

HAFIZ CEMAL VE CHRISTODOULOS TSIAPOURAS'A GÖRE HASAN BULLİLER (1894-1896)

Meral DEMİRYÜREK*

ÖZET

Eşkiyalar dünyanın çoğu yerinde her zaman varolagelmıştır. Günümüzde bunlardan sadece bazılarının adı bilinmektedir. Eric Hobsbawm'ın bu konu üzerindeki ünlü eseri eşkiyaları tarihçilerin, edebiyatçıların, film yapımcılarının ve senaristlerin önemli konularından biri yapmıştır.

1894 yılında Kıbrıs'ta bir eşkiyalık olayı meydana geldi. Hasan Bulliler olarak bilinen bir grup, yaklaşık on beş ay boyunca zaptiyelerden kaçmayı başardılar. Fakat Kıbrıs'taki İngiliz hükûmeti aldığı tedbirler neticesinde onları yakaladı, yargıladı ve astı.

Hasan Bulliler Kıbrıs'taki Türkler ve Rumlar üzerinde büyük etkiler bıraktı. Bu nedenle, onlar için birçok roman, piyes, destan ve şiir yazıldı.

Bu çalışmada Hasan Bulliler için bir Türk ve bir Rum şair tarafından yazılmış iki farklı şiir karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenecektir. Çalışmanın amacı, söz konusu olayın Kıbrıs'taki iki toplumu ve Kıbrıs edebiyatını nasıl etkilediğini ele alınan şiirler yoluyla ortaya koymaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hasan Bulliler, Kıbrıs edebiyatı, Hafız Cemal, Christodoulos Tsiapouras, eşkiya.

*Assist. Prof. Dr., European University of Lefke, Arts and Science Faculty, Turkish Language and Literature Department, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.
meraldemiryurek@gmail.com

**THE TURKISH CYPRIOT BANDITS ACCORDING TO A
GREEK CYPRIOT POET AND A TURKISH CYPRIOT
POET (1894-1896)****ABSTRACT**

Bandits have always existed in most areas of the world. Nowadays we know the names of some of them. However since Eric Hobsbawm wrote his famous research book about bandits, they have become the main subject of historians, filmmakers, scenarists and literateurs.

The bandits gained a great fame that they were the subject of some plays and poems when they were alive. In 1894, the event of bandits occurred in Cyprus. They were known as Hasan Polias. They had lived as fugitives for about 15 months.

During this time the Cyprus Government applied some special measures, such as to enact new laws, to increase the number of police force and to imprison the friends and supporters of the fugitives. Finally, they were captured, judged and hanged. But they were so influential that two poems about their activities were written and published. One of the poems was written by Christodoulos Tsiapouras. The second poem belonged to Hafiz Cemal. Both poems were published in 1996.

The aim of this study is to reveal the effects of this event on Cypriots and the literature of Cyprus by comparing these two poems.

Key Words: The bandits, Hasan Polias, Cyprus, the literature of Cyprus.

Introduction

During the 19th century there were a lot of bandits worldwide. The dictionaries define a bandit in two ways: First meaning is a person living the lifestyle of outlawry¹ and the second meaning is also a member of an armed gang.² It is clear that people

¹ Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outlaw (accessed: 16.8.2009)

² Collins Online Dictionary, www.collinslanguage.com (accessed: 19.8.2009)

know the names of some of them, because the bandits are popular among the public. Thanks to Eric Hobsbawm the bandits have become an important subject of academic work since 1969.³ Moreover some artists have been inspired by the bandits and they have done many artistic works, such as films, novels and poems. Some bandits were also famous in their time and they were the subject of some plays and poems when they were alive.

Bandits became prevalent in Cyprus in the 1890's. They were known as Hasan Polias. There are three poems about them. This study will compare the poems of Christodoulos Tsiapouras and Hafız Cemaleddin. The third poem was not found which was written by Kiriako Papadopoulos.

There are three main themes in the two poems. The first theme is the bandits and the people who were kidnapped by them. The second theme is the bandits and the Cyprus Police Force (Zaptiehs) and the third one is also the bandits and the men killed by Hasan Polias. The poets both praise and criticise the bandits in the poems. However the approaches of the poets are different from each other, because their national identities were different. Hafız Cemaleddin was Turkish Cypriot, as Hasan Polias. Christodoulos Tsiapouras was also Greek Cypriot. Therefore this study will dwell upon these topics.

