

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

**CONTESTATIONS OVER  
MACEDONIAN IDENTITY,  
1870–1912**

by

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## STUDENT DECLARATION

I, Nick Anastasovski, declare that the thesis entitled *Contestations over Macedonian Identity 1870–1912* is no more than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, appendices and references. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Nick Anastasovski

May 2005

## **DEDICATION**

**To my wife Sophie  
whose support and encouragement  
made the study possible**

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## ABSTRACT

AS A CONTESTED space Macedonia in the late nineteenth century suffered political, religious and paramilitary incursions made upon the population by the neighbouring nascent states and the disappearing Ottoman empire. Territorial claims were rationalised by ethnographic maps and statistical population data. Interested commentators viewed Macedonia in accordance with government policy and presented their studies as academic and scientific, even though these studies were clearly political in nature. The European Powers maintained their own pretence and acted as patrons of the small Balkan States. Although churches, schools and paramilitary bands were the primary instruments of the Greek, Bulgarian and Serb states, expansion into Macedonia was ultimately achieved by a full military mobilisation when the armies of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia marched into Macedonia in October 1912 and drove out the Ottoman Turks. The territorial division of Macedonia and claims upon the Macedonians have continued to be a matter of contention between the Balkan States into contemporary times.

As the new nation of Macedonia began its independent existence in 1991, its citizens sought to understand this history. For lengthy periods Macedonia was colonised by more powerful neighbours, especially the Turks in the Ottoman period to 1912. The very word ‘Macedonia’ is a contested category, much like any other post-colonial concept. As each of its neighbours has sought to colonise Macedonia, Macedonian history has become overburdened with the representations of these others. There is no *essential* ‘Macedonia’ hidden beneath these foreign representations, but there is nonetheless a specific and distinctive history comprised of the everyday life of people in the territory now known as Macedonia.

This thesis seeks to recover that everyday life through an examination of the sources relating to a defining period in Macedonian history, the period from 1870 to 1912 – when Macedonia found herself in a disintegrating Ottoman Empire and the

territorial ambitions of neighbouring Balkan States (Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia) saw them engage in a fierce competition for the hearts and minds of the Macedonian Christians.

This thesis interrogates these sources by using the techniques and strategies of post-colonial scholars. This interrogation reveals, just as surely as the post-colonialists have reinterpreted Western views of Asia and Africa, that views of Macedonia by Greeks, Turks, Bulgarians, Serbs and others are not 'innocent' or 'disinterested'. This thesis argues that, no matter how sophisticated their particular methodology or analysis, these foreign scholars – demographers, historians, anthropologists – brought to their studies of Macedonia late in the nineteenth century an imperial agenda, the ramifications of which continue to influence politics in the region to the present time.

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Aga</b>	Aga is commonly applied to low ranking officers or elderly respectable men who have no official rank.
<b>Andartes</b>	Greek irregular para-militaries.
<b>Arnaut</b>	Turkish term for Albanian. Albanians used the term <i>Skipetar</i> .
<b>Asker</b>	Soldier, soldiers or army.
<b>Badjzhdata</b>	An opening in the ceiling of a village home designed to allow smoke (from the home fire) to be released.
<b>Badnik</b>	The day before Orthodox Christmas (January 7) was known as <i>badnik</i> and was celebrated with a village bonfire in the evening.
<b>Baklava</b>	A Turkish sweet.
<b>Barde</b>	A clay drinking vase.
<b>Bashibouzouk</b>	Armed Muslim irregulars; bandits. Often attacked Christian villages in the wake of the Ottoman army. During the suppression of the Ilinden Rebellion, <i>bashibouzkouks</i> were known to appear following Ottoman attacks on towns and engage in undisciplined pillaging.
<b>Basmar</b>	Medicine woman (can be a male, but rarely).

<b>Bayach</b>	Holy woman (can be a male, but rarely).
<b>Bayram</b>	A Muslim religious day.
<b>Bedel</b>	A personal tax payable for every newborn Christian male.
<b>Beg</b>	Common term for feudal landlord but also used by government officials. Similar to the title 'esquire' in the English language. Officers of the army and sons of distinguished persons can also be known as <i>beg</i> . Also known as <i>bey</i> .
<b>Berat</b>	A <i>berat</i> is an act by which officials of the Ottoman Empire are appointed.
<b>Bey</b>	See <i>beg</i> .
<b>Bezisten</b>	Covered marketplace.
<b>Blato</b>	A large body of water such as a marsh or swamp.
<b>Boza</b>	A thick flour-based drink.
<b>Bozhik</b>	Christmas.
<b>Butim</b>	A yoghurt-making instrument.
<b>Chairo</b>	A level, open space in the village of Gorno Aglarci (Bitola region) where <i>desetok</i> tax was paid.

<b>Cheta</b>	A group of armed fighters. Common term when describing a unit of Macedonian revolutionaries of the IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation).
<b>Chiflik</b>	Feudal estate operated by a powerful <i>beg</i> .
<b>Defter</b>	An Ottoman administrative register.
<b>Dekar</b>	One thousand square metres of land.
<b>Derudeshiluk</b>	A tribute or tax forcibly imposed on entire villages and paid to local <i>beys</i> or bandit chiefs for protection from the plunder of bandits.
<b>Desetok</b>	The basic agricultural tax constituting a 10 per cent payment.
<b>Dolum</b>	Agricultural measurement equal to 920 square metres.
<b>Domashna slava</b>	Literally meaning 'home celebration', the <i>domashna slava</i> is a celebration for the patron saint of the family home. It is celebrated annually and is a hereditary tradition handed down from father to son.
<b>Drumo</b>	The road separating the village of Gorno Aglarci (Bitola region) with the villages Armatoush, Meglenci and Suvodol was known as <i>drumo</i> .

<b>Dudule</b>	During long periods of drought when the survival of vegetation and farm animals was in doubt, a rain ritual was performed, commonly known in the Bitola region as <i>dudule</i> or <i>vaidudule</i> .
<b>Duhovden</b>	An Orthodox Christian religious holy day; 'Descent of the Holy Spirit upon Apostle-Holy Pentecost'. <i>Duhovden</i> is celebrated fifty days after Easter.
<b>Efendi</b>	Lord or master, usually applied to a learned Muslim.
<b>Emir</b>	Chief or patron of a defined territory.
<b>Endeze</b>	Measuring system - equivalent to three feet.
<b>Eremiya</b>	A Macedonian seasonal celebration (13 May).
<b>Esnaf</b>	Guild association.
<b>Ethnike hetairia</b>	A Greek organisation founded in Athens in November 1894, the <i>Ethnike Hetairia</i> (National Society) was supported by three-quarters of the officers of the Greek army and by wealthy businessmen. It aimed at liberating all Greeks under Ottoman rule and was particularly active in advancing Greek propaganda in Macedonia.
<b>European Turkey</b>	European Turkey refers to the European territories of the Ottoman Empire.

<b>Exarchate</b>	Established in 1870, the Bulgarian Orthodox church was known as the Exarchate.
<b>Exarchist</b>	Exarchist is sometimes used to describe a village or person under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate church.
<b>Firman</b>	An Ottoman written decree.
<b>Giaor</b>	A derogatory term for a Christian inhabitant of the Ottoman Empire. Also used to denote 'non-believer'.
<b>Griblo</b>	Rake.
<b>Grnchina</b>	Cooking utensils - earthenware, copper and clay pots.
<b>Grosh</b>	Ottoman Turkish currency.
<b>Gurgovden</b>	An Orthodox Christian Holy day celebrated on 6 May each year.
<b>Halva</b>	A Turkish sweet.
<b>Harac</b>	A capitation tax imposed on all adult male non-Muslims.
<b>Hidjaret</b>	When a child turned fifteen his family was required to pay the <i>hidjaret</i> tax. The amount paid often depended upon the means of the family.
<b>Idare Medzhlisi</b>	Ottoman administrative advisory councils.

<b>Ihtissab</b>	<i>Ihtissab</i> (or <i>rusonmat</i> ) taxes were various indirect taxes such as tolls charged by guards on mountain passes, stamp duty, tax on private commercial transactions, a traders' tax based upon the value of their stock, and a fisheries tax.
<b>IMRO</b>	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation. In Macedonian known as <i>VMRO - Vnatrešna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija</i> .
<b>Irade</b>	A personal decree issued by the Sultan.
<b>Ispoldzhija</b>	A <i>chiflik</i> worker.
<b>Janichari</b>	Pronounced 'Yanichari' – English: Janissaries. Janissaries were Christian children forcibly taken by the Ottomans (as a tax) and raised as fanatical Muslim soldiers. This elite fighting force was disbanded in 1826.
<b>Jataci</b>	Collaborators; people who worked secretly with the Macedonian revolutionary movement. Pronounced 'Yatatsi'.
<b>Kaaite</b>	<i>Begs'</i> representatives in <i>chiflik</i> villages, typically residing in the <i>kenla</i> (tower) during periods over summer and monitor work performed on land. Also known as <i>kea</i> or <i>keata</i> .
<b>Kadia</b>	Ottoman administrator of a <i>kaz̧a</i> .
<b>Kadayif</b>	A Turkish sweet.

<b>Kaimakam</b>	High sheriff.
<b>Katchatci</b>	Albanian bandits.
<b>Kaurin</b>	An Ottoman term signifying a non-Muslim or 'non believer'. Also known as 'Giaour'.
<b>Kaza</b>	Administrative unit in the Ottoman Empire, typically encompassing a region.
<b>Kelijni</b>	Initially, <i>kelijni</i> schools provided religious-based instruction through remote churches and monasteries. In the nineteenth century they undertook a gradual transition into secular institutions and were administered alongside the establishment of independent Macedonian church-educational councils.
<b>Klanici</b>	Stones that were positioned around a fire inside a village home.
<b>Kmet</b>	Village headman.
<b>Konak</b>	A <i>konak</i> can signify an inn or more commonly the residence of a <i>beg</i> or a high-ranking government or military official.
<b>Kula</b>	Tower. The term is often used in the Macedonian language as ' <i>Turka kula</i> ' (Turkish tower). Typically, towers were erected in <i>chiflik</i> villages and provided accommodation for the <i>begs</i> ' representatives or the <i>beg</i> himself.
<b>Kum</b>	Godfather.

<b>Kumita</b>	Macedonian revolutionary; irregular fighter.
<b>Kuyka</b>	Home or house ( <i>Kuykata</i> – ‘the home/house’).
<b>Letnik</b>	A Macedonian seasonal celebration (1 March).
<b>Lokum</b>	Turkish delight.
<b>Maalo</b>	A town quarter.
<b>Millet</b>	Ottoman society was organised into religious communities. As such every Ottoman subject belonged to a recognised ecclesiastical institution, known as <i>millet</i> s.
<b>Motika</b>	Hoe.
<b>Mudir</b>	An Ottoman official.
<b>Muftija</b>	High-ranking official in the Islamic religion. The <i>muftija</i> exerted significant influence and his decisions were compulsorily accepted by the <i>kadia</i> . The <i>muftija</i> dealt with matters arising about the ‘Sheriat’. Most larger towns had a <i>muftija</i> .
<b>Muhadjirs</b>	Muslim refugees.
<b>Nahia</b>	A <i>nahia</i> represented the smallest administrative division in the Ottoman Empire. It usually took its name from a town, river or object within its boundaries.

**Nalandzhi**                      Wooden-based clogs popular with Turkish women.

**Nevrus**                        A Macedonian seasonal celebration (25 March).

**Numko**                        Godfather, also known as *kum*.

**Ofchar**                        A shepherd.

### **Ohrid Archbishopric**

The Orthodox Christian Ohrid Archbishopric was the church of the Macedonian people. It was abolished by the Ottoman Sultan in 1767 under pressure from the Greek Patriarchate.

**Oja**                              A Muslim religious figure - similar to a Christian priest. (The same term is also used for a Muslim teacher).

**Oka**                              A system for measuring weight - 1.282 kilogram was equivalent to one *oka*.

**Pasha**                            A high-ranking Ottoman. A military general was known as a *pasha*. The title of *pasha* could only be conferred by the Sultan.

**Patriarchate**                  The church of the Greek Patriarchate was situated in Constantinople and throughout most of the nineteenth century (prior to 1870) it enjoyed a monopoly over Christian ecclesiastical matters in European Turkey.

***Pechalbar***                      Macedonian migratory worker.

<b>Phanariot</b>	<p>Phanariots were those Greeks who were descendants of prominent merchant and cleric families associated with the Greek Patriarchate. They took the name Phanariots from the Phanar quarter of Constantinople, which they inhabited.</p> <p>The Phanariots were a form of Greek aristocracy living in the Phanar district of Constantinople where the Greek Patriarch resided. They were made up of merchants, financiers and clergymen and maintained solid connections with the Patriarchate. From the beginning of the eighteenth century they were utilised by the Ottomans as interpreters with Europeans, however their influence with the Ottomans saw them become powerful and prosperous as they filled prominent civil service positions. Clerical members of the Panariots exploited the Patriarchate church and sought to expand its influence in the Balkans.</p>
<b>Pogon</b>	Parcel of land equivalent to 2000 square metres.
<b>Polyak</b>	Watchman of the village fields.
<b>Pondila</b>	An outer building where farm animals were kept.
<b>Potka</b>	A small, erect mound of earth approximately one foot high used to mark the boundary of agricultural fields.
<b>Prekar</b>	Typically Macedonian surnames are derived from a father's name or even a nickname ( <i>prekar</i> ), which becomes a family symbol.

<b>Raguzina</b>	A straw sleeping mat. Made by men from the central part of the Bitola Pelagonia plain over the winter months.
<b>Rakia</b>	Home-made distilled alcohol.
<b>Raya</b>	Ottoman term denoting non-Muslims of the Ottoman Empire in their entirety, literally meaning ‘the flock’.
<b>Rayatsko</b>	The term <i>rayatsko</i> is typically used when referring to land. <i>Rayatsko</i> land signifies land that is not <i>chiflik</i> land, but denotes land that remained in private ownership prior to <i>pechalbari</i> buying <i>chiflik</i> land back from the <i>begs</i> in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
<b>Rufet</b>	Traditional clothing in the district of Gorna Reka was known as <i>rufet</i> .
<b>Rumelia</b>	Denotes Ottoman Turkish territory in Europe.
<b>Rusonmat</b>	See <i>ibtissab</i> .
<b>Salname</b>	Official Ottoman book outlining religious and other significant dates during the course of a year.
<b>Sandjak</b>	Large territorial administrative region.
<b>Servia</b>	The name Servia was often used by commentators and historians in place of Serbia, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

<b>Shamak</b>	A straw-like weed naturally found in the marshland ( <i>blato</i> ) on the Pelagonia plain. Utilised in the manufacture of <i>zimbili</i> and <i>raguzini</i> .
<b>Sheriat</b>	Sacred (Islamic) law.
<b>Shpion</b>	A spy or informer for the Empire.
<b>Singir</b>	System of measuring agricultural fields. One <i>singir</i> was equivalent to 50 metres.
<b>Soi</b>	An extended family.
<b>Sokak</b>	Street, road or path. For instance, the main road in Bitola was known as <i>Shirok sokak</i> (wide street).
<b>Stomni</b>	A clay drinking vase.
<b>Stroinik</b>	A middle man who organises partners for marriage.
<b>Sursa</b>	Entire unarmed Christian villages were known to be held for ransom by armed Muslim bandits (typically Albanians in western Macedonia) who extracted extortion payments. The extracting of extortion payments in this manner was known as <i>sursa</i> .
<b>Svatovi</b>	In-laws.

<b>Syligos</b>	Greek ultra-nationalist organisation. The Syligos outwardly professed to be literary and scientific organisations, intended to advance education amongst Greeks. The Syligos was supported financially by wealthy Greeks, but the organisation was in fact politically motivated and sought as its primary aim to support the Patriarchate attempts to expand throughout the Orthodox Balkans and assimilate the non Greek Orthodox Christian populations under Ottoman rule.
<b>Tapiya</b>	Property or land title.
<b>Teke</b>	A Muslim monastery or a religious meeting place.
<b>Tovar</b>	Measuring system - 100 <i>oka</i> was equivalent to one <i>tovar</i> .
<b>Trem</b>	Church outer building where various customs and traditions are commonly held. Often used as a school class room. An outer building in a village home is also known as a <i>trem</i> .
<b>Trska</b>	Cane. In the Bitola region it was found in the <i>blato</i> .
<b>Turkey in Europe</b>	Identical to the term 'European Turkey', denotes Ottoman territorial possessions in Europe.
<b>Vakaf</b>	Land belonging to a religious institution was known as <i>vakaf</i> land. Any land, including buildings, donated to a religious institution was transferred through a legal act before the <i>kadia</i> , known as <i>vakafname</i> or <i>vakafie</i> .

<b>Vali</b>	Governor of province or vilayet.
<b>Varvara</b>	An Orthodox Christian religious holy day.
<b>Vasilica</b>	Orthodox New Year (Jan 14).
<b>Veligden</b>	Easter.
<b>Vergia</b>	An Ottoman personal wealth tax. Also known as <i>vergi</i> .
<b>Vilayet</b>	Large Ottoman administrative region. There were six vilayets in European Turkey in 1900.
<b>Vila</b>	Pitchfork.
<b>Vizier</b>	A Minister of public affairs in the Ottoman Empire. The Grand Vizier was the Sultan's representative for secular matters. Imperial orders were passed down to the provinces via the Grand Vizier.
<b>VMRO</b>	See IMRO.
<b>Vodar</b>	A male designated to water the village fields.
<b>Vodici</b>	A Christian holy day; 'Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ'.
<b>Vojvoda</b>	Leader of a Macedonian Revolutionary unit.

<b>Zapatki</b>	The day before the religious day of Gyurgovden was known as <i>zapatki</i> in the Reka district. On <i>zapatki</i> young girls from the village walked through the village fields, pastoral lands and forests to gather herbal plants.
<b>Zaptiehs</b>	Ottoman police officers.
<b>Zbor</b>	Engagement of a couple. Literally meaning ‘word’ - to give ‘word’.
<b>Zimbili</b>	Straw carry bags made during the winter period by men from villages situated in the central part of the Bitola Pelagonia plain.

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# Introduction

## Context

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE has its roots in the Seljuk Sultanate in northwestern Asia Minor in the thirteenth century. Osman I was the first Ottoman to take the title of Sultan at the beginning of the fourteenth century and the dynasty ruled the Empire until its demise in the early twentieth century. A well-organised military command saw Ottoman rule expand over the coming centuries west to Austria, southwest to North Africa (as far as Algeria) and south into the Middle East, including large parts of the Arabian Peninsula. Ottoman rule extended into the Balkans under the reign of Murad I (1362–1389) and during the course of the fifteenth century the wider Balkan Peninsula was to fall under complete Ottoman rule. The Ottoman presence in Macedonia commenced from the late fourteenth century and the land remained an integral and strategic part of the Empire until 1912.

In the early period, Ottoman rule was tolerable for the Christian subjects so long as they paid their taxes and remained submissive. Defeat at Vienna in 1683 marked the beginning of the Ottoman Empire's gradual decline, while successive military defeats in the eighteenth century to Russia and to Austria sent the Ottoman Empire spiralling further downwards. With the end of Ottoman expansion came an economic downturn. The Empire was economically linked to Europe: raw materials were exported to Europe, whilst European goods were imported into the Ottoman Empire. Combined with general Ottoman financial mismanagement, the stature of the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century had vastly diminished in comparison to that of the early Ottomans.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, with the aid of the European powers, Greece, Serbia and Romania achieved their independence. Bulgarian independence followed in the second half of the nineteenth century. By the late nineteenth century Macedonia remained firmly entrenched under Ottoman rule

largely due to its geo-strategic importance.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the turbulent second half of the nineteenth century the European powers engaged the Balkan States in various combinations, seeking to expand their own spheres of influence in what remained of European Turkey. Strategic Macedonia, with its access to the Aegean Sea, particularly through the ports of Solun<sup>2</sup> and Kavala, became the principal object of their designs. As the liberated Balkan States were constructing their nation states and developing a collective national identity amongst their people, Macedonia remained a feudal agricultural state entrenched in an Empire that was in a process of slow decay.

Unlike the Balkan States, which enjoyed the characteristics of free nations, Macedonia had much earlier lost its principal religious and cultural institution, the Archbishopric of Ohrid (abolished by the Ottomans in 1767). In place of the Archbishopric of Ohrid, other foreign churches were permitted to expand their jurisdiction in Macedonia, initially the powerful Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople church and later, in 1870, the Bulgarian Exarchate. Although a distinct Macedonian identity was apparent from the middle of the nineteenth century, the people's identity was typically designated through loose labels related to religious adherence as well as socio-economic status. As an Empire based upon religion, the Ottomans recognised religious groups (known as *millets*), but politically each group was perceived to be ethnically connected to the national church to which it adhered. Therefore, whilst under the jurisdiction of the Constantinople Patriarchate, Orthodox Christians were perceived as 'Greeks', whilst those under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate were 'Bulgarians'. Later Serbia and Romania (for strategic purposes) also established church organisations in Macedonia. The actual 'ethnicity' of the subjects was of no

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<sup>1</sup> The Balkan lands of Albania and Thrace also remained under Ottoman rule at the end of the nineteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> Following the Balkan Wars of 1912-13 and the division of Macedonia all toponyms in southern Macedonia that fell under Greek political rule underwent a process of hellenisation. The central Macedonian city of Solun was officially renamed Thessaloniki, however it is also known as Salonika. A similar process also occurred to a lesser degree in Bulgarian occupied Macedonia.

The reader should also be aware that this thesis is using the Macedonian convention in relation to the spelling of place names. Some specialists consider this method to be contentious and prefer alternative systems. For the ease of readability popular terms are used in the way that they are used by Macedonians in Australia (for example 'ch' or 'tch' instead of 'č').

consequence to the Ottomans. Indeed, permitting the establishment of competing churches in Macedonia proved that the Ottomans were skilled at playing one state against another for the purpose of prolonging their own existence. In turn, this state of affairs was favourable to the Balkan States as it formed the basis of their territorial pretensions over Macedonia.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth, a bitter rivalry developed for the religious adherence of the population that would be principally played out between the Greek Patriarchate and the Bulgarian Exarchate. National churches were used as the primary tool of the young nationalist Balkan States whose expansionist policies saw Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia engage in a fierce competition, attempting to prove that the Macedonian land and people were an integral part of their respective states. In pursuit of territorial expansion, the principal strategies employed in transforming the Macedonian people into Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs, were the development of national churches and educational institutions, and the infiltration of paramilitary bands. This present work examines the impact of 'denationalisation' and assimilation strategies upon the Macedonian Christian population with the aim of investigating the effects upon the development of Macedonian identity, particularly in the village environment in the heavily contested Bitola sample region.

From a post-colonial perspective, it is evident that the contemporary accounts published at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were generally supporting a position maintained by one or another of the existing or nascent Balkan States. As such, the literature was generally partisan in character: for every publication espousing one position there was another supporting an opposing view. Contradictions were common, and often data on matters such as ethnic composition and population were presented in an unscientific or unscholarly manner. Inconsistencies occurred even in successive publications by the same author, often

due to a shift in government policy on Macedonia. The unreliability of statistical data did not prevent the interested parties (Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria) from using such information to promote their own position.

The present work, *Contestations over Macedonian Identity, 1870–1912*, seeks to examine conflicting ethnographic data and population statistics on Macedonia compiled and promoted by the Balkan States; the religious rivalry between the Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian churches for the adherence of the Christian population; and the establishment, form and role of foreign educational institutions in Macedonia. It will do this by concentrating on a typical Macedonian Orthodox Christian village in the Bitola region, in order to obtain a detailed ethnography of the lives of ordinary people in Macedonia in the late nineteenth century and the personal impact of Balkan rivalry on individuals, families and whole villages.

Although largely concentrating on Balkan rivalries over the Macedonian Christian inhabitants, the present work does not intend to present an exclusively Christian view of a Muslim-dominated land, but instead also inquires into Muslim perspectives of Christians, as well as Muslim views of Ottoman rule. The position of the Muslim community, particularly the Macedonian Muslims, is significant to my fundamental theme. Although not a point of contention for the competing Balkan Christian Churches, the conversion of Christians to the Muslim religion is explored as an Ottoman political and religious strategy aimed at consolidating Muslim rule in Macedonia. Macedonian Muslim perceptions of their identity, and perceptions of neighbouring Macedonian Christian villages that were under opposing church jurisdictions, add important dimensions to the problems investigated here.

The link between Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian paramilitary bands and the spread of religious jurisdiction is more important than previously recognised. Traditionally historians have considered teachers and priests to be the front-line

political agitators on behalf of foreign interests in Macedonia, but an extensive range of contemporary literature points to the critical impact of the paramilitary bands.

Information derived from archival material in the form of Bulgarian Exarchate documents (obtained from the Archive of Macedonia) and British Foreign Office Reports (obtained from the Archive of Macedonia), as well as published Turkish, Serbian, Austrian and Greek Patriarchate documents, is essential to understanding the political environment of late Ottoman Macedonia. For example, published Turkish documents provide an insight into the economic position of villages, through taxation records, and these can be compared to the religious orientation of the villages to determine the relationship between these two factors. Other documents demonstrate the relationship between the Ottoman administration and the respective Balkan Churches in Macedonian villages, providing evidence of political favouritism, and the manner in which local Ottoman functionaries influenced the outward appearance of villages. The Ottoman concept of religion as a marker for nationality can be investigated through these sources. Documents relate to commercial transactions, legal documents from Ottoman courts and an extensive range of taxation data, including different tax categories, the collection of various taxes, including overtaxing of individuals (an instance of Ottoman corruption).

Earlier published Ottoman documents from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries are drawn upon to examine the changing ethnic structure of specific villages. Turkish census documents are also a rich source of material regarding internal migratory workers, as well as workers who left to work in other parts of the Empire. Migratory workers generally aimed at returning with enough money to purchase land from the feudal landlords during the period of Ottoman economic and political deterioration. The thesis also relies upon original unpublished Ottoman land

titles in order to understand the breakdown of the *chiflik* land system (the feudal estates) and the transition to private land ownership.<sup>3</sup>

Besides written sources, including archival material, Turkish and consular documents, and unpublished Ottoman land documents, this thesis also utilises oral histories, the importance of which has been overlooked even by Macedonian historians. Numerous interviews, primarily conducted with elderly Macedonians (both Christian and Muslim), but also with members of the Vlah and Albanian minorities, draw upon the personal recollections and stories passed down regarding the lifestyle and general political, religious and economic environment of Ottoman Macedonia.

Oral history is an important tool in this study because it gives us access to those stories a culture tells of itself. A culture is defined in part by these stories. The La Trobe University sociologist John Carroll has argued that this story-telling is at the very heart of culture. He would contend that the stories coming out of late-nineteenth century Macedonian experience give us insights into the archetypal narratives that animate Western cultures generally. On the other side of the Greek border there are historians who have concluded that the nineteenth century was the period when Greece was successfully ‘dreamed’ into nationhood. Nineteenth-century Australia has been understood the same way – the late historian Russel Ward wrote the controversial account, *The Australian Legend* (1958), which describes the stories told of nomadic ‘bush workers’ (rural labourers) as making up the essence of that young nation’s formation. The Macedonian stories are similarly important not merely in what they relate, for the content must be constantly triangulated with other sources, but in the fact of their continuous re-telling.

In this contentious and highly politicised field of study, this present work attempts to transcend the many generalisations, commonly-held assumptions and

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<sup>3</sup> Ottoman land titles referred to in this thesis relate to original documents in the possession of the writer.

misconceptions concerning the period of late Ottoman rule Balkan rivalry. It presents new perspectives and evaluates Macedonian village life at a crucial juncture in the history of that land and people.

A post-colonial analysis helps us understand in a new and positive way the response of the Macedonian peasantry to the various strategies of foreign powers to win them over to their allegiance. In what is otherwise one of the best accounts of this history, Danforth (1995) explains the changeability of these 'illiterate peasants' as a constant process of negotiating identities in a manner designed to serve their interests most favourably. The post-colonial reading of this peasantry provided by this thesis stresses the strength of their oral culture rather than emphasises their lack of formal education. It also sees these negotiations as an intelligent response to a highly contestable situation and invests in these 'illiterate peasants' an agency lacking in other accounts. Danforth's corollary argument, that Macedonian nationalism was not attained until after the 1940s, assumes an essentialist view of that nationalism which is not supported by the current work.

## **Summary:**

Chapter One examines the colonising nature of the Ottoman invasion of Macedonia, which brought with it, from the end of the fourteenth century onwards, favourable conditions for the conqueror to Islamicise elements of the indigenous Macedonian Christian population. Strategic colonisation and Islamicisation, in varying intensities, was a process that lasted to the end of Ottoman rule early in the twentieth century, and brought lasting changes to the ethnic and religious structure of the land. The methods applied in the conversion of Christians to the Islamic religion, the role of new colonising peoples in this process, as well as forms of resistance to conversion, are all investigated.

The investigation indicates how, although in other respects identical with their Macedonian Christian cousins, Islamicised Macedonians were outside of the contest for Macedonia that was directed by the Balkan States only at 'Christian souls'. This particular Muslim group was nevertheless a political factor from the Ottoman perspective - just as Macedonian Patriarchists and Exarchists were used by the Bulgarians and Greeks in the promotion of their own position in Macedonia. For the purposes of population statistics, the Ottomans treated all Muslims as one group regardless of ethnicity, and exaggerated their true number to promote their own position aimed at extending their rule in the land.

The Ottoman concept of religion as equivalent to nationality is relevant in Macedonia primarily within the Christian sphere. However, in Chapter One the concept of religion equating nationality is investigated from a Muslim perspective, using Macedonian Muslims from the Dolna Reka district (Debar region) as a sample group. The impact of the new religion upon perceptions of their identity, and the fundamentally crucial question of whether Macedonian Muslim villagers distinguished between Macedonian Exarchate and Patriarchate villagers are two of the main issues dealt with here.

Religious identity was not a matter for the people simply to determine for themselves. As a land and a population subjected to the rivalries of the Balkan States, Chapter Two examines the inconsistencies and contradictions of ethnographic data on Macedonia. Contemporary accounts of population statistics and ethnographic data published at the turn of the nineteenth century were generally supporting a position maintained by one or another of the Balkan States. Unsurprisingly, the literature was usually noticeably partisan in character. Contradictions were common, and each of the Balkan States used ethnographic and statistical data to present Ottoman Macedonia as essentially a Greek, Bulgarian or Serbian land. A wide range of statistical data is examined, as well as the methods employed by ethnographers, and

the motivation behind their necessarily subjective results. This thesis will attempt a more accurate outline of the ethnic composition of Macedonia, in particular within the primary sample region of Bitola, through the compilation of a detailed ethnographic table of the region.<sup>4</sup>

Chapter Three outlines demographic data of the Bitola region and geographically treats the region as comprising three distinct zones – the Pelagonia plain, the upper villages and the Mariovo district. The economic, religious, political and ethnic elements of the three zones are analysed and compared. A detailed ethnography of the lives of ordinary people in a typical late nineteenth-century Macedonian Orthodox Christian village is undertaken. Constituting a dominant part of life in the rural sector, the *chiflika* agricultural system (feudal estates) is explored, including the relationship between the villagers and the feudal landlord (*beg*), as well as the issue of taxation as a major point of conflict. Village social structure, status systems and ritual celebrations all provide an insight into the unique character of the Macedonian people and the fabric of their village life. As the principal economic and administrative centre, and seat of the opposing religious organisations in the region, Bitola town is examined in order to draw a contrast between rural and urban lifestyles, the naming systems of town quarters, ethnic composition, and religious-political rivalry.

The chapter also describes how political insecurity created by the rivalry of the Balkan States and general economic instability gave rise to the emigration of temporary workers known as *pechalbari*. Mechanisms and patterns of emigration are investigated and the political, social and economic repercussions of large-scale emigration from the Bitola and western regions of Macedonia are explored. Migratory labour is viewed as a movement. Significant aspects of the process of migratory

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<sup>4</sup> As there is no shortage of claims relating to the origins, purity of race, and unbroken ‘racial’ descent over thousands of years amongst the respective Balkan peoples (for instance, there are at least four contrasting theories on the origins of the Vlah minority), this thesis has deliberately avoided making firm statements on the historical ethnic origins of the peoples of Macedonia.

labour being interrogated include who migrated, how and why. The socio-economic background of migratory labourers is viewed independently through each of the three distinct categories found in the Bitola region - the Pelagonia plain, the upper villages and the Mariovo district. The manner of the decision-making process is explored, along with the goals of the migratory workers and the extent of their politicisation upon their return to Macedonia.

Exploring everyday life in the Bitola region provides an understanding of the ethnographic terrain under which the Balkan churches engaged in a fierce contest for jurisdictional dominance in the region. Chapter Four provides an overview of the establishment and role of foreign religious organisations in Macedonia in the form of the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Bulgarian Exarchate, Serb and Romanian religious activities and Western church organisations. Religious jurisdiction was the primary instrument utilised by the Balkan States to support their claims to Macedonia. As such, jurisdiction over a village church outwardly registered the village as belonging to that particular 'nationality', giving rise to an intense political-religious struggle between the Greek, Bulgarian and Serb churches for adherence of the population. In line with this principle, an exclusively Macedonian populated village with three village churches under separate jurisdictions could 'officially' be regarded as a 'Greek, Bulgarian and Serb populated village'. It was not unusual for commentators in the late nineteenth century to subscribe to this method of identifying the population, and this greatly facilitated the promotion of an ambiguous view of Macedonian identity.

Factors influencing religious jurisdiction in villages are examined through the role of the village priest, political agitators and foreign-armed paramilitary bands from Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. The effect of religious rivalry upon the unity of the Macedonian people is examined in the form of relations between adherents to the Patriarchate and Exarchate churches (within a single village) and relations between

neighbouring villages under opposing jurisdictions. Perceptions of others as well as of themselves are both investigated from the perspective of the Exarchate and Patriarchate religious jurisdictions. In addition, modifications to cultural traits, customs and traditions as well as to systems of marriage are explored for any evidence of successful assimilation by the rival church organisations. Contrasts and comparisons are drawn with an exclusively Macedonian-populated village with Protestant, Exarchate and Patriarchate churches (Koleshino sample village, Strumica region). The rivalry between the Greek and Romanian churches for the adherence of the Vlah population forms a point of comparison to the general Greek-Bulgarian struggle for the adherence of Macedonians. Interviews with ethnic Vlachs, from the sample Bitola region (specifically from Gopesh village and Bitola town) provide a rich source for understanding these issues. We will discover a level of cultural unanimity that belies the potential for religious diversity.

Educational institutions were often established alongside churches in villages with the intention of attracting Macedonian children to be educated in the Greek, Bulgarian and Serb languages. The impact of schools in both the Bitola rural environment as well as in the urban centre is analysed in Chapter Five to determine what effect foreign education had upon Macedonian identity and the creation of new identities. Using various sources, including contemporary literature, Exarchate documents and oral accounts, the number of schools and students, and student composition are tabulated. Due to the conflicting nature of opposing educational data, this chapter explores whether statistics were exaggerated to support territorial claims on Macedonia. Where did the schoolteachers come from? If they were locals, to what extent were foreign educational systems practically used in place of Macedonian schools? Furthermore, what was the language of instruction in the schools? An examination of literacy levels in foreign languages in Bitola region villages at the beginning of the twentieth century will confirm whether foreign

schooling accomplished its objective of creating Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs out of Macedonian schoolchildren.

Of course, Macedonian schoolchildren were not a blank canvas, and Chapter Six seeks to evaluate the impact of Islamicisation upon identity, social structure, and village rituals in the sample Dolna Reka district villages (Debar region). A contrast is drawn between a Macedonian Muslim village in the Dolna Reka district and a typical Macedonian Christian village in the Bitola region, in order to compare village rituals, social structures and systems of marriage. As two distinct religious communities of the one ethnicity, each were subjected to religious domination by foreigners who intended on creating new entities out of these populations. A comparison of their village rituals, social structures and systems of marriage is made in order to ascertain whether culturally these two groups were moulded into different entities via the church and mosque respectively, or whether identifiable features of their Macedonian culture remained.

An ethnically and religiously mixed village is examined, specifically Macedonian Christian and Turkish Muslim, for the purpose of analysing social interaction between the two groups - one as the colonising population and the other as the subjugated Christian *raya*.<sup>5</sup> The thesis seeks to compare co-habitation in religiously and ethnically mixed villages (Macedonian Orthodox - Turkish Muslim, and Macedonian Orthodox - Albanian Muslim) in contrast to a religiously mixed village of the same ethnic group, Macedonian Orthodox Christian with Macedonian Muslim. As the contest for Macedonia was underpinned by religion, the issue of physical segregation in the broader Christian – Muslim sphere provides an alternative perspective on whether segregation occurred on religious or ethnic grounds. This method of investigation is explored to provide an alternative insight of the depth to which Islamicisation shaped the identity of those Macedonians and their relations

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<sup>5</sup> *Raya* is an Ottoman Turkish term referring to any Christian inhabitant of the Ottoman Empire. See Glossary of terms for this or any other foreign word or phrase.

with Christian Macedonians in comparison to Christian Macedonian co-habitation with other Muslim groups.

Original and novel features of this present work include the attention paid to the role of Albanian Muslims in the contestations over Macedonian identity in the late nineteenth century. The debates involving Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians – important though these were – obscure the role played by Albanian Muslims. Moreover, the ethnic identity of the dominant element, that is to say, the Macedonians themselves, becomes overburdened with the narratives of the smaller groups jostling for a place in the territory known as Macedonia. Without unduly essentialising the ‘identity’ of ‘Macedonians’, the last decades of the nineteenth century saw a crystallization of a recognisable group who came to represent the category ‘Macedonian’. But the story is a very complicated one, as this work will describe. There is always the danger in this kind of analysis of essentialising what needs to be articulated. Just as the critics of Ward’s *The Australian Legend* contended that he asserted the existence of a ‘national identity’ without proving its existence in the first place, so too we need to be careful about locating a ‘Macedonian’ identity when it was, in a postcolonial sense, still in the process of construction.

# Chapter One: Colonisation and Islamicisation

## 1.1 Colonisation and Islamicisation

OTTOMAN RULE BROUGHT with it an invasion: the systematic colonising of Macedonia by Muslims (both Turks and non-Turks) from Asia Minor.<sup>1</sup> Through colonisation the Ottomans aimed at creating stable support for the new political and social system in conquered Macedonia.<sup>2</sup> The contemporary commentator L. Villari stated that, as a borderland, ‘the Turkish Sultans made every effort to convert it into a powerful bulwark of Islam’.<sup>3</sup> The historian M. Minoski considered the colonisers the ‘eyes and ears’ of the Ottoman authorities,<sup>4</sup> serving the function of monitoring the activities of the Macedonian Christians. Colonisation assisted the Ottomans to secure their rule and created a favourable environment for the Islamicisation of the Christian population.

The nineteenth century historian M. Tozer claims that the earliest Muslim colonisers came from the Saruhan district in Turkey in the late fourteenth century, and, accompanied by Ottoman troops, settled in the cities and large towns throughout the land.<sup>5</sup> Confirmation of the colonising process is evident through an examination of Turkish documents. Muslim communities based in urban centres were visible in the fifteenth century, and their numbers rapidly increased during the course of the sixteenth century. In Tetovo in 1452 there were 146 Christian families to 60 Muslim families. By the middle of the sixteenth century (in 1545), the number

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<sup>1</sup> Prior to the Ottoman invasion Macedonia was an exclusively Christian land. Ottoman rule modified the religious and ethnic composition of the land with effects still visible in the twenty-first century. The same is also true of the wider Balkans where the Ottomans ruled, including Serbia, Bulgaria, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Hercegovina.

<sup>2</sup> M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski, G. Todorovski, editors, *A History of the Macedonian People*, Skopje, 1979, p. 81.

<sup>3</sup> L. Villari, *Races, Religions and Propagandas*, New York, 1905, p. 129.

<sup>4</sup> M. Minoski, *Osloboditelnite Dvizhenja i Vostanija vo Makedonija 1564-1615* [Liberation Movements and Rebellions in Macedonia 1564-1615], Skopje, 1972, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> T.F. Tozer, *The Highlands of Turkey*, Vol I, London, 1869, p. 369.

of Christian families had shrunk to 99, whilst the Muslim element increased to 101 (38 were Islamicised Macedonian Christian). Twenty-three years later, in 1568, there were 108 Christian and 329 Muslim families (184 were Islamicised Macedonian Christians).<sup>6</sup> Colonisation in Skopje was similar. In 1452 there were 312 Christian families to 516 Muslim families; in 1544 Christian families numbered 216 whilst the number of Muslim families had doubled to 1067 (357 were Islamicised Christians). By 1568 the Christian population grew to 511 families whilst the Muslim population continued to surge, reaching 1560 families (709 were Islamicised Christian families).<sup>7</sup>

Skopje, a principal city, was divided into many separate quarters known as *maali*. Each *maalo* was inhabited exclusively either by Christians or Muslims. In 1452 Skopje consisted of 31 *maali* - Christians resided in 8 *maali* and Muslims in 23. In the space of 116 years to the year 1568, Skopje comprised 67 *maali*. Christian *maali* increased by 2, to 10, whilst Muslim *maali* more than doubled to 57.<sup>8</sup> Christians and Muslims lived in separate quarters throughout Macedonian cities in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and to some extent this pattern continued into the late nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

The intensity of colonisation (and Islamicisation) in Macedonian urban centres was observed by many early travel writers, remarking that Macedonian cities in many

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<sup>6</sup> From the 'Kalkandelen (Tetovski) vilayet opshiren popisen defter broj 12 od 1452/53' [Tetovo vilayet - Detailed Census Register number 12 from 1452/53] published in M. Sokolowski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV veka* [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census Registers from the XV century], Vol III, Skopje, 1976, pp. 103-105; and, 'spisok na selata vo nahijata Kalkandelen (Tetovo)' [List of villages in the nahia of Kalkandelen (Tetovo)], Document number 190 dated 1568/69, M. Sokolowski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshiren Popisen Defter za Skopskiot Sandjak od 1568-69 godina* [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census Register for the Skopje sandjak from 1568/69], Vol VI, Book I, Skopje, 1984, pp. 245-253.

