by minstrel or another knowledgeable audience as still practice present preformed socio-cultural contexts.<sup>5</sup> In this case it is easily seen that minstrel poetry functioned as a general cultural taxonomy or index of socio-cultural values that helped to the Turkish people's informal public education since formal education was banned or very selectively limited by Russians.

A very brief outline the basic themes of the minstrel poetry could better explain such cultural taxonomic aspects. First of all, the poems were reciting and teaching the far and recent past as oral history to young generations. The recitation of the historical heroes and their acts was helping to keep high esteem of Turkish peoples moral as a wishful thinking for future. Second, minstrel poems which were consisting religious motifs and mentions were a good passage to the religiously oriented public education for a Muslim people that all over the history was the first time under occupation of a Christian state. In this context, it is clear that these poems and such explanation and interpretation activities that took place either orally sung in the coffeehouses or wedding ceremonies or recited from written copies in formal or informal gatherings functioned as an educational instrument. Of course all the poetry that were produced were not possible to perform publicly because of the tight control of Russians. The minstrels of Karseli established an underground organization for delivering poetry system. This system consist of two parts the poets were writing the poems and people who like them were copying them their personal anthologies which called *cönk*, then when they were going to town of Kağızman's saltpan to get sold they were copying the new poems and returning to their villages or towns with salt to sell and new poems to recite in the secret gatherings, the copying activities were continue in such gatherings too.

However, in the coffee houses minstrel performances time to time became very dangerous for the Turkish minstrels especially when there was Armenian minstrels (*aşugs*) in the coffeehouses and asking for improvise poetry duel. As a long centuries Ottoman State's citizens Armenians became native Turkish speakers and many skilled minstrels (*aşugs*) were raised among them. In contrast to Turkish people of Karseli, local Armenians were in quite different feelings, in the first time over centuries they were the first time under the rule of a Christian nation plus they were getting almost socially and economically the best conditions under the Russians reign.

For this reason Russian occupation was seen as a liberation for them and naturally Armenian nationalism was growing rapidly and making such claims that Karseli will be an outlet for Black Sea of greater Armenia of the future. For this reason Russian attempts to changing the demographic structure by new peoples in the Karseli was accepted by Armenians heavily and they became the biggest among the other new comers of ethnic minorities such as Volga Germans, Malakans, Georgians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Estonians, Assures, Greeks, and Russians were much fewer than them. This situation was seen as a betrayal by the Karseli Turks and their claims on the land even fuelled the sanctioned relationships which were already under high pressure of the Armenian volunteers helps to the Russian Army and attacks during the war. As it was mentioned above the second stage of the Russian occupation, Russians started to the new policy toward the Turks. Basically to force them to leave the land and to immigrate to the Ottoman State.

In this context in a coffeehouse either if there is a Turkish minstrel when an Armenian minstrel comes or during the performance of an Armenian minstrel if a Turkish minstrel would come the traditional minstrel verbal duels turn to be a nationalistic fight and fueled the harbored relations even more. For instance, Âşık İzani, a well known Armenian minstrel originally from Erzurum was immigrated to Russian occupied Karseli and in the city of Ardahan was working at a coffeehouse as minstrel. Âşık İzânî wrote something's name on paper then puts that paper in a handkerchief and hangs it on the ceiling of coffeehouse as a "muamma" (minstrel riddle), according to the tradition whoever will know the answer of the riddle will get the prize that was put by the him and the customers entrance fees. Armenian Âşık İzânî invites Âşık Şenlik to this coffeehouse to solve the muamma. Since this traditional entertainment is turn to be an Armenian-Turkish debate the atmosphere was very high tension and a crowd of people come together at the coffeehouse from both side some statesmen and religious leaders were ready there. Âşık Şenlik after three days work and thought on clues which were the amount of the letters that written phrase includes were able to solve the muamma and get the prize. (Kartarı 1977:49-52). However more important part of this event is to show nationalistic reorientation of the minstrel duels and their symbolic acceptance by the living to gather and practicing such traditional entertainment for centuries without paying nationalistic attention to them.

Minstrels also wrote poems in the form of petitions and send them to the abroad secretly to tell outside world especially to the Ottoman Turks conditions that were living and ask for liberation. In addition to that the minstrels were writing poems that were criticizing even Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid that gave the Karseli to Russian Empire. For example in such a poem has lines that says:

*Those cities Eleşgerd, Çıldır, and Beyazıd were destroyed by Russians  
In addition to them Kars that merciless (Russians) even burned out of its hospital  
I can not say my name to you Sultan Hamid, you do not act on them, you just give  
Your ancestors were earning more cities and land in contrast you are a loser one.*

*Eleşgerd, Ardahan, Çıldır Beyazıd/Yaktı hastahanayı ol hain pelid  
Söylemem ismini ey Sultan Hamid/Ecdadın alırlar ver padişahım (Ertekin, 1939: 11)*

It is clear that the purpose of this poem which was written minstrel style in form of letter was to put pressure on Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid and because of the sultan's fear the poet were not able to put his name on poem. Moreover, later on the Russians also established a secret police to follow such activities for this reason most of the such poetry the minstrels did not use their real names instead they used made up nick names i.e. "Dil-i Gâm" (The broken hart or the crying hart) e.t.c. (Kırzioğlu 1958:38).

