

From the book “The Songs of the Pontian People” written by Stathis I. Efstathiadis, and published by Kyriakidis Bothers, Thessaloniki, Greece 1992.
Permission has been received by the author and the publisher to translate and post the poem below.

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Hellenism/Romiosoni is lost...(pontian dialect version)

A bird, a kind bird, from the City flying,
neither at vines nor at fields he alighted,
He flew and perched at the Portal of Hagia Sophia.

His wing he revealed, in blood soaked,
And his other wing holding a paper inscribed.
What it meant no one could understand or decipher
not even the Patriarch and all his clerics.

And a young boy, a kind little boy goes near and reads it.
And once he reads it he cries, his heart cries:
Alas and woe is us, Hellenism is lost!

Hellenism is lost/Romiosini (Greek version)

A bird, a nice bird from the City departs
and neither on the vineyard nor in the fields paused,
He flew away and on the portal of Hagia Sophia alighted.
His one wing he revealed and blood soaked it was.

On his other wing he holds a paper inscribed.
Not one person can read the message,
neither can my patriarch with all his clerics.
And one boy, a kind boy, the message he reads.
Reading and crying, these words he utters:
Woe to us, Alas to us, Hellenism is lost!

Brief Comments and Observations

Constantinople falls into the hands of the Turks in 1453. Eight years later in 1461 the Empire of Trapezunda falls. For the Pontian people these two grievous events constitute a national calamity. The Pontian muse sings an eternal dirge about the destruction of Hellenism in general.

The folk Muse reflects infallibly. This reflection emerges from the awareness of the Pontian spirit. The message about the destruction is divine. That is why the bird that conveys it, flies and alights on the portal of Agia Sophia.

The distressing message cannot be read by anyone. And even the Patriarch cannot and does not have the right to approach the portal of Hagia Sophia at this critical juncture. In the conscience of the people they are all sinful. Only a sinless, childish spirit has the right to approach and read the message. With the announcement of its contents the elegies commence.

It Will Bloom and Another Will Come...

They seized the Emperor's footstool and no longer was there sovereignty.
The churches mourn, the monasteries weep
And St. John Chrysostom weeps and thrashes himself.
Don't weep, don't weep, St. John and stop beating yourself.
Though Byzantium has passed on, it blooms again and brings another...

The Nation Will Be Resurrected...

The emperor is dethroned and the sultan is placed there
The churches mourn and the monasteries weep
And St. John Chrysostom weeps and thrashes himself.
Don't weep, don't weep my dear St. John and stop beating yourself.
The Nation though enslaved, will be resurrected yet again.

Brief comment and critique

This Pontian dirge about the ethnic calamity includes a characteristic element. Within its content there exists self consolation along with the hope for the resurrection of the race. Immediately after the fall, the Pontian people envision its resurrection. They enter servitude with the fundamental hope that the darkness of Turkish occupation will dissolve one day with the radiance of freedom.