<sup>7</sup> From the 'Skopski vilayet - Opshiren Popisen Defter broj 12 od 1452/53 godina' [Skopje vilayet - Detailed Census Register number 12 from 1452/53] published in M. Sokolowski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV veka* [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census Registers from the XV century], Vol III, Skopje, 1976, pp. 158-167; and, 'Kalkandelen (Tetovo) Vilayet - Opshiren Popisen Defeter broj 12 od 1452/53 godina' [Kalkandelen (Tetovo) Vilayet - Detailed Census Register number 12 from 1452/53] published in *Turski Dokumenti - Opshiren Popisen Defter za Skopskiot Sandjak od 1568/69 godina* [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census Registers from the XV century], Vol VI, Book I, Skopje, 1984, pp. 29-66.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, see footnotes 6 and 7.

<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that it appears some of the names of the *maali* appear to have survived. For instance in Skopje during the sixteenth century there was a *Chairli maalo*, today there is a suburb of *Chair*.

instances had taken on an Asiatic character. New townships were established along strategic positions. The prominent late nineteenth-century ethnographer, V. Kanchov, commented that some of these towns grew into considerable urban centres, such as the city of Enidzhe Vardar, situated on the road from Solun to Voden.<sup>10</sup> Great pressures were brought to bear upon the Christian population in traditional Macedonian urban centres. From the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries many Christians were forced to desert their homes, others Islamicised, and strategic hillside positions were overrun by the new inhabitants.<sup>11</sup>

Few Macedonian cities were left untouched by Muslim colonisation. Strategic colonisation was pursued intensely during early Ottoman rule, and by the second half of the sixteenth century the Muslim element was greater than the Christian in thirteen Macedonian cities.<sup>12</sup> This pattern was to be reversed from the seventeenth century onwards when Christians started to migrate into the cities in large numbers, and Muslim numbers began to decline.<sup>13</sup>

Two other principal routes for strategic colonisation were those from Drama through Seres to Petrich, Strumica, Shtip and Skopje, and from Solun along the Vardar Valley to Skopje.<sup>14</sup> Nomadic Turkic peoples such as the Yuruks and Konjari were also brought to Macedonia. C. Eliot, a former Secretary of the British Embassy

<sup>10</sup> V. Kanchov, *Makedonia Etnografija i Statistika* [Macedonia, Ethnography and Statistics], Sofia, 1970 (1900), p. 347. In the 1920s the Greek government renamed Enidzhe Vardar as Yiannitsa and Voden as Edhessa.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pp. 347-348. Kanchov regards Ohrid, Voden, Bitola, Tetovo, Petrich, Strumica, Kratovo, Seres, Shtip, Drama, Kavala and Melnik amongst others as including the old traditional Macedonian urban towns.

<sup>12</sup> An eminent ethnographer and historian of the Macedonian Muslim population, N. Limanoski's publication *Izlamizacijata i etnickite promeni vo Makedonija* [Islamicisation and ethnic changes in Macedonia], Skopje, 1993, p. 83, is the principal work in the field. Limanoski considers that the dominant number of Muslims in the cities could not be entirely attributed to colonists, but that Islamised Christians may have constituted the majority of all Muslims in cities, especially in the climate of intense colonisation during the sixteenth century. Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>13</sup> The historian, G. M. Terry, *The Origins and Development of the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement with Particular Reference to the Tayna Makedonsko-Odrinska Revolucionerna Organizatsiya from its Conception in 1893 to the Ilinden Uprising of 1903*, Unpublished MA thesis, University of Nottingham, 1974, p. 13; See also, L. Villari, op. cit, p.130, M. Pandevska, *Prisilni Migracii vo Makedonija 1875-1881* [Forced Migrations in Macedonia 1875-1881], Skopje, 1993 and D. Siljanovski, editor, *Makedonia kako prirodno i stopansko celo* [Macedonia as a natural and economic unit], Sofia, 1945

<sup>14</sup> H.F. Tozer, op. cit. pp. 369-370; N. Limanoski, *Islamskata Religija i Izlamizirane Makedonci* [The Islamic Religion and the Islamicised Macedonians], Skopje, 1989, p. 72.

at Constantinople from 1893 to 1898 claimed that Yuruks and Konjari engaged in livestock breeding, found conditions in Macedonia suitable to maintain their traditional livelihood, and were to be found predominantly in the valley of the Bistrica, and north of Solun.<sup>15</sup>

Scattered throughout the country, certain areas contained greater concentrations of Turks. Most significant were the areas along the Aegean coastline, along the fertile plains beside the Vardar River in central Macedonia and in the southern Macedonian region from Ostrovo Lake south to the Bistrica River.<sup>16</sup> Although present in great numbers in these regions, they nevertheless did not constitute the entire population, as the mountainous parts of these same districts were usually inhabited by Christians.<sup>17</sup>

As well as establishing new villages, Turkish colonisers often settled in existing Christian villages. Fifteenth and sixteenth-century Turkish documents provide evidence that it was common practice to settle small groups of Muslims, usually between one and four families, in Christian villages during this period. In the Skopje region in 1452, the village Oreshani consisted of only two Christian families; in 1544 it grew to six Christian families and in 1568 there were nine Christian families and one Muslim family.<sup>18</sup> In the Tetovo region in 1453 Chelopek consisted of 88 Christian families, however in 1568 there were 62 Christian families and 12 Muslim

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<sup>15</sup> C. Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*, London, 1965 (1900), p. 99. Yuruks and Konjari predominantly came to Macedonia during the period between the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. Turkish colonisation in the Ovche-pole district was first recorded in the early sixteenth century (1513). Military personnel and soldiers first settled, and later entire families arrived. Intense colonisation affected the district from the end of the fifteenth century to the early sixteenth with nomadic sheep breeding Turkic tribes arriving. Colonisers typically settled on the plains alongside rivers and roads whilst Macedonians established new villages along mountainous locations. During the seventeenth century Macedonians from the district rebelled against Ottoman oppression and in the period 1683 to 1690 many voluntarily joined the Austro-Hungarian army that liberated the towns of Shtip, Veles and Tikvesh. D. Stojchevski, *Pavleshenci*, Skopje, 1986, p. 75.

<sup>16</sup> V. Kanchov, 1970 (1900), op. cit. p. 352. The Greek government has renamed Ostrovo (Lake) as Vergoritits (Lake) in the 1920s.

<sup>17</sup> L. Villari, op. cit. p. 130.

<sup>18</sup> From 'Skopski vilayet - Opshiren Popisen Defter broj 12 od 1452/53 godina' [Skopje vilayet - Detailed Census Register number 12 from 1452/53] published in M. Sokoloski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV veka* [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census Registers from the XV century], Vol III, Skopje, 1976, p. 173.

families (two were Islamicised).<sup>19</sup> In the Bitola region (to 1468) Bitola town experienced mass colonisation with a total of 278 Muslim families colonised into the town with a native Christian population of 160 families.<sup>20</sup> In the surrounding villages Muslims were implanted in only two Christian villages, Lazhec and Pozdeshevo, with one Muslim family in each respective village.<sup>21</sup> Four Bitola region villages comprised an exclusively Muslim population - Orizari (21 families), Saro Hizirli (10 families), Leskovar (43 families) and Vasharajca (11 families)<sup>22</sup>. It is unclear whether these villages were newly established colonist villages or whether they were previously Christian.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless it is certain that over a period of time, sometimes centuries, former Christian villages were transformed into Muslim villages, with the original Macedonian Christian inhabitants pressured to leave or to convert to Islam. This was particularly the case with strategically situated villages that were targeted for settlement by the authorities.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> From the 'Kalkandelen (Tetovski) vilayet opshiren popisen defter broj 12 od 1452/53' [Tetovo vilayet - Detailed Census Register number 12 from 1452/53] published in M. Sokoloski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV veka* [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census Registers from the XV century], Vol III, Skopje, 1976, pp. 43-44.

<sup>20</sup> From 'Bitolska nahia (Manastir) - Opshiren Popisni Defteri broj 993 i 988 od 1468 godina'. Popisot e opfaten od list 1-10 na defterot broj 993 i od list 11-97 na defterot broj 988. [Bitola nahia [Manastir] - Detailed Census Registers, numbers 993 and 988 from 1468. Census material derived from list 1-10 from register number 993 and lists 11-97 from register number 988]. Published in M. Sokoloski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni defteri od XV veka* [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census registers from the XV century], Vol II, Skopje, 1973, pp. 141-145.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 156.

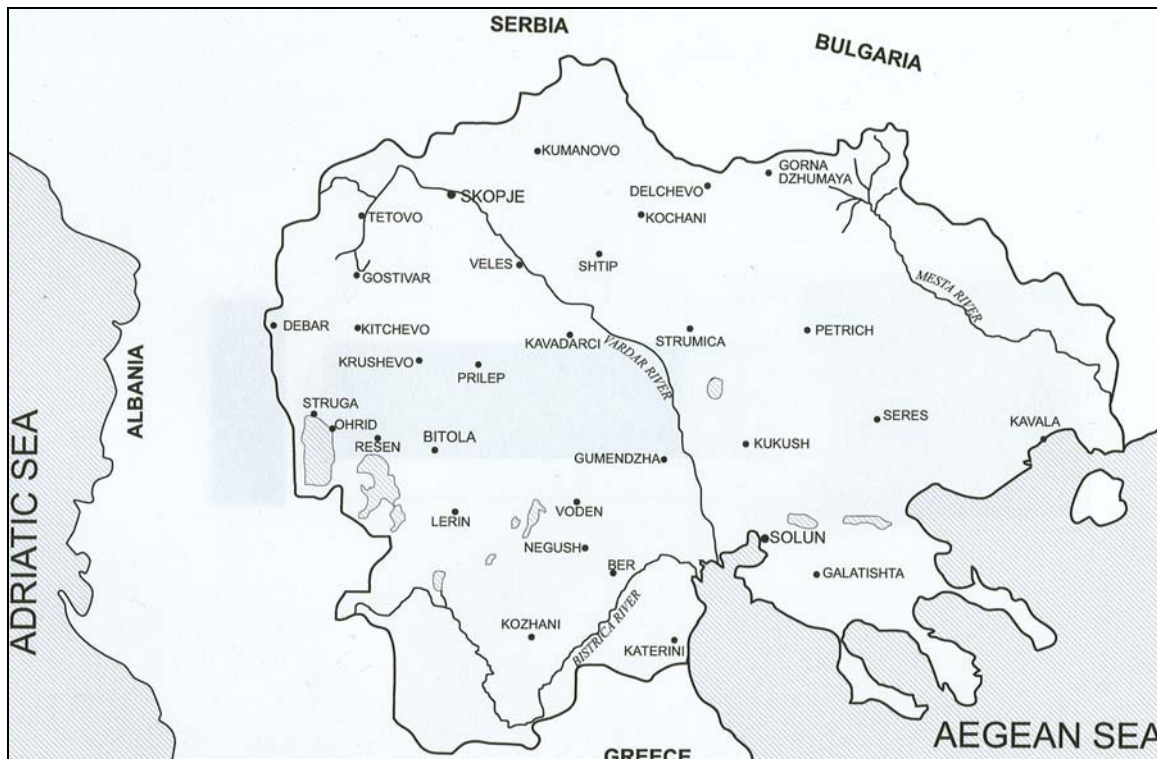
Pozdeshevo appears in published Ottoman tax documents of 1841/42 as Pozdesh. See D. Gorgiev, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Popisi od XIX veka* [Turkish Documents - Censuses from the XIX century] Skopje, 1997, pp. 88-89. However, the village Pozdeshevo does not appear in the prominent ethnographic and statistical data published by V. Kanchov in 1900 (op. cit), or by D.M. Brancoff, *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne* [The Christian Population of Macedonia] Paris, 1905.

<sup>22</sup> M. Sokoloski, editor, 1973, op. cit. pp. 175, 176 and 197.

<sup>23</sup> A difficulty ascertaining which group originally established a village is connected to the village name. Names that appear typically Turkish and have no other Christian variation are likely to have been established by colonisers. However, others are known to have dual names used by the respective Macedonian and Turkish communities. Kanchov points out that some villages have both 'Turkish and Bulgarian names.' V. Kanchov, 1970 (1900), op. cit. p. 358.

<sup>24</sup> See M. Pandevska, op. cit; N. Limanoski, (1993), op. cit. and V. Kanchov, 1970 (1900), op. cit.

Figure 1.1: Generally accepted limits of Macedonia



The Gorna Zhupa district of Debar presents an example of strategic colonisation. The central Christian village of Kodzhadzhik in Gorna Zhupa was transformed into an Ottoman fortress in the fifteenth century. Originally surrounded by eight villages, in 1467 only two of the eight villages remained inhabited, Elevci and Dolgash, and both were exclusively Christian.<sup>25</sup> As a military installation on the borderland of the Empire, Ottoman soldiers brought their families from Turkey and settled them in the region.<sup>26</sup> Thus the district was subjected to intense Turkish colonisation. A local villager from Galitchnik, Shtiljan Trajanov Chaparoski (1870–1934) compiled ethnic and religious data on the Debar region villages at the end of the nineteenth century. According to Chaparoski's data, by the end of the nineteenth century, Turks constituted the overwhelming majority of inhabitants in the Gorna

<sup>25</sup> From 'Vilayetot Gorni Debar - Opshiren Popisen Defter Broj 508 od 1467 godina' [Vilayet Upper Debar, Detailed Census Register number 508 from 1467], from M. Sokolowski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV vek* [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census Registers from the XV century], Skopje, 1976, pp. 314-315. The remaining six villages were Evla, Novak, Kochishta, Breshtani, Osolnica and Prelenik.

<sup>26</sup> N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 179.

Zhupa district. Macedonians accounted for approximately 18 per cent of the Gorna Zhupa population, with Macedonian Christians forming approximately 15 per cent and Macedonian Muslims approximately 3 per cent.<sup>27</sup>

Muslim colonisation initially consisted of Turks and Turkic peoples arriving from Asia Minor. However, with the later Ottoman subjugation of Albania and the mass religious conversion of that land from Christian to Muslim, Macedonia was invaded by a new colonising element, more hostile and violent than the Ottomans. Intense Albanian colonisation commenced from the end of the eighteenth century, continuing throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, and, to a lesser degree to the end of Ottoman rule.<sup>28</sup> Over the summer months Albanian bandits routinely crossed into Macedonia to raid Christian villages,<sup>29</sup> and, over time, members of these bands settled in Christian villages.<sup>30</sup> As Muslims, Albanians rose to positions of prominence in the Ottoman hierarchy and aided the movement of Muslims into Macedonian villages. This could take the form of introducing Muslim tax collectors or simply settling Muslim Albanian families. Colonisation of Christian villages by Albanian Muslims commonly saw the Christian element reduce over a period of time, often until the entire village became Albanian.<sup>31</sup> Albanian colonists typically moved

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<sup>27</sup> Shtiljan Trajanov Chaparoski (1870-1934), *Mesnost(ite) od Debarskoto okružhie* [Places in the Debar region], document from the Macedonian Academy of Sciences (MANU) archive, Catalogue Number NR54, pp.19-21. S.T. Chaparoski commenced compiling data at the end of the 1880s, the final entries were made in 1900. At the end of the nineteenth century there were only two Orthodox Christian churches in the Gorna Zhupa district, in the villages of Selce and Kochishta. Priest Kipro was the resident Priest in Selce and administered the villages of Gorno and Dolno Elevci, Dolgash and Osolnica. Ibid, pp 19-21.

<sup>28</sup> N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 191.

<sup>29</sup> G.M. Terry, op. cit. p. 8.

<sup>30</sup> N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 126.

<sup>31</sup> V. Kanchov, 1970 (1900), op. cit. p. 388.

The well known early twentieth century journalist and commentator H.N Brailsford spent five months during the winter of 1903/04 in Macedonia (together with his wife) working on behalf of the British Relief Fund after the Ilinden Uprising. In his prominent book, *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future*, London, 1905, Brailsford comments on Albanian colonisation stating, 'this sort of thing has been going on steadily throughout the western half of Macedonia for two or three centuries at least, and the process is not yet complete', p 90. Another perspective on Albanian colonisation is provided by the anthropologist, U. Tairovski (a Macedonian Muslim). He stated that at the beginning of the nineteenth century Albanian *agi* and *begs* from the Peshkopeja district moved into the Debar region (bringing their workers and servants, together with their families) forcefully taking fields and villages from Macedonian Christians, who were offered no protection by the authorities. *Slovenskata makro i mikro toponomija vo Dolna Debarska Zhupa* [Slavic macro and micro toponyms in Dolna Debarska Zhupa], Skopje 1987, p. 285.

into Macedonian Christian villages and not into villages inhabited exclusively by Macedonian Muslims.<sup>32</sup>

Albanian colonists arrived in Macedonia from various regions of Albania, and in Macedonia they continued to expand internally. For instance, Albanians from Korcha moved into the Dolna Prespa district, and later a colony moved into the Bitola region along the slopes of the Baba mountain ranges in the villages of Zlokukjani, Kanino, Kishava and Ostrec.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, the village of S'lp in the Kitchevo region was made up of Albanians who had arrived from the Debar region in 1840.<sup>34</sup>

The movement of the Albanian population was welcomed and encouraged by the Ottomans, as an instrument to subjugate the Christian subjects.<sup>35</sup> Albanians were used as a tool to persecute Christians in a manner similar to the way the Ottomans used the Kurds in Asia.<sup>36</sup> A Balkan correspondent for *The New York Times* reported in 1901 that Macedonia was in a condition of chronic anarchy 'owing to the lawlessness of the Albanians, whose attitude to the Christian population is worse than that of the Kurds toward the Armenians'.<sup>37</sup> Although most prevalent in the northwestern parts

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<sup>32</sup> N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 159. According to Abdula Odzheski from the village of Zhirovica in the Reka district of the Debar region, after Islamicisation, Macedonian Moslem villages were not safeguarded from Albanian banditry. Abdula Odzheski (born 1945 in Zhirovica) interview conducted 25 March 2000 in Zhirovica. Ismail Bojda, from the village of Brod in the Gora region (a Macedonian region of Kosovo) also stated that in the Gora region, Albanian banditry commenced from the pre-Islamicisation period and continued after the Islamicisation of Macedonians. Ismail Bojda (born 1953 in Brod, Gora region of Kosovo) interview conducted 7 March 2000 in Skopje.

<sup>33</sup> V. Kanchov, 1970 (1900), op. cit. p. 385

Kanino and Ostrec were originally exclusively Macedonian Christian villages. From the 'Bitolska nahia opshirni popisni defteri broj 993 i 988 od 1468 godina', [Bitola nahia - detailed census registers numbers 993 and 988 from 1468] in M. Sokoloski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV veka* [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census Registers of the XV century], Vol II, Skopje, 1973, pp. 151 and 231. No data is available regarding the ethnic composition of Zlokukani and Kishava prior to Albanian colonisation.

<sup>34</sup> G. Abadzhiev, editor, *Borbite vo Jugozapadna Makedonija po spomenite na Luka Dzherov i Lazar Dimitrov* [Battles in south west Macedonia according to the memoirs of Luka Dzherov and Lazar Dimitrov], Skopje, 1952, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 90.

<sup>36</sup> The French Member of Parliament, George Beri, from a sitting of the French Parliament on 10 March 1903 (Parliamentary Hansard). M. Pandevski, editor, *Makedonofilskoto Dvizheje vo Zapadna Evropa vo 1903 - Dokumenti* [Macedonophile movement in Western Europe in 1903 - Documents], Skopje, 1995, pp. 74 and 77; C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 369; and, L. Villari, op. cit. p. 159.

<sup>37</sup> *The New York Times*, Friday 18 October 1901, p. 1. Article entitled 'Anarchy in Macedonia'.

of Macedonia, small colonies of Albanians were also found in other regions where they were ‘deliberately planted by the Turks for obvious strategic reasons along the frontier of free Bulgaria’.<sup>38</sup>

Muslim colonisation continued at various levels of intensity throughout Ottoman rule, with different regions colonised at different periods. For example, Kriva Palanka was settled by Muslim colonisers in the seventeenth century, Gostivar during the eighteenth century and Lerin at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>39</sup> During the second half of the nineteenth century colonisation escalated as Muslim refugees left the former Ottoman provinces of Bosnia and Hercegovina, and parts of Serbia and Bulgaria. Just as the Balkan lands were liberating themselves from the Ottoman yoke, Macedonia was under siege by waves of new colonisers. Major routes taken by Muslim refugees retreating from newly liberated Balkan lands inevitably led many through Macedonia. Refugees leaving Serbia travelled to Sandjak, Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia and Turkey. Those leaving Bosnia mainly travelled to Turkey via Macedonia and those leaving Bulgaria travelled to Macedonia, the Adrianople Vilayet, and Turkey.<sup>40</sup>

Retreating Muslims were made up of a great assortment of people, united by religion but not by ethnicity. They were known by the collective term ‘Muhadjirs’, meaning ‘emigrants’, and considered to be amongst the most fanatical of Muslims.<sup>41</sup> These diverse Muslim elements all shared a similar experience before leaving their previous homes – they either left through persecution from Christians who had reclaimed their statehood, or had left of their own free will, anticipating that persecution was inevitable. (During periods of great conflict, Christians could be as

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<sup>38</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 91; see also an Austrian Diplomatic report by B. Para, Austrian Consul in Skopje, dated 31 May 1905, Report Number 94, in D. Zografski, editor, *Avstriski Dokumenti 1905-1906* [Austrian Documents 1905-1906], Vol I, Skopje, 1977, pp. 64-65.

<sup>39</sup> D. Siljanovski, editor, op. cit. p. 263. Lerin, a town in southern Macedonia renamed Florina by the Greek government in the 1920s.

<sup>40</sup> M. Pandevska, op. cit. pp. 104-109.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 147; L. Villari, op. cit. p. 129.

brutal as their Muslim rivals.) Most refugees settled in various regions in Turkey, travelling via Macedonia to arrive at their destination.

As a frontier province under the rule of the Sultan, Muhadjirs were welcomed and some were given lands, further dispossessing the native Christian population.<sup>42</sup> Muhadjirs were settled in urban centres as well as the countryside, often in strategic locations.<sup>43</sup> The planting of colonies in the interior of the country was regarded with great suspicion, 'as being intended as a demonstration against the Christian population'.<sup>44</sup> Muhadjir refugees created further insecurity in the land, having arrived harbouring a grievance towards Christians and as

Landless peasants without remunerative employment; and while some of them swell the class of officials, soldiers, and spies, the majority live in poverty and furnish the materials of a dangerous and angry mob which is always ready to avenge its historical wrongs by massacre.<sup>45</sup>

The colonisation of Muhadjirs was a heavy burden upon the Christian population, particularly in the urban centres where Christians were forced from their homes in order to house the new arrivals. In Strumica during January 1878, one-fifth of the Christian inhabitants were forced out of their homes in mid-winter.<sup>46</sup> In Veles, a city of 2500 Macedonian Christian households, 500 families were forcibly removed from their homes.<sup>47</sup> In May 1879 in Skopje, 100 Christian families were forced to take in 100 Muhadjir families.<sup>48</sup> Colonisers were also implanted in villages, both Christian and Muslim. In the Skopje region, which consisted of 148 villages, Muhadjirs were

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<sup>42</sup> L. Villari, op. cit. p. 133.

<sup>43</sup> G.M. MacKenzie and I.P. Irby, *The Slavonic Provinces of Turkey in Europe*, London, 1866, p. 34. G.M. MacKenzie and I.P. Irby were two English women who travelled together through Macedonia and the Balkans during the nineteenth century.

<sup>44</sup> H.F. Tozer, op. cit. p. 370. Much larger colonies of Circassians were settled in Bulgaria and Serbia.

<sup>45</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. pp. 80-81.

In 1866 G.M. MacKenzie and I.P. Irby noted that colonisers are kept well supplied with arms ('of which the Christian is deprived') and 'these new immigrants come thirsting to avenge their own sufferings on all who bear the Christian name'. Op. cit. p. 35.

<sup>46</sup> M. Pandevska, op. cit. p. 120. Pandevska states that approximately 2,500 Muhadjirs were settled in the Strumica region.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, pp. 125-126. A total of 5,140 Muhadjirs were settled in the Veles region, a city of approximately 3,000 homes, of which 2,500 were Macedonian Christian and 500 Muslim.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, pp. 128-129. In Skopje, 250 Muslim homes housed a further 250 Muhadjir families.

settled in approximately 60 villages with a minimum of 2–3 families per village to a maximum of 15–20 families.<sup>49</sup> The historian Pandevska, contends that of the 600,000 to 1,000,000 Muslim refugees that left liberated Christian Balkan lands, approximately 200,000 settled in Macedonia, with approximately half in the Skopje vilayet.

There was a distinct political and social advantage to being Muslim in the Ottoman Empire. Whether one converted to the Muslim religion by force or through self-interest, religious conversion allowed one to leave the oppressed class. From an Ottoman political perspective, the authorities benefited by the increase in the number of Muslims in the Empire, as this created favourable conditions for more secure rule.

Islamicisation continued throughout the course of Ottoman rule. The Serb ethnographer, Hadzhivasilevich, considered that the most intense Islamicisation occurred during the religious monopoly enjoyed by the Constantinople Patriarchate in Macedonia between 1767 and 1870.<sup>50</sup>

During early Ottoman subjugation the Ottomans generally displayed tolerance towards the Christian faith, as evidenced by the rarity of forced conversions to Islam during most of the fifteenth century.<sup>51</sup> The earlier religious tolerance displayed by the Ottomans appeared to be coming to an end when Sultan Selim I (1512–1520) seriously considered converting all his Christian subjects to Islam, putting to death all those that resisted and converting all Christian churches to mosques.<sup>52</sup> Although Sultan Selim I was discouraged from pursuing such radical measures by the Constantinople Muftija Dzhemali and the Grand Vizier Piri<sup>53</sup>, centuries-old churches and monasteries were destroyed in the ensuing fierce attack against the Christians in

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 128

<sup>50</sup> J. Hadjivasilevich, *Muslimani Nashe Krvi u Juzhnoj Srbiji* [Muslims of our blood in Southern Serbia], Belgrade, 1924, p. 70.

<sup>51</sup> Very few instances of conversions to Islam were identified in available Ottoman Turkish published documents during this period.

<sup>52</sup> V. Kanchov, *Makedonia Etnografija i Statistika* [Macedonia, Ethnography and Statistics], Sofia, 1970 (Sofia, 1900), p. 332.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.332.

the sixteenth century. Numerous Christian holy places were demolished by Ottoman fanatics, whilst other sites, such as the Cathedral Church of Saint Sofia in Ohrid, were transformed into mosques.<sup>54</sup>

The attack upon Christianity continued during the rule of Sultan Murat III (1574–1598). Significant legal changes occurred – the courts lost their integrity, they avoided prosecuting Muslims, and Christian witnesses in Muslim courts were no longer necessarily admissible.<sup>55</sup>

Muslim missionaries of the Bektash order also arrived in Macedonia during the sixteenth century and established tekkes in the surroundings of the village Shipkovica (Tetovo region), the village of Poroj (Tetovo region), in Kitchevo and the famous 'Arabati Baba tekke' in Tetovo.<sup>56</sup>

From the late fifteenth and throughout the sixteenth century, Islamicisation was intensified, primarily in urban centres.<sup>57</sup> It was first directed at the old land-owning nobility, who were encouraged to accept Islam in order to protect their wealth.<sup>58</sup> Others viewed conversion as a means for economic gain as well as an opportunity to enter the Ottoman administration. Hadzhivasilevich provided an

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<sup>54</sup> During the rule of Murat IV (1623-1640) the Ottomans attempted to transform the famous church of St Kliment into a mosque. It was only saved after many of its precious treasures were sacrificed in order to buy it back. In Ohrid, according to local legend, a mosque known to the locals as *Krst džhamija* (literally 'cross mosque') was built from the ruins of a church (St George) which had been devastated by the Ottomans. Its walls were still partially erect when the Ottomans commenced to rebuild it as a mosque. For three consecutive days during construction, upon arrival in the morning the Ottomans would find the work performed the previous day on the walls had collapsed. They continued rebuilding it into a mosque and safeguarded it from further overnight damage by placing a guard at the site. At its completion it was noticed that in the middle of the Muslim crescent perched on the peak of the dome, there was a cross. The authorities promptly replaced the religious symbol believing that someone had swapped it over. The following day, the cross re-appeared. The Ottomans became furious and stationed a guard overnight before the building. The following morning the cross re-appeared in the middle of the crescent. Perplexed by the event, the Ottomans allowed it to remain and so it stands there today.

<sup>55</sup> N. Limanoski, *Izlamizacijata i etnichkite promeni vo Makedonija* [Islamisation and ethnic changes in Macedonia], Skopje, 1993, p. 86.

<sup>56</sup> V. Cvetanoski, *Arabati Baba Tekke* [Arabati Baba Tekke], Tetovo, 2000, p. 5. Note: A *tekke* is a Muslim monastery or a religious place of worship.

<sup>57</sup> V. Kanchov, 1970 (1900), op. cit. p. 331.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, pp. 331-332; and, N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 43.

example from 1570 in Skopje, where an individual was prepared to accept Islam on condition that he was given a particular administrative position.<sup>59</sup> The affluent urban element of Macedonian society during early Ottoman rule that accepted Islam adopted the characteristics of Turkish people, including the Turkish language, and over time became indistinguishable from the Turks.<sup>60</sup>

As the Ottomans initially consolidated their rule in the urban centres, where they settled large numbers of colonists, it is therefore not surprising that Islamicisation was more likely to occur in urban locations than rural areas. In 1569, 23 per cent of Muslims in the large towns and cities of Macedonia were converted Christians, whilst in the countryside villages it was merely 13 per cent (see Table 1.1). In Bitola, 40 per cent of Muslim households were Islamicised Christians, whilst in the countryside only 9 per cent of Muslims were similarly Islamicised. As is evident from the data in Table 1.1, in all but two towns from a total of 16, Islamicised Christians in urban centres constituted a greater proportion in comparison to their village counterparts in the same region.

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<sup>59</sup> J. Hadzhivasilevich, 1924, op. cit. pp. 40-41.

<sup>60</sup> N. Limanoski, *Islamskata religija i Islamisiranite Makedonci* [The Islamic religion and the Islamicised Macedonians], Skopje, 1989, pp. 76-77.

Table 1.1: Urban and Rural Colonisation and Islamicisation in Macedonia, 1569

	Urban			Villages			Total		
	Total Muslim homes	Converts	%	Total Muslim homes	Converts	%	Total Muslim homes	Converts	%
Demir Hisar	26	16	61	611	105	17	637	121	18
Tetovo	330	184	55	384	107	27	714	291	40
Skopje	1,551	701	45	1,001	172	17	2,552	873	34
Prilep	282	126	44	585	52	8	867	178	20
Bitola	608	248	40	561	56	9	1,169	304	26
Seres	824	318	38	351	65	18	1,175	383	32
Solun	1,212	468	38	481	81	16	1,693	549	32
Ber	384	143	37	194	30	13	578	173	29
Enidzhe Vardar	529	165	31	847	113	5	1,376	278	20
Lerin	182	55	30	2,188	179	8	2,370	234	9
Kostur	142	42	29	340	76	22	482	118	24
Kavala	181	47	25	770	104	13	951	151	15
Drama	205	45	21	2,019	150	7	2,224	195	8
Nevrokop	304	63	20	1,725	422	24	2,029	485	23
Serfidzhe	87	17	19	1,191	67	5	1,278	84	6
Kitchevo	80	14	17	99	29	28	179	43	24
TOTALS	6,927	1,652	23	13,357	1808	13	20,274	4,460	22

Source: M. Sokoloski, *Izlamizacija vo Makedonia*, Skopje, as cited in N. Limanoski, *Izlamizacijata i etnichkite promeni vo Makedonija*, Skopje, 1993, p. 212.

Table 1.2: Colonisation and Islamicisation of Debar Region 1467–1583 (Districts of Dolna Reka, Mala Reka, Golema Reka, Dolna Zhupa and Gorna Zhupa)

Village	1467			1519			1583		
	C	M	I	C	M	I	C	M	I
Belchica	Un			18			30		
Bitushe	3			28			12		
Bogdevo	3			16			10		
Boletin <sup>61</sup>	5						3		
Brodec	4			27			20		
Dovirche <sup>62</sup>	5								
Draginci <sup>63</sup>	Un								
Galitchnik <sup>64</sup>	Un			33			32		
Gari <sup>65</sup>	Un			62			40		
Glavino <sup>66</sup>	Un								
Kichenica <sup>67</sup>	Un			8					
Kosovrasti Dolno <sup>68</sup>	16			63	1		63	7	1
Kosovrasti Gorno	6			36			13		1
Krakornica	3			12			20		1
Leskovo <sup>69</sup>	Un			8			5		
Melnichani Dolno	5			16			12	2	1
Melnichani Gorno	6			17			33		
Nichburi	8			16			20		
Nistrovo	8			36			70		
Novaci <sup>70</sup>	4								
Orahovo	3			12			5	2	1
Pesja Gorica	Un			17			10		1
Prisojnica	5			16			15		
Radoslavicha <sup>71</sup>	4			28			20		
Ribnica Golemo <sup>72</sup>	10			34					
Ribnica Malo <sup>73</sup>	4			42	1				

<sup>61</sup> No data available for 1519

<sup>62</sup> Dovirche is an unidentified village and not recorded in subsequent Ottoman records.

<sup>63</sup> The uninhabited village of Draginci does not appear on 1519 or 1583 Ottoman records.

<sup>64</sup> In the years 1519 and 1583, Galitchnik is recorded as a Dervish village.

<sup>65</sup> In the years 1519 and 1583, Gari is recorded as a Dervish village.

<sup>66</sup> Glavino is recorded as an uninhabited village in 1467 and no further mention is made of the village in the 1519 and 1583 censuses.

<sup>67</sup> No data available for Kichenica village in the year 1583.

<sup>68</sup> Kosovrasti Dolno is recorded as a Dervish village.

<sup>69</sup> Leskovo is an unidentifiable village.

<sup>70</sup> Novaci does not appear in the 1519 and 1583 records as it was transferred into another administrative area.

<sup>71</sup> Radoslavicha is an unidentifiable village.

<sup>72</sup> No data for Ribnica Golemo in 1583.

<sup>73</sup> No data for Ribnica Mala in 1583.

Rostusha	15			40	1		6	4	4
Selce	Un			22			20	1	
Sence	4			42	1		31	2	1
Shtirovica	11			30			50		3
Skudrinje	11			52			18	3	2
Strezemir	5			38			60		2
Tiho Pole <sup>74</sup>	Un			7			Un		
Trebishta	15			55			41	5	
Tresonche Golemo	Un			12			34		
Tresonche Malo	Un						37		
Trnica <sup>75</sup>	1						10		
Usoj	Un			20			40		1
Vidusha <sup>76</sup>	4			14					
Volkovija <sup>77</sup>	6			13			40		
Vrbeni <sup>78</sup>	9			94	1		125	2	1
Vrbjani	16			55	1		50	7	13
Yagorec	Un			Un			Un		
Yanchi	1			6			8		
Zhirovnica	22			69	3		20	40	48
Zhuzhne	5			14			20		1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>999</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>934</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>82</b>

Source and notes: Vilayetot Reka Opshiren Popisen Defter Broj 508 (1467) from *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV vek*, Vol III, Skopje, 1976, pp 391- 409 (with notes - regarding sixteenth century data).

Note: C = Christian, M = Muslim, I = Islamicised Christian.

The colonisation and Islamicisation of Debar region (districts of Dolna Reka, Gorna Reka, Mala Reka, Dolna Zhupa and Gorna Zhupa), although not conducted on a mass scale in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, appear to have affected the growth of the Christian population from 1519 to 1583. Whilst there is no record of Islamicisation and colonisation during the 52 years to 1519, there was a substantial increase in the number of Christian inhabitants in the region, a total increase of 489 per cent (795 families). With the onset of Muslim colonisation, albeit on a small scale, and a corresponding growth in Islamicisation, the number of Christians in the region

<sup>74</sup> Tiho Pole is an unidentifiable village.

<sup>75</sup> No data recorded for Trnica village in 1519.

<sup>76</sup> No data recorded for Vidusha village in 1583.

<sup>77</sup> Volkovija is recorded as a Dervish village.

<sup>78</sup> Vrbeni was recorded as a Dervish village in 1519.

during the following 64 years to 1583 reduced by 7 per cent (65 families). Large-scale emigration is the most likely explanation for the lack of population growth in the region. Although colonists accounted for only 0.79 per cent of the population in 1519, it could nonetheless be assumed that their presence in the region occasioned great concern. In 1583 from a total population of 1,091 families, colonists accounted for 6.87 per cent of the population whilst Islamicised Christians made up 7.51 per cent of the total.

Islamicised Macedonians did not exclusively appear in villages where colonists settled, although this was more likely. Islamicised Macedonians lived in 9 villages with colonists (69 colonist families to 72 Islamicised Christian families), and ten Islamicised Christians in six villages without colonists. In this sample, colonists appear to have settled in villages located in close proximity to the main route, along the Radika River. Of prominence is the population decrease of Christians in villages where Muslim colonists had settled between the period 1519 and 1583 (for example Rostusha experienced an 85 per cent decrease in its Christian inhabitants, Zhirovnica a 71 per cent decrease and Skudrinje a 65 per cent decrease). The most prominent increase in Christian population occurred in villages where there were no colonists (for example Volkovija experienced a 68 per cent increase in Christian inhabitants, Melnichani and Nistrovo a 51 per cent increase respectively, and Osoj a 50 per cent increase).

Photo 1.1: Zhirovnica village



From the middle of the seventeenth century, the widespread practice of pressuring people to convert to Islam expanded out of the urban centres into the rural sector where most Christians lived. Entire villages and districts were subsequently converted to Islam, bringing great changes to the demographic appearance of Macedonia. General persecution of Christians by the Muslim rulers and a continued deterioration of conditions for the Christian population made life unbearable for many. Islamicisation was often related to heavy economic exploitation by feudal landlords and, in addition, during periods when the Ottoman Empire prepared for war, the Christian population was further burdened by an increase in taxes.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> N. Limanoski, 1993, *op. cit.* pp. 93–94.

Taxes were a constant impost for the Christian population. High taxes and their miserable economic condition were factors in encouraging the religious conversion of the Christian population.<sup>80</sup> The basic tax paid by Christians was known as the *arach*. At the end of the sixteenth century it was increased from 50 to 240 *akchina*, though acceptance of the Muslim religion immediately freed one from the tax.<sup>81</sup> Born in 1908, the Albanian Justruf Metovski believed that in the late nineteenth century, Albanians 'lived well under Turkish rule, paid less taxes than Christians, and enjoyed greater freedoms'.<sup>82</sup> Conversion to Islam saw the lifting of oppressive taxes and was a certain method of evading payment of the despised *arach*, the 'blood tax'.<sup>83</sup> Ismail Bojda from the village of Brod confirmed that in the Gora region (Macedonian region of Kosovo - Serbia) 'oppressive taxes were reduced only when Macedonians accepted Islam'.<sup>84</sup>

Economic exploitation assumed other forms apart from direct taxes. A local Ottoman *valia*, having loaned a village a sum of money that over time they could not afford to repay, offered to forgive them the debt on condition that they accept the Muslim religion.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> C. Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*, London, 1965 (1900), p. 248

<sup>81</sup> N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. 43–44. Limanoski adds that the Ottomans further enticed Christians by offering parcels of land in return for conversion to Islam. It is interesting to note that Gypsies constituted a separate category for tax purposes. A single tax collector was assigned the role of collecting taxes from the gypsy population only (both Christian and Muslim). The annual tax bill for 1641 for Christian Gypsies, within the administrative boundaries of the *kadia's* in Ohrid, Bitola, Prilep, Hrupishta, Bihklišhte, Korcha, Kostur, Serfidzhe, Lerin, Prespa, Struga, Kitchevo and Debar, was 720 *akchina*, whilst for Muslim Gypsies the amount was 650 *akchina*. From an Ottoman Firman dated 12 to 21 February 1641, V. Boshkov, editor, *Turski Dokumenti, Seria I, 1640-1642* [Turkish Documents, Series I, 1640-1642], Vol IV, Skopje, 1972, pp. 55–56.

<sup>82</sup> Justruf Metovski (born 1908 Resen, Prespa region) interview conducted 23 March 2000 in Bitola.

<sup>83</sup> The historian A. Matkovski, *Otporot Protiv Izlamizacija* [Resistance against Islamicisation], Skopje, 1987, p. 40.

<sup>84</sup> Ismail Bojda interview, op. cit.

<sup>85</sup> Ismail Bojda interview, op. cit. It was not uncommon for Ottoman officials to loan money either to individuals or to an entire village as a whole. During the mid-seventeenth century, loans of this nature included interest payments that were set at a limit of 11.5 *akchina* returned, for every 10 *akchina* borrowed. From Ottoman Firman dated between 3 to 11 April 1641, V. Boshkov, editor, *Turski Dokumenti, Seria I, 1640-1642* [Turkish Documents, Series I, 1640–1642], Vol IV, Skopje, 1972, pp. 70–71. Ottoman officials did not always abide by the set limit on interest payments, for instance the village of Bukovo borrowed 20,000 *akchina* to be returned over a twelve-month period at 20 per cent interest. From a contract dated 5–14 November 1641. Ibid, pp. 97–98. Loans to villages appear to have been a widespread practice. In 1641, Fatime, the daughter of the Bitola Kadia Kodja, had outstanding loans (with interest) to 54 villages. From a list of monies owed dated 10–19 July 1641, ibid, pp. 85–86.