The minstrels who immigrated from Karseli to Turkey they kept producing poems about various aspects of the Karseli in the performances in Turkey. Those poems functioned as a propaganda of the situation of Karseli and continued to make people of Turkey think about their fellow citizens and an occupied piece of the motherland. For instance Âşık Ceyhûnî immigrated to Turkey in last years of 1880 he wrote a poem which is called "95 Muhacirlik Destanı"(The Ballad of 95's Immigration) consist of 28 stanzas is can be given as an example for such poems. This long poems couple stanzas are like that:

*Good by, good by to the mountains that are covered with grass  
And in the lakes green head beautiful ducks left there  
The white rooms that are covered with marmars  
The buildings which every stone of them are gem left there*

*Elvedâ, elvedâ çimenli dağlar/Göllerde yeşilbaş sunalar galdı  
Sedri mermer ağ sıvalı odalar/Her daşı gevherden binalar galdı*

...

*When the enemy occupied Kars, the roses of Kars died  
All of the infidel christlovers entered to inside  
They made a church, the mosque of Cengoğlu  
The ezans and the Friday ceremonies stopped there*

*Ol zamanda Kars 'in gülleri soldu/Haçperest mıkıdan içine doldu  
Cengoğlu Cami 'si kilise oldu/Okunmaz ezânlar, Cumalar kaldı*

....

*Castels, towers and very nice minarets  
Medrese, mosques and the other urban buildings  
Homes which begs and aghas were guests  
The homes that like paradise left there*

*Kaleler, kuleler, hoş minareler/Misafir olurdu beyler ağalar  
Medrese, camiler ol mamureler/Cennete müteşebbih haneler galdı (Kartal, 1977: 25).*



Russians soon recognize the minstrels and their poetry functions over the Turkish people, they began to use the same channel of communication. In other word the Turkish minstrel traditions type written poems became an instrument for Russian propaganda. For example, there is a poem which encourages the Turks to immigrate from Karseli to Turkey by using the profit Mohammed's immigration form Mecca to Medina as frame. Either the Russians intelligence or Armenian minstrels that were part of Turkish minstrel tradition (linguistically) might write it. However the name of minstrel is not known the author pretend that he is a ulema by doing that it might be calculated would be more effective on Muslims. The poem called "Göç Destanı"<sup>6</sup> (Destan of Immigration) consist of 15 stanzas, to give an idea about its contend a few stanzas could be translated like that:

*O you, Muslim people, listen to the Ulemas words  
Why you are here, you must immigrate  
To immigrate is definitely necessary for faith full Muslims  
Why you are here, you must immigrate*

*Dinle ulema sözünü/Ne durursun hicret eyle  
Mümin olanlara farzdır/Ne durursun hicret eyle*

...

*An ulema is said and made this poem  
Would get much better acceptance by Muhammad  
You who listened it, you must accept it  
Why you are here, you must immigrate*

*Bir alimdir bunu diyen/Rahmet bulsun hem okuyan  
Kabul et bunu dinleyen/Ne durursun hicret eyle (Kırzioğlu, 1958:53).*

The answers to the such Russian immigration propaganda destans was given quickly probably on purpose the minstrel who went to visit his immigrated relatives in Sivas of Turkey wrote the answer poem which consist 10 stanzas couple of them are like that:

*They always encourueces Turks to immigrate  
By doing that they destroyed many houses here  
That makes the Armenian people happy  
Soon this Russians will be destroyed*

*Hep hicrete şidendirir/Çok ocaklar söndürür  
Ermeniye sevindirir/Bu Urus perişan olur*

*Most of those immigrants are in regret  
The enemy will not stay here along time  
The immigrants lost a lot for nothing  
Soon this Russians will be destroyed*

*Gidenlerin çoğu pişman/Yok yere hiç haya düşman  
Burada çok kalmaz düşman/Bu Urus perişan olur  
The Şeyhülislâm is given to this advice  
You never cut your hope of freedom from God  
The Sultan Abdülhamid never will give up  
Soon this Russians will be destroyed*

*Şeyhülislâm söylüyor öğüd/Mevladan kesilmez ümid  
Verir mi hiç Abdülhamid/Bu Urus perişan olur (Kırzioğlu,1958:59).*

Examples lines that are given above shows that the minstrel who comes from visiting of the some immigrants in Turkey tells to the people that “the immigrants are regretted that they immigrated” it means clearly that “you should not immigrate” plus this is an advice by the şeyhülislâm that is the highest religious authority of Ottomans is put the religious scholar. Moreover, the occupation is shown as a temporary act of the Qalif and the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid’s plan that as soon as possible he will take back the Karseli and will scattered the Russians.