1. The History of Hasan Polias in Cyprus

Hobsbawm famously claims that anyone belonging to a group of men, who attack, rob and resort to brute force, are branded as bandits by the government.⁴ In the 19th century such a group of the bandits appeared in Cyprus. The history of the bandits goes back to the family of Polia.

The family of Polia lived in Mamonia, in the district of Bafos. In 1894, Ahmet Polia had two sons named Mehmet [his nickname *Kaimakam*] and Hüseyin [his nickname *Kavuni*]. The older son named Hasan was in prison owing to his offences committed in 1887-1888. On January 8th, 1895, Kavuni, Kaimakam, their mother's brother and their friends who were Greek Cypriots drank and had a good time. When a disagreement took place among them, a Greek Cypriot attacked Kavuni and beat him. During the quarrel, Haralambos Kolotasas was stabbed by Kavuni and he was killed. According to another rumour, one of Ahmet Polia's sons made love with a Greek Cypriot girl. The reason of the disagreement was this

³ Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, London 1969.

⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *ibid*, p. 13.

matter, because the stabbed Greek Cypriot was the brother of that girl. Kavuni and Kaimakam did not surrender to the Police. They were fugitives who lived as fugitives for about two years. They were very popular in Cyprus between both Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots.

During this time the Cypriot Government applied some special measures such as to enact new laws, to increase the number of police force and to imprison the friends and supporters of the fugitives. The Government published a reward. According to it, if anyone helped the police to arrest them, the government would give him a hundred liras as the reward. Finally, a Turkish Cypriot named Talha gave secret information to the Police. One night, when the fugitives were sleeping, they were captured by the police, judged and hanged.

However the public were very supportive of the bandits and some poets were inspired by the story of Hasan Polias. For example, three poems were written and published about them in the end of 1800s. Two of the poems were written by Greek Cypriots named Kiryako Papadopulo and Christodoulos Tsiapouras. 1000 copies of Kiryako Papadopulo's poem were published on January 7th, 1896 by the Greek Cypriot publisher while they were still fugitives. Its name was "The Song of Hasanpolias." 1000 copies of Christodoulos Tsiapouras's poem was also published on March 9th, 1896 after the bandits were captured. The latter 1000 copies of this poem were published again on March 19th, 1896. Its name was also "The Song of Hasanpolias."⁵

After the bandits were hanged, a Turkish Cypriot poet named Hafız Cemaleddin also wrote a poem about them. Its name was "Cyprus Bandit under the British Rule."⁶ 600 copies of Hafız Cemaleddin's poem were published on June 21st, 1896.

2.The Bandits and the Women Kidnapped by Them

It is believed that Hasan Polias were clearly bandits, but some people think of them as noble bandits. According to Hobsbawm, the noble bandits have some features and their "relation with peasants is that of total solidarity and identity."⁷ However the behaviors of Hasan Polias were different from the definition of Hobsbawm about the noble bandit. For example, the gang kidnapped three Turkish women, who were Feride, Pembe Mulla and Aliye. Hafız Cemaleddin

⁵ Haşmet Muzaffer Gürkan, *Bir Zamanlar Kıbrıs'ta*, Lefkoşa 1986, p. 66-74.

⁶ Hafız Cemaleddin, *İngiliz İdaresinde Kıbrıs Eşkiyası*, Lefkoşa 1313(1896).

⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, *ibid*, p. 35.

mentioned their names in his poem but does not seem to criticize the gang. They perhaps raped the women, but Hafız Cemaleddin did not describe it clearly. He only wrote:

*“They went Alehtora daylight,
They seized Feride that day.
There is no place in the coffee-shop.”*

*“They busted Bladanisya by night,
They took Pembe Mulla by force.
They escaped by taking the girls,
They put forward Penbe Mulla,
They undressed her”*

*“They busted Mamonia by night,
Aliye went with them by crying.
Her husband wept for his wife,
But nobody listened him”*

Christodoulos Tsiapouras also discusses the kidnapping of these women. Like Hafız Cemaleddin, he did not criticise the kidnappings. But he claimed that Aliye’s husband had cursed: *“Aliye’s husband said: Murderers, the God punished you, to be held the wrath of the God”*. He depicted the events as the following:

*“In the Turkish village named Malunda,
They kidnapped a Turkish girl,
There was no any reason her to kidnap,
She were with her husband in her house,
The woman named Aliye was a beautiful woman.
They were crowded, they were nine people,
They raped her in turn.”*

*“In the village named Alehtora there was a coffee-shop,
A woman was dancing, she was very beautiful,
They abducted her.”*