The unstable political environment of late Ottoman rule saw Macedonian Christians transfer allegiance between various national churches, sometimes more than once (for various reasons outlined in Chapter Three). In central Macedonia, Orthodox Christians adopted Catholicism in the 1880s, but most were to return to Orthodoxy.<sup>86</sup> Conversely, there are numerous instances of obstacles placed before Christians seeking to transfer adherence between the foreign Orthodox churches (that is, the Patriarchate and the Exarchate), but these were based on political considerations and not due to religious reasons. Once Islamicised, it was extremely difficult to re-convert to Christianity without serious repercussions.<sup>87</sup> Rare instances are known; a notable example occurring in Galitchnik in the Reka district. Galitchnik was a central Orthodox Christian village in the area with approximately 2,000 inhabitants. Even its remote location could not safeguard the village from the widespread Islamicisation in the district and the wider region. In the middle of the nineteenth century 30 Galitchnik families converted to Islam. In 1843 the headman from the neighbouring village of Lazaropole, Gurchin Kokaleski, with the support of the village headman from Galitchnik, Tomo Tomoski, succeeded in re-converting the Islamicised Christians to their original faith. Gurchin first visited the Islamicised and influential Sinanovci family and presented the following question to the head of the family, 'what would you do if thirty of your animals were suffering from disease?' The

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<sup>86</sup> In the 1880s in the central Macedonian region of Gevgelija there were 3,246 Catholic households; by 1888 the bulk of these (2,060 households) had returned to Orthodoxy. From a diplomatic Consular report from the Serb Consul in Solun dated 18 February 1888, K. Dzhambazovski, editor, *Gradja za Istoriju Makedonskog naroda - iz Arhiva Srbije* [Material on the History of the Macedonian people - from the Serbian Archives], Vol V, Book III, (1888-1889), Belgrade, 1987, pp. 73-75.

<sup>87</sup> A. Matkovski, 1987, op. cit. p. 54. In order to protect themselves from Ottoman oppression, the Macedonian Christian inhabitants of Radozhda (Struga region) declared themselves Turks and secretly continued Christian worship. Seen as Muslims by the authorities, the men were called upon for military service in the Ottoman armed forces. In order to avoid conscription, they declared that they were in fact Christians. The Ottomans became enraged as they were considered to have discarded Islam (*'pochnale da gledat na niv kako na verostapnici'*). Sherif *bey* incarcerated the entire village below the ladies' section of the church of Saint Sofia in Ohrid. The villagers were locked in a dark and damp area, and left for days without food. Local Macedonians of Ohrid, at great risk to themselves, secretly sent food to the tormented prisoners. Disease set in and quickly spread. Many were to die and the Ottomans forbade that bodies be buried in Ohrid, demanding that they be returned to Radozhda. From a total of between 150 to 200 people, only a handful survived. (N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 139.) A unique method utilised by Christians that aimed at resisting Islamicisation involved the tattooing of a cross on a child's forehead at the time of his or her baptism. The tattoo would thus be visibly displayed throughout its life and was particularly popular with the Vlah population. A. Matkovski, 1987, op. cit. p. 44 and M. Minoski, *Osloboditelnite Dvizhenja i Vostanija vo Makedonija 1564-1615* [Liberation Movements and Rebellions in Macedonia 1564-1615], Skopje, 1972, p. 45.

analogy was clear. Soon after the 30 Islamicised families visited the Sveti Jovan Bigorski monastery to be baptised and returned to Christianity.<sup>88</sup> The significance of re-converting to one's original Christian religion is evident in that this rare event continues to be retold through the form of a traditional Macedonian folk song in the region. The following is a verse from the song:<sup>89</sup>

*Kade se chulo, videlo*  
*Turchin vera da menuva*  
*Vera da menuva*  
*Kaurin da stanuva.*

Where has it been heard, where seen  
 A Turk to change his religion  
 Change his religion  
 And become a *kaurin*.

Widespread measures forced upon Christians to convert to Islam included intimidation and violence, even threats of death.<sup>90</sup> Violent oppression from individual Muslims, officials, bandits and, in rare instances, even the Ottoman military played a part in forcing Christians to accept Islam. There are recorded instances of civilian Turks collectively agitating for the Islamicisation of Christians. In Bitola during January 1731, 'a group of Muslims walked through the streets with drums, attacking Christians, abducting their children and pressuring the *raya* to adopt the Muslim religion and preventing them from freely attending church'.<sup>91</sup> In the Meglen region, a total of twenty-eight villages became Islamicised during the eighteenth century, with Ottoman troops uncharacteristically involved.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup> The story of how 'Galitchnik was saved' was told by Abdula Odzheski during an interview conducted on 25 March 2000 in Zhirovica. The year 1843, and the names of the village headmen are from A. Matkovski, *Otporot Protiv Izlamizacijata* [Resistance against Islamicisation], Skopje, 1987, pp. 54–56. In addition, Matkovski states that at the time of Islamicisation, the families in question from Galitchnik village adopted Muslim names, and upon their reconversion they replaced these with Christian names – for example, Aliya Sinanovski became Trpko Pakoski and the Yasharevci family became Sharovci. Ibid, p. 55.

<sup>89</sup> A. Matkovski, 1987, op. cit. p. 56.

<sup>90</sup> N. Limanoski, 1989, op. cit. p. 76.

<sup>91</sup> A. Matkovski, 1987, op. cit. p. 39. Note: Matkovski has obtained this information from an Ottoman Firman - Document B.C. 43, L. 110.

<sup>92</sup> The historian T. Simovski, *Izlamizacijata vo Tikveshko i Meglensko* [Islamicisation in the Tikvesh and Meglen regions], Skopje, 1984, p. 104. The widely recorded story of Islamicisation in Meglen suggests that Ottoman troops surrounded the church building on Easter Sunday after the Christians had gathered for the service, whereupon bishop Ilarion first accepted Islam and encouraged the church adherents to follow his path (ibid, pp. 103–104). The late nineteenth and early twentieth century ethnographer and historian, I. Ivanich, adds another perspective to the mass Islamicisation in the Meglen region. Ivanich claimed that the Ottoman army surrounded the church on Easter Sunday at the instigation of the Patriarchate church. As Islamicisation in Meglen occurred in the late eighteenth century, after the abolishment of the Ohrid Archbishopric, the Patriarchate church had yet to practically incorporate the 'rebellious' Meglen region into its jurisdiction. Ivanich

Added pressure to accept Islam came from Muslim Albanians who spread into Western Macedonia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>93</sup> Armed Albanian bandits (known as *Katchatci*) operated in the western regions of Macedonia. Groups of up to 150 men, from May to September each year in the late nineteenth century, brought misery to unarmed Christian villages.<sup>94</sup> The most affected regions were Debar, Tetovo, Gostivar, Kitchevo and Ohrid.<sup>95</sup> Albanian bandits engaged in a notorious annual autumnal practice of kidnapping people, usually children, and holding them until a ransom was paid.<sup>96</sup> In October 1894, the band of Karabadzhakot kidnapped two young children aged 10 and 14 from the village of Dupeni (Prespa region). The father of the children, Duljan, was instructed to pay 500 Turkish lira for their return, an enormous amount that a poor villager could never obtain. After selling his possessions he raised 50 lira and borrowed another 100. The money bought back his youngest son's life, but the elder son was killed and his head sent to the father.<sup>97</sup> Having travelled through Macedonia at the beginning of the twentieth century, the English journalist and commentator H.N. Brailsford referred to this practice as an 'addiction', particularly with the Albanian tribes of Debar.<sup>98</sup>

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suggests than rather than going over to the Patriarchate, Bishop Ilarion converted to Islam, together with his people (*Ilarion se reshil, da se poturchi zajedno so svojim narodom*) and that he did this as 'a protest against the abolishment of the Ohrid church and firmly represents the intense dislike Macedonians have for Greeks and the Greek Patriarchate' (*'on ostaje ipak najrechitiji protest protiv ukidanja Oridski crkve I najjaci dokaz koliko cy Makedonci mrzeli Grke I Grckiy Patriarshiji'*). I. Ivanich, *Makedonija i Makedonci* [Macedonia and Macedonians], Vol II, Novi Sad, 1908, pp. 378–380. The Meglen region has been renamed as the Aridea region by the Greek government following its occupation of southern Macedonia.

<sup>93</sup> J. Hadzhivasilevich, 1924, op. cit. p. 65

<sup>94</sup> The historian G. Todorovski, *Malorekanskiot Predel* [The Mala Reka district], Skopje, 1970, pp. 98–99. The contemporary commentator I. Ivanov stated that Albanian bandits travelled in groups of 300–400 men in Western Macedonia. *Polozhenieto na Blgarite v Makedonia* [The situation of the Bulgarians in Macedonia], Sofia, 1895, p. 35.

<sup>95</sup> I. Ivanov, op. cit. pp. 34–36.

<sup>96</sup> The revolutionary leader, Slaveyko Arsov (from the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation), outlines some of the most notorious culprits of the practice – Tafo in the Porech-Kitchevo region, Islam Onbashija in the Kitchevo region, Tair-Tolo in the Struga region and Bizhal in the Bigla district, amongst others. I. Katardzhiev, editor, *Spomeni - S. Arsov, P. Klashev, L. Dzherov, G.P. Hristov, A. Andreev, G. Papanchev, L. Dimitrov*. [Memoirs - S. Arsov, P. Klashev, L. Dzherov, G.P. Hristov, A. Andreev, G. Papanchev, L. Dimitrov], Skopje, 1997, p. 60.

<sup>97</sup> D. Dimeski, *Priliki vo Bitolskiot Vilayet vo 1894 i 1895 godina* [Characteristics of the Bitola Vilayet in 1894 and 1895], Skopje, 1981, p. 139. Albanians have a notorious reputation for engaging in the practice of demanding ransom payments in return for one's child or family member. This practice continued during the 1920s and 1930s and most recently was used by Albanian terrorists against Macedonians in Western Macedonia during the 2001 war in the Republic of Macedonia.

<sup>98</sup> H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*, London, 1905, p. 49.

Exorbitant ransom demands forced families to sell their land and stock to buy back their children.<sup>99</sup> Cattle and sheep were forcibly taken from families and usually offered back to the dispossessed at a price. The village *kmet* (headman) of Galitchnik maintained a record of Albanian crime against the village during the period 1877–1880 and emphasised that wealthy sheep farmers were specifically targeted by the gangs. Individuals lost entire flocks of 3,500–4,000 sheep, and often the bandits offered to sell the sheep back to the farmers.<sup>100</sup>

Albanian banditry was not restricted to the northwestern regions of Macedonia; there are numerous recorded instances of similar activities throughout other regions. For instance, a *Firman* from 1712 sent to the kadi of Serfidzhe, Lerin, Bitola, Prilep, Veles, Kitchevo, Prespa, Kostur, Naselitch, Hrupishte and Grevena, warned them of Albanian bandits consisting of between 300 and 500 men who were stealing stock and murdering individuals.<sup>101</sup> Although constituting a small minority of all Bitola region settlements, some Albanian villages openly stole from their Christian neighbours.<sup>102</sup> One informant, Vane Tancevski of Lopatica, was aware that Albanians from the neighbouring villages of Drevenik and Crnoec

increased their stock holdings by plundering ours. They would come to steal a ram or other animals, what could you do? You would say lucky they didn't take them all. Albanians were armed and protected by the ruling Muslim regime [*šić*]. Our people were unarmed with no form of protection.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, pp. 49–50. For examples of entire villages forced to make collective ransom payments, see the Report by Serbian Metropolitan Polikarp of the Debar-Veles Eparchy, number 109, dated 23 February 1903 from L. Lape, editor, *Izveštaj od 1903 godina na Srpske Konsuli, Mitropoliti i Učiteljima i Inspektori vo Makedonija* [Report of 1903 of Serb Consuls, Metropolitans and School Inspectors in Macedonia], Skopje, 1954, pp. 114–121.

<sup>100</sup> G. Todorovski, 1970, op. cit. pp. 97–99.

<sup>101</sup> *Firman* dated 3<sup>rd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> September 1712, drawn from A. Matkovski, editor, *Turski izvori za Ajdutstvo i Aramistvo vo Makedonija 1700-1725* [Turkish sources regarding haiduts and bandits in Macedonia, 1700–1725], Book III, Skopje, 1973, pp. 97–98. (Also see document number 94 on p. 88, *ibid*). The following towns have been renamed by the Greek government in the 1920s: Serfidzhe to Servia, Lerin to Florina, Kostur to Kastoria, Naselitch to Siatista and Hrupishte to Argos Orestikon.

<sup>102</sup> Of the 135 villages in the Bitola region, Albanians inhabited 10 villages - 5 exclusively Albanian and 5 villages shared with Macedonians. See table 3.4 in Chapter three.

<sup>103</sup> Vane Tancevski (born 1935 in Lopatica village, Bitola region) interview conducted on 6 March 2002 in Melbourne. Vane Tancevski added that according to the old folk in the village, in the past, Lopatica had two monasteries, both destroyed by Albanian bandits. It is believed the destruction of the monasteries occurred in the early nineteenth century and that the perpetrators were from the neighbouring villages of Crnoec and Drevenik. According to a traditional Macedonian folk song with roots in the northwestern Tetovo region, the Ottoman used Albanians in their attack upon churches and monasteries. The song 'Sardisale Leshochkiot

Similarly, the three upper district Albanian villages of Zlokukani, Ostec and Kishava made life difficult for all the surrounding Macedonian Christian villages.

They were known to kidnap children and hold them to ransom, they knew which families had money and specifically targeted them.<sup>104</sup> On one occasion at the beginning of the 1900s a group of men from Graeshnica were forcibly taken (by armed Albanians) whilst gathering wood in the forest above the village. Between 50 100 gold coins was demanded for the release of each individual.<sup>105</sup>

Entire villages were plundered and held for ransom and it was not uncommon for Macedonian Christian villages to hand over money as a result of extortion demands.<sup>106</sup> During 1901 and 1902 the village of Nikiforovo (Gostivar Region) paid 111 Turkish lira to nine separate Albanian bandits in a period of less than twelve months. However, the total economic damage to the village (which contained 50 homes), including burned homes and outer buildings, as well as ransoms paid for kidnapped children, amounted to approximately 400 Turkish lira.<sup>107</sup> Financial payments to bandits from villages held for ransom was known as *sursa*, an impost that the historian Dimeski describes as a 'bandit tax'.<sup>108</sup>

Further examples include the village of Inche (Porech district) that was held to ransom in August 1894 by the bandit leader Sefer and forced to pay 90 Turkish lira. In February 1895 the village of Drenovci (Prilep region) was similarly held to ransom

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manastir' suggests that an angry Kuzum Pasha unleashed Albanians from the village Slatino to set fire to the famous monastery in Leshok village. L. Dimkaroski, *Makedonski Biseri, 150 narodni pesni* [Macedonian Pearls, 150 folk songs], Ljubljana, 1993, p. 118. During the military conflict of 2001 in Macedonia, with the use of explosives, Albanian terrorists destroyed the historically and religiously significant monastery for the second time. The destruction of Christian places of worship and cultural monuments was widespread in Kosovo following United Nations administration of the Serbian province. Albanians have attempted to wipe out all trace of Serbian Orthodox existence. A similar strategy was undertaken in parts of western Macedonia during 2001, with numerous centuries-old churches and monasteries destroyed and vandalised.

<sup>104</sup> Stojan Spasevski (born 1922 in Graeshnica village, Bitola region) interview conducted 30 March 1999 and 18 February 2002 in Melbourne. Stojan added that this practice continued into the period from the end of the Second Balkan War (1913) to the commencement of the Second World War in 1940 when Macedonia was occupied by Nazi Germany.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> I. Ivanov, 1895, op. cit. p. 35; G. Abadzhiev, op. cit. p. 12; and the Report by Serbian Metropolitan Polikarp of the Debar-Veles Eparchy, number 109 dated 23 February 1903 from L. Lape, editor, op. cit. pp. 114–121.

<sup>107</sup> Report No 109, dated 23 February 1903 by the Serb Metropolitan Polikarp of the Debar-Veles Eparchy, from L. Lape, editor, op. cit. pp. 119–121.

<sup>108</sup> D. Dimeski, 1981, op. cit. p. 140.

by the bandit leader Rasim and forced to pay 300 Turkish lira. In the summer of 1894 the bandit leader Sefer gathered 1000 grosh for himself and 1050 grosh for his brother Velija from each household in the village of Zvechan (Porech region). It was the third time the village had paid a tax to the bandits in three years. In autumn of the same year the bandits sought to extract a fourth payment from the village, and, unable to immediately pay, the villagers pleaded for more time but were refused. Anticipating a bandit attack, the villagers together with their children slept in the woods overnight for two weeks. Sefer arrived one evening with his band and found the village deserted. Enraged, he set fire to 22 homes and many outer buildings. Eleven families left Zvechan after this event (Petre Jovanov, Zmejko Sadev, Phillip Stojchev, Josif Bozhin, Karafile Zdravkov, Trpe Bogatinov, Ivan Hristov, Korun Trpev, Angelko Todorov, Janko Vanev and Isaiha Stolev).<sup>109</sup>

The level of authority exerted by the bandits economically impacted upon entire districts. For instance, in the Demir Hisar and Kitchevo regions, many villages were to fall under the economic bondage of the Albanian bandit whose *nom de guerre* was Remko.<sup>110</sup> In the Porech region a group of six Macedonian Christian villages under the oppression of the Albanian bandit, Ibish, could not conduct a wedding ceremony without his approval, and had to make a payment to him before the wedding could occur.<sup>111</sup> The economic position of the Macedonian Christians in western Macedonia was significantly deteriorating and the general lawlessness made their situation helpless.<sup>112</sup> Pressures from armed Albanian bandits and colonising

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid, pp. 140–141.

<sup>110</sup> G. Abadzhiev, op. cit. p. 12.

<sup>111</sup> Ibish also took possession of all six village seals. D. Dimeski, 1981, op. cit. p. 142.

<sup>112</sup> The IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation) responded by targeting specific Albanian bandits for execution. But this could bring further retribution against innocent Macedonian Christian villages. Under the direction of the IMRO, villagers from Dobrenoec (Porech district) liquidated the notorious Albanian bandit, Zulko, together with three of his cronies. Their bodies were carefully concealed in order to avoid further violence aimed at the village. Abdulraman *beg* of Debar town was directly involved in the economic bondage of numerous Christian villages in the region. A plan was drawn up which involved kidnapping the high-profile *beg* and extracting a ransom for his release which would go towards the IMRO treasury. Information received by the IMRO indicated that Abdulraman was carrying 2,000 Lira to purchase a *chiflik* in Pilep. He was captured by an IMRO *cheta* at the crossroads between the Debar and Kitchevo regions in 1899, but was found to be carrying only 150–160 Lira. He was duly executed, along with four *aggi* who travelled with

Muslim Ottomans created an environment of intimidation, terror and violence which could only be appeased through Islamicisation or emigration.

Converting to the new religion was promoted by the Ottomans as offering a 'better life', and the enticement of the privileged class that could be entered through the acceptance of the new religion was convincing.<sup>113</sup> Some Christian women married Muslims in order to escape their miserable economic existence. During the late eighteenth century in certain areas, local Ottoman authorities aimed at encouraging the process of Islamicisation by exempting Muslims from military service as a reward for marrying Christian women.<sup>114</sup> The ethnographer J. Hadzhivasilevich observed that Christian women who married Muslim men chose Islamicised Christians usually from the same village, thereby avoiding having to adopt a new language.<sup>115</sup>

During the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, forced conversions were aimed at individuals rather than groups. Most vulnerable were young women who faced kidnap and Islamicisation by Muslim Turks and Albanians. Trajanka Talevska, born in the village of Vrajnevc, explained that in the Bitola region 'young girls were locked inside their homes when Turks came by the village for fear of being kidnapped'.<sup>116</sup> In Krushevica (Mariovo district of Prilep) local traditional costumes worn by women were colourful and predominantly red in colour, whilst older women dressed in black. Due to a constant threat of kidnap and Islamicisation

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him. Neither the Debar or Kitchevo region authorities accepted responsibility for the incident. Albanian bandits recognised that the *beg* and *agi* were not murdered by Albanians due to the manner of the massacre. The Albanian bandit Ramduka together with his band extracted revenge upon the village of Lazaropole, by murdering the village *kmet* (headman) Bosko, together with six young men. Later the village of Dushegubice was punished by Ramduka and his band of approximately 100 men. Forty homes were destroyed by fire, and three villagers murdered – an elderly man, a woman and an eleven-year-old child. G. Abadzhiev, op. cit. pp. 12–13.

<sup>113</sup> C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 248.

<sup>114</sup> J. Hadzhivasilevich, *Muslimani nashje krvje vo Juzhnoj Srbiji* [Muslims of our blood in Southern Serbia], Belgrade, 1924, p. 71.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, pp. 72-73.

<sup>116</sup> Trajanka Talevska (born 1925 in Vrajnevc village, Bitola region) interview conducted 10 March 2000 in Novaci. Trajanka Talevska stated that she recalled hearing these stories from her mother and other older women in the village. Similar responses were received during interviews conducted with Mara Tanchevska (born 1923 in Sekirani village Bitola region) interview conducted 6 March 2002 in Melbourne and Dragica Kleshteva (born 1934 in Vrajnevc village, Bitola region) interview conducted 1 November 1999 in Melbourne.

of young girls, the local Macedonian revolutionary authorities ordered that all women regardless of age wear black when in the fields outside of the village in order not to attract attention from potential Turkish kidnappers.<sup>117</sup> According to a 1903 Serbian Metropolitan report, Albanians in the Kitchevo region kidnapped and forcefully converted a young girl from the village of Dvorca, a young girl from Svetoracha, a young girl from Leshnice, and a woman from Lupshta.<sup>118</sup> Young girls and women once kidnapped and placed in the harem of an Albanian bandit leader were forced to accept Islam upon threat of a cruel death. The threat of death would often extend to a husband, brothers, and even her entire family.<sup>119</sup>

In the mixed Macedonian Christian and Turkish Muslim village of Dolenci (Bitola region) in 1909, Veljan Altiparmak was attacked by a knife-wielding Turkish villager who intended to murder him and take his wife Trena as his own. Veljan immediately left the village after the attack and Trena followed with their six children after another Turkish villager advised them to 'leave for Bitola otherwise he (*the attacker*) will kill your children'.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Zora Dimovska (born 1937 Krushevica village, Prilep part of the Mariovo district) recalled hearing this story from her mother. Notes of interview, Melbourne 21 January 2000.

<sup>118</sup> Report by Serbian Metropolitan Polikarp of the Debar-Veles Eparchy, number 109 dated 23 February 1903, from L. Lape, editor, op. cit. pp. 116–117. The Serb ethnographer, J. Hadzhivasilevich also confirms that Albanians kidnapped Christian girls in order to Islamicise them in the Kitchevo region. Menka from Shutovo was kidnapped in 1860, and Mara Vasileva from Srbjani in 1879. These particular instances are unusual because both were returned to their families after refusing Islamicisation and after a concerted effort to free them by their villages. J. Hadzhivasilevich, 1924, op. cit. pp. 67–68.

<sup>119</sup> The French Member of Parliament, George Beri, from a sitting of the French Parliament on 10 March 1903 (Parliamentary Hansard). M. Pandevski, op. cit. pp. 83–84.

<sup>120</sup> Vasko Altiparmak (born 1912 in Bitola) interview conducted in Bitola on 30 March 2000. Veljan Altiparmak was Vasko's grandfather. It is interesting to note that the surname Altiparmak is not a traditional Macedonian name but is based on a nickname given to his grandfather, Veljan, who was born with six fingers on each hand. The Turkish word for six is *ali* and the word for finger is *parmak*. Vasko Altiparmak is the retired former director of the Yugoslav National Bank in Bitola.

Photo 1.2: Velebrdo Village



That Muslim men were prepared to go to extreme lengths in order to Islamicise young girls and women is further evidenced by an event which became an international incident in 1876. Stefana, a young Macedonian girl from Bogdantsi (Gevgelija region) was kidnapped and pressured to accept Islam in order that she marry a rich Turkish bey in Solun. Upon her arrival at the Solun railway station the German Consul (H. Abot), intervened and provided Stefana with safe shelter in his residence. The incident became the occasion for mass protests by a fanatical Muslim mob that demanded that Stefana be returned to them at all costs. The French and German Consuls, Moulin and Abot, went to the Mosque to speak to the Muslims who had gathered there, and were brutally murdered.<sup>121</sup> The kidnapping of girls and

<sup>121</sup> The historian, M. Pandevski, *Macedonia and the Macedonians in the Eastern Crisis*, Skopje, 1978, pp. 147–148.

women by Muslims was considered cruelly barbaric and the bitterness caused by such acts drove deep wedges between Christian and Muslim communities.<sup>122</sup>

Probably the most famous case involving the attempted abduction and Islamicisation of a Macedonian Christian girl was that of Kalesh Anga, in the Mariovo district of the Bitola region. Kalesh Anga chose death before Islamicisation, throwing herself off a cliff top whilst fleeing from her would-be Turkish abductors.<sup>123</sup> This practice of Muslims kidnapping Christian girls was widespread enough, indeed, to warrant its inclusion as a 'strictly forbidden practice' in Article 166 (Civil Administration section) of the Constitution of the Macedonian Rebel Committee during the Macedonian Kresna Uprising of 1878.<sup>124</sup>

Some of our best sources for this forced conversion are interviews and folk songs, but Islamicisation does not occupy a prominent place in the oral culture. Stories appear to be rarely passed down in the Mala Reka district, for instance. According to Abdula Odzheski from the exclusively Macedonian Muslim village of Zhirovnica, 'the old folk never spoke about the Islamicisation of our forefathers, as though it was something to be ashamed of'.<sup>125</sup> Young males in the village were also conscious that stories of Islamicisation were not being passed down to them; however, it is common knowledge to all that they were once Christians.<sup>126</sup> Older villagers are aware that the last remaining Christian in the village during the process of Islamicisation was Priest Kiril. Unable to save the village, Priest Kiril finally left in

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<sup>122</sup> Stories of Islamicisation occurring as a result of kidnapping appear to have been widespread. Many such stories have been handed down through traditional Macedonian folk songs. See T. Bicevski, *Makedonski Narodni Pesni od Vodensko* [Macedonian National Folk Songs from the Voden region], Skopje, 1989, pp. 51–68.

<sup>123</sup> The story was immortalised by Stale Popov (born 1902), from the village of Melnica in the Mariovo district in the book *Kalesh Anga* (first published 1953). The large cliff top rock from where Kalesh Anga threw herself is known as *Momin Kamen* ('young girl's rock') and is visible from the road leading up to Makovo from the Bitola district.

<sup>124</sup> 'Rules of the Macedonian Rebel Committee', from H. Andonov-Polyanski, editor, *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, Vol I, Skopje, 1985 p. 280.

<sup>125</sup> A. Odzheski interview, op. cit.

<sup>126</sup> The writer spoke to several young males in a village café in their late teens and early twenties and it was apparent that none were aware how the village became Muslim. One respondent stated that 'this matter is not discussed, although we are aware that our ancestors were Christians'.

1864 and moved to Debar where he changed his surname to Zharnovski, in commemoration of his native village.

As in Zhirovnica, Redzho Muslioski from the village of Dolno Kosovrasti (predominantly Muslim with a minority group of Macedonian Christian inhabitants) stated he did not know when the village was Islamicised and that stories were not passed down regarding Islamicisation of the village. He was, however, aware that religious conversions were conducted family-by-family, 'because there have always been native Macedonians in the village of the Christian faith'.<sup>127</sup>

By contrast, people living on the eastern slopes of the Shar and Koritnik Mountains of the Gora region have vivid memories of Islamicisation captured in traditional storytelling. The eminent ethnographer of Macedonian Muslims, Limanoski, cites an interview with a Macedonian Muslim from the Gora region speaking of Islamicisation:

We know from the old people who told us that we were once Christians (*'kauri'*), but we were forced through hardship to become Muslim (*'poturchile'*). Our children were forcibly taken and circumcised. Adult men were forced to accept the Muslim religion (*'poturchat'*). Upon returning from *pechalba*, a husband called his wife Safio, although her real name was Sofia. She began tearing her hair out of grief ... Sofia, who later became Safia, was from Rushanica. When the Turks left the village she rejoiced and danced.<sup>128</sup>

Ismail Bojda, from the village of Brod, in the Gora region, believed that the region was Islamicised much later than the Reka district and that this had some impact upon the memories of the process of Islamicisation. Due to different periods of Islamicisation in the two regions, variations of traditions and customs are noticeable,

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<sup>127</sup> Redzho Muslioski (born 1946 in Dolno Kosovrasti, Debar region) interview conducted 27 March 2000 in Dolno Kosovrasti.

Today the inhabitants of Dolno Kosovrasti are entirely Macedonians of the Muslim religion, the few remaining Macedonian Christian families moved to Skopje in at the end of the twentieth century.

<sup>128</sup> 'Znaeme od stari koi ni kazhvale deka sme bile kauri, ama so zorle sme poturchile. Decata gi zemale od sokacite I gi suneticuvali. Mazhi zemvale I so zort da gi poturchat. Edna zhenata bila Sofia i koga i doshol mazhot od gurbet, vlegol doma i na zhenata i vikol Safio. Ona fatila kosa da kubet I od zhalost I gi iskinala ... Zenata sbto se vikala Sofia a posle Safiabila Rushanica. Koga si zaminale Turcite od ovde taa se raduala i igrala.' N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. pp. 46–47.

and far more cultural similarities between the traditions maintained in the Gora region and those celebrated by Macedonian Orthodox Christians. Generally people in the Gora region have some idea when their families became Muslim, as most have an awareness of their family genealogy. The Bojda family is able to trace Islamicisation back five generations:<sup>129</sup>

Ismail	born 1953
Imer	born 1927
Ismail	born 1890
Bajram	born 1865
Alija	born 1840
<i>Bogdan</i>	born 1815

The name Bogdan is Christian, indicating that the moment of Islamicisation occurred in the 1820s or 1830s.

Five centuries of Ottoman rule saw various levels of systematic colonisation and Islamicisation result in significant demographic modifications to the ethnic and religious make-up of Macedonia. In the northwestern regions there was a gradual process of Macedonian Christians leaving their villages because of the daily insecurity caused by Muslim colonisers, and especially by armed Albanians, who were the primary source of intimidation for unarmed Christians. Macedonian Christians in Debar and in other regions (such as Tetovo and Gostivar) were compelled to migrate, establishing new isolated settlements or resettling into existing Christian villages. In the 1890s Sushnica in the Dolna Reka district was made up of approximately 30 Christian households.<sup>130</sup> Approximately 120–130 years earlier, the entire village population deserted their homes and resettled in the villages of Krushovo (Prilep region) and Smilevo (Bitola region), due to injustices perpetrated by Muslim bandits. Over time a number of villagers returned, re-establishing their homes in a less accessible location in Mala Reka. Partially erect walls of former homes continued to stand in the original village during the 1890s and the town became known as *Stara*

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<sup>129</sup> Ismail Bojda interview, op. cit.

<sup>130</sup> S.T. Chaparoski document, op. cit. p. 5.

*Sushnica* ('Old Sushnica') or *Staro Selo* ('old village').<sup>131</sup> The new location was no doubt adopted due to security concerns, as it sat at 1,420 metres above sea level, making it the second highest village in the Mala Reka district following Galitchnik (1,520 metres - another Macedonian Christian village).<sup>132</sup> Terrorised villagers sometimes left Macedonia altogether and migrated to the neighbouring free Christian Balkan States of Serbia and Bulgaria.<sup>133</sup>

The Reka districts of Dolna, Mala and Golema were affected by Islamicisation but not colonisation (see Table 1.3) whilst Gorna Zhupa saw mass colonisation with little Islamicisation (see Table 1.4). Surrounding districts similarly appear to have distinguishing characteristics. At the end of the nineteenth century in the Gorna Reka district villages, a corrupted form of Albanian was spoken by both Muslims and Christians alike. It was neither the language of their forefathers, nor their mother tongue, but a mixture of Albanian and Macedonian words, making the language unique and comprehensible only among themselves.<sup>134</sup> Traditional clothing (*ruket*) in the district is identical between both Christians and Muslims.<sup>135</sup> Of the 25 villages in the district, five were exclusively Muslim, four exclusively Christian (two with churches) and sixteen mixed Muslim-Christian villages (ten with churches).<sup>136</sup> The Ottomans advocated a religious adherence, not ethnic assimilation, so it was rare for a Macedonian Muslim village to discard its age-old customs, traditions and mother tongue.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid, pp. 5–6.

<sup>132</sup> The third highest situated village in Mala Reka district was the Christian village of Gari at 1,170 metres. M. Panov, *Enciklopedija na selata vo Republika Makedonija* [Encyclopaedia of the villages of the Republic of Macedonia], Skopje, 1998.

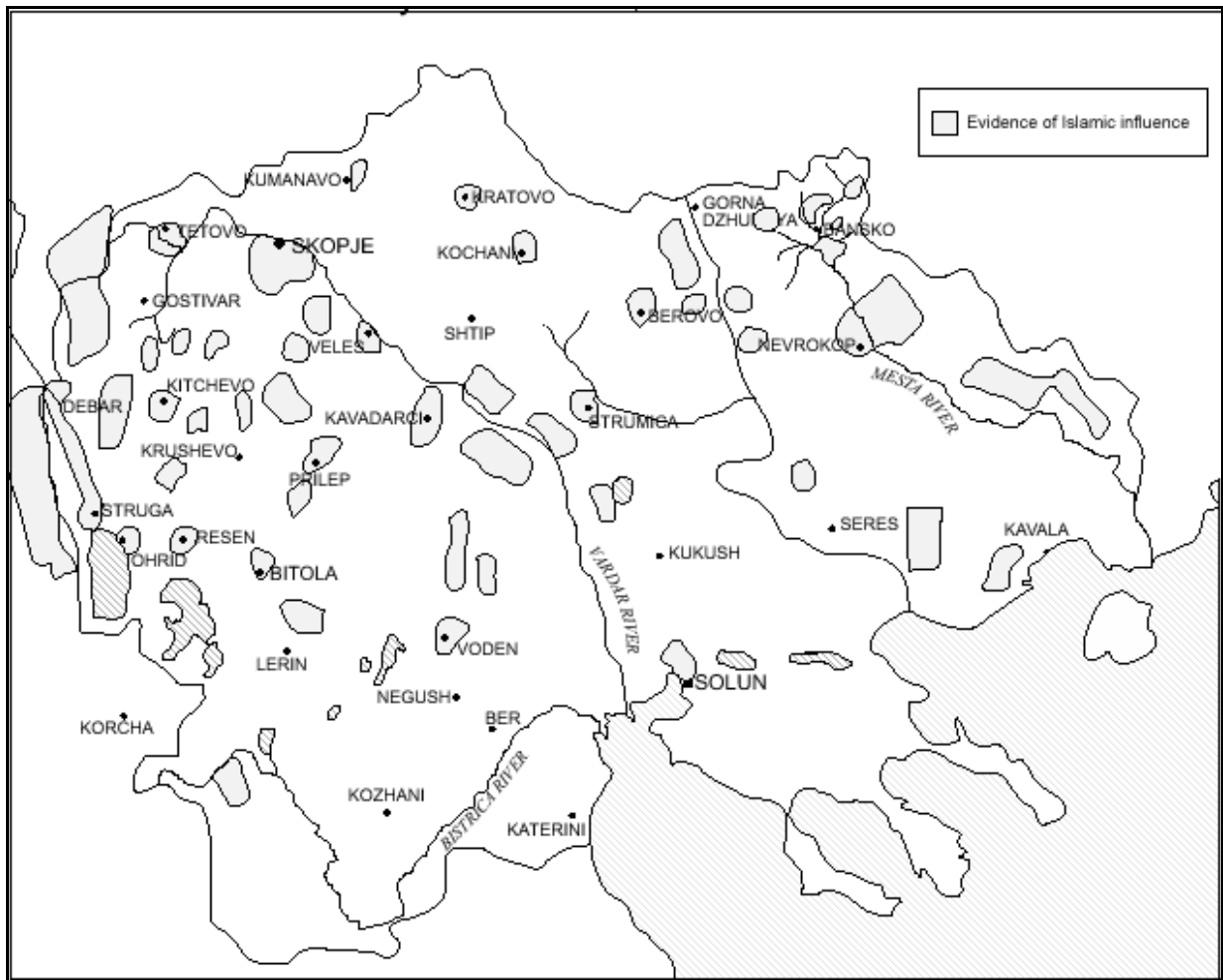
<sup>133</sup> V. Kanchov, 1970 (1900), op. cit. p. 389. In the 1880s Vasil Ginoski, from Galitchnik, violently injured a Turk and was able to leave after buying his freedom. He moved to Podgorica in Montenegro where he was later united with Teofil and Alekso Ginoski. H. Polenakovic, *Panajot K. Ginoski*, no place or date of publication, p. 242. In certain instances, individuals would retaliate in some form and consequently be forced to flee. For example, the Tchkorlevci family originally came from the Veles region during distant Ottoman rule. Over a number of generations the Tchkorlevci men killed nine Turks in nine separate locations whilst moving from one district to another before eventually settling in Vrajevci village on the outskirts of Pelagonia Plain (bordering the Mariovo district). Atanas Vasilevski (born 1928 in Vrajevci village, Bitola region) interview conducted 16 March 2000 in Bitola.

<sup>134</sup> Chaparoski document, op. cit. p. 11.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, pp. 11–12.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, pp. 12–15.

Figure 1.2: Macedonian localities affected by Islamicisation, 1400–1900



Unlike the Ottoman Turks, Albanians were known for their assimilatory propensity.<sup>137</sup> The movement of Albanians into Macedonian Muslim villages saw a gradual Albanianisation occur.<sup>138</sup> The villages of Ostreni, Trnovo, Klene, Leten, Dzhepitsa, Brbele, Obuki, Makelari and others were largely Albanianised by the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>139</sup> Where Albanians moved into Christian villages, it was common for Macedonians to leave. In the middle of the nineteenth century the Debar villages of Vichica, Goleica and Pisanki were exclusively Christian; by the end

<sup>137</sup> It is interesting to note that Macedonians, be they of the Christian or Muslim religion, were not renowned for assimilating other ethnic groups.

<sup>138</sup> S. Gopchevich, *Stara Srbija i Makedonija* [Old Serbia and Macedonia], Belgrade, 1890, pp. 206-207; J. Hadzhivasilevich, 1924, op. cit. pp. 29-30; N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 124; and, V. Kanchov, 1970 (1900), op. cit. p. 388.

<sup>139</sup> V. Kanchov, 1970 (1900), op. cit. p. 388.

of the century they had become exclusively Albanian.<sup>140</sup> In Grazhdani Albanians arrived in the 1850s. By 1900 there remained only eight Christian homes: the ethnographer, V. Kanchov, declared in 1900 that they 'will soon leave too'.<sup>141</sup> Migrating Albanians overran entire districts in the frontier Debar region (Grika, Luzunija, Dolno Debar) with the only remnants of the original Macedonian inhabitants being the obviously typical Macedonian toponyms.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid, p. 388.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, p. 388

<sup>142</sup> Chaparoski document, op. cit. p. 27.

Similarly, J. Hadzhivasilevich stated that toponyms in the Dolni Debar district generally remained unchanged and in villages taken over by the expanding Albanian population by the middle of the twentieth century it became common that toponyms became Albanianized. J. Hadzhivasilevich, *Grad Debar y vreme oslobodzhenja 1912 g.* [Debar during the period of liberation in 1912], Belgrade, 1940, p. 35.

Table 1.3: Ethnic and Religious Composition of Mala and Dolna Reka District Villages, circa 1900

Village	Inhabitants		Grazing land in hectares	Agric. land in hectares	Forests in Hectares	Metres Above Sea level
	MC	MM				
Adzhievci		MM	44	18	89	760
Bitushe	MC		210	70	287	954
Boletin		MM	N/A	N/A	N/A	820
Galitchnik	MC		5313	2	770	1,520
Gari	MC		2018	33	1,417	1,170
Kosovrasti D	MC	<b>MM</b>	151	28	498	625
Kosovrasti G	MC	<b>MM</b>	198	86	374	1,040
Lazaropole	MC		1,120	159	3,272	1,300
Melnichani D	MC		40	20	255	740
Melnichani G	MC		N/A	N/A	N/A	940
Mogorche		MM	270	176	740	1,020
Osoj	MC		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Prisojnica		MM	96	38	189	820
Rosoki	MC		N/A	N/A	N/A	980
Rostusha	MC	<b>MM</b>	261	63	1,109	720
Selce	MC		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Skudrinje		MM	103	78	617	940
Sushica	MC		N/A	N/A	N/A	1,410
Trebishte	MC	<b>MM</b>	358	120	1,014	940
Tresonche	MC		2,684	26	851	1,000
Velebrdo	MC	<b>MM</b>	296	61	336	840
Vidusha		MM	38	52	615	1,110
Yanche	<b>MC</b>	MM	27	31	469	760
Zhirovnica		MM	1,361	195	1,364	900

Sources and notes: Data compiled in the Reka district during field research conducted March 2000; S.T. Chaparoski, *Mesnost(ite) od Debarskoto okružhie*, Document number NR54; V. Kanchov, *Makedonija Etnografija i Statistika*, Sofia, 1970 (1900); J. Hadzhivasilevich, *Muslimani Nashe Krvi u Juzhnoj Srbiji*, Belgrade, 1924; and, M. Panov, *Enciklopedia na selata vo Republika Makedonija*, Skopje, 1998.

Note: MM signifies Macedonian Muslim inhabitants and MC signifies Macedonian Christians. In each instance where a village contains both religious groups one is highlighted and this signifies that it made up the majority group in the village.

The total population of the Mala and Dolna Reka districts in 1900 amounted to 12,015 Christians and 6,565 Muslims according to V. Kanchov, 1970 (1900), op. cit.