The Armenians were established an underground organization that called “Cân fidâ” in 1906 its purpose was directly terrorize to the Turks. Âşık Şenlik in Spring of 1910 composed a poem which consist 12 stanzas the poem called, “Ermeni Canfidarbaşı Vağarşak Ağaya Açık Öğüt” (A Publicized Advice to Vagarşak Agha who is the head of the organization of Canfida). A couple of stanzas from the poem could be translated as:

*O you, Vağarşak Agha the commander of the nation (!)  
I hear many words that come from you everyday  
You get a couple of trouble maker people around you  
Do not think that you will get any benefit from them*

*Millet komitanı Vağarşak Ağa/Günde senden manğa bir âvâz gelir  
Yığıpsing başınga on, on beş dığa/Deme ki onlardan bir hüner gelir*

...

*Do not follow the orders of Cân Fidâ and immigrants of the city of Muş  
Those trouble makers one day will loot your town  
In that case it will not be like the city of Baku or Şirvan  
Be ready that one hundred thousand man will attack on you*

*Uyma “cânfidâ”ya, o “kakhdagan”a/Bir gün şehrini verir talana  
Ne Baku’ya benzer, ne de Şirvan’a/Hazır ol üstüne yüz min er gelir  
(Kırzioğlu, 1958:81-82).*

.....

Another thematically similar poem was written by Âşık Sadık that consist of ... stanzas has even more harsh lines to treat to the head of the “Cânfidâ” organization a couple of them could be translated as:

*I will order then they will attacked to your town  
They will cut your children in your home  
Then they will hang you on your window  
Vağarşak, you will have big trouble*

*Emrederem şeheringi basarlar;/Oğulung, uşağing evde keserler  
Seni tutup pencereden asarlar/Vağarşak başınga çok icaz gelir*

....

*Make people to read to you these words and understand what I mean very well  
Give advice to Armenian immigrants from the city of Muş that made you fool  
Soon be aware of the situation then tell to the people that around of you  
Otherwise you are in a big trouble and you will get them soon*

*Okutup bu sözü, yahşi dinle sen/Muşlu “Kakhdagan”a tenbih eyle sen  
Tezden ferağlanıp, nâsa söyle sen/Âhiri başınga belâ tez gelir (Kırzioğlu, 1958:79-82).*

However threats did not work Armenians kept their plans and had started to attacks on the Turks. For this reason, the Turks established an underground organization that called “Cânbezâr” to fight back to Armenian Cânfidâ. This organization’s establishment propaganda is also made by a poem “Türk-Gönüllü Teşkilatı Cânbezâr Destanı”. The poem consist of 19 stanzas and was delivered to the public by written copies. (Kırzioğlu, 1958: 83). The poems couple stanzas could be given as an example are like that:

*O you aghas give your ear and hear it  
All people who are Moslem should hear it  
Establish your union by thinking religious brotherhood  
Go and be member of “Cân Bezâr”*

*Dinleyin ağalar gûşun yetirsin/Ehl-i İslam olan haberdar olsun  
Din gayreti düştü birbiriz tutun/Yazılın bir takım “Can Bezâr” olsun*

*Armenians want to have an independent state  
And make us, the Muslims a secondary minority  
Such a situation is shameful for all of us,  
Let's broke their plans and not let them to put us low*

*Ermeni ister ki Beğlik ala/İslâm milletini ayağa sala  
Bu da bizim için çok ayıp ola/Bozak yığınacağını tarümar olsun (Kırzioğlu, 83-85).*