*“They went at night under the moonlight,
They abducted a woman named Penbe Mulla,
They had two women.”*

They also abducted a Christian girl whose father was a priest. Hafız Cemaleddin did not tell us her name but explained this event as the following:

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and History of Turkish or Turkic
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*"They came and entered her house
They abducted her and raped.
The girl begun to sweep"*

*"But no one came to help her.
The fugitive said: Don't cry,
We will take you, if you are dying."*

*"They went to the vineyard of Kara Ali,
They hurt very much her,
They committed everything"*

Christodoulos Tsiapouras wrote about this kidnapping in a different way to Hafiz Cemaleddin. Because she was a Christian girl named Varvorou and she was a daughter of a priest. In addition to this, she was engaged with Moisi. According to Tsiapouras, this event that took place, was a "disaster". He commented: *"Her mother used to wish her daughter to die before kidnapping."* *"If Varvarou and Moisi died, it would be more then kidnapping"* When they were captured, Tsiapouras described: *"This was the curse of the Priest."* He also cursed them by saying *"Their condition were more worse than the girl of the Priest"*

He claimed the kidnapping as the following:

*"Everyone who heard the disaster used to sweep,
He had a beautiful girl and she was engaged.
Her mother wished her to bury before kidnapping,
She was a wonderful girl don't say only a girl,
Her name was Varvarou and she was engaged with Moisi.
It would be well, if they lost their heads,
She was the daughter of the brother of the wife of the Priest,
She was a nourishing of the Priest.
The God has a lot of time, the time was the evening prayer,
Nobody was in the house except the girl, it is the worst time.*

...

*Three monsters entered suddenly the house,
They abducted her and they woke up another place,
They were in a abandoned sheepfold, It was a desolate hut,
They almost killed her and tore her breasts."*

There was also a kidnapping attempt. Hafiz Cemaleddin did not discuss it, but Christodoulos Tsiapouras did. She also was a Christian girl. She was lived Milikuri. Tsiapouras described:

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*“They intended a girl lived Milikuri to abduct,
She lived with Hacı Perikli.
She had a suspicion and did not stay his house.
The fugitives burned the house.”*

According to Christodoulos Tsiapouras, all women were afraid of the fugitives. Therefore, they could not go to their fields. They could not irrigate their potatoes which were withered. He explained:

*“Women could not go their fields, even if one time in week,
The potatoes withered, they were without water.”*

3.The Bandits and the [Zaptiehs] Cyprus Police Force

The Hasan Polias were fugitives. Although a very large reward was offered for their capture by the government, the Paphos villagers didn't betray them. Moreover Hasan Polias clearly struck terror on many villages.⁸ Hafız Cemaleddin also wrote about their adventures relating to this matter. One of them was about the conflict with Cyprus Police force. The Police officers were afraid of them. After a fighting, the Police revealed their opinions:

*“...We were afraid of them,
We were cooked by our sweats
Our work was memorizing
The God save us
These traitors will kill us”*

*“The police run away when they were in dangerous
They were wounded and ran towards the village,
In fact, their effort was ineffective.”*

*“They said we met with misfortune,
Run away our friends go the plain.
If we knew this we would not come here.”*

There are the names of four Police officers in the poems. They were Delevando, Mavrokordato, Mustafa Şevki and Spiros. According to Hafız Cemaleddin the fugitives wanted to kill Delevando.

⁸Paul Saint Cassia, “Banditry Myth and Terror in Cyprus and Other Mediterranean Societies”, **Comparative Studies in Society and History**, 1993, 4, p. 776. (stable [URL:www.jstor.org/stable/179182](http://www.jstor.org/stable/179182) accessed: 30.7.2009)

They ambushed Delevando, but they could only kill Kiracı Sava and two women. Delevando escaped. Hafız Cemaleddin explained:

*“They used to want eagerly Delevando,
They used to wait in Prodor,
Kiracı Sava was passing the way,
The soul of Sava passed away by mistake,
Besides, two women were their victims.”*

He did not mention Mavrokordato and Spiros but Tsiapouras did. The fugitives were captured by Captain Mustafa Şevki Efendi. Hafız Cemaleddin depicted it in this way:

*“Captain Mustafa Şevki Efendi,
He ordered immediately the zaptiehs.
Twelve rifles were directed the door,
All rifles began to shoot at once.”*

Christodoulos Tsiapouras also wrote about these policemen. According to him, Delevando was impatient and wanted to hunt them today or tomorrow. He explained: *“They killed the tenant of Delavando, It would almost live only Delavando’s name.”* Mavrokordato was chasing them forever. He wanted to arrest them. He also told Mustafa Şevki. According to him, *“There was a Captain, he was fat and brave.”* His name was Mustafa Şevki Efendi. Spiros was a police officer. He took some information from Aliye, who was kidnapped by the fugitives.