Figure 1.3: Religious composition of Macedonian villages in the Dolna/Mala Reka district, circa 1900

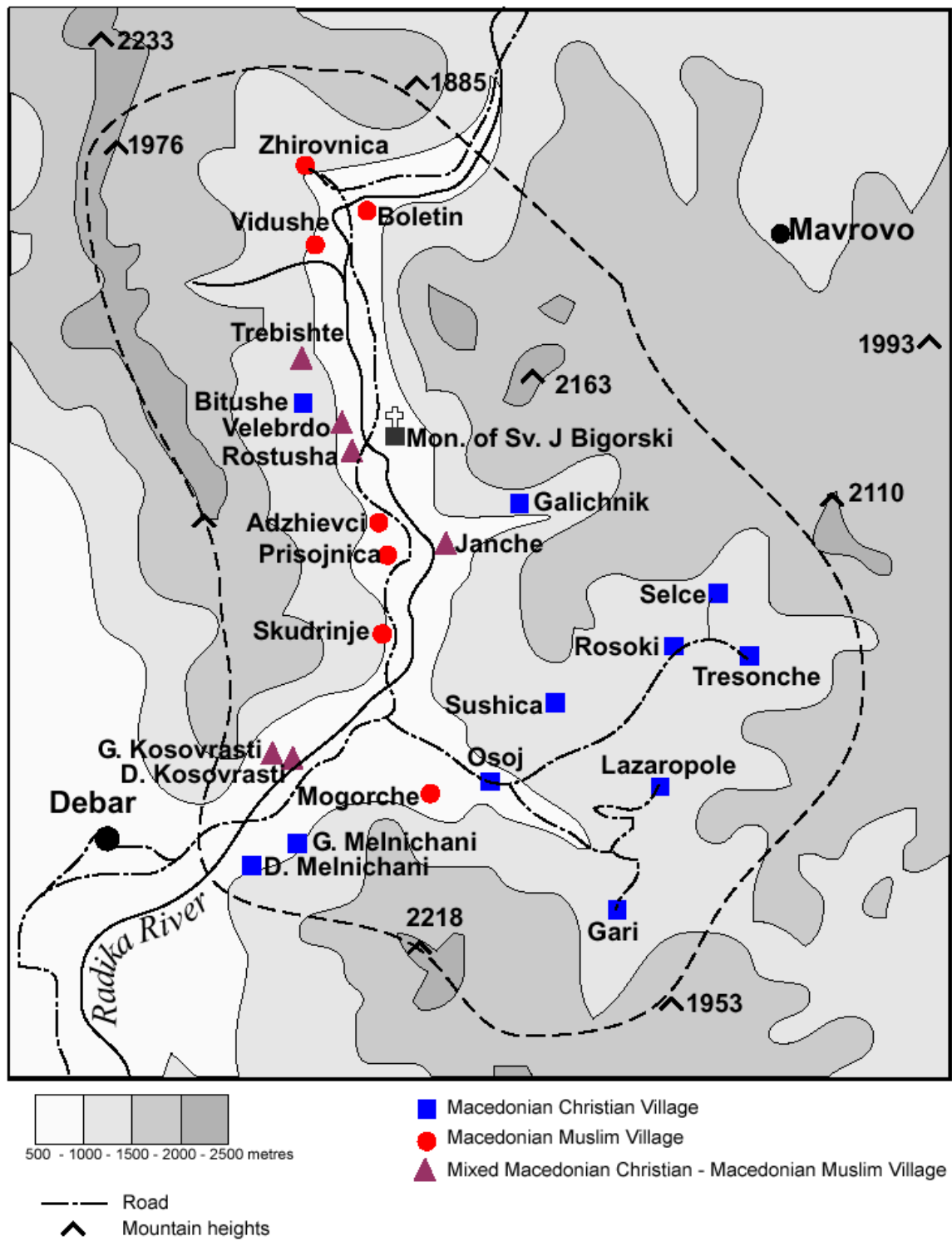


Table 1.4: Ethnic and Religious Composition of Gorna Zhupa District, circa 1890s

<b>GORNA ZHUPA DISTRICT - DEBAR REGION CIRCA 1890's</b>			
<b>Village</b>	<b>Turks</b>	<b>Macedonian Muslim</b>	<b>Macedonian Christian</b>
Breshani	35-38 homes		
Dolgash	10-12 homes		
Dolgash			7-8 homes
Elevci Dolno		40 homes	15 homes
Elevci Gorno	160 homes		10 homes
Evla			
Kochishta	55 homes		Up to 20 homes
Kodzhadzhik	600-650 homes		
Novaci	70 homes		
Osolnica	40 homes		
Osolnica			45-50 homes
Prelenik	70 homes		1 home
Selce			100-110 homes
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>1,040-1,095 homes</b>	<b>40 homes</b>	<b>198-214 homes</b>

Source and notes: S.T. Chaparoski, *Mesnosti(te) od Debarskoto okruzhie*, Document number NR54. Chaparoski notes that there was a church in the villages of Kochishta and Selce respectively. The last Christians left Kodzhadzhik in the 1820s. Osolnica is tabulated twice as two separate villages in close proximity to one another (a half-hour walk from one another).<sup>143</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Osolnica is also mentioned twice in published statistical data based on the 'bedel-i askeriye' tax of 1873. The Christian-inhabited Osolnica is recorded as 'Osolnica', whilst the Turkish-inhabited Osolnica as 'Turko Osolnica' ('Turkish Osolnica'). J. Jordanov, editor, *Makedonia i Odrinsko Statistika na Naselenieto ot 1873 g.* [Macedonia and Adrianople Population Statistics from 1873], Sofia, 1995, p.177. The 1995 publication is a reprint of the original French language 1878 publication, the reprinted version appears in French and Bulgarian. Original title - *Ethnographie des Vilayets D'Adrianople, De Monastir et de Salonique*, Constantinople, 1878.

## 1.2. Religion and nationality

IT WAS NOT a sense of ethnicity or nationalism driving the Ottoman Empire, but religion. 'Their law was a religious code, their army a force which conquered in the name of a faith.'<sup>144</sup> Basic categories in the Ottoman Empire were based on religious groups. There were Muslims, the 'believers', and others, the 'non-believers'. Ottoman society was organised according to religion, and as everyone necessarily belonged to a religious community, all citizens were considered to be a part of a 'nationality' known as *millet*. Prior to 1870 the Ottomans recognised only two millets in the Balkans, the *Rumi millet*, which consisted of all Orthodox Christians, and the Muslim *millet*, to which all Muslims belonged. As the only recognised Christian church in the Ottoman Balkans prior to 1870 (the Macedonian autocephalous Archbishopric of Ohrid was abolished in 1767), the Greek-controlled Constantinople Patriarchate was the official head of all Orthodox Christians. Adherents were thus labelled as belonging to the Rumi millet (also known as *Roum* or *Rum millet*). Consequently, in the official language of Turkish bureaucracy, a common racial name was given to all Orthodox Christians and Muslims respectively, with only two nationalities officially recognised – 'Greeks' (*Roum millet*) and 'Turks' (Muslim *millet*).<sup>145</sup> Later, with the intensification of Balkan rivalry over Macedonia (1870–1912), and the official recognition of other Orthodox Churches, new *millets* or 'nationalities' were recognised.

Politically perceived as denoting nationality, church affiliation incorrectly implied an attachment to the corresponding national state. For instance, when the Bulgarians and Serbs established their churches (as well as the Romanian church, aimed at Vlachs), new *millets* were recognised, and suddenly new 'nationalities' emerged in Macedonia. Religious or sectarian identification from a Christian perspective based

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<sup>144</sup> H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future*, London, 1906, p. 62.

<sup>145</sup> *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, Washington, 1914, p. 22. G.M. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby wrote 'throughout Turkey in Europe the name "Turk" is used to express a Mahometan; the name "Greek" to denote a Christian of the Eastern church'. Op. cit. pp. xxiii–xxiv. A Bulgarian millet was later recognised (in 1872), corresponding with the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate church.

on church adherence did not necessarily correspond to ethnic identification. In fact, Christian church adherence was at times fluid, with allegiance transferred from one national church to another 'as necessary' (to protect life and property). Subjected to an intense political rivalry between the Greek, Serb and Bulgarian churches, Macedonian Christians could therefore, theoretically, be recognised under the Ottoman *millet* system as belonging to the 'Greek', 'Bulgarian' or 'Serb' nationalities, but by transferring their religious adherence to a competing Orthodox church, they could fluctuate between the loose labels of 'Greek', 'Serb' and 'Bulgarian'. In contrast, a Muslim was generally regarded as belonging to the Turkish race only.

Converting to Islam was seen as a process of leaving one's own national group and 'becoming Turkish' (*po-Turchuvajne*). The Macedonian proverb, 'whoever changes his faith, changes his nationality', testifies that faith was seen to equate to nationality during the period in question and that whoever changed their faith was seen to submit to the conqueror.<sup>146</sup> Due to a powerful association perceived between the Muslim religion and the Turk, Islamicised Christians considered that they had adopted 'the Turks' religion'. The earliest Christians who converted to Islam were the old Macedonian feudal class in the urban centres, who, over time, became assimilated as Turks. Later the same fate befell many other Islamicised Macedonians in the large towns. But in the rural sector assimilation was far less likely to occur and the position of the peasants remained largely unaltered. Through their acceptance of Islam they acquired some of the privileges reserved for the ruling caste, however their cultural traditions and language remained unchanged.<sup>147</sup> They appear to have been nominal but 'very lax Muslims who have adopted Islam as a protection, but hardly observe its precepts unless they are among Turks'.<sup>148</sup> Islamicised Christians appear to have identified Islam with the Ottoman Turkish Empire and the ruling feudal class, and

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<sup>146</sup> The scholar of Macedonian folk literature, T. Sazdov, *Macedonian Folk Literature*, Skopje, 1987, p. 145.

<sup>147</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 88.

<sup>148</sup> C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 329; See N. Limanoski, 1993, regarding Macedonian Muslims secretly maintaining their Christian faith after Islamicisation.

not as a theological belief system.<sup>149</sup> The new convert rarely took it upon himself to study the precepts of his new religion.<sup>150</sup>

Although 'the 'Turks' religion' had become their own, generally Islamicised Macedonians were conscious that they were not Turkish. Macedonian Muslims have themselves used and been known by various labels. In the eastern regions of Macedonia, and on the Bulgarian hinterland around the Rhodope Mountains, Islamicised Christians were known by the label *Pomaks*.<sup>151</sup> In the western regions of Macedonia they have commonly been known as *Poturi* or *Torbeshi*.<sup>152</sup> In the Gora region Macedonian Muslims are known as *Goranci*.<sup>153</sup> Although various labels were used to denote Islamicised Christians, a popular label in the late nineteenth century was 'Turk'.<sup>154</sup> The Turks themselves labelled all Muslims as 'Turks', and Albanians

<sup>149</sup> The historian, A. Matkovski, *Otporot protiv Izlamizacija* [Resistance to Islamicisation], Skopje, 1987, p. 37.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

<sup>151</sup> G.M. Mackenzie and I.P. Irby, op. cit. p. 24. The term, *Pomaks*, was in widespread use during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Bulgarian writers and was adopted by European commentators at the time when referring to all Islamicised Christians in Macedonia.

<sup>152</sup> The historian, J. Hadzhivasilevich, *Grad Debar y vreme oslobodzhenja 1912 g.* [Debar during the liberation of 1912], Belgrade, 1940, pp. 39-40. The term *Torbeshi* is seen as politically incorrect in the late twentieth century as Islamicised Macedonians feel it has a derogatory connotation.

<sup>153</sup> The Gora region encompasses approximately 400 square kilometres and extends over three states. Situated where the political borders of Kosovo (Serbia), Albania and Macedonia meet. World Macedonian Congress, *Report za položbata i pravata na Gorancite vo Oblasta Gora i na Kosovo so predlozi za nivno konsolidirajne i sanirajne* [A report on the conditions of the *Gorancite* in the Gora region of Kosovo with recommendations for their consolidation and sanitation], Skopje, 2000, pp. 1-2. The contemporary commentator and historian, S. Gopchevich, also refers to this group as *Goranci*. He claims that their language is a mixture of Serbian and Albanian and that they have 'forgotten' their Serbian language. S. Gopchevitch, *Stara Srbija i Makedonija* [Old Serbia and Macedonia], Vol I, Belgrade, 1890, p. 204.

It is interesting to note that at the end of the Second World War, in 1946, a group of Islamicised Macedonians from the Gora region (the modern municipality of Dragash) presented a petition to the Macedonian government requesting that their children be educated in the Macedonian language. They met with the then President of the Macedonian Parliament, Vidoe Smilevski-Bato, however, their aim was never realised. At the same time there were calls for a modification of the administrative boundary between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Serbia (both then in the Yugoslav Federation) in order to include the Gora region into Macedonian boundaries. *Makedonsko Sonce* [weekly Macedonian news- magazine], No 263 - 09 July 1999, Article by S. Sharoski, pp. 22-23. According to the ethnographer, V. Kanchov, Macedonian Muslims in the Kitchevo region have been known as *Chitaci*. V. Kanchov, *Makedonia Etnografija i Statistika* [Macedonia Ethnography and Statistics], Sofia 1970 (1900), p. 333. The late nineteenth century compiler of ethnographic and linguistic data in the Debar region, S.T. Chaparoski, noted that Albanian Muslims in certain Debar districts (Grika, Luzunija, Dolni Debar and others) were known by the name *Malesorci*. S.T. Chaparoski, *Mesnost(ite) od Debarsko okruzhie* [Places in the Debar region], Document Number NR54, From the Archive of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences, p. 26.

<sup>154</sup> V. Kanchov, 1970 (1900), op. cit. p. 334

similarly labelled all who professed the Muslim religion as 'Turks', regardless of their ethnicity.<sup>155</sup>

Although the term 'Turk' had widespread usage, Macedonian Muslims were generally conscious of their separate language, customs and traditions in comparison to Turks. In the Dolna Reka district villages, Macedonians had limited contact with Turks, and even though they adopted the religion of the Turk, and identified with the Turk on a religious basis, Turks were considered a separate people.<sup>156</sup> Born in 1911 in the village of Velebrdo, Asan Asani recalled that older people in the village referred to themselves as 'Muslims-Turks' (*Muslimani - Turci*), with an emphasis on the term 'Muslim'.<sup>157</sup> It is evident that Macedonian Muslims experienced some difficulty separating the terms 'Muslim' and 'Turk'. A lifelong resident of Velebrdo, Asani Rejep, explained:

The old people understood themselves to be Turks because we were Muslims, that's how it was perceived. In the Turkish period when a Macedonian Muslim met a Turk, he could not speak his language, he knew he wasn't the same as him. The Macedonian used different labels to identify himself back then, but he always knew he was unique.<sup>158</sup>

A retired village schoolteacher, Abdula Odzheski, from Zhirovnica, stated that many of the older people referred to other Islamicised Macedonians with the term '*nashinski Turchin*' ('one of our own Turks') whereas the term '*Turchin*' ('Turk') was used when speaking of a genuine Turk.<sup>159</sup> Elderly men in the village were known to say '*Elamdulah*' ('Praise to God') at the end of a meal, indicating that the meal was finished. This Turkish term was also used as an expression forsaking Turkish identity

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<sup>155</sup> S. Gopcevic, 1890, op. cit. p.113.

<sup>156</sup> Asan Asani (born 1911 Velebrdo, Dolna Reka district) interview conducted in Velebrdo on 25 March 2000. Asan Asani is from the 'Asanagovci' family (Asan's father's grandfather was named Asan) and he was able to trace his male ancestors back four generations to his grandfathers grandfather, Kara Mustafa.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. The Albanian interviewee, Justref Metovski, (born 1908 in Resen, Prespa region) advised that in the past (into the second half of the twentieth century) it was not uncommon for elderly Gypsy Muslims to identify as *Musliman-Turchin* ('Muslim-Turk') or *Turchin-Guptin* ('Turkish-Gypsy'). Albanians similarly used terms of identification such as *Musliman-Turchin* ('Muslim-Turk') or *Turchin-Arnaut* ('Turk-Albanian').

<sup>158</sup> Asani Rejep (born 1915 Velebrdo, Dolna Reka district) interview conducted on 25 March 2000 in Velebrdo.

<sup>159</sup> Interview conducted with Abdula Odzheski (born 1945 Zhirovnica) on 25 March 2000 in Zhirovnica.

- '*Turchin Elamdulah*' - '*vo posledno sum Turchin*'.<sup>160</sup> In the Gora region Macedonian Muslims identified themselves as 'Goranci'. Although conscious that they were not Turks, the interviewee, Ismail Bojda, now a resident of Skopje, advised that Macedonians of the Muslim religion considered their religion to be Turkish. Elderly folk in Gora were known to say '*imame Turska vera*' ('we have the Turkish religion') and '*zëhimi Turska vera*' ('I swear by my Turkish religion').<sup>161</sup>

Although the Empire was made up of diverse ethnic and racial groups of people, religion remained the essential basis of identification. As such, regardless of ethnicity, Christians commonly regarded Muslims as 'Turks', so the term 'Turk' was used as a blanket label for all Muslims. In line with this view, in the late nineteenth century Macedonian Christians generally maintained a stereotypical view of all Muslims as 'Turks' in everyday language, particularly where there was limited contact with Muslim communities, including Macedonian Muslims. However, where Macedonian Christians lived in shared communities, in neighbouring villages or even maintained family links, similarities of language, customs and traditions were recognised. Exposed to Macedonian Muslim communities in the Mala Reka district, at the end of the nineteenth century, Shtiljan Trajanov Chaparoski from the village of Galitchnik recognised distinguishing cultural and ethnic features of Macedonian Muslims (as well as with other separate Muslim groups). Although maintaining use of the 'Turk' label in a loose form, Chaparoski classified Muslims into three distinct language groups, 'Turks who speak Turkish', 'Turks who speak Albanian', and 'Turks who speak Slavic' (Macedonian).<sup>162</sup>

During the Macedonian Kresna Uprising in 1878 the political and military program of the rebel committee as outlined in its Constitution – 'Rules of the

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ismail Bojda (born 1953 Brod - Gora region) interview conducted on 7 March 2000 in Skopje.

<sup>162</sup> S.T. Chaparoski, document NR54, op. cit. J. Hadzhivasilevich claims that Christians in the Debar region commonly used the terms *Torbeshi* or the more popular *Poturi* when speaking of Islamicised Christians, and the term Turk was more likely to be used in anger. 1940, op. cit. pp. 39–40.

Macedonian Rebel Committee' - made a direct reference to Macedonian Muslims as constituting a part of the Macedonian people. According to Article 15, 'The Military Rules of the Macedonian Army': 'Any Christian or Muslim Macedonian, Turk, Albanian, Wallachian or anyone else who proves to be an opponent of the uprising and of the rebels, will be pursued and when caught, duly punished' [sic].<sup>163</sup> The explicit common ethnic identification in the term 'Christian or Muslim Macedonian' is noteworthy. Macedonian Muslims also appear in 'The Constitution on the Future State Organisation of Macedonia 1880' (Macedonian League) under the sub-section 'Boundaries and People', in general population data. Macedonian Muslims appear under the name '*Pomaks* (Muslims)' (Article Three), and significantly not as 'Turks'.<sup>164</sup> These movements were clearly attempting to transcend religious difference in the articulation of a nascent 'ethnic' nationalism.

Rivalry between the Bulgarian and Serb churches in the Reka districts during Ottoman rule did not impact on perceptions held by Macedonian Muslims of their Macedonian Christian neighbours. The concept of a Macedonian Patriarchist being a 'Serb' or 'Greek', or a Macedonian Exarchist as a 'Bulgarian', was one with which respondents were unfamiliar. During the period of late Ottoman rule Macedonian Muslims in the Reka districts viewed Macedonian Christians as 'Christians' and did not associate any modified form of ethnic identity with their Macedonian neighbours as a result of village Patriarchist (Serb) or Exarchist (Bulgarian) religious jurisdiction.<sup>165</sup>

Of fundamental importance to the overall aims of this present work are Macedonian Muslim perceptions of Macedonian Christian identity during Ottoman rule. In every instance respondents from the Mala Reka district spoke of the 'old

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<sup>163</sup> H. Andonov-Poljanski, editor, *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, Skopje, 1985, p. 269.

<sup>164</sup> S. Dimevski, V. Popovski, S. Shkarich, and M. Apostolski, *Makedonskata Liga i Ustavot za Državno Ureduvajne na Makedonija od 1880* [The Macedonian League and Constitution for the future state organisation of Macedonia 1880], Skopje, 1985, p. 238.

<sup>165</sup> In the Reka district the Christian religious contest was played out between the Serb and Bulgarian churches.

people' routinely describing Macedonian Christians simply as being *Risyani* ('Christians'), or, as Asan Asani stated, 'the old folk knew that Macedonian Christians were different because of their religion, otherwise they were ours (*nashi*) also'.<sup>166</sup>

The Islamicisation of Macedonian territory produced a splintering of what had been a relatively homogenous Christian population. More fundamentally, however, it radically challenged the easy assumption that ethnic identification and religious adherence were interchangeable. It will be demonstrated in the following chapter that the demographics were much more varied and complex than this. We turn now to examine in detail the various categories of populations occupying the Macedonian territory in the late nineteenth century.

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<sup>166</sup> Asan Asani interview, op. cit.

# Chapter Two: Peoples and Populations

## 2.1 Peoples of Macedonia

### **Macedonians: The contested majority**

BROAD CATEGORIES OF identification were commonplace in the Ottoman Balkans. A popular nineteenth-century term to describe Islamicised Macedonians was ‘Turks’. Adhering to the Ottoman concept of religion equating nationality the Ottomans increased the number of ‘Turks’ in Macedonia (in their own population data) to justify their continued rule. Similarly, labels were also broadly used when it came to the Christian population, and Christian Macedonians were also categorised as being a part of other ethnic groups. The central dispute in Macedonia at the end of the nineteenth century concerned the national identity of the Christian Macedonian ethnic element. Typically inhabiting countryside villages, they engaged in an agricultural lifestyle. Regarded by the bulk of commentators as constituting the majority of the population, Macedonians were identified by a number of differing labels. Living within a contested territory, Macedonians too came to be a contested people. Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs labelled Macedonians as Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs respectively, in accordance with the designs of these three nations to annex Macedonian territory.

An overview of the ethnic structure of Macedonia is presented in this chapter, together with population statistics and ethnographic data as promoted by interested parties from the Balkans and from the wider Europe. Ethnographic maps in particular were a powerful tool used by the Balkan states to convince western Europe of the presence of their respective populations in Europe, whilst at the same time a politically motivated contest for religious and educational expansion was being waged in Macedonia. In a crucial period during the development of Macedonian identity towards the end of the nineteenth century, that identity was being challenged and

disputed simultaneously within countryside villages of the Bitola region and the major capitals of western Europe – for the sake of territorial gain.

While statistical data and publications had their impact on views of Macedonia, ethnographic maps proved to be notably effective as a tool. The Bulgarians in particular, were among the first to make significant inroads into European thinking about the nationality of the Macedonians.

Foreign commentators typically subscribed to the position that Macedonians were Bulgarians. This viewpoint was influenced by the existing Ottoman millet system of identification, which saw the population divided by religious affiliation, and not by ethnicity or language. Earlier in the nineteenth century ‘Rum’ millet was reinterpreted by Greek nationalists to mean ‘Greek’ in a national sense and was also used to refer to members of the Orthodox Christian merchant class regardless of their ‘ethnic origin’ or the language they spoke.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the term ‘Bulgarian’ had earlier been broadly used as a collective label in the Ottoman Empire but it too had no political significance, for the term ‘Bulgarian’ meant nothing more than peasant.<sup>2</sup> As competition for Macedonia developed, the Bulgarians themselves encouraged the use of the term Bulgarian in Macedonia. In Ottoman Macedonia,<sup>3</sup> terms like

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<sup>1</sup> The American anthropologist L. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 59; The Russian commentator A.V. Amfiteatrov, *Zemlya na Razdorot*, Makedonska Kniga, Skopje, 1990, pp. 51–52 [Original title, *Zemlya na Razdorot*, Moscow, 1903]; The Macedonian historian M. Pandevski, *Nacionalnoto Prashanje vo Makedonskoto Osloboditelno Dvizhenje 1893–1903* [The National Question in the Macedonian Liberation Movement 1893–1903], Kultura, Skopje, 1974, p. 49. Throughout European Turkey the name ‘Greek’ was used to denote a Christian of the Eastern church. Two English women, G.M. MacKenzie and I.P. Irby, travelled through Macedonia in the nineteenth century, and wrote *The Slavonic Provinces of Turkey in Europe*, Alexander Strahan, London, 1866, p. xxiii. According to MacKenzie and Irby, as a result of the treaty of Adrianople the Greek Patriarch was declared head of all Orthodox communities in European Turkey and subsequently all Orthodox Christians were viewed as Greeks (“The Greek Patriarch is declared head of all Orthodox communities in Turkey. “Be Catholic” says the Mohammedan judge, “or Protestants”, or set up a sect of your own, and we will recognise you with pleasure; so long as you call yourselves “orthodox” we must know you only as Greeks’. Ibid p. 31).

<sup>2</sup> L. Danforth, op. cit. p. 59; A.V. Amfiteatrov, op. cit. pp. 51–52; The English historian, D. Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897–1913*, Institute for Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki, 1966, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> The term ‘Ottoman Macedonia’ refers to Macedonian territory under Ottoman rule.

'Bulgarian' and 'Greek' were not used to designate different ethnic or national groups; they were used to designate different socio-cultural categories.<sup>4</sup>

The perception of the Bulgarian character of Macedonians was historically linked to a similar fate shared by the Macedonian and Bulgarian people in a deeply rooted, dual Turkish-Greek oppression. In addition, Russia harboured expansionist designs towards the Balkan Peninsula, and 'Slavophile' propaganda was directed at awakening a 'Slav consciousness' amongst the Balkan peoples.<sup>5</sup> Macedonia and Bulgaria were particularly exposed to Russian influence, as Ottoman rule in both lands was firmly established in comparison to Greece and Serbia, which were geographically further from Turkey.<sup>6</sup> Russian influence on the destiny of both Macedonians and Bulgarians was to create an entanglement of the separate identities of the two people, one that continued to be a matter of contention for nationalist propagandists well into the twentieth century. During the period from the 1820s to the 1860s, it was said of Russian Slavophiles that, 'misinterpreting the Bulgarian kingdom of the middle ages, and its subjugation of Macedonia, they identify the Macedonian people with the Bulgarian, and as a single people they drive them to liberate themselves from Greek influence'.<sup>7</sup> Russia saw it in her interests to encourage a Macedonian-Bulgarian union as it corresponded to her designs towards the Aegean Sea<sup>8</sup> and, sponsored by the Russian Tsar, the Bulgarians set about 'the Bulgarisation

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<sup>4</sup> L. Danforth, op. cit. p. 59

<sup>5</sup> The Italian historian, M. Dogo, *Jazikot i Nacionalnosta vo Makedonia, Doizvivuvanjata i razmisluvanjata na nevooruženite proroci 1902–1903*, Makedonska Kniga, Skopje, 1990, p. 215 [original title, *Lingua e nazionalità in macedonia vicende e pensieri di profeti disarmati 1902–1903*, Milano, 1985]. The prominent Serb ethnographer, J. Hadzhivasilevich, *Patrijarshisti i Egzarhisti y Skopskoj Eparhiji* [Patriarchists and Exarchists in the Skopje eparchy], Belgrade, 1938, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics, A Review of the Ethnographic Cartography of Macedonia*, Liverpool, 1951, p. 58. A lecturer in geography at the University of Liverpool, Wilkinson's important work details an impressive collection of conflicting ethnographic maps of Macedonia.

<sup>7</sup> S. Dimevski, *Istoria na Makedonskata Pravoslavna Crkva* [History of the Macedonian Orthodox Church], Skopje, 1989, p. 319. The historian S. Dimevski may be regarded as the principal authority on the history of the Macedonian Orthodox church. In relation to Russian 'Slavophile' doctrine and 'Bulgarianisation', also see Balkanicus, *The Aspirations of Bulgaria*, London, 1915, and M. Dogo, op. cit. pp. 215–216.

<sup>8</sup> The historian S. Pribichevich, *Macedonia: Its People and History*, 1982, p. 114.

of Macedonia'.<sup>9</sup> Although an alliance was formed under the common struggle against Greek ecclesiastical domination, Bulgarian nationalists assumed a superior position, hijacking the struggle for domination over Macedonia.<sup>10</sup>

In 1903 the Macedonian intellectual Krste Missirkov described relations with the Bulgarians as having been

extremely close as the result of the general situation in Turkey: we were brothers through destiny and our relations were equal towards the government and the Phanariot Order.<sup>11</sup> We were given, in our common fate, the common name of Bulgarians right up to the liberation of Bulgaria, and even after the liberation of Bulgaria this remained a tradition in Macedonia. This was the basis on which the Bulgarians established their pretensions to Macedonia; but the Macedonians had expected to be liberated by the Bulgarians.<sup>12</sup>

The ambiguity of the term Bulgarian went undetected by many commentators during the period of late Ottoman rule. In 1915 the English commentator, Crawford Price, wrote, 'it is easier to call a Macedonian a Bulgar than to prove him one; his nationality is largely ignored'.<sup>13</sup>

When the Bulgarian Exarchate entered Macedonia in 1870 it came as no surprise that a mass movement of Macedonians left the Patriarchate church to join

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<sup>9</sup> The contemporary commentator, C. Price, *The Intervention of Bulgaria - and the Central Macedonian Question*, London, 1915, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> The historian Y. Belchovski, *The Historical Roots of the Macedonian Orthodox Church*, Skopje, 1987, p. 148; see also, S. Pribitchevich, op. cit. p. 114.

<sup>11</sup> The Phanariots were a form of Greek aristocracy living in the Phanar district of Constantinople where the Greek Patriarch resided. They were made up of merchants, financiers and clergymen and maintained solid connections with the Patriarchate. From the beginning of the eighteenth century they were utilised by the Ottomans as interpreters with Europeans; however, their influence with the Ottomans saw them become powerful and prosperous as they filled prominent civil service positions. Clerical members of the Phanariots exploited the Patriarchate church and sought to expand its influence in the Balkans.

<sup>12</sup> K. P. Missirkov, *On Macedonian Matters*, Skopje, 1974, p. 115. [English reissue; original title, *Za Makedonskite Raboti*, Sofia, 1903]. Missirkov was an outstanding figure amongst the Macedonian intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth century. Regarding the close relationship between Macedonians and Bulgarians, Missirkov considered that the interests of the Bulgarians were strengthened 'by mixing our interests with theirs. We have, so to speak, called ourselves Bulgarians... And, indeed, since we called ourselves Bulgarians we had the right to expect good and not evil for ourselves: we might have expected Bulgaria to give support to all our spiritual needs. Bulgaria is a free State. She has money, culture, Statedmen and diplomats. She should understand her own national interests and ours, and defend them with all her might. But we have seen our hopes bitterly deceived, and instead of meeting with good we have met with evil.' Ibid. p. 105.

<sup>13</sup> C. Price, op. cit. p. 11.

the new Bulgarian church, and Bulgarian schools followed, often replacing Greek schools. Dominated from Sofia, Exarchate religious and education institutions generally adopted a colonial attitude in Macedonia and were met with resentment and conflict from the lower level clergy and school teachers who were typically local Macedonians. Embittered by Bulgarian domination and indicative of growing self-esteem, a Macedonian Movement was formed, spearheaded by school teachers calling for the restoration of the Macedonian Archbishopric of Ohrid church and the establishment (standardisation) of a Macedonian literary language.<sup>14</sup>

As early as 1874 a distinctly Macedonian *national* individuality was apparent, according to one of the leaders of the Bulgarian national revival, Petko Rachev Slaveykov. Sent to Macedonia by the Exarchate, he reported details of his findings and clearly described the national individuality of the Macedonians, in the words, 'the Macedonians are not Bulgarians'.<sup>15</sup> In regards to their national aspirations, 'they persistently strive, regardless of the price, to obtain a separate church of their own'.<sup>16</sup> Slaveykov speaks of an attitude amongst Macedonians that the Macedonian dialect should be declared a literary language. His letters portray Macedonians as possessing a separate 'national' consciousness and politically represented by a Movement with defined political aims seeking independent church and national liberation.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Initial efforts during this period saw the Macedonians attempting to restore their church through union with the Roman Catholic Church. See S. Dimevski, op. cit. (chapter three).

<sup>15</sup> Petko Rachev Slaveykov letter dated February 1874. See (the letter appears in full) H. Andonov-Poljanski, editor. *Documents - on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation State*, Vol 1, Skopje, 1985, p. 238. Note P.R. Slaveykov sent two letters in February 1874 describing the situation in Macedonia (see op.cit., pp. 237–242).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid p. 238. Furthermore, from Slaveykov's letter, 'Thoughts at the restoration of the Archbishopric of Ohrid at the moment are most prevalent here, in Salonika, but they are gradually spreading to Northern Macedonia...I intend to meet some of the elders from the local community. I shall try to convince them of the groundlessness of their aspirations for a separate church when they already have one in the form of the Exarchate. Certainly the most difficult question will be that of appointment of Bishops of Macedonian origin'. pp. 239–240.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p. 241. According to Slaveykov's letter, 'the Macedonian activists already widely use the expression "the Macedonian Movement" in their language of communication, by which one should understand independent national and church liberation. I must emphasize strongly, Your Excellency, that this is a factor of an important political character – separatism is being spread starting from a religious basis towards a broader national one'.

At about the same time (1875) Giorgi Pulevski, a Macedonian from Galitchnik, published a *Dictionary of Three Languages*, in which he made a number of statements that the linguist H.G. Lunt considers ‘cannot possibly reflect a feeling of Bulgarian nationality’.<sup>18</sup> Pulevski's definition of nationality and nation warrants attention:

a nation is called people who are of one kind and who speak the same language and who live and associate with one another and who have the same customs and songs and celebrations – these people are called a nation, and the place in which they live is called the fatherland of that nation. So too the Macedonians are a nation, and this place of theirs is Macedonia.<sup>19</sup>

Expressions of Macedonian national identity were disregarded, or otherwise poorly grasped by many nineteenth-century commentators. Visitors to Macedonia would tour the country in tow of a representative of one or another of the interested rivals and the traveller ‘assimilated the ideas of his guide rather than divined the nationalism of the people’.<sup>20</sup> Other commentators attested that Macedonians possessed no national consciousness and simply identified as Christians. Although not entirely unusual for a Macedonian villager to refer to himself as a Christian, this could be expressed in an ethnic sense and not a religious one. It was not unique for a Macedonian to identify oneself as Christian; indeed, in Bulgaria prior to statehood, Bulgarians commonly declared themselves ‘Christian’ in answer to the question, ‘What are you?’ The term ‘Christian’ specifically meant ‘Orthodox’ and was understood to be ‘Bulgarian’. The Russian Tsar therefore was understood by Bulgarian peasants to be a ‘Bulgarian Tsar’, not by nationality, but by Orthodox Christianity.<sup>21</sup> A parallel account was given in 1888 by the Greek Professor Valavanes concerning his native Cappadocian village. Valavanes concluded that:

Hellenism exists almost intact in the Christian community, the Asia Minor Greek “does not even know the name of the tribe to which he belongs”. Asked what he is “he will answer you promptly Christian”. “Very well, others are Christian too, the Armenians, the French, the Russians ...” “I don't know”, he will tell you, “yes, they

<sup>18</sup> H.G. Lunt, *Some Sociolinguistic Aspects of Macedonian and Bulgarian*, University of Michigan, 1984, p. 103.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.103.

<sup>20</sup> C. Price, op. cit. p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> H.G. Lunt, op. cit. p. 104.

too (may) believe in Christ, but I am a Christian”. “Aren't you perhaps a Hellene?” “No, I'm not anything (of the sort). I told you I am a Christian, and again I tell you I am a Christian!” he will answer you impatiently. According to Valavanis, this demonstrates the close relationship of the notions of Christianity and ethnicity for these people, and they “love Russia as a bulwark of the faith against the enemy of Christ”.<sup>22</sup>

A popular term of identification indicating separateness from others, and acknowledging an individual or group as being Macedonian, is the term ‘*nash*’ or ‘*nashi*’, literally meaning ‘ours’ – or ‘one of ours’.<sup>23</sup> These terms of identification persist even at the beginning of the twenty-first century.<sup>24</sup> Similarly Macedonian Muslims, when referring to other Macedonian Muslims, used the term ‘*nash Turchin*’ (‘one of us’/ ‘ours – Turk’) instead of simply ‘*Turchin*’, as was the case when referring to a Muslim Turkish speaker.<sup>25</sup> Depending upon which particular Balkan church maintained religious jurisdiction over a village, the inhabitants might have used the terms ‘Exarchists’ (*Eksarhisti*) or ‘Patriarchists’ (*Patriashisti*) when referring to ‘others’, or when intending to use derogatory labels one could refer to ‘others’ as ‘*Bugari*’ (Bulgarians) or ‘*Grci*’ (Greeks). These labels were understood as being representative of a religious association and not as a form of ethnic or national identification.

The historian Perry points out that those living along the border regions with Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece respectively sometimes claimed to be Serbs, Bulgarians or Greeks, ‘but for many this was a religious affiliation and not an ethnic identity’.<sup>26</sup> It is not unusual in history to find other Europeans using different labels of identification in place of their own national name. For example, Poles have in the past referred to themselves as Germans, Ukrainians as Russian, and Finns as Swedes. In each instance

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 104.

<sup>23</sup> Although some modern specialists in the field may consider the reading of the term ‘*nash/nashi*’ as controversial the writer maintains its justified use.

<sup>24</sup> The usage of these common terms was completely overlooked by contemporary commentators. *Nash - nashi - nashinec* are popular terms used to describe an individual or group of people as Macedonians. It is used in Macedonia, and amongst Macedonian communities in Europe, North America and Australia a century after Ottoman rule. In Australia it is frequently used amongst Australian-born Macedonian second- and third-generation children.

<sup>25</sup> Refer to Chapter Five.

<sup>26</sup> D.M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror - The Macedonian Liberation Movements 1893–1903*, London, 1988, p. 19.

there are historical reasons for such processes occurring. Although Macedonian separateness existed, it was not clearly visible to outsiders, who evaluated identity based on the concept of the Western European nation state and in an environment of excessive Balkan nationalism which viewed Macedonia as a colonial prize.

Macedonians were unable to assert a uniform identity due to a range of circumstances. Of the utmost importance to gain recognition for a separate nationality in the Ottoman Empire, and to consolidate a single uniform label visible to the outsider was the previous recognition of a separate church. Without a recognised church, national recognition in turn was impossible.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, Macedonians were subjected to the imperialistic designs of Greek, Bulgarian and Serb religious and educational institutions in Macedonia, which attempted to instil a Greek, Bulgarian and Serb nationality upon them amidst the chaos of a deteriorating economic, social and political environment within the Ottoman State.<sup>28</sup> Unlike their neighbours, late nineteenth-century Macedonians did not have control of their own territory and were therefore unable to engage in a process of nation-building by cultivating a shared national identity. In the free Balkan States, the process of nation-building involved the military, the civil service, the education system, and, most importantly, the establishment of autocephalous national churches.<sup>29</sup>

Typically, Greek, Serb and Bulgarian commentators systematically failed to distinguish a separate Macedonian identity in any form. Quite apart from Western European commentators, travel writers and ethnographers advocating a particular political agenda, even those with the best of intentions could have misconceived the separateness of Macedonian identity. Subsequently only a small group of

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<sup>27</sup> Balkanicus, *op. cit.* p. 226.

<sup>28</sup> Macedonian converts to the ruling religion remained outside the Balkan rivalry aimed at Christian Macedonians. Some commentators included them in the overall Muslim figures, occasionally they were incorporated into the estimates of the majority Macedonian group, but most often they were labelled 'Bulgarian Pomaks' and rarely did they constitute their own category. Estimates of Macedonian Muslims ranged up to 500,000.

<sup>29</sup> L. Danforth, *op. cit.* p. 58.

commentators recognised a distinct Macedonian nationality, whilst others used various synonyms to describe them, the most common being 'Bulgarian'. Despite differing labels, a general consensus amongst commentators placed Macedonians as the majority element, comprising approximately 1,200,000 people at the beginning of the twentieth century. The lowest estimates were 454,700 by (Greek) C. Nicolaides in 1899 and 512,000 by (Romanian) N. Constantine in 1913. The highest figures were derived from those recognising Macedonian individuality, such as (German) K. Oestreich in 1905 at 2,000,000 (including 500,000 Macedonian Muslims) and (Russian) G. Georgiev in 1913 at 2,275,000.<sup>30</sup>

## **Vlahs: Romanian or Greek, a contested minority**

VLAHS ARE ORTHODOX Christian in religion, speak a Latin language and are found scattered throughout South Eastern Europe. Vlahs are also known as Tsintzars to the Macedonians, Serbs and Bulgars; Kutzovlahs to the Greeks; they have at times been known as Macedo-Rumans in order to distinguish themselves from their cousins, Daco-Rumans, across the Danube.<sup>31</sup> The largest and most compact concentrations of Vlahs in the Balkan Peninsula traditionally were in Epirus and Thessaly.<sup>32</sup> Of all the Vlah centres in European Turkey, the largest urban concentration was located in the town of Moskopole (along the Albanian/Macedonian borderlands) with approximately 60,000 Vlah inhabitants in

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<sup>30</sup> The highest estimates of the Macedonian population, unsurprisingly, were derived from individual commentators who recognised a separate Macedonian identity.

<sup>31</sup> G. M. Terry, *The Origins and Development of the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement with Particular Reference to the Taina Makedonsko-Odrinska Revolutsiionerna Organizatsiya from its Conception in 1893 to the Ilinden Uprising of 1903*, Unpublished MA thesis, University of Nottingham, 1974.

<sup>32</sup> The Romanian historian I. Arginteanu, *Istoriya na Armn Makedoncite (Vlasite)* [A History of the Macedonian Vlahs], 1998, p. 113 [Original title, *Istoria Romanilor Macedoneni*, Bucharest, 1904].