During the occupation one day Âşık Şenlik was performing his art in a wedding ceremony the village of Köyhaf of Çıldır. The Russian gendarme commander of Çıldır goes to the wedding ceremony with his retinue. The people welcomed him and sit and listen the performance of Âşık Şenlik. When the performance was over the commander stood up and puts hand on his sword (it was understood by people a sign of threat) then tells to the Turkish people that were there: “You know that during the Ottoman rein you, Turk were force to go to mandatory army service which was more than fifteen years, you were able to return home old or even not able to return at all, the Ottoman State was taking taxes which you were suffering under them, the Ottoman State was jailing and hanging you even for small mistakes. The Ottoman State was helping to poor people at all. However under our state we do not do any thing like that” then he returns to Âşık Şenlik and says that “You minstrel Şenlik, are going to tell a poem which state is better for you and you want to which one.”(Kartarı, 1977: 21). Ofcourse, his purpose is to make the legendary Turkish minstrel Âşık Şenlik a part of the Russian propaganda instrument by his accomplished fact. Âşık Şenlik said that “All right Sir! Then, he risked his life blindly and started a perilous enterprise of the situation by improvusinly saying the poem which is below:

*If you ask this question by sincerity,  
I want from God the Ottoman State  
From God that has plenty of mercy  
I want the profit's pure blood khanate*

*Hulusi kalb ile sorarsan fikrimi/Men Allah'dan Al'osmanı isderem  
Merhamet sahibi ol rahmi gani/Nesli Mürsel hökmü hanı isderem!*

*Sultan that on Salomon's throne forever  
He is the profit Muhamed's state of minister  
Koran is in his hart and mind forever  
I want Sultan that recites name of Allah and Muhammad*

*Süleyman mülkünde bergarar duran/Muhammet Vekili Makamı Nuran  
Hıfşının ezberi Âyeti Kur'ân,/Selavatlı o Suldanı isderem !*

*My Ottoman Shah that is the king of kings.  
He recites forever God's name and his words  
From one side to another all over the worlds  
I want that only the Ottoman Shah should rule*

*Al'osman Şahım var Şahlar serveri,/Dilinde selavat zikri ezberi,  
Kaftan Kafa Zirü Zeminden beri,/Hükmetmeğe bir tek onu isderem!*

*God wanted it like this and wrote it his pen  
My trouble was written by God in my fate and it is now present  
I want the sultanate that govern the world  
I want the sultan that renown is under his throne*

*Emri Hak yedinden çekilip Kalem,/Bar imiş ettiğim yetişdi belam,  
Mülkünde saltanat hükmünde âlem,/Divanında Şevket şânı isderem!*

*This poor Şenlik's hart's joy is Ottoman  
I never forget the name of Ottoman  
After they left this land the world lost its meaning  
I want it up to the last day of the world.*

*Gam günlü Şenliğ'in gönlünün şadı,/Çıkmaz hatırımdan Al'osman adı,  
Gidipti dünyanın lezzeti, tadı/Mahşer günü bir mekânı isderem.*

*The cruel will not last forever  
What will do death to the brave man  
Here my head if you want cut it by sword  
Does not matter I will tell whatever the truth*

*Pâyidar olmaz zâlim/Yiğide neyer ölüm  
İşte boynum, sal kılıç/Doğruyu söyler dilim  
(Kartarı, 1977: 49-52; Özder,1977: 21-22).*

The Russian banned the Turkish minstrels perform publicly.(Şahin, 1983). However secret performances at homes and copying the minstrels poetry and delivering them to each other by using the network of Kağızman saltpan continued up to the end of Russian occupation.

Finally, it is clear that The Turkish minstrel tradition functioned as a only Turkish public media. The Turkish minstrels from Karseli had multi functions under the occupation of their homeland. They were very useful and help full weakening informal public education. They also worked as a network of underground Turkish resistance. They propagandize to keep high esteem of the Turkish people. Also, the Turkish minstrels produce contra propaganda material to answer Russian and Armenian propaganda through the Turkish and Armenian peoples. The minstrels who immigrated to outside of Karseli they kept to propagandize their homeland's situation and made the immigrants do not forget the people who were living there.

#### Endnotes

- 1 One of the earlier form of this paper was a presentation which read at the 2016 AFS/ISFNR Joint Annual Meeting –Americak Folklore Society in Miami, the article form is expanded by consideration of contributions of audiences at the symposium. I am glad to thank them.
- 2 A poem which is written in 15th century by Süleyman Çelebi in Bursa, about Profit Muhammed'life has read in the religious ceremonies for various purposes such as celebration of birth, death, circumcise, or marriages etc.
- 3 For further information on “dream motif and initiation ceremonies in The Turkish minstrel tradition, see (Başgöz, 1966).
- 4 For much of the poems that collected from hand written manuscripts of personnel anthologies (cönk) or oral sources later by folklorist see Kırzioğlu
- 5 Such explanations and interpretations either minstrel or audiences were observed by the present authors fieldwork which took place 1995, 1996 in Kars and the other places around it.
- 6 The immigrations from Karseli was so big that only between 1878-1882 82.000 Turkish people immigrated to Turkey. For instance the city of Kars population was turn to be from 24.000. to 3921 (Kırzioğlu : 46)

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