According to him, the police who followed the fugitives were not cowards. But they wanted to be far from the fugitives, because they would lose their life.

According to Christodoulos Tsiapouras, the fugitives were notorious. For example, Hüseyin was a “snake”. Therefore they were with the Devil. But the Devil decided that there was a job to finish. It is clear that the poet used some metaphors in his poem, such as snake and Devil. Therefore he described the bandits: *“The old Devil will finish the job”, “As we said the Devil is carrying on this play”, “The crippled Devil disturbed them”.*

4.The Bandits and the Men Killed by Them

Hobsbawm argues that there are too many words describing noble bandit and “it may be summarized in nine points.”⁹ Especially

⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *ibid*, p. 35-36.

the fourth point shows that the bandits of Hasan Polias are not noble bandits, because the noble bandit “never kills but in self-defence or just revenge”

According to Christodoulos Tsiapouras, the fugitives killed fourteen people. Most of them were Greek Cypriots. He did not write their names. Hafız Cemaleddin did not explain how many people were killed by them but mentioned some names, such as Cücüyani and New Hristofi. While Cücüyani was going to a festival, the fugitives shot him, because he was the informant. Hafız Cemaleddin depicted it like this:

*“While Cücüyani was going to a festival,
He came suddenly face to face with three fugitives
He mounted a horse.
When he was passing, he was shot by Hüseyin”*
...
*Kaimakam says; also take a bullet from me,
When he was shot, he dropped on the ground.
Hüseyin says; the people give the information to police,
All of them would go like this.”*

The second person killed by the fugitives was New Hristofi. When he was going from Fasulla to Limassol, he was shot by the fugitives because he did not want to give them money. Hafız Cemal described this event derisively. For example, “*The Greek Cypriot swallowed the meatball*”. In addition, he depicted this event:

*“When he was going from Fasulla to Limassol,
The fugitives came suddenly face to face with him.
He mounted a mule.
When he was shot by them, he dropped.
The legs of New Hristofi stood up,
His genitals came from his forehead”.*

The fugitives also shot a number of Turks. Their names were Mahmut, Bayram. They were shot, because they had given some information to the police about the fugitives, in return for the reward if the police managed to arrest them. Hafız Cemaleddin mentioned their names but Christodoulos Tsiapouras did not. Hafız Cemaleddin commented:

*“Mahmut and Bayram were apparently friends of them,
But they were enemies of them,
Because they cooperated with the police,*

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*They took a lot of money from the police.
The fugitives found out it and heard,
And killed both of them.*

...

*Mahmut said; It was a lie,
My enemies wanted me to be killed.
They listened him well,
The fugitives were silent and gritted their teeth,
And they shot him later.*

...

*Firstly, look. What did Mahmut?
He took a lot of money from the Police.
Later, he made trick.
But the fugitives heard what he did,
They killed him one night."*

...

*Şükrü ran, and saw Bayram was shot,
Bayram was in the blood."*

The Cypriot government started to research about the bandits of Hasan Polias and inspector Kareklas was charged with this matter in 1937. He visited villages and talked with peasants. The report of Kareklas is very important, because he met peasants and officers who were eyewitnesses of the occurrence of Hasan Polias. Also this report shows that after almost 40 years, the government took an interest in the bandits.

Conclusion

Hasan Polias tried to live like outlaws in Cyprus in the late of 19th century, when Cyprus was part of the British colony. The government promised to catch the bandits and the reward that it offered in return for any information was a very significant amount. However nobody gave information about Hasan Polias, because people supported them.

There are many works relating to Hasan Polias, such as novels, dramas and poems. The two poems that are especially important were written by Hafız Cemaleddin and Christodoulos Tsiapouras. Although there is only one fact about the bandits, the poem's perspectives are different from each other. The poets emphasized the different parts of the fact. Both of poets also praised the fugitives. There were some statements in their poems that lead us to believe that they praised them. There can be no doubt that the two poets supported the bandits, who rebelled against the government which was managed by the British government. However the two

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poems are different from each other, because Hasan Polias were Turkish Cypriots and it is believed that Hafız Cemaleddin commented on them positively. Christodoulos Tsiapouras was also Greek Cypriot and his opinion consists of critical details about the bandits.

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