The historian, G. Nakratzas (renowned in Greece for his fresh balanced approach towards Greek history), adds that the Vlahs constituted the overwhelming majority of the local population of north-eastern Epirus, Pindus, western Thessaly and the Sperhios valley over the last thousand years. G. Nakratzas, *The Close Racial Kinship Between the Greeks, Bulgarians, and Turks*, Thessaloniki, 1999, p. 68.

the eighteenth century.<sup>33</sup> The nearby towns of Bitkuyki and Shipiska each contained 30,000 Vlachs.<sup>34</sup>

A harmonious co-existence between Vlachs and Albanians ended with the conversion of the bulk of the Albanian population to Islam. Vlachs inhabiting a line stretching south from Moskopole to the Gramos Mountain became victim to constant terror by Albanian Muslim bandits.<sup>35</sup> The infamous Ali Pasha of Janina, with a large *bashibouzuk* force made up of Albanians and Turks, attacked and totally destroyed the town of Moskopole in 1789.<sup>36</sup> A similar fate befell the Vlach towns of Bitkuki, Birina, Nikulica, Gramosta, Linotopa, Varteni and others.<sup>37</sup> Vlachs were forced to flee and migrated as far as Austria, Hungary and Bulgaria. Others settled in Macedonian towns such as Bitola, Ohrid and Krushevo, followed by further movement into the Macedonian interior. They were most populous in the far southerly regions of the Bitola vilayet, particularly in the Grevena district where they constituted the bulk of the population, and their settlement extended southwards into the Pindus ranges where they formed a very large compact group.<sup>38</sup> Other groups of Vlach villages existed in the central and western regions of Macedonia, typically in mountainous districts.

In commercial centres such as Bitola, Krushevo, and Voden, Vlachs engaged in trade and business. Urban Vlachs were renowned for coming under Greek influence, and were considered by H.N. Brailsford, a journalist and relief worker in Macedonia, to be the 'backbone of the Hellenic party' in Macedonia.<sup>39</sup> Generally mistaken as

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<sup>33</sup> I. Arginteanu, op. cit. p. 149.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 149.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 148.

<sup>36</sup> *Bashibouzuks* were Muslim irregular fighters, typically acting as bandits. They were notorious throughout Macedonia. During the Ilinden Rebellion, after a village had been attacked by the Ottoman military, *bashibouzuks* often made up a second wave of attack, pillaging and plundering all that remained in the village.

<sup>37</sup> I. Arginteanu, op. cit. p. 151.

<sup>38</sup> G. Nakratzas, op. cit. pp. 72-76.

<sup>39</sup> H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future*, London, 1905, p. 179. *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future*, is a well-known and much-quoted work. Although a journalist, Brailsford spent five months during the winter

Greeks, and claimed as such by Greek propagandists, clearly without the Vlachs the ‘Greeks would cut a poor figure among the statistics’.<sup>40</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century it was observed how Vlachs might have been mistaken as Greeks:

They shelter themselves in the Greek Church, adopt Greek culture as a disguise, and serve the Hellenic idea. It is rare to meet a man among them who does not speak Greek more or less fluently and well, but at home the national Latin idiom persists, and their callings, their habits, their ways of thinking, make them a nationality apart.<sup>41</sup>

C. Eliot, a former Secretary at the British Embassy at Constantinople from 1893 to 1898, makes a similar observation about the hidden nature of Vlach nationality: ‘One may live and travel in the Balkan lands without seeing or hearing anything of the Vlachs, until one’s eyes are opened’.<sup>42</sup>

Outside the urban centres Vlachs established livestock breeding settlements in mountainous regions and lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle. They were known to herd large sheep holdings over great distances.<sup>43</sup> Rural Vlachs were not as inclined to adopt a pro-Greek attitude compared to their city brethren and were more inclined to subscribe to pro-Romanian propaganda. Traditionally Vlachs maintained friendly relations with the Ottoman authorities as they harboured no political aspirations in Macedonia. The authorities welcomed Romanian propaganda in Macedonia, as it weakened the Christian subjects further and there was no threat of Romania annexing any part of Macedonia. Romanian influences on rural Vlachs, however, drew a violent reaction from Greek official quarters with various pressures exerted upon Vlach villages in order to encourage them to remain with the Greek Patriarchate church and therefore remain a ‘Greek village’. Greek pressure took two forms – ‘the spiritual

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of 1903–1904 in Macedonia, together with his wife, working on behalf of the British Relief Fund after the Ilinden Uprising. Brailsford treats the Macedonians as belonging to the Bulgarian nationality.

<sup>40</sup> G. M. Terry, op. cit. p. 9. The historian, L.S. Stavrianos, Stated that when Romania pressured Ottoman Turkey for official recognition of the Vlachs in Macedonia, ‘this policy naturally aroused much resentment, particularly among the Greeks, for the Vlachs had hitherto been counted as Greeks in population estimates’. L.S. Stavrianos, *Balkan Federation - A History of the Movement toward Balkan Unity in Modern Times*, Connecticut, 1964, p. 140.

<sup>41</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 176.

<sup>42</sup> C. Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*, London, 1965, (1900), p. 371.

<sup>43</sup> Vlachs were known to herd their sheep over large distances, ‘some as far south as the Gulf of Corinth’. D.M. Perry, op. cit. p. 18.

terrorism of the Greek Church, which holds them by the threat of excommunication, and the physical terrorism of the Greek bands which assassinate their notables and teachers'.<sup>44</sup> Vlachs became an object of rivalry between Romanian and Greek propaganda.

Generally Bulgarian and Serbian sources put the Vlach figure at between 70,000 and 80,000. The lowest estimates, not surprisingly, came from Greek contemporary commentators such as C. Nicolaides in 1899, at 41,200, and the Greek Parliamentary Minister, Delyanis in 1904, at 25,101. Western European authorities placed Vlach numbers in the 60,000–70,000 range. The highest figures were derived from Romanian sources. Late in the nineteenth century Romania lay claim to the Vlachs and proceeded to interest herself in Macedonian affairs, producing statistical data indicating a Vlach population of anywhere from 350,000 to 3,134,450.<sup>45</sup>

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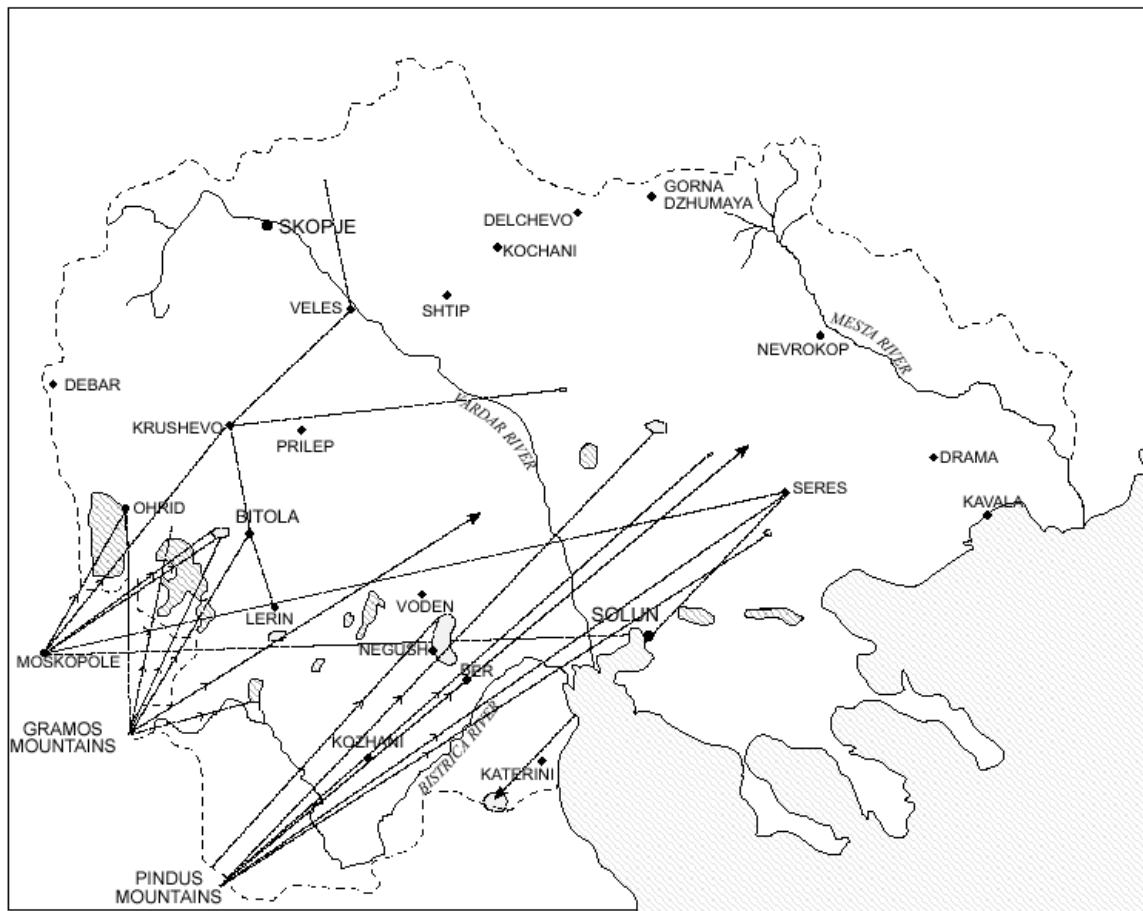
<sup>44</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 198.

<sup>45</sup> An ethnographic map published by the Romanians N. Densusianu and F. Dame (1877) introduced a new controversy to the ethnic composition of Macedonia. It indicated a much larger distribution of Vlachs in Macedonia than had previously been recorded. The Vlach population in Macedonia and the surrounding areas was claimed to be 1,200,000 – of whom 450,000 were to be found in Macedonia, 200,000 in Thessaly, 350,000 in Epirus and Albania, and 200,000 in Thrace. In 1913 another Romanian commentator (N. Constantine) claimed that there were 350,000 Vlachs in Macedonia. Romanian statistics of the Vlach population in Macedonia were connected to political manoeuvring rather than any real claim to Macedonian territory. The historian, Stavrianos, Stated, 'they made use of the Vlachs as a sort of speculative investment which perhaps could be used profitably for bargaining purposes some time in the future'. L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 1966, p. 521.

Table 2.1: Estimates of Vlahs in Macedonia, 1877–1913

Year of data	Commentator	Origin of Commentator	Number of Vlahs
1877	V. Teploff	Russian	63,895
1877	N. Denisusianu & F. Dame	Romanian	450,000
1878	Syligos	Greek	70,000
1889	S. Verkovitch	Serb	74,375
1898	G. Weigand	German	70,000
1899	C. Nicolaides	Greek	41,200
1900	V. Kanchov	Bulgarian	77,367
1904	Delyanis	Greek	25,101
1905	D.M. Brancoff	Bulgarian	63,895
1906	R. Von Mach	German	56,118
1912	Y. Ivanoff	Bulgarian	79,401
1913	R. Pelletier	French	63,000

Figure 2.1: Vlah movement into Macedonia, 1700–1900



### Greeks: Fishermen, farmers or townsfolk?

THE GREEK MINORITY in Macedonia inhabited sections of the Aegean coast where they formed fishing communities and in the southern districts of the Macedonian Greek frontier south of the Bistrica River. They were scattered alongside Vlahs and Macedonians in the southerly parts of the Bitola vilayet around Katerini, Ber, Serfidzhe, Grevena, Naselitch and Kozhani regions.<sup>46</sup> Away from the coast the most northerly region inhabited by Greeks was Seres in eastern Macedonia, where, according to the English Consul in Bitola, they constituted 25 per cent of the population. Commentators of the period commonly subscribed to the view that

<sup>46</sup> Ber was renamed Veroia by the Greek government in the 1920s.

Greeks were a minority element of the population. Von Knapich, the Austrian Consul in Salonika, reported in 1874 that the Greek population was limited exclusively to the Kasandra and Ayonoros districts, the old Chalcidice and the Peninsula opposite (the western shore of the Gulf of Solun). The Austrian commentator, K. Gersin (1903) considered that Greek presence extended only as far as the River Bistrica and along the Chalcidice.<sup>47</sup> The historian and long-time English diplomat at Constantinople, E. Pears, maintained the view that 'away from the shore it is rare to find a purely Greek village except near the confines of Greece'.<sup>48</sup>

In central Macedonia and generally throughout the rural regions Greeks were almost non-existent. There is a widespread misconception that they inhabited urban centres en masse and engaged in business and trade, however, the ambiguous nature of terms of identification gave the Greeks a presence where there was none. Urban 'Greeks' in the Macedonian interior were the descendants of those Christians (typically Vlachs), who had acquired the religion, commercial language and commercial aptitude of the Greeks: 'in short, they acquired a Greek way of life'.<sup>49</sup> The term Greek was applied to urban dwellers liberally, and could be applied to any 'better off' or educated Christian.<sup>50</sup>

The artificial 'Greekness' of Vlachs exaggerated the Greek presence in Macedonia and it is through Vlachs and their adherence to the Constantinople Patriarchate that Greeks claimed a position in Macedonia. An early twentieth-century Serb commentator on Macedonia, Ivan Ivanich, declared that 'the Greek element in

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<sup>47</sup> H. Andonovski, *Foreign Authors on Macedonia and the Macedonians*, Skopje, 1977, pp. 200–201. The Bistrica River has been renamed the Aliakmonas River by the Greek authorities. The Chalcidice is known to Macedonians as Halikidik.

<sup>48</sup> E. Pears, *Turkey and Its People*, London, 1911, p. 231. The Italian commentator L. Villari noted in *Races, religions, and propagandas*, (New York, 1905) that, 'If we look for real Greeks we find them in a majority only in the south-western part of the vilayet of Monastir, in the south of that of Salonica, especially in the Chalcidice, and in a few isolated settlements'. The British archaeologist and ethnologist, Sir Arthur Evans similarly noted in 1903 that 'except for a narrow fringe to the south and some sporadic centres of no real magnitude in the interior of the province, the Greek element had no real hold in Macedonia'. V. Bozhinov, and L. Panayotov, Editors, *Macedonia Documents and Material*, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, 1978, pp. 540–541.

<sup>49</sup> G. M. Terry, op. cit. p. 11.

<sup>50</sup> C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 240.

Macedonia is made up of Vlahs' (*Grički element y Makedoniji sachinavajy Tsintsari*).<sup>51</sup> The Greek position in Macedonia was further strengthened by the role of the Constantinople Patriarchate and its special relationship with the Ottoman authorities that granted it privileges not bestowed upon any other Christian institution.

Greek statistics present the number of Greeks at around 650,000 people in Macedonia. It is clearly an exaggerated figure and is taken from Ottoman sources reflecting church adherence. European commentators of the period generally considered Greeks to number fewer than 250,000 people. In 1899 (German) K. Oestreich counted 200,000, and in the same year (Serbian) S. Gopcevic counted 201,140. In 1900 (Bulgarian) V. Kanchov counted 225,152 Greeks, while in 1903 (German) K. Peucker counted 240,000, and (Austrian) K. Gersin counted 228,702 in the same year.<sup>52</sup> The Greek element in Macedonia constituted no more than 10 per cent of the total population in Macedonia.

## **Turks and Albanians: The colonists**

### **Turks**

PRIOR TO THE Ottoman invasion of the Balkans in the fourteenth century Turks did not constitute an ethnic element in Macedonia. This soon transpired. Aiming to create political and social support in conquered Macedonia, the Ottoman authorities encouraged voluntary migration and later introduced systematic forced migration of Turkish and Turkic peoples from Asia Minor. Turkish settlements were formed throughout Macedonia, especially along important routes, in the valleys of navigable

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<sup>51</sup> I. Ivanich, *Makedonija i Makedonci* [Macedonia and the Macedonians], Vol II, Belgrade, 1908, p. 422.

<sup>52</sup> The International Carnegie Commission compiled population figures immediately after the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913 and recorded the Greek population as comprising 236,755 people, in the part of Macedonia that fell under Greek rule. This figure can be considered representative of the total Greek population in pre-1912 Ottoman Macedonia as the Greek minority was confined to the southern districts of the land. *Report of the Carnegie International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* Washington D.C., 1914.

rivers (particularly the Vardar and Struma) and on the coastal plains<sup>53</sup> on the eastern coastline around Kavala and the mouth of the Mesta river.<sup>54</sup> Turkish settlements were also found in the south of the Bitola Vilayet around the Karakamen Mountain Ranges (taking in parts of Djuma, Kozhani, Kajlar, Meglen)<sup>55</sup> and in the Chalcidice. From the eighteenth century onwards there was a decline in the Turkish population in Macedonia due to a low birth rate, depletion of the male population by years of military service, and heavy tolls from epidemics.<sup>56</sup> Turks were landlords, government officials in the civil service or the military, or employees of the state in areas such as the courts, post offices and taxation. Turkish villages were not unlike the typical Macedonian Christian village, and suffered from corruption and misgovernment as much as the Christians, although they were subject neither to massacres nor to wholesale plundering.<sup>57</sup> The Turks did not have any particular political aspirations in Macedonia. Their aim was simply to maintain rule over the country.

Estimates of Turkish population in Macedonia were often inflated because of the Turkish habit of classifying all Muslims collectively as Turks. Other Muslims included in this category were Circassians, Azeri, Yuruks, Macedonian Muslims and Albanians. During the late nineteenth century other Muslims arrived from Bosnia, Bulgaria, Thessaly and Serbia, States which had discarded Ottoman rule and reverted back to Christian authority. Estimates of Osmanli Turks in Macedonia ranged anywhere from 250,000 to 500,000. At the end of the nineteenth century the Turks were considered to constitute approximately a quarter of a million people in Macedonia. Three sets of statistics were produced in 1899, (Serb) S. Verkovich placed their figure at 240,264, (German) K. Oestreich placed them at 250,000 and (Serb) S. Gopcevic at 231,400. The most extreme view was given by the Turkish

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<sup>53</sup> M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski, G. Todorovski, editors, *A History of the Macedonian People*, Skopje, 1979, pp. 81–82.

<sup>54</sup> Following Greek rule in southern Macedonia the Mesta River was renamed by the Greek authorities as the Nestos River.

<sup>55</sup> The Greek government renamed Kajlar as Ptolemaida.

<sup>56</sup> G.M. Terry, op. cit. pp. 12–13.

<sup>57</sup> L. Villari, op. cit. p. 134.

authorities, for the 1904 Ottoman census recorded a population of 1,508,507 Turks in Macedonia. This figure is, however, refuted by all parties as grossly excessive. Commentators in the post-Ottoman era generally viewed the Turkish population as being between 250,000 and 300,000 before the Balkan Wars.<sup>58</sup>

Table 2.2: Estimates of Turkish Population in Macedonia, 1878–1913

Year	Commentator	Origin of Commentator	Number of Turks
1878	Sylogos	Greek organisation	349,000
1889	S. Verkovitch	Serb	240,264
1889	S. Gopchevich	Serb	231,400
1899	C. Nicolaides	Greek	576,600
1899	K. Oestreich	German	250,000
1900	V. Kanchov	Bulgarian	489,664
1903	K. Gersin	Austrian	499,204
1904	Delyanis	Greek	634,017
1908	I. Ivanic	Serb	400,624
1912	Y. Ivanoff	Bulgarian	548,225
1913	G. Giorgiev	Russian	455,000

<sup>58</sup> All the Christian Balkan States under Ottoman rule contained a significant Turkish population prior to their liberation (Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania). In each instance there was a notable Turkish departure from the respective States. Turkish departure was not always of a voluntary nature. Along with the liberation of these States, there is a corresponding history of forced deportation and murder of Turkish Muslims in the Balkans and other Ottoman territories in Central Asia and the Middle East. In the case of the Balkans the Greek revolution against the Ottomans in 1821 was particularly horrific. In March, Ottoman officials, particularly tax collectors, were the first to be murdered. The following month there was a general attack upon Turks in the Morea (southern Greece) and Turkish villagers were murdered as they were found by Greek guerrillas and villagers. In Kalamata and Kalavryta they were murdered after receiving promises of safety if they surrendered. Muslims were tortured to death in Vrachori, and Jews, perceived as infidels by the Greeks 'were killed as readily as were Muslims'. Inhabitants of whole Turkish towns were rounded up and marched out to slaughter. The Greek Church was not aside from the rampage and expressed its patriotism for the revolution with the cry by Archbishop Germanos being 'Peace to the Christians! Respect to the Consuls! Death to the Turks!' J. McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821–1922*, NJ, 1995, pp. 10–11.

Velika Spirova from Nered recalled that after 1913, when the Lerin region fell under Greek rule, Turks from the neighbouring exclusively Turkish village of Maala were instructed by the Greek authorities to leave within 24 hours, otherwise young and old alike would be slaughtered. The Turks took heed of the threat and the entire village immediately left, taking whatever small possessions they could with them. Macedonians from the neighbouring villages went to the village in the following days and found it totally deserted (Velika Spirova, born 1911 in Krpeshina village, Lerin region. Interview conducted on 19 January 2002 in Melbourne. Velika Spirova arrived in Australia in 1939 first settling in Newcastle with her husband Vasil Spirov, from the village Nered, Lerin region).

Although Macedonians failed to obtain liberation and establish their own state, the evidence reveals a far more moderate approach towards its Muslims. During the Kresna Rebellion of 1878 and the Ilinden Rebellion of 1903 when entire regions were liberated, there were no organised acts of revenge against Turkish villages.

## Albanians

CONSIDERED THE WILDEST and most 'primitive' people of all Europe, prior to Ottoman arrival Albanians were predominantly Orthodox Christians as well as Roman Catholics. They did not constitute an ethnic element in Macedonia and were located in their traditional Albanian lands. During the course of early Ottoman rule, over two-thirds converted to Islam,<sup>59</sup> 'not so much from fear as from the hope of gain'.<sup>60</sup> During the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Muslim Albanians moved eastward into Macedonia's fertile western districts. During the early eighteenth century groups of Albanian bandits, often acting in collaboration with Ottoman feudal lords, conducted raids along the western frontier, attacking towns and villages, and brought the area into a State of anarchy. As a result of these continued attacks, a section of the Macedonian population settled further into the interior of the country, whilst Albanians settled in their place.<sup>61</sup>

Albanian movement into Macedonia took on a colonising nature. When a new Albanian village was formed in amongst three or four surrounding Macedonian Christian villages, the Albanians exercised a semi-feudal terrorism. Christians were defenceless against Albanian intimidation. Conversion to Islam had guaranteed Albanians the right to carry weapons, whilst Christians were forbidden to possess arms.<sup>62</sup> Albanians enjoyed close relations with the Ottomans and the Sultan was considered their patron.<sup>63</sup> The Ottomans welcomed and encouraged Albanian population movement into Macedonia as it tended to enslave and weaken the

<sup>59</sup> E. E. Jacques, *The Albanians: An Ethnic History from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, McFarland and Co, 1995, p. 213. Jacques Stated that 70 per cent of Albanians had converted to the Muslim religion by the end of Ottoman rule in 1912.

<sup>60</sup> H. N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 240. In *Nicholas Biddle in Greece: The Journals and Letters of 1806*, Albanians are described as 'notoriously lax Muslims' and that conversion allowed them to 'profit from the privileges accorded the conquering religion'. R.A. McNeal, editor, Pennsylvania State University, 1993, p. 21.

<sup>61</sup> M. Apostolski, D.Zografski, A. Stoyanovski, G. Todorovski, editors, op. cit. p. 100 and the ethnographer, N. Limanoski, *Izłamskata Religija i Izłamižiranite Makedonci*, [The Islamic religion and the Islamicised Macedonians], Skopje, 1989, p. 73. N. Limanoski is a renowned historian and ethnographer of the Islamicised Macedonian Muslim population.

<sup>62</sup> H. Vivian, *The Servian Tragedy: With Some Impressions of Macedonia*, London, 1904, p. 281.

<sup>63</sup> W. Miller, *The Ottoman Empire and its Successors, 1801–1927*, London, 1927, p. 445.

Christian subjects and helped to consolidate their rule, and went as far as strategically planting Albanian villages in the far eastern districts of Macedonia near the Bulgarian border.<sup>64</sup> Largely confined to sections of the north-western frontier of the Vilayet of Bitola, Albanian villages were predominantly situated along mountain ranges. The greatest concentration was found in the northern parts of the Vilayet of Skopje, in Kosovo.<sup>65</sup> Albanians had no political aspirations in Macedonia; they sought to maintain their autonomy and 'their vested right to plunder their neighbours'.<sup>66</sup> The Ottomans used Albanians as a tool to freely persecute the Christian population for which they received 'practical autonomy in exchange for fidelity to the Sultan'.<sup>67</sup>

Statistics published by the Greek Syligos in 1878, the Greek historian and commentator C. Nicolaides in 1899, and by the Greek politician Delyanis in 1904, fail to separately categorise Albanians as inhabiting Macedonia. This is probably due to the strategic Greek view of the northern Macedonian boundary being in line with Greek territorial designs, instead of the commonly accepted northern limits of Macedonia. Alternatively it may also be connected to a tendency to lump all Muslims as Turks. In 1889 the Serb, S. Gopchevich estimated 165,000 Albanians in Macedonia, whilst the Bulgarians V. Kanchov (1900) and Y. Ivanoff (1912) declared Albanians as constituting 124,211 and 194,195 people respectively. The highest estimate was advocated in 1900, by the Albanian, George Verdene, at two and a half million.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. pp. 90-91.

<sup>65</sup> Albanians colonised Kosovo in a similar violent manner as occurred in Macedonia.

<sup>66</sup> L. Villari, op. cit. pp. 159-160. There was no sense of national unity between Albanians in Albania and adjoining non-Albanian territories inhabited by Albanians. Organised on a clan basis, they formed two tribal groups, the Tosks in Southern Albania and the Gëgs in the north.

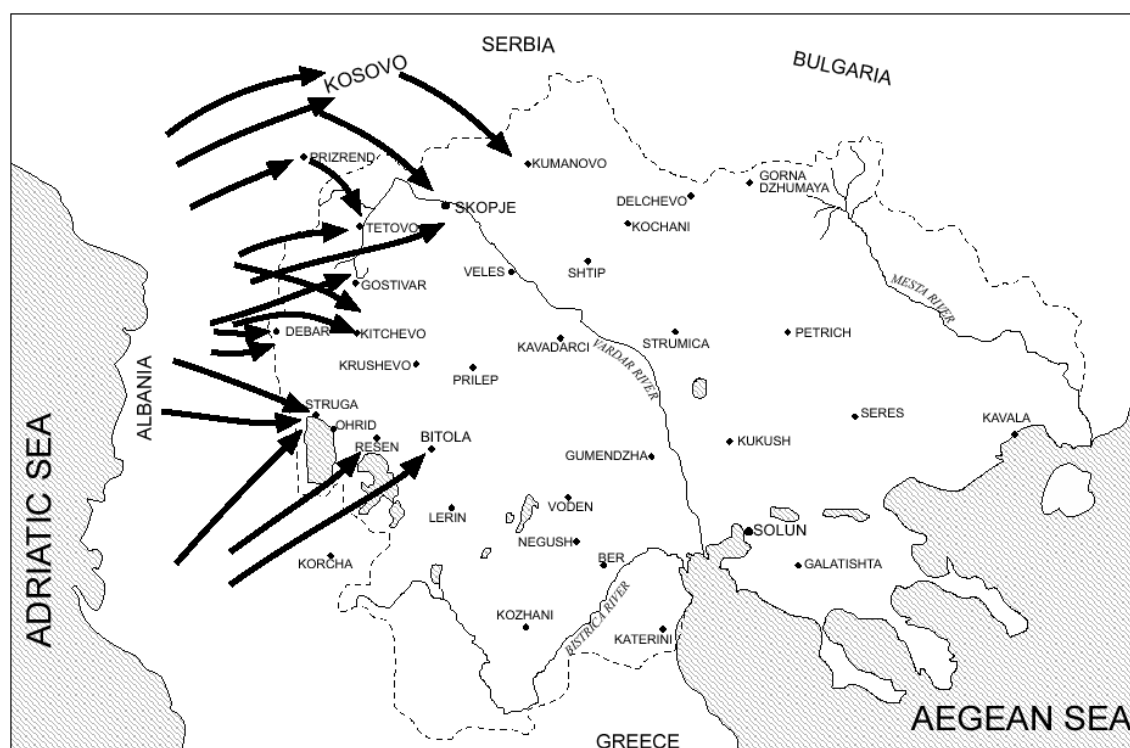
<sup>67</sup> Ibid, pp. 159-160.

<sup>68</sup> G.M. Terry, op. cit. p. 8, and L. Mojsov, *Okolu Prashanjeto na Makedonskoto Nacionalno Malcinstvo vo Grcija*, [The Question of the Macedonian National Minority in Greece], Skopje, 1954, p. 171. According to Mojsov, Verdene claimed 2,600,000 Albanians. Verdene claims a total population of 4,635,000 inhabitants in Macedonia. He described Macedonia as constituting 800,000 Macedonians, 500,000 Greeks, 900,000 Turks, 520,000 Vlachs, 95,000 Jews and 20,000 Gypsies. An historian better known in the former Yugoslavia as a prominent political figure, L. Mojsov served as the Yugoslav Ambassador to the United Nations for an extended period.

Table 2.3: Estimates of Albanian Population in Macedonia, 1877–1912

Year of data	Commentator	Origin of Commentator	Number of Albanians
1877	V. Teploff	Russian	12,055
1889	S. Gopchevich	Serbian	165,620
1889	S. Verkovitch	Serbian	78,790
1900	V. Kanchov	Bulgarian	124,211
1900	G. Verdene	Albanian	2,500,000
1906	R. Von Mach	German	6,036
1912	Y. Ivanoff	Bulgarian	194,195

Figure 2.2: Albanian movement into Macedonia, 1700–1900



## Gypsies and Jews: The uncontested

### Gypsies

GYPSIES FORMED THE smallest minority in Macedonia at the end of Ottoman rule. The majority of gypsies were Muslim in religion. They stood apart from the other minorities in Macedonia and harboured no political aspirations.<sup>69</sup> Ottoman law refused them residence in cities and towns, making them the only Muslim people not sharing Ottoman privileges. Living on the fringes of urban towns, they generally lived in poverty, and engaged in work as pedlars, blacksmiths, horse traders and grooms. They appear to have been tolerated by all, and even though they were Muslim in religion the Ottomans did not display any great confidence in them as allies. They believed that if they were to cross over the borders to Serbia or Bulgaria they were certain to embrace Christianity, however, in the case of conflict with the Christian Macedonians, they would serve 'on the side of the dominant race, and in a struggle they would doubtless join the Mohamedan mob of the towns'.<sup>70</sup>

Although all commentators agree that the Gypsy population constituted the smallest minority, estimates for the number of Gypsies range between 8,000 and 43,000. In 1889 the Serbs S. Verkovich and S. Gopchevich claimed 10,588 and 28,730 Gypsies respectively. In 1904 (Greek) Delyanis counted 8,911 Gypsies, whilst in 1913 (Romanian) N. Constantine and (Bulgarian) Y. Ivanoff claimed 25,000 and 43,370 Gypsies respectively.

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<sup>69</sup> The historian, R. Ristelhueber, *A History of the Balkan Peoples*, New York, 1971 (originally published 1950), p. 174.

<sup>70</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 81

Table 2.4: Estimates of Gypsy Population in Macedonia, 1889–1913

Year of Data	Commentator	Origin of Commentator	Number of Gypsies
1889	S. Gopchevitch	Serb	28,730
1889	S. Verkovitch	Serb	10,558
1899	C. Nicolaides	Greek	-----
1900	V. Kanchov	Bulgarian	54,557
1904	Delyanis	Greek	8,911
1906	Von Mach	German	8,550
1912	J. Ivanoff	Bulgarian	43,370
1913	N. Constantine	Romanian	25,000

## Jews

From a commercial perspective the Jews of Macedonia were an important minority, with the largest concentration found in Macedonia's commercial centre and seaport Solun. All writers agree that Jews formed the largest percentage of Solun's population throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>71</sup> Jews numbered approximately 80,000 to 90,000 people in Macedonia at the turn of the century with approximately 70,000 in Solun.<sup>72</sup> Their dominance in the city was unrivalled, and 'it is not too much to say that they dominate the city socially, politically and commercially'.<sup>73</sup> In addition to Solun, Jewish communities were found in Bitola, Skopje and Kostur, and others were scattered amongst Macedonia's larger towns in smaller numbers. They inhabited urban centres and were not known to form village communities in the countryside.

<sup>71</sup> After visiting Solun in 1704, the traveller Paul Lucas Stated that the Jews numbered about 30,000 people, and the Christians 10,000. Other travellers and authors recorded that between 1720 and 1730 Solun had between 25,000 and 30,000 Jewish inhabitants. The traveller, Aba Bellay noted in 1722 that Solun had 65-70,000 inhabitants, of whom 30,000-35,000 were Turks, 8,000 Christians and 26,000-27,000 Jews. Henry Austen Layard recorded that there were about 25,000 Jews in Solun in 1830 and that they were numerically superior to the Muslim and Christian populations. In 1867, the French traveller, Cherveau, placed Solun's total population at 71,000, with 20,000 Muslims, 5,000 Christians and 45,000 Jews. A. Matkovski, *A History of the Jews in Macedonia*, Skopje, 1982, pp. 43-44.

<sup>72</sup> The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* claims 80,000 Jews in Solun in the year 1900, whilst statistics just prior to the Balkan Wars of 1912 give Solun's Jewish population at 75,000. Ibid. A. Matkovski, p. 45. The Russian commentator A.V. Amphiteatrov, claimed in 1901 that three quarters of Solun's population was Jewish (of a total population of 120,000, that Jews consisted of 90,000 people). A. V. Amphitiatrov, op. cit. pp. 69-70.

<sup>73</sup> H. Vivian, *The Serbian Tragedy: With Some Impressions of Macedonia*, London, 1904, p. 269.

Although present in Macedonia from the pre-Ottoman period,<sup>74</sup> the greatest influx occurred in 1492 when Ferdinand and Isabella expelled them from Spain. Late nineteenth century Jews were predominantly their descendants and notably their language was a corrupt form of Spanish.

Of no political significance, they stood aside from revolutionary activities and were generally characterised by a Turkophile orientation.<sup>75</sup> The Ottoman Turkish occupation of the Balkan Peninsula presented Jews with new opportunities, most notably in the economic sphere. With the support of *Firmans* issued by the Sultan,<sup>76</sup> Jewish communities were granted autonomous self-administration, with various privileges including the right to purchase real estate, to build synagogues and to conduct trade throughout the Ottoman Empire.<sup>77</sup> Conditions for the Jews were positive and they enjoyed freedoms on a higher scale than their Christian neighbours. Evidence of favourable conditions for Jews in Macedonia and Ottoman Europe in general comes from a fifteenth century letter from the Macedonian Jew, Isaac Jarfati, sent to German and Hungarian Jews advising them of the favourable conditions in the Ottoman Empire, and encouraging them to emigrate to the Balkans.<sup>78</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century Jews were the first in Macedonia to establish industrial companies. They operated businesses such as silk vending, steam mills, breweries, cotton producers, and tile, thread and soap factories. Certain Jewish families had attained enormous wealth and were close to the Ottoman authorities. In 1858 when Sultan Abdul Mejid travelled to Solun, the rich Jews of the city offered him and his companions their private homes to reside in. Mehmed Ali Pasha, the Admiral of the Navy, stayed in the Altini home while the Minister of the Army stayed

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<sup>74</sup> A. Assa, *Makedonija i Evrejskiot Narod* [Macedonia and the Jewish people], Skopje, 1992, p.36, (originally published in 1972, Jerusalem). Assa claims that Jews have inhabited Macedonia and the Balkan Peninsula since the sixth century BC.

<sup>75</sup> W. Miller, op. cit. p. 442.

<sup>76</sup> A firman is a written decree.

<sup>77</sup> A. Assa, op. cit. p. 39.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p. 40. Assa explains that the appeal did result in a new wave of immigration of German Jews from Nuremberg settling in Solun.

with Solomon Fernandez.<sup>79</sup> However not all Jews in Macedonia were wealthy businessmen and industrialists.<sup>80</sup>

Amongst the Jews there were also those who had embraced Islam: these were known as the Doumne minority. Constituting their own community, they did not enter into mixed marriages with other Muslims; instead they habitually married amongst themselves. Doumne Jews numbered approximately 20,000 people.<sup>81</sup>

Table 2.5: Location and Number of Jews in Macedonia, 1912–1913, According to Dr C. Mezan (Jewish view)

Macedonian City	Jewish Population
Drama	380
Shtip	500
Kavala	2,000
Ber	500
Kostur	1,600
Bitola	6,000
Nevrokop	110
Solun	75,000
Seres	2,000
Gorna Dzhumaya	50 - 100
Strumica	650
Skopje	1,700 - 2,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>90,840</b>

Source and notes: I. Mihailov, *Spomeni IV - Osvoboditelna Borba 1924–1934*, 1973, pp. 207–208. Mihailov stated that Dr Mezan conducted a study on the history of Jews in Macedonia and that the data was originally published in the journal *Makedonski Pregled* (Year 6, Books 1 and 2).<sup>82</sup>

<sup>79</sup> A. Matkovski, op. cit. p. 50.

<sup>80</sup> Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski (born 1893 in Bitola), interview conducted on 21 March 2000 in Bitola; Vasil Petrov (born 1911 in Bitola), interview conducted on 1 April 2000 in Bitola; Vera Tanevska (born 1924 in Bitola), interview conducted 24 March 2000 in Bitola; and, Konstantin Nicha (born 1919 in Bitola), interview conducted 30 March 2000.

<sup>81</sup> G.F. Abbott, *A Tale of a Tour in Macedonia*, London, 1903, p. 22. Abbott describes the Doumne minority as a sect, forming a link between the Turk and Jew. He adds that 'both Jews and Turks despise the Doumne as renegades, and dread them as rivals; for the Doumnes, in embracing the faith of the Ishmaelites, renounced nothing of the sharpness and aptitude for business which characterise the Israelite. On the contrary they have improved those qualities by an infusion of the self-respect which distinguishes the Mohamedan'.

<sup>82</sup> Dr Mezan outlines only two central Macedonian urban centres as containing Jewish communities (Shtip and Strumica). Similarly, Dr D. Galev's study into Serb terror in the south eastern regions in that part of

Table 2.6: Estimates of Jewish Population in Macedonia, 1889–1913

Year of data	Commentator	Origin of commentator	Number of Jews
1889	S. Gopchevich	Serb	64,645
1889	S. Verkovitch	Serb	1,612
1898	G. Weigand	German	9,000
1900	V. Kanchov	Bulgarian	67,840
1904	Delyanis	Greek	53,147
1908	I. Ivanich	Serb	60,000
1913	N. Constantine	Romanian	65,600

## 2.2 Conflicts around population data

### Territorial boundaries

EXISTING AS A distinct geographical entity through the ages, the ethno-geographic limits of the ancient Macedonian kingdom in the fifth century BC stretched from Lake Lychnida (Ohrid) in the west to the Strymon (Struma) River in the east.<sup>83</sup> Although modern Greeks like to think of the ancient Macedonians as Greek, there is ample evidence indicating they were a separate non-Greek people with their own language.<sup>84</sup>

During the reign of Phillip II and Alexander the Great (in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC) the expanding boundaries of Macedonia incorporated areas known in modern times

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Macedonia, which came under Serb rule following the 1912–1913 Balkan Wars (otherwise the central region of Macedonia), revealed a Jewish presence only in the towns of Shtip and Strumica. The towns of Gevgelija, Dojran, Kochani, Pehchevo, Negotino, Radovich, Veles and Kratovo had no Jewish populations. D. Galev, *Beliot Teror – Vo Jugoistochna Makedonija 1910-1941* [White Terror – In South Eastern Macedonia 1910-1941], Skopje, 1991. I. Mihailov cites the following figures from Dr Mezan in relation to the situation of the Macedonian Jews in partitioned Macedonia after the Balkan Wars: of a total 90,840, 81,480 came under Greek rule, 9,150 came under Serbian rule and 210 came under Bulgarian rule. I. Mihailov, *Spomeni IV, Osvoboditelna Borba 1924–1934* [Memoirs IV, The Liberation Struggle 1924–1934], IND, 1973, pp. 207–208.

<sup>83</sup> The historian, J. Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation*, London, 1997, p. 23.

<sup>84</sup> A particularly interesting account of the ancient Macedonian kingdom, and relations between Macedonia and the Greek city states is provided by the professor of ancient history E.N. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus - The Emergence of Macedonia*, Princeton University Press, 1990.

as Albania, Thrace, Kosovo, and more.<sup>85</sup> Following the demise of the Macedonian Empire, Rome acquired the status of the new-world ruler and Macedonia became a Roman province in 168 BC. During Roman rule Macedonia appeared on the maps of Claudius Ptolemy (87–150 AD) the Alexandrian astronomer and geographer, and Castorius designated Macedonia on his map in 375 AD. Roman rule marks the conclusion of Macedonian independence for almost two thousand years, apart from short periods when Macedonia re-emerged on the political map as an independent State during the middle ages.

The name Macedonia was obscured for lengthy periods, which also saw successive invasions and migrations of peoples which left no Balkan land untouched. When Ottoman rule extended into the Balkans Macedonia re-emerged on cartographic maps. Macedonia appeared on the maps of European Turkey by Gastaldi (Venice-1560), Mercator's map entitled 'Macedonia, Epirus and Achaia' (Duisberg-1589), Cantelli's map 'La Macedonia' (Roma-1689) and the map by Senex (Paris-1707). Successive early nineteenth-century maps delineated the borders of Macedonia as well as the neighbouring Balkan lands in European Turkey. Interestingly, the borders of the respective lands generally conflicted on the various maps and differ to post-1878 State boundaries.

Following the Congress of Berlin in 1878, the expansionist interests of the Balkan States politically coloured their views of State boundaries in the remaining unliberated European Ottoman possessions. Macedonia became the central point of contention by Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia and each respective State was sponsored by patrons amongst the European powers who sought their own geo-strategic objectives at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. Each of the Balkan States sought to substantiate their claims upon Macedonia by compiling 'evidence' of their particular 'race' forming the majority population. Statistical data relating to

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<sup>85</sup> D.M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror - The Macedonian Liberation Movements 1893–1903*, London, 1988, op. cit. p. 12.

Macedonia has to be viewed with caution, particularly that which originates from Macedonia's neighbouring Balkan States. During the late nineteenth century (and into the early twentieth century), under the guise of academic studies, data was compiled in support of theories that Macedonia was an integral part of Greece, Bulgaria or Serbia. Linguists, academics and census takers went to Macedonia to write about 'their people' and 'their land'. National myths were being created in support of expansionist policies.

Literature was mass-produced and promoted in Europe, attempting to sway public opinion, and to present Serb, Greek and Bulgarian interests in Macedonia to their patrons among the European powers. Political manipulation was presented as academic studies. Statistical data, together with the production of ethnographic maps, were compiled with the intention of supporting their political objectives in Macedonia. Findings (and theories) were contradictory with one another and serve to demonstrate the politically hostile environment in which Macedonians found themselves. Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria had all thrown off the yoke of Ottoman rule and were now engaged in a competition over who would win Macedonia as their own.

The developing dispute over Macedonia's ethnic composition has its basis in the crude data compiled on territorial aspirations.

The statistical data available concerning turn of the century Macedonia serves graphically to underscore the fact that such data are extremely unreliable. Most figures are based upon the estimates of politically motivated parties who used them as an exercise for numerical manipulation for political ends.<sup>86</sup>

Statistical data and ethnographic maps were also compiled by other Europeans of non-Balkan nationality who were commissioned by the Balkan States and whose findings happened to support the theories of the government they were employed

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

by.<sup>87</sup> Subsequently, the multitude of conflicting data served to create a perception of Macedonia in Europe as a 'disputed territory', which came to be known as the 'Macedonian Question'. Perceived as a great ethnic mix, a new culinary term emerged in France, 'Macedoine', denoting fruit salad.<sup>88</sup>

Intense competition developed between the rivals for the 'hearts and souls' of the Macedonian people, that is, for their adherence to a particular church organisation and school. Having invoked various scientific methods to support their claims, 'it became a question of who could assemble the most bishops, churches, schools, teachers and students'.<sup>89</sup> By the beginning of the twentieth century a new violent phase emerged in the competition for 'statistical supremacy'. As we have seen, each of the Balkan States (Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria) sent armed bands to threaten and coerce Macedonians in declaring themselves as belonging to a particular nationality. French diplomatic correspondence of 1905, although specifically reporting on the activities of a Greek armed band in Southern Macedonia, may be considered representative of the general behaviour and aims of foreign paramilitary bands.

The Greek committees, for their part, have doubled their boldness. A few days ago they delivered me a letter addressed to the inhabitants of the villages in the surroundings of Salonika by some leader of a Greek band, who, on the threat of death, ordered them to subordinate themselves to the Patriarchate and declare themselves as Greeks in the census lists... The peaceful population of Macedonia is thus mercilessly exposed to the outlawed bands of professionals, headed by political agitators who have only one aim – the increase in disturbances and insecurity in order to bring about the intervention of Europe and the dismembering of the country in conformity with their national programmes.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> According to L. Danforth, 'the inconsistencies and contradictions in this material can be contributed to the fact that most of the early ethnographers of Macedonia were in the service of one nationalist camp or another'. *The Macedonian Conflict*, Princeton University Press, 1995, p. 57.

<sup>88</sup> It is no wonder that even reputable scholars made mistakes compiling Macedonian population data.

<sup>89</sup> R. Ristelhueber, *A History of the Balkan Peoples*, New York, 1971 (1950), p. 175.

<sup>90</sup> The extract is from a diplomatic report dated 10 August 1905 by Auguste Boppe, charge d'affaires of France in Constantinople, addressed to Maurice Rouvier, President of the Ministerial Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs. From H. Andonov-Poljanski, editor, *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, op. cit. p.524.

Although conflicting definitions of the territorial boundaries of Macedonia were perceived by rival parties, Macedonia is generally defined by the territory bounded, in the north, by the hills north of Skopje and by the Shar Mountains; in the east, by the Rila and Rhodope Mountains; in the south, by the Aegean coast around Salonika, by Mount Olympus, and by the Pindus Mountains; and in the west, by lakes Prespa and Ohrid. Its total area is about 67,000 square kilometres.<sup>91</sup> Here the term ‘generally accepted limits of Macedonia’ refers to this definition.<sup>92</sup>

## 2.3 Population statistics

LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY MACEDONIAN population statistics can be classified within four categories: Ottoman Turkish population data; population statistics advocated by Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria; population data compiled by non-Balkan Europeans supporting views of the respective Balkan States; and population data recognising Macedonian identity.

### Ottoman Turkish population data

IN THE LATE nineteenth century, European Turkey (that part of the Ottoman Empire located in Europe) was officially divided into six administrative units known as vilayets – Skutari, Janina, Skopje, Bitola, Solun, and Adrianople.<sup>93</sup> Geographical Macedonia was made up of the vilayets of Bitola, Solun and approximately one third of the Skopje vilayet (specifically the Skopje sandjak).<sup>94</sup> Attempting to wipe out any form of nationalism, the Ottomans went as far as avoiding the use of the term

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<sup>91</sup> E. Barker, *Macedonia, Its Place in Balkan Power Politics*, London, 1950, p. 9.

<sup>92</sup> Refer to Figure 1.1 for a map of the generally accepted limits of Macedonia.

<sup>93</sup> The Skopje vilayet was also known as the ‘Uskub’ vilayet (Uskub being the Turkish name for Skopje). Earlier in the nineteenth century, the extreme northern limit of Macedonia and the region of Skopje fell within the administrative unit of the Kosovo vilayet, and late in the nineteenth century some commentators continued to refer to these areas as a part of the Kosovo vilayet. The Bitola vilayet was also commonly known as the ‘Manastir’ vilayet (Manastir being the popular name for Bitola during the Ottoman period), the Solun vilayet as the ‘Salonika’ vilayet and Adrianople as ‘Edirne’ vilayet.

<sup>94</sup> A sandjak is an Ottoman term denoting a territorial administrative unit.

Macedonia. In a 1903 communiqué from the Grand Vizier's Office, it was attributed to 'the Sultan's command that in all addresses to and announcements in connection with the Rumeli vilayets (the vilayets of Skopje, Bitola and Solun) from henceforth the local names are to be used and under no circumstances the name Macedonia'.<sup>95</sup> However, in everyday language, 'other and older geographical designations are frequently used' with the names Macedonia, Albania, Old Serbia, Epirus and Thrace persisting.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> From a telegram Dated 7 April 1903. G. Stardelov, C. Grozdanov and B. Ristovski, editors *Macedonia and its Relations with Greece*, Council for Research into South Eastern Europe, Skopje, 1993, p. 22.

It was even urged that specific changes be made in the New Testament circulated in Macedonia. The problematic part related to The Acts of the Apostles 16:9 which reads 'During the night a vision appeared to Paul, a Macedonian man who stood and pleaded with him *cross over into Macedonia and help us*'. It was suggested that this be changed to 'Come over into the three provinces of Salonika, Monastir and Kosovo'. *A Handbook of Macedonia and Surrounding Territories*, Compiled by the Geographical Section of the Naval Intelligence Division, Naval Staff, Admiralty, London, 1916, p. 70.

<sup>96</sup> C. Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*, London, 1900, p. 52. The fate of the Armenians during this period was similar to the Macedonians. At the end of the nineteenth century Armenia was also under Ottoman Turkish rule without recognised political boundaries but most numerous in the Vilayets of Erzerum, Van, Sivas, Harput, Bitlis, Diarbekir and part of the Vilayet of Aleppo. Armenians were also dominant in the Russian provinces of Kars and Erivan. The name Armenia was strictly forbidden in Turkey, and all maps marking the land as Armenistan were confiscated (Eliot, p. 383). It is interesting to note that the IMRO and the Armenian Revolutionary Organisation enjoyed a history of co-operation against the Ottomans in the 1890s and early 1900s (See MPO, *Armenia i Makedonia*, IN, 1964). According to an Austrian diplomatic report dated 15 July 1903, Boleslav Sherka, a Jew from Constantinople, was actively working on behalf of the IMRO and acting as a go-between with the Macedonian and Armenian liberation organisations. D. Zografski, editor. *Izveštaj od 1903-1904 godina na Avstriskite Pretstavnici vo Makedonija* [Report of 1903–1904 of the Austrian representatives in Macedonia], Skopje, 1955, p. 41.

Figure 2.3: European Turkey, 1900



Figure 2.4: The Macedonian vilayets, 1900



Official Ottoman censuses carried out before 1870 described the population of Macedonia within three exclusive categories – ‘the non-believing population, the Muslim population and the Jewish population’.<sup>97</sup> The Ottomans had no interest in the ethnic structure of the non-Muslim population, which they referred to as ‘*Raya*’. The population was classified exclusively on religious difference; similarly, Turks were

<sup>97</sup> G. Stardelov, C. Grozdanov and B. Ristovski, op. cit. p. 22, and Balkanicus, *The Aspirations of Bulgaria*, London, 1915, p. 225.

not distinguished from other Muslims.<sup>98</sup> According to religious affiliation, Turks, Albanians and Macedonian Muslims were classified together, and equally misleading was the structure of the Christian population.

This Ottoman failure to recognise distinct nationalities presents obvious problems. Prior to 1870, Christians, regardless of ethnicity, were generally viewed as Greeks due to the sole jurisdiction enjoyed by the Constantinople Patriarchate in Macedonia (1767–1870). As such, Ottoman population statistics from the 1844 census give a total of 15,260,000 inhabitants of European Turkey, and, conforming to religious Orthodox classification, ‘Greeks’ numbered 10,000,000 people. (However, the Turkish historian Karpas states that according to ethnic origin Greeks accounted for only 10 per cent of the Orthodox population.<sup>99</sup>) Although Turkish data were unreliable due to the compilation of population data on religious affiliations, another concern is related to actual population figures. Caution should be taken when viewing Ottoman figures due to the methods employed in data collection. Turkish official registers count men only, as the registers served only for military service and tax assessment purposes, and there was no mention of women and children. Furthermore, official surveys were not particularly accurate, were not uniform from one place to another, and they were not always complete.<sup>100</sup>

In 1878 the Constantinople newspaper *Courrier D'Orient* published population data for the vilayets of Bitola, Solun and Adrianople based on the register of the *bedel-*

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, Balkanicus, pp. 225–226.

<sup>99</sup> K. Karpas, *Ottoman Population 1830–1914*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, p. 116. Karpas cites these figures from A. Ubicini, whose statistics are compiled from the Ottoman census of 1844. According to Karpas, Ubicini's data first appeared in his 1856 publication ‘Letters on Turkey’ (in French) and were later reprinted in English with some statistical modifications. Karpas presumes that the data in the English version is more accurate and that the original census of 1844 cannot be found. The English commentator and historian W.S. Cooke, however, considered that the official Ottoman population estimates of 1844 and 1856 ‘are generally regarded as having little claim to accuracy’. W.S. Cooke, *The Ottoman Empire and its Tributary States*, London, 1876, p. 1.

<sup>100</sup> C. Anastasoff, *The Bulgarians*, New York, 1977, p. 130; H.R. Wilkinson, op. cit. p. 73; M. Pandevski, op. cit. p. 49.

*i askeriye* tax of 1873, only counting male heads of households.<sup>101</sup> Significantly, the published data recognised for the first time separate categories of ethnicity, including the Macedonian Muslim group under the label ‘Pomak’. In the vilayet of Bitola 50,356 homes were counted with 215,748 males, an average of 4.2 males per household, whilst in the vilayet of Solun 107,403 homes were counted with a total male population of 383,709, an average of 3.5 males per household.

Table 2.7: Male Population of Bitola and Solun Vilayets according to Ottoman Register of *Bedel-i Askeriye* Tax of 1873

	<b>Vilayet Bitola (50,356 Homes)</b>	<b>Vilayet Solun (107,403 Homes)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Albanians	3,175		3,175
Bulgarians	152,534	216,895	369,429
Greeks	700	24,666	25,366
Gypsies		1,670	1,670
Jews	3,250	40,300	43,550
Muslims	40,236	68,775	109,011
Others		3,760	3,760
Pomaks		22,573	22,573
Vlahs	15,853	5,070	20,923
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>215,748</b>	<b>383,709</b>	<b>599,457</b>

Source and notes: *Ethnographie des Vilayets D'Adrianople, De Monastir et de Salonique*, reprinted in its original French form (and Bulgarian) in *Makedonia i Odrinsko – Statistika na naselinieto ot 1873*, J. Jordanov, editor, Makedonski Nauchen Institut, Sofia, 1995.<sup>102</sup>

Prior to 1878 there was no separate Skopje vilayet. Skopje sandjak made up a part of the Bitola vilayet and a number of Albanians are included in the figure of 5,070 Vlahs in the Solun Vilayet (ibid, pp. 198–199).

Ottoman population data for 1877–1878 produced differing results to that derived from the *bedel-i askeriye* tax of 1873. In the Solun vilayet in 1877–1878, the

<sup>101</sup> The publication was entitled *Ethnographie des vilayets D'Adrianople, De Monastir et de Salonique* and largely a response to the French historian and ethnographer A. Sinve, and his pro-Greek views of European Turkey, expressed in the publication *'The Greeks in the Ottoman Empire, Statistical and Ethnographic Research'* (original in French).

<sup>102</sup> In the preface of the reprint, Jordanov presents the publication as proof that Bulgarians were the dominant group in Macedonia, and he attacks those who falsify history and declare that Macedonia is Southern Serbia. Reminiscent of late nineteenth-century Balkan rivalry, he highlights that there were neither Serbs nor Macedonians mentioned as inhabiting Macedonia (pp. 9–11).

male population slightly increased to 393,029, with far fewer homes recorded. The 27,503 homes registered elevates the average number of people per household from 3.5 to 14.52. Discrepancies in the Bitola vilayet between the 1873 and 1877–1878 data provide for a massive increase from 50,356 homes recorded in 1873 to 176,516 homes five years later, with an increased population from 215,748 to 363,789. The overall average reduced from 4.2 to 2.0.<sup>103</sup>

A similar problem is encountered with 1881 Ottoman census data. In 1887, the author, De Laveleye (*The Balkan Peninsula*) using Ottoman sources, published the findings of the 1881 Census that gave the total Macedonian population as numbering 1,863,382 inhabitants. In 1887 a detailed breakdown of the 1881 census was issued.<sup>104</sup> A new classification was included under the label 'Slav', whilst previous categories appearing in the 1873 data, such as Vlah, Gypsy, Albanian and Pomak were omitted. According to Karpat, the Ottoman census of 1881 produced contrasting results. Although the overall population figure is similar, population designations according to 'nationality' contain significant variations.

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<sup>103</sup> According to the Karpat data, the Bitola Vilayet was made up of four sandjaks at the time – Bitola, Prizren, Skopje and Debar. Data from the Prizren sandjak have not been included; however, Karpat stated that the Prizren sandjak contained a population of 175,365 people in 74,135 homes, an average of 2.36 people. K. Karpat, op. cit. p. 118.

<sup>104</sup> E. De Laveleye, *The Balkan Peninsula*, 1887, p. 290, as cited in J. Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation*, London, 1997, p. 98 and M. Radin, *IMRO and the Macedonian Question*, Kultura, Skopje, 1993, p. 20.

Table 2.8: Conflicting Ottoman 1881 Census Results, according to De Laveleye (1887) and Karpát (1985) (using official Ottoman Turkish records)

<b>1881 Ottoman Census Results</b>			
<b>According to De Laveleye 1887</b>		<b>According to Karpát 1985</b>	
<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Population</b>
Greeks	57,480	Greeks	512,251
Jews	40,000	Jews	43,512
Muslims	463,839	Muslims	789,296
Others	50,678	Others	3,006
Slavs	1,252,385	Bulgarians	576,424
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,863,382</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,926,554</b>

Source and notes: E. De Laveleye, *The Balkan Peninsula*, 1887, p. 290 as cited in J. Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation*, 1997, p. 98 and M. Radin, *IMRO and the Macedonian Question*, Skopje, 1993, p. 20. K. Karpát, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914*, 1985, pp. 134–141.

‘Others’ according to Karpát consist of 230 Armenians, 2,312 Catholics, 418 Protestants and 46 Latins. Not included in this figure are 2,085 foreign citizens.

A further Ottoman census carried out in 1901 produced results conflicting with the earlier one in 1881. The number of Greeks vastly increased at a time when the Greek Patriarchate had been losing adherents to the Exarchate. There were no Gypsies, Jews or Vlachs mentioned in the Skopje vilayet, yet each were present to some degree. Albanians were given a separate category of their own, whilst Vlachs and Gypsies also appeared in their own right.

Table 2.9: Ottoman 1901 Population Data

Nationality	Solun and Bitola vilayets	Skopje Vilayet	Totals
Slavs	566,000	587,000	1,153,000
Turks	363,000	183,000	546,000
Greeks	260,000		260,000
Vlahs	60,000		60,000
Jews	60,000		60,000
Albanians	9,000	169,000	178,000
Gypsies	25,000		25,000
Others	5,000	46,000	51,000
Total:	1,348,000	985,000	2,333,000

Source: M. Radin, *IMRO and the Macedonian Question*, op. cit. pp. 20-23.

A later Turkish census of 1904, commonly referred to as the Hilmi Pasha census, contains significant discrepancies to the one conducted in 1901.<sup>105</sup> The most notable variation is the dramatic increase to the Muslim element, from 724,000 (Turks and Albanians) to 1,508,507 'Muslims'.<sup>106</sup> The figure of one and a half million Muslims appears to be grossly over-exaggerated: even allowing for Turkish and Muslim colonisers entering Macedonia towards the end of the nineteenth century, there is no basis for such a substantial increase. The large Muslim element appearing on the census results is likely to be attributed to political manoeuvring and the anticipation by the Ottomans that the Empire was nearing its demise in Europe.<sup>107</sup> A similar view was held by the Macedonian contemporary and intellectual Pavel Shatev, who considered that the sole purpose of the census was to present the majority of the

<sup>105</sup> The findings of the 1904 Census were published as Official Turkish Statistics in the Solun newspaper *ASR*, No 2, January, 1905, as cited from C. Anastasoff, op. cit. Appendix VIII p. 324. Hilmi Pasha was the Inspector General of the Vilayets of Roumelia.

<sup>106</sup> The overwhelming majority of Albanians in Macedonia were Muslim. Undoubtedly Macedonian Muslims were included as Turks in the 1901 census and as Muslims in the 1904 census.

<sup>107</sup> The German commentator, R. Von Mach, stated that 'the central authorities have discovered that it would not be in the interest of Turkey to publish a scientifically accurate and clear statement of the ethnographical and religious grouping of the Balkan Peninsula'. *The Bulgarian Exarchate: Its History and the Extent of its Authority in Turkey*, London, 1907, p. 45. Karpas disagrees, and claims that the political reason for the new census was to put an end to the rivalry between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria. Karpas adds that the census only took three months to complete instead of taking several years, as occurred with the previous census. K. Karpas, op. cit. p. 35.

Macedonian population as Turkish Muslim.<sup>108</sup> Prior to the census taking place, as early as mid 1903 a report by Hilmi Pasha to the Grand Vizirate indicated that ‘the Muslim population is greater than the Christian’.<sup>109</sup>

A further indication of the politicisation of the census concerns the number of Christian inhabitants and the continuing connection between Ottoman relationships with the Balkan States and the policy of favouring one State against another at different intervals. At the turn of the century, Ottoman policy was based on a pro-Greek position. The findings of the population census were orchestrated to the detriment of the Bulgarian position. As Hilmi Pasha went on to say, ‘it is in the interest of the country to increase the number of supporters of the Patriarchate because in this way the Bulgarians will remain in the minority’.<sup>110</sup> Christian classification in the census was based upon adherence to the Patriarchate and Exarchate churches, with Bulgarians listed separately as Exarchate Bulgarians and Patriarchate Bulgarians. This method of delineating the ethnic character of the population favoured the Greeks, who wasted no time claiming all Patriarchists as Greek in their claims on Macedonia. The Bulgarians for their part disregarded religious adherence as a factor and claimed all Bulgarians, regardless of religious jurisdiction as Bulgarian. As with most statistics on Macedonia, the Hilmi Pasha statistics were viewed with some scepticism.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>108</sup> P. Shatev, *V Makedonia Pod Robstvo* [In Macedonia under bondage], Sofia, 1968 (1934), pp. 456–466.

<sup>109</sup> From a report concerning the population census, dated 14 May 1903, to the Great Vizirate from the Inspector General of the Vilayets of Roumelia. V. Bozhinov and L. Panayotov, editors, *Macedonia: Documents and Material*, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, 1978, p. 491.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p. 491. Following the Hilmi Pasha census the Ottoman authorities continued to maintain a strategy of exaggerating Muslim population figures. According to a diplomatic report dated 18 September 1905 (Report Number 153), by B. Para (the Austrian Consul in Skopje), the Ottoman government aimed at demonstrating that the Muslim population constituted the majority element. D. Zografski, editor, *Avstriski Dokumenti 1905–1906* [Austrian Documents 1905–1906], Vol I, Skopje, 1977, pp. 87–89.

<sup>111</sup> Stavrianos considers they are only meaningful for religious affiliation. L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, New York, 1966, p. 517. Whether in fact they are of any use even for religious affiliation is questionable. As explained, the Ottoman State undertook active measures to prevent people leaving the Patriarchate to join the Exarchate. Furthermore, in a later Hilmi Pasha report dated 6 July 1904 to the sublime Porte, Hilmi Pasha clearly stated, ‘it is not in the interests of the State to increase the number of Bulgarians’. V. Bozhinov and L. Panayotov, editors, op. cit. p. 545. Even the pro-Greek historian, D. Dakin, harbours concerns regarding the validity of the figures. *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897–1913*, Institute of Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki, 1966, p. 20.

A further concern regarding the validity of Ottoman data, but not related to political considerations, involves the total number of villages in the Macedonian vilayets registered in the Ottoman records. According to the *Salname* of 1318 (Official year book, for the year 1900), the Bitola vilayet contained 2,003 villages, Solun vilayet 1,860 villages and the Skopje vilayet 1060 villages.<sup>112</sup> The total figure came to 4,923 villages. This figure was far in excess of the actual number of villages within the generally accepted boundaries of Macedonia at the beginning of the twentieth century. In an examination of the *chiflik* land system in Macedonia in 1910, the commentator A. Razboinikov asserted that there were 2325 villages,<sup>113</sup> and my own estimates based on a World War One French military map of Macedonia (Scale 1:300,000) provide for approximately 2,000–2,500 villages.

Table 2.10: Ottoman 1904 (Hilmi Pasha) census

Bulgarian Exarchists	575,534
Bulgarian Patriarchists	320,962
Greek Patriarchists	307,000
Muslims	1,508,507
Serb Patriarchists	100,717
Vlahs Patriarchists	99,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,901,720</b>

Source and notes: D. Lithoxoou, *Meionotika zoetoemata kai ethnikoe syneidoesoe stoen Ellada*, [Minority issues and ethnic consciousness in Greece], Athens, 1991, p. 43. According to the Hilmi Pasha census, on a Vilayet basis the population was most numerous in the Bitola Vilayet with 1,105,592, followed by the Solun Vilayet with 1,025,899 and the Skopje Vilayet with 770,229. Ibid, p. 43.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Due to the Skopje sandjak constituting approximately one third of the vilayet, the author has calculated 1,060 villages in the Macedonian part of the sandjak. The total number of villages in the vilayet was 3,211. Figures are from K. Karpat, op. cit. p. 210.

<sup>113</sup> A. Razboinikov, *Chifligarstvo vo Makedonia i Odrinsko* [The *Chiflik* system in Macedonia and Adrianople], Solun, 1913, p. 35.

<sup>114</sup> Conflicting Hilmi Pasha statistics appear in the Greek nationalist publication *Macedonia and the Macedonian Question - A brief survey*, by the Society for Macedonian Studies, Thessaloniki, 1983, which claims 634,500 'Greeks' and 385,729 'Bulgarians'. It considers the figures 'reliable and objective'. p. 18.

## Population statistics advocated by Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece

### Serbia

SERB CLAIMS ON Macedonia were based upon the Serb empires of the Middle Ages and similarities of language and culture. However, throughout most of the nineteenth century Serbia harboured westerly designs towards the Adriatic Sea. Her aspirations were to be shattered as a result of a secret treaty with Austria in 1881, which effectively obliged Serbia to abandon her claims in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Novi Pazar. Serbia was completely cut out of those territories that had been the main targets for Serbian expansion and unification since the middle of the nineteenth century. The Congress of Berlin and the secret treaty of 1881 forced Serbia to turn elsewhere. 'The chief targets became "Old Serbia", that is, the region from Serbia's southern border to the Shar Mountains, and Macedonia to the South.'<sup>115</sup>

Serbian policy radically changed due to being forced to turn her attention to the Aegean as an outlet to the sea rather than the Adriatic. This immediately had an impact upon Serbia's relationship with Bulgaria, for their interests were to conflict in Macedonia. Austria's support for Serb penetration southwards fuelled the new Serb ambitions.<sup>116</sup> Article VII of the secret treaty stated: <sup>117</sup>

If, as a result of a combination of circumstances whose development is not to be foreseen at present, Serbia were in a position to make territorial acquisitions of her southern frontiers (with the exception of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar), Austria-Hungary will not oppose herself thereto, and will use her influence with the other powers for the purpose of winning them over to an attitude favourable to Serbia.

When union of the Bulgarian Principality and Eastern Rumelia was effected on 6 September 1885, King Milan of Serbia saw this as the restoration of San Stefano Bulgaria and, believing that Macedonia would be next, Serbia could never allow this

<sup>115</sup> M. B. Petrovitch, *A History of Modern Serbia 1804–1918*, Vol II, New York, 1976, p. 495.

<sup>116</sup> According to the historian F.W.L. Kovacs, the Habsburgs 'dreamt of Serbia as a springboard to Salonica'. F.W.L. Kovacs, *The Untamed Balkans*, London, 1942, p. 41. See also the historian, L.S. Stavrianos, *Balkan Federation - A History of the Movement toward Balkan Unity in Modern Times*, Connecticut, 1964, pp. 125–126.

<sup>117</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, *op. cit.* pp. 94–95.

to occur, therefore, 'it seemed good to him to weaken Bulgaria sufficiently to keep it from effecting its claims in Macedonia'.<sup>118</sup> Serbia moved by declaring war on Bulgaria on November 14, with King Milan marching at the head of his troops to the farewell cheers of 'King of Serbia and Macedonia', whilst the cry of the Serbian expansionists was 'to the Aegean!'.<sup>119</sup> Ironically, the fighting was over within two weeks, as the Serbs suffered an unexpected military defeat.<sup>120</sup>

After the Serbo-Bulgarian war of 1885, Serbia firmly fixed her position on Macedonia. 'Bulgaria's success had made Serbs realise, as never before, that Bulgaria was indeed the main obstacle to Serbia's expansion into Macedonia'.<sup>121</sup> Serbia proceeded to expand its propaganda in Macedonia systematically. M. Veselinovic and J. Dragashevich were amongst the first of the Serbian ethnographers to produce maps of Macedonia claiming that the Serb people constituted the dominant element in Macedonia. Previously it was considered that the territories of Old Serbia and Macedonia were populated by a Bulgarian majority; but now Veselinovich was instrumental in advancing the notion that 'the numbers of the Serbs in the population had previously been sadly underestimated ...' and the 'Bulgarians were actually Serbs'.<sup>122</sup>

The following year (1886) the St Sava Association was founded, aiming to establish Serbian schools in Macedonia. In 1887 the leading Serbian professor of Geography at the University of Belgrade, Vladimer Karich, published a textbook on Serbian geography which included an ethnographic map of Serbia and Macedonia.

<sup>118</sup> M.B. Petrovitch, op. cit. pp. 430–431.

<sup>119</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, op. cit. p. 96. Wilkinson stated that the 'cry of Serbian expansionists in 1885, was "to the Aegean!", whereas before that date it had been "to the Adriatic!"'.

<sup>120</sup> A decisive battle took place at Slivnitsa on 17 November 1885 when the Serbian troops suffered their heaviest losses. Ten days later, on 27 November, the Bulgarians had entered Serbia and taken Pirot. The road to Belgrade lay open, and it was only through the intervention of the Austrian representative Count Khevenhuller (who insisted on an immediate end to the war) that the Bulgars did not proceed to the Serbian capital.

<sup>121</sup> M.B. Petrovitch, op. cit. p. 433.

<sup>122</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, op. cit. p. 96. In the 1860s the Serb ethnographer, Stefan Verkovich had labelled the inhabitants of Macedonia as Bulgars. This position was to be criticised by nationalist Serbs later in the nineteenth century. Balkanicus accused Verkovich as being a 'notorious forger'. Balkanicus, op. cit. p. 214.

The Serbs were described as inhabiting the greater part of the country. The Serbian State also succeeded in obtaining approval from the Ottoman Empire, through the signing of a consular convention, for the opening of diplomatic consulates in Solun, Skopje (1887) and Bitola (1888).

The Austrian Serbian Treaty of 1881 was revisited in 1889. An additional article was incorporated into the Treaty, recognising the Serbian nation's right to Macedonia, which fostered further rivalry and animosity with Bulgaria:<sup>123</sup>

If the circumstances foreseen by Article VII of the Treaty of June 23, 1881 should chance to occur while this treaty remains in force and while Serbia has faithfully observed its stipulations, it is understood that Austria-Hungary will recognise, and support with other Powers, the recognition in favour of the Kingdom of Serbia of the territorial extension foreseen by Article VII above-mentioned, which extension may be carried out in the direction of the valley of the Vardar as far as circumstances will permit.

Following the prolongation of the Austrian-Serb Treaty in 1889, an ethnographic map was produced by Spiridon Gopchevich that was widely distributed in Europe and portrayed the Serbs as extending further south than ever before. Two years later another map was produced and circulated to a Western European audience, produced by scholars at the High School in Belgrade. It was known as the 'Serbian High School Map' and presented Macedonia as overwhelmingly Serbian. Gopchevich's 1889 ethnographic map of Old Serbia and Macedonia defined Macedonia's northern boundary as laying south of Bitola and Strumica, with the middle Vardar Valley as a part of Old Serbia.<sup>124</sup> Similarly, the Serbian High School Map of 1891 gave Macedonia's northern boundary as the area south of Bitola and Strumica. Old Serbia was marked as extending from Novi Pazar to Prilep.

The renowned Serb scholar Cvijic considered the area between Shar mountain and Salonika as two separate sections. The northern section was an extension of Old Serbia, whilst the southern part was the area largely inhabited by Macedonians. Cvijic

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<sup>123</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, *op. cit.* p. 95.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid*, H.R. Wilkinson, p. 99.

went to great lengths to define the boundary between Macedonia and Old Serbia in a 1904 publication.<sup>125</sup> The historian T.R. Georgevitch supported Cvijic's claims, adding that Macedonia included regions around Ohrid, Bitola, Voden, Salonika, Doiran, Strumica, Seres, Kavala – 'all else to the north of this is not Macedonia', (it was Old Serbia).<sup>126</sup> Over an eight-year period (1906–1913) Cvijic was to compile five maps (1906, 1909, 1911, 1912 and 1913) and each time he modified his ethnographic ideas in support of Serbian foreign policy. Wilkinson states that 'his interpretation of ethnographic facts had varied, but always in favour of the Serbs'.<sup>127</sup>

At the time of the publication of *Makedonija i Makedoncite*, Ivan Ivanic was already involved in forwarding the view of the Serbian character of the Macedonians in his capacity of Director of the Serbian Government Press Agency. Published in 1906 (as Volume I), he claimed Macedonians as Serbs according to their 'language, traditions, national poetry, and nationality, but were divided along church lines'.<sup>128</sup> The second edition of Ivanic's book attacked Bulgarian and Greek nationalist propaganda in Macedonia and gave a reassessment of Macedonia's boundaries, making it substantially smaller and basing it primarily on the Solun vilayet with all areas north of Demir Kapiya (Solun vilayet) incorporated in the boundaries of Old Serbia. Ivanic deviated from other Balkan ethnographers of the time through his radical new definition of Macedonia.

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<sup>125</sup> Cvijic further reinforced his position by stating 'it is a well known fact, moreover, that this definition of Serbia was not merely a cartographic and literary conception, but one that lived in the minds of the inhabitants, since persons from those regions (Kratovo, Skopje, Ovche Pole, etc.) described their native districts as Serbian countries'. J. Cvijic, *Geographical Conditions of Macedonia and Old Serbia*, 1904, pp. 208–212, as cited in T.R. Georgevitch, *Macedonia*, London, 1918, p. 4. Later in a 1922 publication Cvijic claimed that after the Berlin Congress of 1878, Macedonian territory in European Turkey comprised 168,536 square kilometres. J. Cvijic, *Balkansko Poluostrvo i Juzhnoslovenske Zemlje*, I, Zagreb, 1922, p. 86, as quoted in M. Pandevski, op. cit. p. 13.

<sup>126</sup> T.R. Georgevitch, op. cit. p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, op. cit. p. 181.

<sup>128</sup> In 1906 I. Ivanic detailed the number of 'Serbs' in the Bitola vilayet, giving a breakdown of their Exarchate and Patriarchate adherence. He claimed the total number of Serbs in the vilayet as 314,790. In the Solun vilayet, he only gave details on a percentage basis, claiming that 'the Greeks and Vlah grkomans constituted 25 per cent of the Christian population, whereas the Slavs comprised 75 per cent of the total Christian population'. Furthermore, he stated that in the Seres and Drama regions, 'Serbs under the Patriarchate and Serbs under the Exarchate come to 75 per cent against 25 per cent'. I. Ivanic, *Makedonija i Makedoncite*, Vol I, Belgrade, 1906, pp. 306–307.

Gopchevich's statistics are particularly interesting. According to Wilkinson, 'Gopchevich admitted that he had himself been convinced, earlier in his career, that the Serbs could be guilty only of gross chauvinism laying claim to Macedonia and he had even expressed such an opinion in writing before he embarked on his Macedonian travels'.<sup>129</sup> Gopchevich's map immediately came under criticism in European academic circles. Subsequent Serbian ethnographers maintained similar claims and were to have limited success in influencing other European academics.

Table 2.11: Serbian Views of Macedonia, 1886–1908

	<b>Veselinovic 1886</b>	<b>Gopcevic 1889</b>	<b>Ivanic 1908</b>
Albanians	N/A	165,620	
Bulgarians	"	57,600	
Greeks	"	210,140	
Gypsies	"	28,730	
Jews	"	64,645	60,000
Macedonians	"		
Miscellaneous	"	3,500	34,277 190,639
Muslims	"		
Serbsians	600,000	2,048,320	680,976
Turks	N/A	231,400	400,624
Vlahs	"	69,665	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>"</b>	<b>2,879,620</b>	<b>1,366,566</b>

Sources and notes: Veselinovic's data appeared in the Serbian periodical publication *Srpsstvo*, Number 9, in 1886, declaring a total of 600,000 Serbs in the Bitola and Solun vilayets, as cited in L. Mojsov, *Okolu Prashanjeto na Makedonskoto Nacionalno Malcinstvo vo Grcija*, Skopje, 1954, p. 154. Gopcevic's statistics appeared in the publication *Bevolkerungsstatistik von Altserbien und Makedonien*, Vienna, 1899, as cited in J. Cvijic, *Questions Balkaniques*, Paris, 1916. Ivanic's statistics appear in *Makedonija i Makedoncite*, Belgrade, 1908, p. 108. The figure of 190,639 inhabitants under 'miscellaneous' represents 'Orthodox non-Slavs' and the Serb population total of 680,976 is made up of the following: 400,568 Serb Patriarchates; 265,408 Serb Exarchates; and, 15,000 Serb Catholics.

<sup>129</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, op. cit. p. 102.

Table 2.12: Non-Serb Estimates of Serb Population in Macedonia, 1878–1913

Year of data	Commentator	Origin of commentator	Number of Serbs
1877	V. Teploff	Russian	41,282
1899	C. Nicolaides	Greek	-----
1900	V. Kanchov	Bulgarian	700
1904	A. Stead	English	580,000
1913	N.Constantine	Romanian	21,700

Figure 2.5: The northern limit of Macedonia according to S. Gopchevich, 1889



## Bulgaria

THE BULGARIAN CLAIM on Macedonia was based on the empires of their ancestors, such as Simeon (893–927) and John Asen (1218–1241).<sup>130</sup> Similarity of language and culture figured prominently amongst Bulgarian claims. Academics were employed to scientifically examine the issue of Macedonian identity and culture in an effort to determine the nationality of the Macedonians, and this they found in language. Bulgarian linguists sought phonetic and morphological traces of Bulgarian influence in Macedonian dialects so as to classify them as Bulgarian dialects and ‘insisted on an essentially Bulgarian basis in the Macedonian dialects’.<sup>131</sup> Considering the Macedonian language to be a Bulgarian dialect they argued that ‘physiologically the Macedonians were closer to them than to the Serbs’.<sup>132</sup>

The looseness with which the term ‘Bulgarian’ has often been used in the Balkan Peninsula<sup>133</sup> has brought about a misconception of ‘Bulgarians’ as dominating Macedonia and its surrounding territories. This served to fuel Bulgarian nationalist claims upon Macedonia. Bulgarians were quick to point to diplomatic reports by the French, British, Russian, Austrian and other Consuls who generally spoke of Bulgarians in Macedonia as constituting the majority element of the population.<sup>134</sup> The widespread acceptance of this view was apparent by estimates of ‘Bulgarians’ in the Peninsula (before 1878) which were wide-ranging – between 2 and 7 million.<sup>135</sup> Furthermore, when the Greek Church monopoly was broken in Macedonia, and the Bulgarian Exarchate was introduced, it came as no surprise that a massive proportion of Macedonians joined the Bulgarian church (whose official language was far closer to Macedonian compared to the incomprehensible Greek). Bulgarian nationalists

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<sup>130</sup> Balkanicus, op. cit. pp. 209–211.

<sup>131</sup> Carnegie Commission, op. cit. p. 27.

<sup>132</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, *Balkan Federation - A History of the Movement Toward Balkan Unity in Modern Times*, Connecticut. 1964, p. 131.

<sup>133</sup> E. Pears, *Turkey and Its People*, London, 1911, pp. 229–230.

<sup>134</sup> M. Pandevski, *Macedonia and the Macedonians in the Eastern Crisis*, Skopje, 1978, p. 86.

<sup>135</sup> According to K. Irechek in *History of the Bulgarians*, (1878), as cited in *Macedonia Documents and Material*, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, pp. 346–347.

therefore argued that the rapid expansion of the Bulgarian church in Macedonia represented 'the Macedonians embracing the Bulgarian church and displaying their Bulgarian nationality'. Similarly, the growth of the Bulgarian Exarchate school system throughout Macedonia was seen as further evidence of the 'Bulgarian character of Macedonia'.

Balkan uprisings against Ottoman rule in the 1870s (Bosnia and Hercegovina in 1875 and Bulgaria in 1876) were to set in motion significant political events favourable to future Bulgarian claims upon Macedonia. The Bulgarian Uprising was violently suppressed by the Ottomans; the terrible event was known as the 'Bulgarian atrocities', as thousands of civilians were mercilessly slaughtered. In June 1876, Serbia and Montenegro entered the war against Ottoman Turkey. Meanwhile the European powers (Britain, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, France and Italy) gathered at Constantinople (the Conference of Constantinople) under a British initiative aimed at preventing the conflict from escalating and finding a peaceful resolution.<sup>136</sup> The mediation of the powers failed to produce a solution and on 23 April 1877 Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans suffered a devastating defeat, and hostilities ended with the signing of the San Stefano Peace Treaty on 3 March 1878.

The decisions reached at San Stefano granted complete independence to Serbia, Montenegro and Romania. The Ottomans lost vast territories as Balkan boundaries were redrawn. Considered as a diplomatic triumph for Russia, the Bulgarian State was to be expanded to include a much larger territory outside of her own ethnographic and traditional boundaries. Autonomous Bulgaria was to include a swathe of territory along modern-day eastern Albania, the modern-day south-western

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<sup>136</sup> The proposals put forward to the Ottoman government as a result of the Conference were that administrative autonomy should be given to Bosnia and Hercegovina, that Bulgaria and Macedonia should come under the control of the Great Powers, and that Serbia and Montenegro should be allowed a certain territorial expansion at the expense of the Ottoman Empire.

corner of Serbia, and the vast majority of Macedonia. Enlarged Bulgaria was to become known as 'San Stefano Bulgaria', and Russia sought greater influence in the Balkans through an independent and powerful Bulgaria in which it played a major role creating.<sup>137</sup> Bulgaria's territorial expansion was 'on such a scale as to restore in effect the Bulgarian Empire of the Middle Ages'.<sup>138</sup>

The dissatisfaction of the Great Powers saw firm opposition to a large and powerful Bulgaria, seen by the British as merely being a Russian province, becoming 'a constant menace to Constantinople, and a basis for a future Russian attack upon it'.<sup>139</sup> An enlarged Bulgaria arising out of the San Stefano Treaty was never realised, and the Bulgarians have never quite recovered. San Stefano Bulgaria fulfilled all Bulgarian ambitions. 'The realisation of these frontiers became the aim of the whole of subsequent Bulgarian policy. It became a "holy ideal" which no Bulgarian leader dare renounce.'<sup>140</sup> In general that part of European Turkey assigned to Bulgaria through the San Stefano Treaty is given the name Macedonia by the Bulgarians.<sup>141</sup> The non-realisation of San Stefano Bulgaria was an enormous blow to the Bulgarians, and henceforth Bulgarian claims to Macedonia were largely based on the Treaty.

Bulgarian maps of Macedonia characteristically corresponded roughly to the generally accepted boundaries of geographical Macedonia. Macedonian territorial

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<sup>137</sup> E. Bouchie de Belle, *Makedonija i Makedoncite* [Macedonia and the Macedonians], Skopje, 1992, p. 134, original title *La Macedoine et les Macedoniens*, Paris, 1922. During the First World War, as a member of the French military, E. Bouchie de Belle spent a total of three years in Macedonia in the regions of Ostrovo, Lerin, Bitola, Prilep and finally in Skopje where he tragically died in 1918. *La Macedoine et les Macedoniens* was not published until 4 years after his death.

<sup>138</sup> Lord Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries – The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire*, New York, 1977, p. 524.

<sup>139</sup> W. Miller, op. cit. p. 385. The West European Powers opposed the establishment of San Stefano Bulgaria at the Congress of Berlin in 1878. Austria-Hungary saw Bulgaria as destructive to her own interests in the Balkans, particularly as San Stefano Bulgaria would have severed her penetration towards Solun. German interests were similarly affected and Britain feared her Mediterranean domination was being threatened. The Congress of Berlin effectively restored Macedonia back to Ottoman rule.

<sup>140</sup> G.M. Terry, op. cit. p. 33. Regarding the loss of San Stefano Bulgaria, the historian Poulton commented: 'Henceforth Bulgaria would be striving to "regain" Macedonia and would be almost permanently revisionist and revanchist'. H. Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* London, 1995, p. 39.

<sup>141</sup> R. Von Mach, op. cit. p. 43.

boundaries, according to Brancoff, Kanchov and Ivanoff, generally coincide, whilst the 1908 map of Ivanoff is particularly significant because of its adoption by Macedonian patriots until the twenty-first century.<sup>142</sup> Unlike Greek and Serbian claims to Macedonia which were based on a mutual understanding between the two States, Bulgaria, at least prior to the First Balkan War of 1912, did not enter into any combinations with her Balkan neighbours over a division of the land. Bulgaria believed she had the strongest claim to Macedonia due to the dominant ethnic element generally recognised as being Bulgarian in character.

Figure 2.6: Bulgaria according to the San Stefano Treaty of 1878



The most famous Bulgarian map influencing views of Macedonia was that of Vasil Kanchov in 1900. Similar to other Bulgarian ethnographic maps that were not

<sup>142</sup> J. Ivanoff's map has been consistently reproduced by Macedonian émigré communities throughout the twentieth century and is commonly found displayed in many Macedonian households around the world.

based on Turkish data and religious adherence, it instead used language as the basic criterion delineating nationality. V. Kanchov compiled ethnographic data whilst employed as a Bulgarian school inspector in Macedonia during his travels throughout the land. Bulgarian population data was notably consistent in comparison to Serb and Greek data, declaring the Bulgarian element as constituting just over 50 per cent of the total population. D.M. Brancoff's population data presented Macedonia as an exclusively Christian unit. He categorised all Muslims under the one religious group, and based his 1904 ethnographic map on the Christian population only. It produced a differing perspective - Bulgarians comprised 82.19 per cent, Greeks 13.3 per cent and Vlachs 4.48 per cent of the population. Both V. Kanchov's and D.M. Brancoff's data were notable because their findings were published outlining the ethnic make up of every individual village throughout Macedonia. No other ethnographer from the Balkan States or elsewhere presented such detailed information publicly.

Table 2.13: Bulgarian Views of Macedonia, 1900–1912

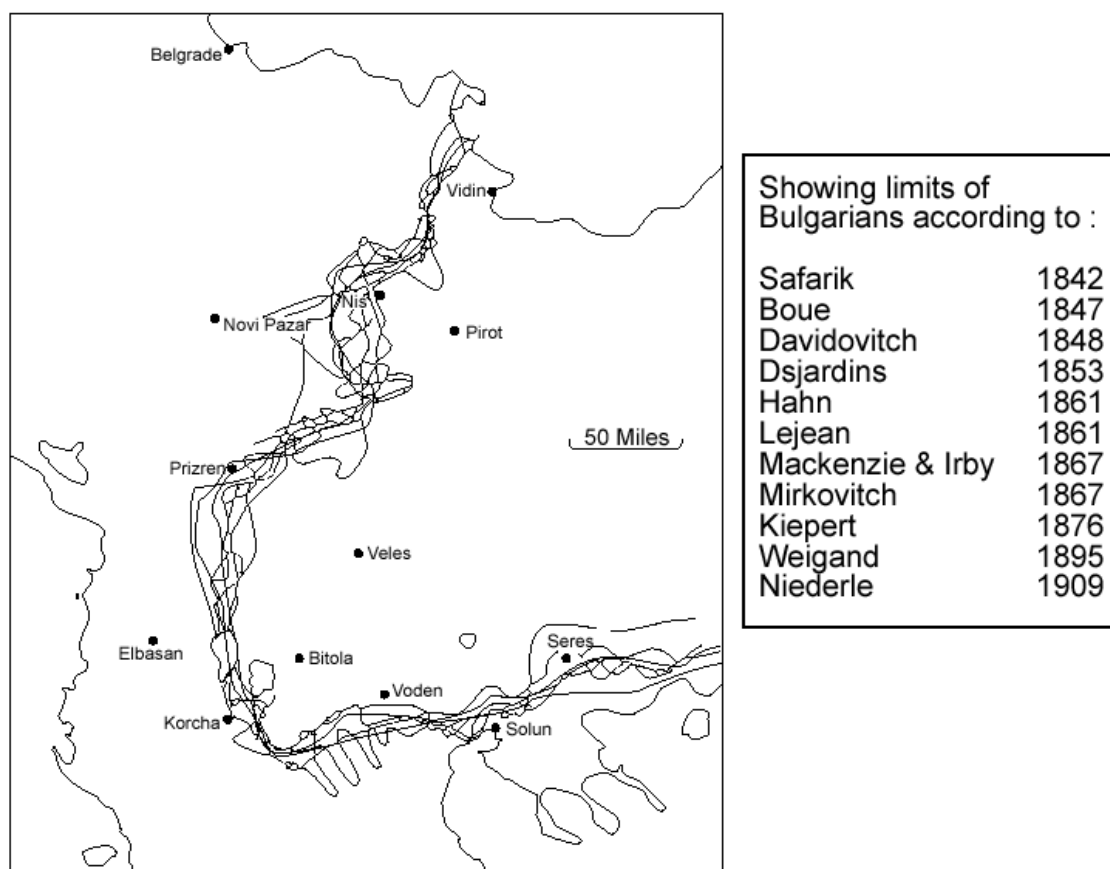
	<b>V. Kanchov 1900</b>	<b>D.M. Brancoff 1905</b>	<b>J. Ivanoff 1912</b>
Albanians	124,211	12,006 (*)	194,195
Bulgarians	1,184,036	1,172,136	1,103,111
Greeks	225,152	190,047	267,862
Gypsies			43,370
Jews			
Macedonians			
Miscellaneous	147,244		106,360
Muslims		840,433	
Serbian	700		
Turks	489,664		548,225
Vlachs	77,367	63,895	79,401
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,248,274</b>	<b>2,278,517</b>	<b>2,342,524</b>

Source and notes: V. Kanchov, *Makedonia etnografia i statistika*, Sofia, 1900; D.M. Brancoff, *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne*, Paris, 1905, and J. Ivanoff, *The Macedonian Question, Historically, Ethnographically, and Statistically*, Paris, 1920, as quoted in C. Anastasoff, op. cit. p. 324. Note: (\*) The figure of 12,006 Albanians in Brancoff's statistics represents Christian Albanians only.

Table 2.14: Non-Bulgarian Estimates of Bulgarian Population in Macedonia, 1878–1913

Year of data	Commentator	Origin of Commentator	Number of Bulgarians
1877	V. Teploff	Russian	1,172,136
1889	S. Verkovitch	Serb	1,317,211
1898	G. Weigand	German	1,200,000
1899	C. Nicolaides	Greek	454,700
1906	R. Von Mach	German	1,166,070
1913	N. Constantine	Romanian	512,000
1913	R. Pelletier	French	1,172,000

Figure 2.7: The ethnographic frontiers of the Bulgarians in Macedonia according to leading authorities, 1842-1909



## Greece

THE GREEK POSITION is based on the concept of 'historical rights'. The Greek claim to Macedonia consists of three main arguments: the assumption that ancient Macedonia is Greek, Byzantium's past domination over Macedonia, and the assertion that the Macedonians were 'civilised' by the Constantinople Patriarchate.

Contemporary commentators generally accepted that Greek arguments for Macedonia at the end of the nineteenth century were the weakest of the interested Balkan States. There is no conclusive evidence to support the view that the ancient Macedonians were Greek. Secondly, claiming Macedonia because of past domination is an invalid argument. Bulgarian and Serb Empires occupied Macedonia more recently than Byzantium. Furthermore, Greek pretensions were erroneously advanced as though Byzantium were a Greek monopoly.<sup>143</sup> Finally, Macedonia was claimed as Greek due to an unhindered monopoly by the Constantinople Patriarchate over ecclesiastical affairs in Macedonia from 1767 to 1870. According to this logic, an analogously erroneous argument could be made that 'the "Roman" Catholic Church should claim the greater part of Europe as the inheritance of Italy'.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> According to the former IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation) revolutionary leader, and historical commentator, I. Mihailov, 'Greece cannot completely identify herself with Byzantium as, for example, the former Austro-Hungarian Empire cannot by all means identify herself with only one of her constituent nationalities. The Greek language and character predominated in Byzantium in the same way as, in general, the German language and atmosphere predominated in Austria-Hungary'. I. Mihailov, *Macedonia A Switzerland of the Balkans*, St Louis, 1950, p. 40. The Byzantine Empire stretched much further than Macedonia. It encompassed Hungary, the Adriatic, the Caucasus and the Crimea. If Macedonia figured in the claims of the nineteenth century Greek State, then one would reasonably assume that Greece could logically claim these lands as her own! If the concept of previous possessions is adhered to, what becomes of the fact that several other empires at one time or another occupied Macedonia? Amongst these are the Roman, and in the dark ages it had been ruled by the Serbians, the Bulgarians and even by Franks. The French socialist P. Argiriades considered that 'if the historical truth were to be respected, Macedonia should rather have the right to possess all those countries, which would like to devour it, since once it governed and ruled them itself'. *Almanach de la Question Sociale, Illustre*, Paris, Pour 1896, pp. 240–244, as quoted from H. Andonov-Poljanski, 1985, op. cit. pp. 404–406. It is interesting to note that no Greek rule had ever extended over Macedonia prior to the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913.

<sup>144</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 194.

Greek nationalists are in no way disturbed that the Macedonians ‘are not Greeks and do not even know the Greek language’.<sup>145</sup> They instead advance a popular claim suggesting that the Macedonians are ‘Bulgarophone Greeks’, that they are Greeks who speak a ‘Bulgarian’ language. The historian G. Terry refers to this as a ‘linguistic miracle’.<sup>146</sup> This view was espoused to Brailsford by a Greek Bishop in Macedonia in the following manner:

Originally the population of Macedonia was Hellenic, but it won so many victories over the Slavs, and took so many prisoners of war, that linguistic difficulties arose. The Slavs being then, as now, notoriously stupid, would not learn Greek, so the Greeks were forced to learn Slav in order to have a means of giving orders to their servants. Little by little they forgot their own language, and the ‘Bulgarophone Greek’ of modern Macedonia is the result.<sup>147</sup>

In the late nineteenth century Greek territorial aspirations extended beyond Macedonia to encompass the wider Balkans, asserting that they ‘were culturally and historically an inalienable part of the Hellenic world’.<sup>148</sup> This view along with the position of ‘Bulgarophone’ or ‘Slavophone’ Greeks was to be promoted in the theses of C. Nicolaides in 1899, N. Kasasis in 1903, S.P. Phocas Cosmetatos and V. Colocotronis in 1919 ‘and those of a host of other Greek scholars who continued to labour for the next fifty years in a desperate effort to revitalise the old idea, that the Balkans constituted an Hellenic province’.<sup>149</sup>

Greek irredentism is portrayed through the policy of the *megali idea* (the ‘great idea’). The ultimate aim of the great idea ‘was to gather all the Greeks in a new Byzantine Empire’,<sup>150</sup> a single state whose capital would be Constantinople. It is a

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid, p. 197.

<sup>146</sup> G.M. Terry, op. cit. p. 30.

<sup>147</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 200, K. Bitoski, *Dejnosta na Pelagonskata Mitropolija 1878–1912* [The Activities of the Pelagonia Archiepiscopal Diocese 1878–1912], Skopje, 1968, p. 81.

<sup>148</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, op. cit. p. 71.

<sup>149</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, op. cit. p. 71 – V. Colocotronis, *La Macedoine et L’Hellenisme*; C. Nicolaides, *Makedonien*, Berlin, 1899; S.P. Phocas Cosmetatos, *La Macedoine: son passe et son present*, Lausanne, 1919; N. Kasasis, *L’Hellenisme et la Macedoine*, Paris, 1903.

<sup>150</sup> D. Dakin, op. cit. p. 140.

The concept of the ‘great idea’ sought to establish a greater Greece stretching from the river Menderes in Asia Minor to the city of Edremit and deep into the western regions including the cities of Izmir, Aydin and Marmaris. Northern Thrace with Edirne, the Gallipoli Peninsula and including the Island Imroz, Western Thrace, Southern Macedonia up to Prilep, Southern Albania including the Gjirokaster region, nearby islands

nineteenth-century Greek concept, with the term 'Great Idea' first coined by a Hellenised Vlah, Ioannis Kolettis. He was to become an influential political figure in Greece during the 1830s and 1840s and to champion the cause. He insisted that not only were the inhabitants of the Kingdom Greeks, but so too were those who lived in any land associated with Greek history or the Greek race.

There were two main centres of Hellenism: Athens, the capital of the kingdom; and the 'City' of Constantinople, 'the dream and hope of all Greeks'.<sup>151</sup> The historian G. Augustinos stated that it became a search for national identity: 'Since a Greek State had not existed for centuries, a "national" culture was vitally important in order to weld the disparate elements of the new society together and give meaning to this new political entity'.<sup>152</sup> These views became the basis of the country's national culture, and politicians advocated that a great Greek state would make the country economically self-sufficient and politically stable – 'in short, it was a dream of salvation by expansion'.<sup>153</sup> In order to realise the 'great idea', Macedonia was of the utmost strategic importance, for it was only through Macedonia that Greece could

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and the large Mediterranean island of Cyprus. The master proponent of this idea, Venizelos, was to become the Greek Prime Minister. The Greek historian, Kofos, stated that among those who concerned themselves with the national ideas, two main tendencies were apparent. 'The idea of Panhellenism, or the "Great Idea", which disregarded the rights and the interests of the other Balkan peoples', and the conservative view, which 'favoured the active promotion of Greek national interests though taking into account the justified needs and claims of the other Balkan States'. E. Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Thessaloniki, 1964, p. 30.

<sup>151</sup> R. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, London, 1992, p. 48. The following extract is from an address by the influential politician Ioannis Kolettis, before the constituent assembly in 1844: 'The Greek kingdom is not the whole of Greece, but only a part, the smallest and poorest part. A native is not only someone who lives within this kingdom, but also one who lives in Ioannina, in Thessaly, in Serres, in Adrianople, in Constantinople, in Trebizond, in Crete, in Samos and in any land associated with Greek history or the Greek race...' p. 48. Most non-Greek authors consider that 'the idea' emerged during the nineteenth century. It is only Greek authors who claim the idea as having been defined much earlier. Some such as Vavouskos consider that it was born in the thirteenth century. T.G. Tatsios, *The Megali Idea*, East European Monographs, 1984, p. 10.

<sup>152</sup> G. Augustinos, *Consciousness and History: Nationalist Critics of Greek Society 1897-1914*, East European Monograph Series, Colombia University Press, 1977, p. 3.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p. 3. It is interesting to note that the late nineteenth century Greek nationalist Ion Dragoumis saw the Greek state as threatened by fragmentation and 'offered cohesiveness through a nationalist vision of a people united by common action' (ibid. p. 20).

Greece did not abandon her 'great idea' policy until her disastrous defeat in the Asia Minor Campaign in 1922. E. Kofos, op. cit. p. 45.

form a link between Greece proper and other potentially Greek territories.<sup>154</sup> Without Macedonia the great idea would never be attainable.

It was due to the insistence of the Great Powers pledging to respect the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, and a failed attempt to incorporate Crete into the Greek Kingdom, that 'the Macedonian frontier to the north was presented by some in Greece as a potential catharsis for the isolation, defeatism, and melancholy that seemed to pervade the country'.<sup>155</sup> This was reinforced by prominent Greek nationalist writers such as Kostas Palamas, Perikles Giannopoulos and Ion Dragoumis. A leading nationalist at the turn of the century, Ion Dragoumis was renowned for promoting Greek efforts in Macedonia. Through his role with the Greek Consulate in Macedonia and as a historical symbol of the Greek nation, he wrote the book *Martyrs' and Heroes' Blood*, with the primary theme of rejuvenating Hellenism, a call to arms and personal involvement for the Greek cause in Macedonia. He argued that fighting for Macedonia could help the Greeks overcome the 'mediocrity' that had become pervasive following their defeat in Crete in 1897.<sup>156</sup> Using the past, Dragoumis argued that Greece had just as good a claim to Macedonia as anyone else did, and in support of his position he used 'historical arguments' based

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<sup>154</sup> The historian, C.M. Woodhouse, in *The Story of Modern Greece*, London, 1968, p. 168, stated that Macedonia and Crete were essential and considered by Greeks as a starting point in 'the next stage of advance towards the absorption of all the unredeemed territories within the Greek Kingdom. The expansion of their boundaries had been steady and almost uninterrupted since the war of independence. Other territories, which adjoined them or shared a historical connection with them, could be expected to fall into place of their own accord once Macedonia and Crete were gained... Thus did the whole future of the Great Idea turn upon Macedonia and Crete'.

<sup>155</sup> The anthropologist, A.N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 90. An anthropologist, Karakasidou's study attracted intense criticism from nationalist Greeks worldwide because she dared to question the notion that Macedonia (the part of Macedonia in northern Greece) might not be exclusively Greek.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, p. 91. A.N. Karakasidou points out that Dragoumis wrote in broad, general categories of Greek and Bulgarian. Yet occasionally, particularly when articulating a detailed ethnographic point, he also spoke of Macedonians. Augustinos similarly comments that Dragoumis defined what were Greek lands and who was part of Hellenic society in broad terms. Dragoumis stated that 'Greek lands are those which for thousands of years now are settled and worked by Greeks, those in which are buried the bones of thousands of Greek generations'. p. 165.

on culture and race, claiming Greeks 'had a right to possess the area by virtue of longevity of presence as well as cultural supremacy'.<sup>157</sup>

Following Greek independence, Greek claims to Macedonia comprised the whole of the country. But by the end of the nineteenth century these pretensions were reduced to Macedonia south of Skopje.<sup>158</sup> The geographical perception of Macedonia reflected the understanding that had developed between Greeks and Serbs. Negotiations between Serbia and Greece were renewed in 1899, the results being that the Greek sphere of influence claimed in Macedonia extended north as far as Nevrokop, Melnik, Strumica, Prilep, Krushevo and Struga, and Greece 'proposed that the Serbian's sphere of influence should extend southwards to Debar, Veles and Radovich'.<sup>159</sup>

Greek statistics are characterised by the exclusion of the Skopje vilayet and by claims of a decline in the number of Vlachs in the country. There is no historical basis for a reduction in Vlach numbers during the period 1878 to 1904, however; instead, Vlachs were clearly being counted as Greeks. C. Nicolaides was a History Professor at

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<sup>157</sup> G. Augustinos, op. cit. p. 125.

<sup>158</sup> L. Villari, op. cit. p. 137.

<sup>159</sup> D. Dakin, op. cit. pp. 83-84. Furthermore, Greece suggested that the Serbs should withdraw their consuls from Solun, Seres and Bitola and offered 'to use her influence with the Patriarchate to secure the appointment of Serbian bishops in the three dioceses of Uskub, Prizrend and Veles-Debar'. Greater definition to Greek and Serbian aspirations reflected the friendly relationship that was developing into very clear policies between the two states. The understanding between them was evident through the following extract from S. Pribitchevich: 'Prominent members of the Greek Parliament expressed nostalgia for the simple old times when E. Venizelos of Greece (former Prime Minister) and N. Pasic of Serbia, after the Balkan Wars of 1913, agreed on the Greek Serbian frontier so that to the north there would be only Serbs and to the south only Greeks, and "no Macedonians" on either side'. S. Pribitchevich, *Macedonia, Its People and History*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982, p. 240. J. Shea stated that Greeks argue that 'the portion of Macedonia given over to Greece was approximately equal in extent with the "historical" Macedonia of the classical period, thus providing a justification for the expansion of Greek territory'. Shea considers there are 'good reasons to doubt this argument' as an examination of the descriptions of Macedonia provided by ancient writers as well as modern historians shows that virtually all of what is now the Republic of Macedonia was included in Ancient Macedonia at the time of Phillip II. J. Shea, op. cit. p. 104. During the second half of the twentieth century Greek historians continued to promote a definition of Macedonia similar to that presented by Greek nationalists, and corresponding to official Greek aspirations at the turn of the previous century. According to the historian, K.A. Vakalopoulos, the southern boundary was formed by Mount Olympus, the Chasia and Kamvounia ranges, and the coast of the Aegean Sea. The western limits were marked by the Pindus range and by the river Mesta. Its northern limits were defined as beyond the lakes of Ohrid and Prespa, including the towns of Krushevo, Prilep and Veles, and incorporating the Strumica and Melnik districts further east. K.A. Vakalopoulos, *Modern History of Macedonia 1830-1912*, Thessaloniki, 1988, p. 15.

the University of Athens when he profiled his views on Greek aspirations in Macedonia. His method of delineating ethnic groups was, as Wilkinson points out, ‘one more example of how ethnographic data might be manipulated in order to create an impression of conditions favourable to a particular thesis’.<sup>160</sup> Data compiled on the basis of language weaken the Greek cause in Macedonia, so Nicolaides based his map on ‘commercial language’ rather than ‘mother tongue’. Furthermore, he went as far as to base his ethnographic map of Macedonia on H. Kiepert’s 1878 ethnocratic map.<sup>161</sup>

The Greek perception of the Macedonian population is so out of keeping with the other depictions that some explanation is called for. Stathis Gourgouris has coined the evocative phrase ‘dream-work’ to describe the considerable exertions of Greek intellectuals in imagining their nation-State into existence in the nineteenth century.<sup>162</sup>

Table 2.15: Greek Views of Macedonia, 1878–1904

	<b>Syligos 1878</b>	<b>Golos 1878</b>	<b>Nicolaidis 1899</b>	<b>Delyanis 1904</b>
Albanians	-----		-----	-----
Bulgarians	338,000	140,500	454,700	332,162
Foreigners		35,000		
Greeks	438,000	705,500	656,300	652,795
Gypsies			-----	8,911
Jews			-----	53,147
Macedonians				
Miscellaneous	135,000	100,000	91,700	18,685
Muslims		349,000		
Serbians			-----	-----
Turks	349,000		576,600	634,017
Vlahs	70,000		41,200	25,101
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,330,000</b>	<b>1,330,000</b>	<b>1,820,500</b>	<b>1,724,818</b>

<sup>160</sup> H.R Wilkinson, op. cit. p. 120.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, pp. 120–121.

<sup>162</sup> S. Gourgouris, *Dream Nation: Enlightenment, Colonization, and the Institution of Modern Greece*, Stanford University Press, Stanford CA, 1996.

Source and notes: The Syligos 1878 data are derived from D.M Brancoff, op. cit. p. 267<sup>163</sup>; Golos 1878 data (Greek publication), cited from K. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830–1914*, 1985, pp. 47–48; C. Nicolaidis' statistics appeared in the publication *Macedonien*, Berlin, 1899; Mr Delianis, a Minister in the Greek Parliament, outlined the following statistical details in the newspaper *Le Temps*, No. 15.897, on 26 November 1904, as cited in S. Kiselinovski, *Grchkata Kolonizacija vo Egejska Makedonija (1913-1940)*, Skopje, 1981, p. 23.<sup>164</sup>

Table 2.16: Comparative Estimates of Greek Population in Macedonia, 1877–1913

Year of data	Commentator	Origin of Commentator	Number of Greeks
1877	V. Teploff	Russian	190,047
1878	Golos	Greek	705,500
1878	A. Synvet	Greek	587,860
1889	S. Verkovitch	Serb	222,740
1889	S. Gopchevich	Serb	210,140
1889	K. Ostreich	German	200,000
1898	G. Weigand	German	220,000
1900	V. Kanchov	Bulgarian	225,152
1903	K. Gersin	Austria	228,702
1903	Syligos	Greek	659,000
1905	D.M. Brancoff	Bulgarian	190,047
1906	R. Von Mach	German	95,005
1912	J. Ivanoff	Bulgarian	267,862
1913	R. Petellier	French	190,000
1913	N. Constantine	Romanian	193,000

Notes: The 1878 Golos Greek data are derived from K. Karpat, *Ottoman Population data*, op. cit. p. 48. According to Karpat, Golos was a Greek publication. Karpat also adds that Synvets 1878 statistics were derived from the Syligos (p. 47). The 1903 Syligos statistics represent Greeks in the vilayets of Bitola and Solun only.

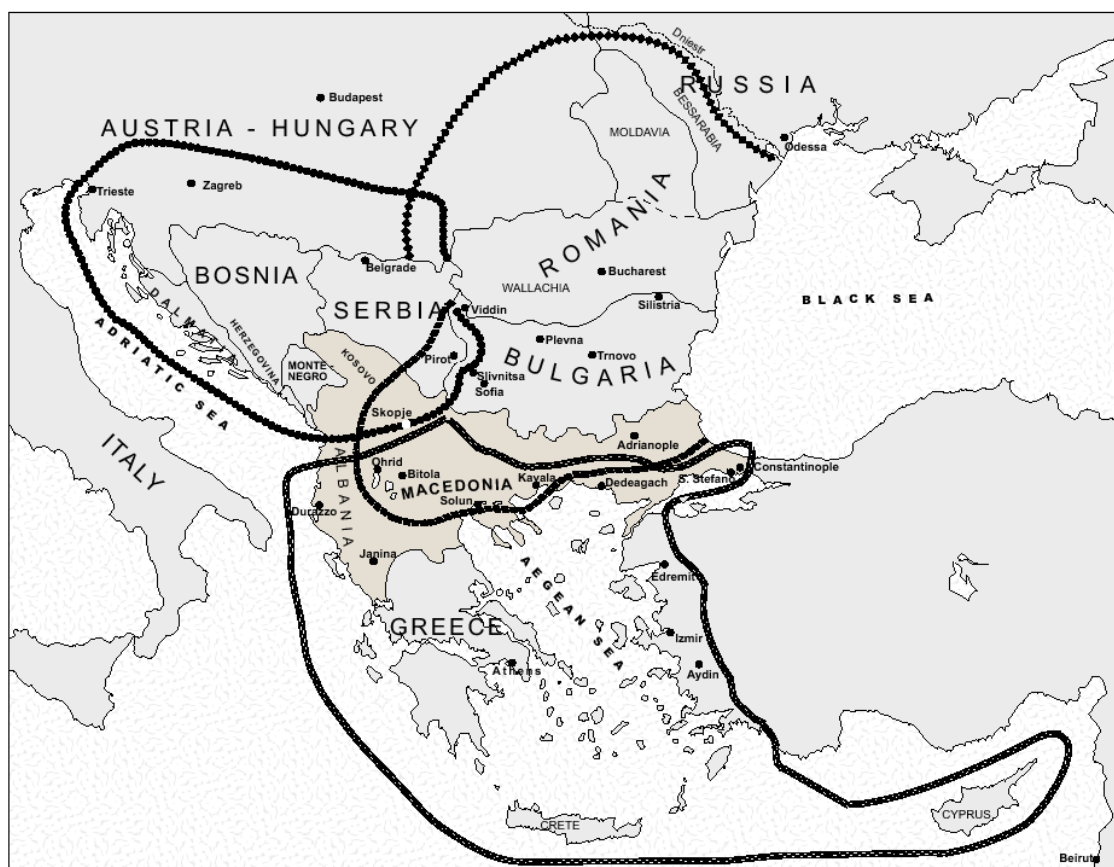
<sup>163</sup> The Syligos outwardly professed to be a literary and scientific organisation, intended to advance education amongst Greeks. Supported financially by wealthy Greeks, the organisation was in fact politically motivated and sought, as its primary aim, to support the Patriarchate attempts to expand throughout the Orthodox Balkans and assimilate the non-Greek Orthodox Christian populations under Ottoman rule.

<sup>164</sup> The Bulgarian diplomatic representative Zolovitch responded to Delianis' figures (published in *Le Temps* Number 15950 on 18 February 1905) stating that there were 1,100,000 Bulgarian Christians and 100,000 Bulgarian Muslims. Zolotovitch claimed 280,000 Greeks in Macedonia.

Figure 2.8: The northern limit of the Greek linguistic zone of Macedonia according to C. Nicolaides, 1899



Figure 2.9: The territorial aspirations of the Balkan States during the late nineteenth century



- Extent of Bulgarian territorial aspirations
- ..... Extent of Romanian territorial aspirations
- Extent of Greek territorial aspirations
- ..... Extent of Serbian territorial aspirations

## Population data compiled by non-Balkan Europeans supporting views of the respective Balkan States

OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE to the European powers was Macedonia's strategic geographical location. Since ancient times Macedonia had been a strategic stepping stone between east and west for invading armies and empires. In the late nineteenth-century Macedonia found herself the central focus of conflicting European power struggles. Russian and Austrian hopes for access to Solun had to be achieved via Serbian or Bulgarian territories, and Russia offered Macedonia to Serbia and Bulgaria from time to time in the course of negotiations.<sup>165</sup> The English and French encouraged the idea of a greater Greece in order to forestall Russian and Austrian attempts to gain access to the Mediterranean. The imperialist designs of the European Powers took precedence over ethnographic questions and views based on Macedonia being a 'territory of dispute' were more in line with existing political agendas. There was no shortage of individuals willing to link their ethnographic findings to political positions. As we have seen, subsequent population statistics are generally unreliable and 'either compiled to project specific national claims, or, as with certain foreign census takers, based on insufficient or intentionally distorted facts and sources'.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> According to the Macedonian historian, D. Tashkovski, *The Macedonian Nation*, Skopje, 1976, p.18, a Russian Tsarist government document dated 12 February 1878 stated: 'It is generally known that our policies concerning the South Slav peoples in the Balkans are guided by the defence of our interests involved by the Eastern Question. The liberation of the unfree South Slav peoples from Turkish slavery must always be accommodated to our policies concerning that part of the world. We have been ready to support the rapprochement of Serbs, Greeks and Montenegrins and those Slav peoples as yet unfree. But the present regency in Serbia, headed by Blaznavac and Jovan Ristich, has gone too far in distancing itself from Russia. The note sent by our Ministry for Foreign Affairs on 27 November last year produced no results. Therefore it suits us for Bulgaria to be liberated, bringing with it as much territory, considered from the geographical point of view even has the advantage over Serbia, because of the border adjacent to Istanbul. Thus it would be better that Macedonia, which we had earlier promised to Serbia, come under a new Bulgarian State to be indirectly under our control.'

<sup>166</sup> E. Kofos, op. cit. pp. 22–23. See M. Dogo regarding Italian and European journalistic reporting in Macedonia during the period 1902–1903, *Jazikot i Nacionalnosta vo Makedonia, Doživuvanjata i razmisluvajata na nevooruzenite proroci 1902–1903*, Skopje, 1990, pp. 70–76, [original title, *Lingua e nazionalità in macedonia vicende e pensieri di profeti disarmati 1902–1903*, Milano, 1985].

Aimed at gaining support from European public opinion, the Balkan States employed ethnographers from non-Balkan European States to advocate their respective national claims in Macedonia. It is not always evident what scientific methods were applied in the collection of data. Ethnographical and statistical data was compiled utilising differing methods: some used Church adherence, others utilised Ottoman data, some applied novel methods and yet some simply worked off existing ethnographic maps and population data. Few were familiar with the Macedonian language and yet others never set foot in Macedonia and formed conclusions from Western European capitals. An example of one such 'expert' is F. Bianconi, who worked as a railroad company engineer from 1872 to 1876. Upon his return to the West he issued his own set of population statistics, using no reliable sources.<sup>167</sup> Bianconi's data presented a pro-Greek position and 'despite their gross distortions, Bianconi's figures have often been cited as a major source of information on Ottoman population'.<sup>168</sup>

Commentators travelled to Macedonia for any number of reasons, some sought adventure, others sought to uncover the basis of competing claims, and yet others arrived with preconceived ideas. The early twentieth-century British commentator Crawford Price demonstrated the conflicting intentions of contemporary commentators. According to Price,

It once happened, during Hilmi Pasha's regime in Macedonia, that an English author arrived at Salonika and sought permission to journey into the interior. The honesty of his intentions was well expressed which the then British Consul-General gave him to the Vali. 'Mr. X', wrote our representative, 'wishes to tour Macedonia in order to establish the truth of the situation as between Greek and Bulgar'. Shortly afterwards another man of letters arrived on the scene. He also was thirsting for first hand knowledge; but, in handing him a similar letter of introduction, the Consul felt it necessary to add: 'I deem it only right to advise Your Excellency that the truth which

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<sup>167</sup> K. Karpat, op. cit. p. 6. In E. Said's study of Western conceptions of the Orient, he outlines the case of the two most renowned German works on the Orient, Goethe's *Westöstlicher Divan* and Friedrich Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*. These were based on a Rhine journey and time spent in Paris libraries respectively. Said adds that 'what German Oriental scholarship did was to refine and elaborate techniques whose application was to texts, myths, ideas, and languages almost literally gathered from the Orient by imperial Britain and France'. E. Said, *Orientalism, Western Conceptions of the Orient*, London, 1995, p. 19.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, p. 6.

this gentlemen desires to establish is not the same as that sought by Mr. X, whom I presented to you recently.<sup>169</sup> This passage demonstrates the ways in which the ‘truth’ concerning Macedonia differed greatly depending on the observer.

Ethnographic outcomes were all too often political in character rather than ‘scientific’. The renowned Serb ethnographer J. Cvijic recognised the dubious nature of ethnographic data produced by both Balkan and foreign personalities and considered that they ‘make a living from interfering in the Macedonian “ethnographic” question and the “eastern question”’. Many of them exploit the desire of small Balkan States to have their aspirations understood and befriended in Europe’.<sup>170</sup>

Most ethnographic maps up to the Ilinden Rebellion of 1903 did not include Serbs in Macedonia. Only Serbian maps did so, most notably those of J. Dragashevich (1885), M. Veselinovich (1885) and S. Gopchevich (1889). They considered earlier maps presenting Bulgarian domination in Macedonia were incorrect and that the population was in fact Serb. The ethnographic map produced by N. Zaryanko (Russian) in St Petersburg in 1890 presented the vast majority of the interior of Macedonia as exclusively Bulgarian, however it was the first non-Serb map to extend the Serbian element further south than had been done so before. Although the Serbs were not entirely pleased with the map, it did however indicate that the Serbs were beginning to exert some influence on European thought.<sup>171</sup>

European pro-Serb ethnographic maps commenced appearing in the lead up to the Balkan Wars. The first was by A. Stead in 1909 which indicated a Serbian presence in the most northerly part of Macedonia. Previous British maps by G.M. Muir-Mackenzie and A.P. Irby in 1867, E.G. Ravenstein in 1877 and H.N. Brailsford

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<sup>169</sup> C. Price, op. cit, p. 12.

<sup>170</sup> J. Cvijic, *Promatrana o etnografiji Makedonskih Slovena*, Belgrade, 1906, as cited in L. Mojsov, *The Macedonian Historical Themes*, Belgrade, 1979, p. 61.

<sup>171</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, op. cit. pp. 103–105.

in 1905 all presented the Serbs as an extreme minority on the northern fringes of Macedonia, but apparent in Kosovo. In 1911 the British ethnographer R.W. Seton-Watson (considered by H.R. Wilkinson to be one of the architects of the future Yugoslav State) produced a map giving Macedonia a Serb population where there had not been one before, settled in Skopje and as far south as Shtip. Alfred Stead presented an extreme pro-Serb view of the Serb-speaking population of the Balkans, declaring 'it must, however, not be forgotten that Servia forms only a small part of the lands inhabited by the Servian race'.<sup>172</sup> He gave a total figure of 9,656,210 Serbs,<sup>173</sup> stretching across the Kingdom of Serbia (2,750,000), Montenegro (260,000), Bosnia and Hercegovina (1,799,210), Hungary (679,000 - in Banat, Batchka, Barania with Rieka), Croatia and Slavonia (2,270,000), Dalmatia (623, 000) and Istria (155,000). In 'Old Serbia' (statistics of 1900–1906) there were 450,000 Serbs in the *sandjak* of Novi Pazar, Kosovo, and Metodija to the Shar Mountain. He presented a total of 580,000 Serbs in Macedonia, which were broken down into two areas (the first which coincides with Serb designs on northern Macedonia according to the Serb/Greek arrangement), the northern *kazas* of Skopje, Tetovo, Kumanovo, Prechevo, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, Kochani, Pehchevo, Shtip and Radovishte, with a total of 280,000 Serbs and a further 300,000 Serbs in 'Macedonia'.<sup>174</sup>

Most ethnographic maps produced by various Europeans presented the Bulgarians as the dominating ethnic element throughout Macedonia. As the first to seize upon the advantage of producing ethnographic maps, they were the first to present maps in the European arena, at the Conference of Constantinople in 1876 (through their ally and patron Russia). Throughout most of the second half of the nineteenth century in Europe, it was generally accepted that the entire Southern Balkans, including Bulgaria, Macedonia and Thrace, was predominantly inhabited by the Bulgarian 'race'. Following the Conference of Constantinople, Serbia and

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<sup>172</sup> A. Stead, editor, *Servia by the Servians*, London, 1909, p. 4.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid. Stead stated that of 9,656,210 Serbs, 2,915,600 were Catholics.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

particularly Greece found themselves in an inferior position to the Bulgarians, 'because it became clear that through the medium of ethnographic ideas the Bulgarians had gained a position of moral ascendancy over all the other peoples of the Balkans'.<sup>175</sup>

Following the Constantinople Conference the importance of ethnographic maps as a political tool was more generally recognised. The appearance of maps multiplied over the next few years. Pro-Bulgarian maps were produced by some of the most eminent European ethnographers of the second half of the nineteenth century, including, the German H. Keipert (1876), the Austrian F. Meinhard (1899) and the British H. Brailsford (1906). Ethnography came into its own as an academic discipline, pressed into the service of various empires.

Following the popularisation of the Bulgarian position in Macedonia, a Greek reaction was inevitable. The Greeks had suffered an enormous blow to their designs on Macedonia from the Bulgarians, and within a year after the Conference of Constantinople three maps appeared disputing the previous pro-Bulgarian maps and supporting the Greek position in Macedonia. In 1877 the British ethnographer E. Stanford produced a map, printed in both English and Greek, presenting most of the Peninsula, including Thrace, Central and Southern Albania, as Greek. Included as Greek were Burgas, Plovdiv, Edirne, Skopje, Bitola, Vlore and the southern fringes of Sofia. Stanford's map was compiled from Greek sources which 'dismissed language as an unreliable criterion on which to base an ethnographic map'.<sup>176</sup> The French F. Bianconi's map was published in 1877, portraying most of European Turkey as Greek.<sup>177</sup> A. Synvet (a Greek schoolmaster from Constantinople) adopted a 'novel method' with his ethnographic map by stressing a mixed population in

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<sup>175</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, *op. cit.* p. 64.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.* p. 71.

<sup>177</sup> Later in 1885, interestingly, this same Bianconi produced a commercial map of Macedonia with its boundaries roughly coinciding with the generally accepted limits of Macedonia, with the only significant deviation being that the southern boundary extended beyond Mount Olympus.

Macedonia and by distinguishing compact ethnic groups in Serbia, Romania and a small part of Bulgaria. Although not as extravagant as Bianconi and Stanford with his claims for the Greeks, the Greeks did nevertheless welcome his map in 1877.<sup>178</sup>

## Population data recognising Macedonian identity

BY THE LATE nineteenth century, Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria had either gained full independence or were self-administered in a semi-autonomous capacity. As such they were able to utilise a range of State resources to support and promote their position in Macedonia. European patrons and national churches were also of crucial importance in the independence struggles of the Balkan States. Prior to the abolition in 1767 of the Archbishopric of Ohrid by the Ottomans (at the instigation of the Constantinople Patriarchate), there were numerous examples of Macedonian archbishops travelling to the royal courts of Europe seeking support for rebellions and other assistance against the Ottoman Turkish rulers.<sup>179</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth century, Macedonia remained under what is widely regarded as backward Ottoman rule. The Macedonian bourgeoisie was in its early stages of formation, there was no recent tradition of Statehood, no royal family, and with an abolished church there was little opportunity of influencing foreign governments to support Macedonian sovereignty. No significant body existed to attract foreign political support, foreign ethnographers or statisticians. In contrast the Balkan States utilised a wide range of State apparatus, including diplomats and national churches. The Greek national hero Dragoumis recognised the value of

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<sup>178</sup> H.R. Wilkinson, op. cit. pp. 73–74. Although the Greeks welcomed Synvet's map in 1877, and it did represent a reaffirmation of the Turko-Greek viewpoint, later in 1919 they rejected it.

<sup>179</sup> See M. Minoski, *Osloboditelne Dvizhenja i Vostanija vo Makedonia (1564-1615)* [Liberation movements and uprisings in Macedonia (1564–1615)], Skopje, 1972, and S. Dimevski, *Istorija na Makedonskata Pravoslavna Crkva* [History of the Macedonian Orthodox Church], Skopje, 1989.

public opinion in Western Europe and even ‘urged friends to write in European newspapers and make propaganda on behalf of Greece’s national interests’.<sup>180</sup>

The politically disadvantaged position of Macedonians was recognised by Kosta Shahov, editor of the journal *Makedonija*, who stated, ‘today the press is stronger than the cannon and almost all people of the world use it, except us’.<sup>181</sup> Macedonian print media outside Macedonia was largely concentrated in Serbia and particularly Bulgaria, and aimed at the Macedonian *pechalba* and émigré communities. The views of Macedonian newspapers sometimes were in conflict with the authorities and it was not unusual for publications to be banned from sale. In 1902, *Balkanski Glasnik*, published in Belgrade, was prohibited by the Serb government after eight issues for advocating an autonomous Macedonia. The paper was publicly burned on the streets of Belgrade by the authorities.<sup>182</sup> Prohibited from further pursuing journalistic activities, the editor of *Balkanski Glasnik* (Stefan Jakimov-Dedov) moved to Sofia and in 1903 recommenced publication of the newspaper under the name of *Balkan*, but it too met with the same fate under the Bulgarian authorities. The following year, 1904, Jakimov re-launched a new newspaper *Courier*, which advocated an independent Macedonia. Twenty issues were published before it too was banned.<sup>183</sup>

In Western Europe Macedonian views were virtually non-existent. Macedonian students in Geneva published *L'Effort* with the intention of informing Europe of the internal political situation in Macedonia and supporting the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement. Published in the French language, several issues appeared in 1900–1901.<sup>184</sup> The newspaper was relaunched in Paris in 1902, and was published bi-monthly under the title of *Le Mouvement Macedonien*. It ceased

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<sup>180</sup> G. Augustinos, op. cit. p. 126.

<sup>181</sup> *Makedonija*, Issue Number 1, 21 October 1888, p. 1.

<sup>182</sup> B. Mokrov, and T. Gruevski, *Pregled na Makedonskiot Pечат (1885–1992)* [Review of the Macedonian Press (1885–1992)], Skopje, 1993, p. 19.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, p. 63.

publication in 1903.<sup>185</sup> Based in London, the *L'Autonomie* newspaper was published in French with only five issues appearing during 1902.<sup>186</sup> No English language newspapers were published. A Russian language paper appeared in Odessa in 1905 (one issue - *Vardar*) and a Croatian/German language newspaper, *Makedonija - Macedonia - Macedonien*, was published in Croatia from November 1898 to January 1899.<sup>187</sup>

The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Movement was not yet developed sufficiently to exert influence outside of the Balkans. The organisation established a permanent foreign branch in Sofia (Bulgaria) on 28 July 1895, but no evidence exists that it pursued matters of an ethnographical or statistical nature. The main reason for its formation was that 'the greater part of the most politically active Macedonian immigrants were there'. 'The Macedonian Liberation Movement counted on their financial contributions.'<sup>188</sup> No attention was paid to the declarations of Macedonian patriots that they were neither Greeks, nor Serbs nor Bulgarians, as no European Power had a vested interest in a 'Macedonia for the Macedonians'. The few ethnographers and commentators who recognised Macedonian identity were therefore unlikely to have been influenced by Macedonian lobbying.

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid, p. 82.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid, p. 62.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, pp. 41, 66. For an examination of Macedonian political orientation as expressed through IMRO publications prior to the Ilinden insurrection of 1903, see B. Mokrov, *Borbata za idejna politichka chistota na Makedonskiot narod preku vesnicite na VMRO* [The battle for the future political purity of the Macedonian people through the newspapers of IMRO], Krushevo, 1979.

<sup>188</sup> L. Lape, *The Foreign Branch of the Secret Macedonian Odrin Revolutionary Organisation*, Skopje, 1985, p. 158. Other foreign branches operated in an unofficial capacity, in Athens and Istanbul. There is limited information regarding their activities, as no documentation has survived. References regarding the activities of these branches were made largely through the memoirs of the Macedonian revolutionary leader, Gjorche Petrov. There also appears to have been a temporary branch in Geneva. Nevertheless no direct evidence is available indicating that the organisation sought to exert any influence on intellectuals to conduct any type of census data in Macedonia. Macedonian historians generally consider that the role of the foreign representatives was directed towards securing financial support for the organisation, for the purchase of arms. The renowned Macedonian revolutionary leader Boris Saraffov once offered the United States Consul in Petrograd a Macedonian legion to help in the fight for Cuban independence during the Spanish American war, in exchange for the United States supplying IMRO with arms to fight the Ottomans. S. Christowe, *Heroes and Assassins*, London, 1935, p. 67.

An important work recognising Macedonian national individuality was that of the Austrian Karl Hron in 1899. He attacked the Serbian view as expressed through Verkovich and particularly Gopchevich, exposing its ‘weaknesses, distortions, falsifications and unscientific conclusions concerning the proper position of the Macedonians with respect to their nationality’. Hron was convinced that the Macedonians were not ‘Serbs or Bulgarians’, but ‘a specific national group’.<sup>189</sup> Although he did not provide specific population data he nevertheless concluded that the Macedonians were the dominant ethnic group in the land.

Data compiled by Hron, Oestreich, Gersin and Georgiev differed vastly from that of Greek, Bulgarian, Serb and other European commentators. All recognised the majority of the population as distinctly Macedonian rather than Bulgarian or Serb. The German Dr Karl Oestreich determined that Macedonians constituted a separate people from Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians, and estimated the Macedonian Christians at 1,500,000 and Macedonian Muslims at 500,000, from a total population of 2,850,000.<sup>190</sup> Gersin also considered Macedonians made up a separate nationality and provided population data declaring Macedonians as constituting the majority of the population, totalling 52.4 per cent. A figure of 1,182,036 represented the combined total of Macedonian Christians and Macedonian Muslims according to Gersin.<sup>191</sup> The Russian G. G. Georgiev’s data appeared in the Macedonian publication *Makedonski Glas*, published by the Macedonian colony in St Petersburg in 1913. Amongst the highest of estimates Georgiev counted a total population of 3,500,000 people with a Macedonian majority accounting for 65 per cent of the population (2,275,000). There was no corresponding enlargement of Macedonian boundaries to account for the increased population. Georgiev adhered to the generally accepted frontiers of Macedonia, and included upper Korcha in the west, Kachanik in the north and the

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<sup>189</sup> K. Hron, *Narodnosta na Makedonskite Sloveni* [The Nationality of the Macedonian Slavs], Skopje, 1966, p. 29 (Macedonian reprint, original title *Das Volksthum der Slaven Makedoniens*, Wien, 1890).

<sup>190</sup> K. Oestreich, *Die Bevölkerung von Makedonien*, (Geogr. Zeitschr., XI, 1905, p. 292), as quoted in J. Cvijic, *Questions Balkaniques*, Paris, 1916, Appendix (No page number).

<sup>191</sup> K. Gersin, *Macedonien und das Türkische Problem*, Vienna, 1903, as quoted in H. Andonovski, *Foreign Authors on Macedonia and the Macedonians*, Skopje, 1977, p. 200.

southern boundary as marked by Mount Olympus. The island of Thasos was also included as constituting a part of Macedonian territory.<sup>192</sup>

Table 2.17: Non-Macedonian Estimates of Macedonian Population in Macedonia, 1899–1913

	<b>Oestreich 1899 German</b>	<b>Peuker 1902 Austrian</b>	<b>Gersin 1903 Austrian</b>	<b>Georgiev 1913 Russian</b>
Albanians	300,000	NA		245,000
Bulgarians		"		
Greeks	200,000	"	228,702	315,000
Gypsies		"		35,000
Jews		"		52,500
Macedonians	2,000,000	1,215,000	1,182,036	2,275,000
Miscellaneous		NA		8,750
Serbs		"		
Turks	250,000	"	499,204	455,000
Vlahs	100,000	"		113,750
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,850,000</b>	<b>"</b>	<b>2,258,244</b>	<b>3,500,000</b>

Source and notes: Oestreich data cited from J. Cvijic, *Questions Balkaniques*, Paris, 1916, (Appendix, No page number); Gersin statistics as cited in H. Andonovski, *Foreign Authors on Macedonia and the Macedonians*, Skopje, 1977; Peuker data cited from L. Mojsov (1954), op. cit. p. 167; and, Georgiev data appeared in the newspaper *Makedonski Golgos*, Year 1, Issue number 2, 1913, p. 33. Note: Oestreich estimates that the number of Christian Macedonians was 1,500,000 and Macedonian Muslims 500,000.

## Macedonian data

MACEDONIAN COMMENTATORS DEEMED the Macedonian ethnic element as constituting the majority of the population, with Turks, Vlahs, Albanians, Greeks, Jews and Gypsies making up the remainder of the population. Macedonian data differs from the bulk of Balkan and European statistics in that Macedonians are designated as Macedonians and not as Bulgarians or Serbs. In contrast to those who

<sup>192</sup> *Makedonski Golos* [Macedonian - *Makedonski Glas*, English - Macedonian Voice] The publication of the Macedonian colony in Saint Petersburg, Russia, Year 1, Issue Number 2, pp. 28–34.

harboured designs towards Macedonia and whose academics and linguists were financially supported by scientific academies and foreign departments, Macedonian commentators had no such resources at their disposal. Subsequently there was limited Macedonian data regarding the ethnographic make-up of the country. Amongst the earliest instances of population data of Macedonian origin and appearing after the Congress of Berlin was the Constitution of the Provisional Government of Macedonia (specifically Article Three). Although an important historical document, there is no evidence that it was intended for western European circulation to influence views on the ethnographic make-up of Macedonia. The Constitution appeared at the time of the Kresna Rebellion. Article Three stipulated that Macedonians consist of more than 50 per cent of the total population and distinguished Macedonian Muslims as a separate group from other Muslims (although incorporated their number together with the Turks). Although the overall population was recorded as just under 1.4 million people, the geographical boundaries of Macedonia as articulated in Article One of the Constitution corresponded to the generally accepted limits of the land. The northern regions of Preshevo and Katchanik were included as a part of Macedonia, as was Korcha (Gorica) in the west, and the southern boundary marked by the river Bistrica.<sup>193</sup>

For almost twenty years no other population data were produced by Macedonian sources. In 1898 the Macedonian Revolutionaries' newspaper *Politichka Borba* ('Political Struggle') presented statistics indicating the Macedonian element as constituting the majority of the population (52.74 per cent).<sup>194</sup> The data did not recognise the presence of Bulgarians or Serbs in Macedonia. The publishers of the newspaper obviously considered Weigand's ethnographic study of Macedonia,

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<sup>193</sup> S. Dimevski, V. Popovski, S. Shkarich and M. Apostolski, *Makedonskata Liga i Ustavot za Drzhavno Ureduvanje na Makedonija 1880*, [The Macedonian League and the Constitution on the Future Organisation of Macedonia 1880], Skopje, 1985, pp. 237–238. A similar population total is given by Greek sources for 1878 (see Table 2.15); however, Greek views of Macedonia are typically based on a more limited recognition of geographical Macedonia.

<sup>194</sup> *Politichka Borba* [Political Struggle], Issue No 7, 29 October 1898, p. 1. The author assumes that no other Macedonian based population statistics were produced to 1898.

conducted in the same year, as credible, as the data were clearly his, except that the category Bulgarian was replaced with Macedonian. The Macedonian Congress produced a geographical map of Macedonia in 1902. It appeared as a part of the Project for Macedonian Autonomy, and proposed that the Vilayets of Solun, Bitola and Skopje should form one Vilayet, with Solun as the capital. Prishtina, Prizrend and Old Serbia were to be excluded from the boundaries of the single Macedonian Vilayet.<sup>195</sup>

In 1913 the Macedonian Scholarly and Literary Society in St Petersburg sent a Memorandum for Independence of Macedonia to the participants of the 1913 London Conference, protesting at the partitioning of the country as ‘a cruel violation of human rights’, and merely substituting the Turkish yoke for a Christian one.<sup>196</sup> The Memorandum called for the establishment of an independent Macedonian nation with a Macedonian national assembly in the principal city Solun.<sup>197</sup> There was no recognition given to Bulgarians or Serbs inhabiting the country. It noted that two thirds of the population were made up of Macedonians whilst the remaining peoples were made up of Turks, Vlahs, Albanians, Greeks and Jews.<sup>198</sup> As an appendix to the Memorandum, a geographical map outlining the national borders of Macedonia was included and marked Macedonia's far south-eastern border beyond the Mesta River, incorporating the town of Ksanti and along the Aegean Sea to Port Lagos.<sup>199</sup> The island of Thasos was included as a part of Macedonia, the southern boundary extended beyond Bistrica river but excluded Katerini and Mount Olympus. Almost the entire western boundary extended further westward, incorporating Gorica

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<sup>195</sup> D. Dakin, op. cit. p. 82. The Rhodope mountains where the Muslim Pomaks were settled was also to be excluded from the single Vilayet, whilst the Halkidik Peninsula and the territory to the East as far as the River Mesta was to be included in the boundaries.

<sup>196</sup> *Makedonski Golgos*, op. cit. (Issue 1, 1913), p. 23.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, pp. 21–23. Macedonian nationalists have always considered Solun as being the capital of an independent Macedonian State. The Russian commentator A.V. Amfiteatrov (op. cit. p.69) also noted the same during his travels in Macedonia at the beginning of the twentieth century.

<sup>198</sup> *Makedonski Golgos*, op. cit. pp. 21-22.

<sup>199</sup> Ksanti is known in Greek as Xsanti.

(Korcha) and numerous other smaller towns. The northern boundary stretched to the southern limits of the Vranje region.<sup>200</sup>

Whilst Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria were influencing Western Europe with their population statistics and ethnographic maps in support of their respective positions in Macedonia, there was virtually no effective opposing view advocating the Macedonian standpoint. In addition, due to Macedonian identity not being clearly visible to outsiders, and interested outsiders were typically not concerned with discovering what they were not in search of, all these factors further compounded the general confusion which gave rise to Macedonia becoming a territory of dispute. Conflicting claims emanating from the hostile Balkan States correlated to territorial aspirations. The Bitola region was one of the most highly contested regions in Macedonia as each of the Balkan States claimed that their own nationality constituted the majority of the Christian population. The following chapter will present a detailed evaluation of everyday life in that region.

Table 2.18: Macedonian Views of Population, 1880–1898

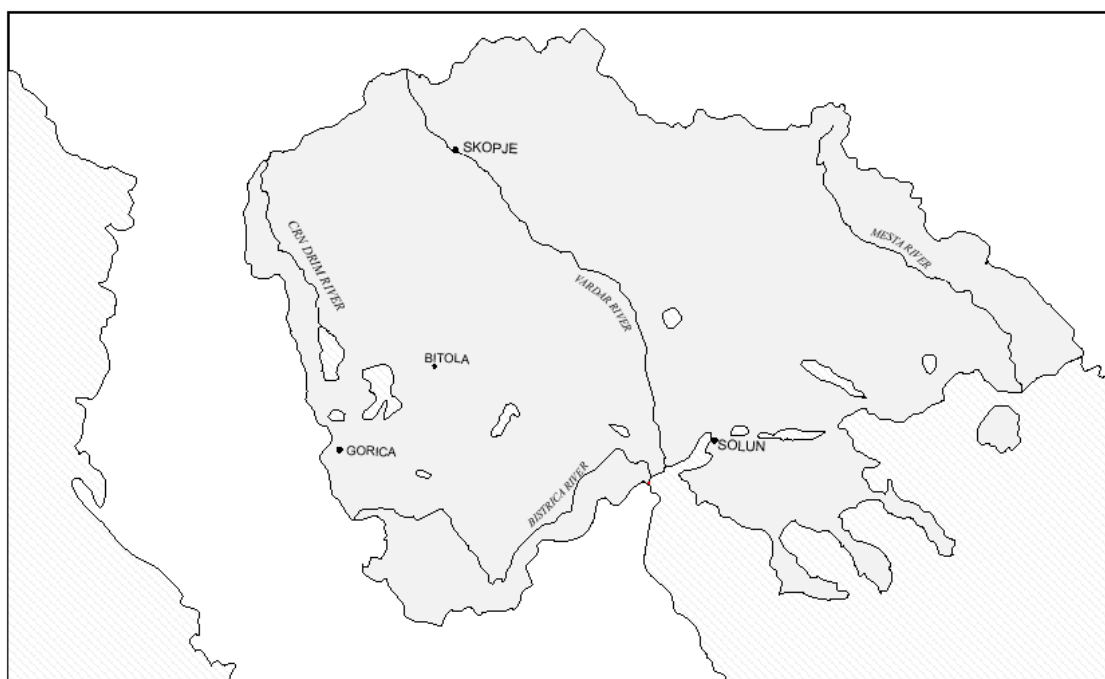
	<b>1880 Constitution</b>	<b><i>Politichka Borba</i> 1898</b>
Albanians	75,000	
Bulgarians		
Greeks	61,000	220,000
Gypsies		
Jews	65,000	90,000
Macedonians	705,000	1,200,000
Miscellaneous		
Serbs		
Turks	450,000	695,000
Vlahs	41,000	70,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,397,000</b>	<b>2,275,000</b>

Source and notes: S. Dimevski, V. Popovski, S. Shkarich, and M. Apostolski, *Makedonskata Liga i Ustavot za Drzhavno Ureduvanje na Makedonija 1880*, Skopje, 1985, p. 238. Population data for the number of Turks represents the total number of ‘Turks and Pomaks’. The figure

<sup>200</sup> The compiler of this map was Dimitar Chupovski, a leading member of the Macedonian society in St Petersburg.

of 41,000 Vlachs is recorded as 'Vlahs and others', and the Albanian category included 'Orthodox and Muslim'. The 1898 figures are drawn from the newspaper *Politichka Borba*, Issue Number 7, dated 29 October 1898, p. 1. The figure of 695,000 Turks represented all Muslims.

Figure 2.10: Dimitar Chupovski's map of Macedonia, 1913



# Chapter Three: Bitola

## 3.1 Rural and urban landscapes

AS A REGION, Bitola serves as a useful sample within which to reconstruct the finely-grained detail of Macedonian life in this period. Bitola is (and was) at the heart of the Macedonian experience, and it so happens that life within this province is reasonably well documented.

Having examined the ethnic—make up of Macedonia and conflicting accounts of the population structure on a general level in the preceeding chapter, by comparison, Chapter Three will present a finely textured account of the highly contested Bitola region. The economic, religious, political and ethnic structure of the region will be explored in order to understand the real—life conditions under which Macedonians lived at the local level in both the urban and rural environments. Village social structure, status systems and ritual celebrations are also drawn upon to provide an insight into the defining character of the Macedonian people and the fabric of their village life.

Located in the western part of Macedonia, the Bitola region is situated in the central part of the Pelagonia plain. The Pelagonia plain expands over the regions of Prilep, Bitola and Lerin. The Bitola plain consists of 582 square kilometres of land; however, the total size of the Bitola administrative region, including Pelister Mountain and the Mariovo district, is 1,798 square kilometres. The plain lies at approximately 600 metres above sea level, and the highest point in the region is Pelister Mountain at 2601 metres. In the Mariovo hills the mountains range between heights of 1,000 and 1,500 metres. As such the Bitola plain is encircled by high mountain ranges which directly impact upon the climate. The region experiences cold winters with snowfall

covering the land throughout winter, when the temperature is known to fall below minus 30 degrees celsius. During the warm summer months the temperature can reach up to 40 degrees celsius, although the nights become milder due to the surrounding mountain ranges. Rain is most frequent from October to March, with maximum sunshine in the months of July and August. The least amount of sunshine occurs during the winter months, in December and January.<sup>1</sup> The major river is the Crna, with approximately 70 kilometres of it running through the region. Other river systems connected to the Crna include the Shemnica, Dragor (flows through Bitola town) and Bela (through Mariovo). There are numerous streams and creeks flowing out of the surrounding mountain ranges linking to the Crna River. A large marsh existed in the south central part of the Bitola Pelagonia Plain and was known as *Blato*, stretching approximately 20 kilometres long and up to five kilometres wide.<sup>2</sup>

The Bitola region boundaries used in this study are not identical to the administrative unit of the Bitola *kaza* in the Ottoman period. The administrative boundaries of the Bitola *kaza* varied at different times. In the 1873 Ottoman population census, the Bitola *kaza* was recorded as containing 180 villages.<sup>3</sup> The prominent Bulgarian ethnographer and compiler of Macedonian population statistics, V. Kanchov, counted 266 villages in the Bitola *kaza* in 1900.<sup>4</sup> Another Bulgarian compiler of Macedonian population data, D.M. Brancoff, claimed 120 villages for the Bitola *kaza* in 1905.<sup>5</sup> A 1913 Serb military report compiled immediately after the Second Balkan War claimed 123 villages in the Bitola *kaza*.<sup>6</sup> These discrepancies

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<sup>1</sup> G. Lumburovski, ed. *Bitola*, Ljubljana, 1985, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> The marsh was drained in the early 1960s.

<sup>3</sup> J. Jordanov, editor, *Makedonia i Odrinsko - Statistika na Naselenieto ot 1873g*, [Macedonia and Adrianople - Population statistics of 1873], Sofia, 1995, p. 106 (reprinted edition in original form with a Bulgarian translation by the Macedonian Scientific Institute in Bulgaria). Original title *Ethnographie Des Vilayets D'Adrianople, De Monastir et De Salonique* Courier D Orient, Constantinople, 1878.

<sup>4</sup> V. Kanchov, *Makedonia Etnografia i Statistika*, [Macedonia, Ethnography and Statistics], Sofia, 1970 (1900), p. 542.

<sup>5</sup> Brancoff also includes the 14 villages from the Giavato *nahia*. D.M. Brancoff, *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne*, [The Christian Population of Macedonia], Paris, 1905, pp. 166-175.

<sup>6</sup> Report number 6260 dated 20 August 1913 by D.G. Alympich, from G. Todorovski, editor, *Srpski izvori za istorijata na Makedonskiot narod 1912-1914*, [Serbian Sources on the History of the Macedonian People], Skopje, 1979, p. 223.

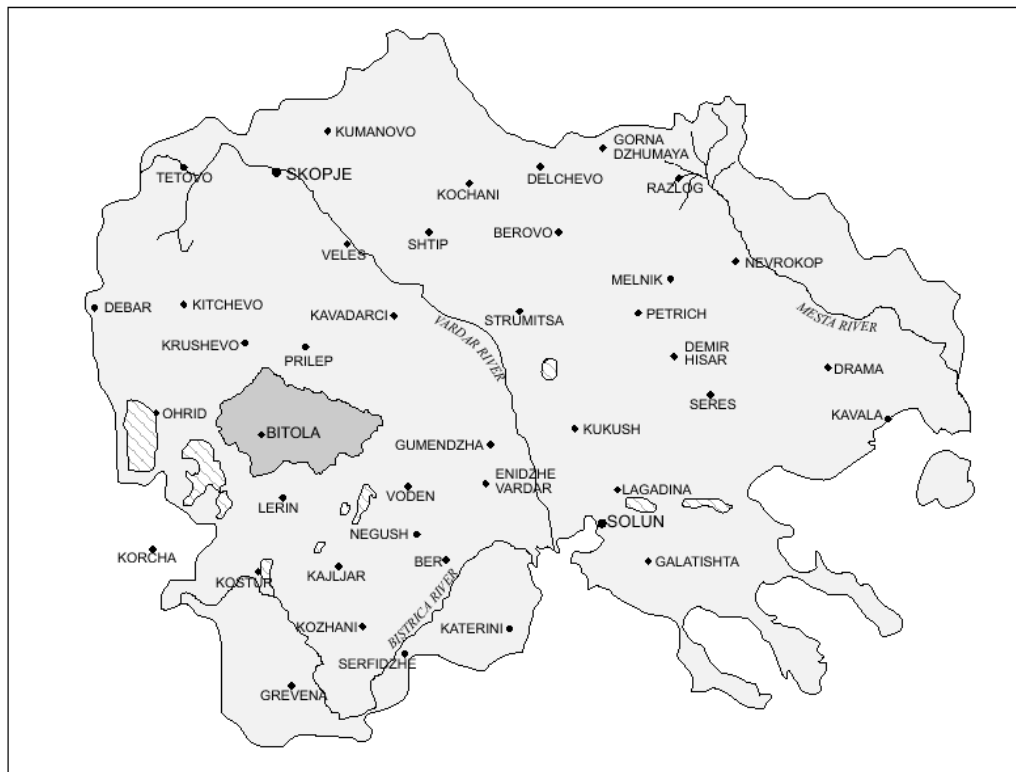
show the degree of variability involved. The boundaries of the Bitola region as used in this study comprise a total of 135 villages and correspond to the Bitola administrative boundaries as used in the Republic of Macedonia from the 1940s to 1994. This definition of the Bitola region fairly accurately encompasses what is traditionally considered as ‘belonging to the Bitola region’.

The Bitola *kaza* of the late Ottoman period encompassed a larger territory and included villages otherwise associated with the Demir Hisar, Prilep and Lerin regions. As such an administrative division such as a *kaza* may overlap with a religious territory (an eparchy) causing some confusion as to which region a particular village belonged. For instance, a 1909 Exarchate document from the Bitola Pelagonija eparchy refers to the village of Klabuschishta as a Bitola village (*Bitolsko selo*), even though it is in fact a Lerin region village.<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of this study the Bitola region is recognised as containing three distinct categories of villages – the Bitola Pelagonia plain villages (known to the locals in everyday language as *poletto*, ‘the plain’), Upper villages (known to the locals as *Gornite sela*) of the Pelister Mountain and Baba ranges and the Mariovo district (*Mariovo or Marioto*). This ‘zoning of village districts’ is essentially based upon recognising the diversity within each of the three sub-districts and the varying economic, political, religious and ethnic conditions. Villages are designated as small (up to 29 homes), medium (30–60 homes) large (61–100 homes) and very large (more than 100 homes).

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<sup>7</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0007.0060/0183-0186, dated 15 October 1909. Commenting on Greek educational data the newspaper *Glas Makedonski* similarly points out that Patriarchate schools were designated as belonging to certain eparchies and not to particular *kazas*. *Glas Makedonski*, Year IV, Number 9, 5 January 1897, p. 1. Following the extension of Greek rule over southern Macedonia Klabuschishta has been officially renamed as Poliplotanos.

Figure 3.1: Bitola region in Macedonia



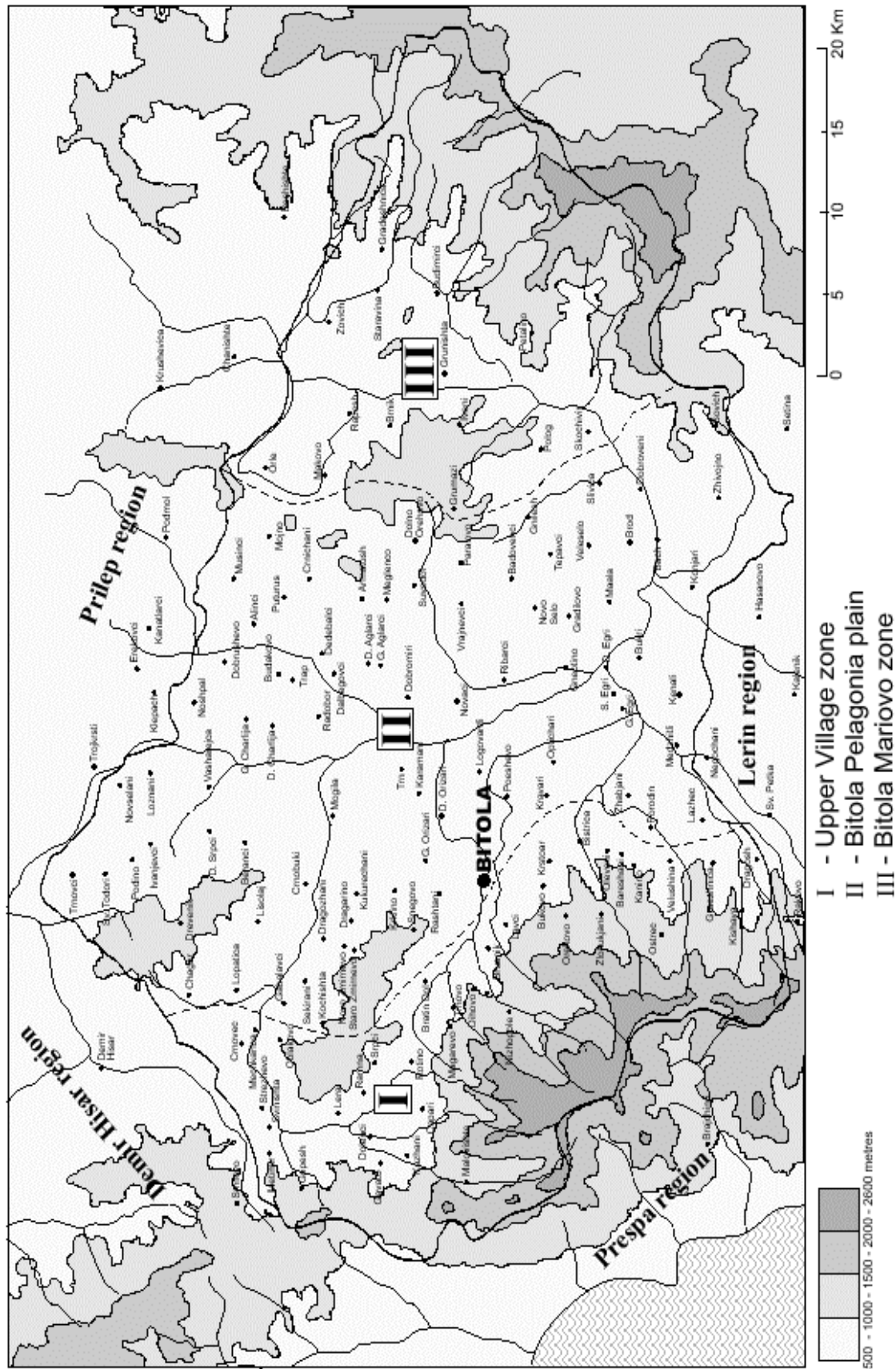


Figure 3.2: Topographical map of Bitola region

## Pelagonia plain

BY FAR THE largest of the three zones, the Pelagonia plain is also one of the largest and most fertile plains in Macedonia. In our period, 62 per cent of all Bitola region villages were located on the Pelagonia plain (83 villages from a total of 135). Amongst the largest of villages along the plain was Mogila, with over 200 homes.<sup>8</sup> Typically villages along the plain comprised between 30 and 60 homes at around the turn of the century. There were also several extremely small villages containing less than 10 homes, such as Armatoush and Metimir. Homes were similar in appearance, constructed of mud brick, square or rectangular designs consisting of one main room, covered with a pitched roof and supported by a large post erected in the centre of the room. Most homes did not have an internal ceiling; those that did were constructed of cane mixed with earth before being whitewashed. A village home may house a dozen or more family members and often three generations lived under the one roof.<sup>9</sup> Depending on the 'wealth' of households, farm animals were either kept separately in a small barn outside, in close proximity to the home, or the home was divided by an internal wall separating family members on one side (*kykata*) and animals such as cows, horses, donkeys and sheep on the other (*pondila*).<sup>10</sup> The average home along the Pelagonia plain had several small windows approximately 60 x 60 centimetres in diameter with wooden shutters.<sup>11</sup> The fireplace was the central point of the home, being where the cooking was conducted and heating supplied during the bitter cold winters. Above the fireplace a chimney led out through the ceiling. In the poorer homes a fire was simply lit in the middle of the room, and an opening in the roof enabled the smoke to escape (the opening in the ceiling was known as

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<sup>8</sup> The measuring tool for the size of villages differs according to the commentator, sometimes it was the number of homes, other times the number of inhabitants. Respondents often experienced difficulty estimating the number of people in their village during the period under examination (and this was also the case when asked to estimate the current village population). No such difficulties existed, however, when responding to the question regarding the number of homes in the village.

<sup>9</sup> Large numbers offered a 'sense of security' during the turbulent environment of late Ottoman rule. Most village homes on the Bitola plain also kept two or three dogs, even though sheep herding was not their primary livelihood.

<sup>10</sup> Pigs and chickens never shared the same roof with people.

<sup>11</sup> Windows were similar in homes in the upper village and Mariovo districts.

*badžhata*).<sup>12</sup> Four rectangular-shaped large stones were positioned around the fire and known as *kelanici*.<sup>13</sup> Furniture was at a minimum. During construction of the home a recess was left in an internal wall to be utilised as a cupboard.<sup>14</sup> Cooking utensils consisted of earthenware, copper and clay pots known as *grnchina*.<sup>15</sup>

Each village had its own church located on the fringes of town, with a cemetery situated beside it. Wheat was the dominant product of the Bitola Pelagonia plain, followed by tobacco, beans and peppers. Livestock was generally limited to working animals, and few households maintained more than 10 or 15 head of sheep. The characteristic feature of Bitola plain villages was that they were predominantly agricultural settlements, the bulk made up of *chiflik* feudal estates. Working the land on behalf of a feudal landlord known as the *beg*, villagers lived under an entrenched system of labour exploitation which placed them in a position of servitude. As Macedonians constituted the majority group of the rural population, it was they who were primarily subjected to the backward and corrupt *chiflik* agrarian system. Villages along the Pelagonia plain offered greater security from Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian armed bands and Albanian Muslim bandits, but there was no security from the persecutions and violations committed by a cruel *beg*.

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<sup>12</sup> Mihailo Kleshtev (born Gorno Aglarci 1934), interview conducted in Melbourne on 1 November 1999. Mihailo married Dragica Vasilevska from Vrajevci in 1956, and later moved to Gini Male in Bitola in the early 1960s where he built a new family home. He arrived in Australia in 1964. Regarding typical Macedonian village homes see K. Tanchevski, *Tipovi i enterieri na selskite kujki vo Bitolskiot kraj*, [Characteristics of village homes in the Bitola region], Bitola, 1981, and also M.E. Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, London, 1905.

<sup>13</sup> K. Tanchevski, op. cit. p. 562.

<sup>14</sup> A villager would construct his own home with the help of relatives and friends from within the village.

<sup>15</sup> Earthenware pots were often made by village women (who would sing specific songs whilst making them). Copper pots were purchased from the Bitola marketplaces and clay pots used to cook stews could also be purchased from travelling salesmen known as *grnchari*. Water was stored in a clay drinking vase known as a *bardina* (*barde*). There were never enough spoons for everyone - spoons were made of wood, most people made their own, while some purchased them in Bitola. The meal table was roughly the size of a modern kitchen table, but constructed of timber and hand made. At the head of the table sat the eldest male member of the household, and beside him sat other adult males of the household. The eldest female adults also sat at the table, whilst the younger women with young children sat at a smaller wooden table. The eldest males sat upon small wooden three legged stools; but there were never enough stools for all the adults, so others sat on a mud brick stool that was constructed alongside the wall. The one main room was both a kitchen and bedroom. Beds consisted of straw mattresses that lay on the bare earthen floor and were rolled up when not in use. Every home had a large wooden chest known as *koŕcheke* (or *cheŕa*) that contained the finest clothes, blankets and other items of value. Mihailo Kleshtev interview, op. cit. and Dragica Kleshteva (born 1934 Vrajevci, Bitola region), interview conducted 1 November 1999. Dragica lived in Vrajevci until her marriage to Mihailo Kleshtev in 1956.

An analysis of the ethnic characteristics of Pelagonia plain villages (Table 3.1) reveals that Macedonian villages constituted the major ethnic element in the district. These were numerically followed by Turks who were more likely to live in a shared Macedonian Christian-Turkish Muslim village than inhabit a village exclusively. Albanians inhabited only two villages, Drevenik and Snegovo. The two sole Albanian villages were situated along the highest points on the Pelagonia plain; both sat at 1100 metres above sea level and were located respectively on the northern and western fringes of the plain. In comparison to the majority of villages on the plain, Drevenik and Snegovo were non-*chiflik* villages. Vlachs were completely absent from the plain, and this was in accordance to their non-agricultural traditions. Jews were not known to be rural inhabitants and none are recorded as living in any village within the three Bitola districts. Gypsies were also exclusively urban dwellers.

Migratory labour known as *pechalba* provided men with an opportunity to work abroad and return with substantial income which was otherwise impossible to secure by remaining in the village. Although *pechalba* was a long-held tradition in the region, towards the final stages of Ottoman rule working abroad substantially increased in popularity, yet was not as widespread along the Pelagonia plain as in the upper villages (and in other mountainous regions of Western Macedonia). Pelagonia plain villages were generally under the heaviest economic strain of the three Bitola zones.

Table 3.1: Bitola Pelagonia Plain Villages

Pelagonia Plain	Ethnic Make-up	Size of village	Metres Above sea level	Agricultural land in hectares	Grazing land in hectares	Forest land in hectares	Land status
Aglarci Dolno	Macedonian	Sm-M	582	286	14		<i>Chiflik</i>
Aglarci Gorno <sup>16</sup>	Macedonian	Sm-M	590	286	14.7		<i>Chiflik</i>
Alinci	Macedonian	Sm-M	604	327	41	4.4	<i>Chiflik</i>
Armatoush	Macedonian	Sm	840	104	367	6.6	<i>Chiflik</i>
Bach	Macedonian	Med	620	1138	547	1.5	<i>Chiflik</i>
Baldovenci	Macedonian	Sm	690	NA	NA	NA	<i>Chiflik</i>
Beranci	Macedonian	Med-L	640	1028	785	15	<i>Chiflik</i>
Bilyanik	Macedonian	Sm-M	580	535	58	-	<i>Chiflik</i>
Brod	Macedonian	Large	740	1274	630	0.7	<i>Chiflik</i>
Budakovo	Turk/Mac	Med	525	476	14.7	-	<i>Chiflik</i>
Bukri <sup>17</sup>	Macedonian	Small	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Chagor <sup>18</sup>	Macedonian	Small	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Charlija Dolno <sup>19</sup>	Macedonian	Med	582	950	56		<i>Chiflik</i>
Charlija Gorno	Macedonian	Small	583	950	56		<i>Chiflik</i>
Crnichani	Macedonian	Med	690	523	607		Mixed
Crnobuki	Macedonian	Large	600	1042	434		<i>Chiflik</i>
Dalbegovci	Macedonian	Small	592	491	31		<i>Chiflik</i>
Dedebalci	Macedonian	S-M	592	939	203	-	<i>Chiflik</i>
Dobromiri	Macedonian	Med	575	1062	31	-	<i>Chiflik</i>
Dobroveni	Macedonian	Med	580	433	994	1.7	Mixed
Dobrushevo	Macedonian	Large	594	1475	38	39	<i>Chiflik</i>
Dragarino	Macedonian	Small	615	139	233	-	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Dragozhani	Macedonian	S-M	590	268	904	-	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Drevenik	Albanian	Large	1100	586	312	707	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Egri Gorno	Macedonian	S-M	580	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Egri Sredno	Macedonian	S-M	900	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Egri Dolno	Macedonian	Large	572	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Gabalavci	Macedonian	Small	660	349	291	8.7	<i>Chiflik</i>

<sup>16</sup> Both Gorno and Dolno Aglarci are recorded as having the same amount of agricultural and grazing lands, according to M. Panov, *Enciklopedia na selata vo Republika Makedonija*, [Encyclopedia of the villages in the Republic of Macedonia], Skopje, 1998.

<sup>17</sup> During the First World War a number of villages such as Bukri and others in the district were deserted due to heavy fighting. In Gorno Aglarci, military trenches were constructed through the middle of the village and the entire village population left the village for their own safety. A number of villages in the district, as far as Suvodol, were vacated during the war. The inhabitants of Gorno Aglarci all moved to Prilep during the fighting and returned after the war to rebuild their lives. The devastation of some villages meant that the inhabitants were never to return. There is no doubt about the intensity of the fighting that took place in the district, as many years later villagers were still digging up human bones in their fields.

<sup>18</sup> Village destroyed during the Ottoman period.

<sup>19</sup> Gorno and Dolno Charlija are both recorded by M. Panov op. cit. as having the same amount of land holdings.

Gnilesh	Macedonian	Sm-M	840	356	1653	54.6	Mixed
Gnotino	Macedonian	Sm	577	1441	106	-	<i>Chiflik</i>
Gradilovo <sup>20</sup>	Macedonian	Sm-M	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Ivanyevci	Macedonian	Med	630	898	597	98	<i>Chiflik</i>
Karamani	Macedonian	Med	570	670	25	-	<i>Chiflik</i>
Kochishta <sup>21</sup>	Macedonian	Small	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Konjari <sup>22</sup>	Mac/Turk	Sm-M	610	1060	569	8.4	<i>Chiflik</i>
Kravari	Macedonian	Small	587	160	-	-	<i>Chiflik</i>
Kenali <sup>23</sup>	Turkish	V-Lrg	588	2705	117	48	<i>Chiflik</i>
Krkliino	Macedonian	Med	670	491	415	22	Mixed
Kukurechani	Macedonian	Large	680	1466	227		<i>Chiflik</i>
Lazhec	Maco/Turk	Large	595	1036	111		<i>Chiflik</i>
Lisolay	Macedonian	Med	700	754	1148	17	<i>Chiflik</i>
Logovardi	Macedonian	Med	576	1527			<i>Chiflik</i>
Lopatica	Macedonian	Small	576	694	1338	329	<i>Chiflik</i>
Loznani	Macedonian	Med-L	600	563	219	32	<i>Chiflik</i>
Maala <sup>24</sup>	Macedonian	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Medzhitliya	Turkish	Large	587	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Meglenci	Macedonian	Small	740	297	494	17	<i>Chiflik</i>
Mogila	Macedonian	Large	582	1712	340	9	Mixed
Moyno	Macedonian	Small	710	1475			<i>Chiflik</i>
Musinci	Turk/Maco	Large	630	943	132	14	<i>Chiflik</i>
Noshpal	Macedonian	Med	588	921			<i>Chiflik</i>
Novaci	Macedonian	Med	576	980	111		<i>Chiflik</i>
Novoselani	Macedonian	Small	610	374	84		<i>Chiflik</i>
Obershani	Macedonian	Large	589	588			<i>Chiflik</i>
Optichari	Macedonian	Med-L	578	1530	140		<i>Chiflik</i>
Orehovo Dolno	Mac/Turk	Med-L	720	385	1189	344	<i>Chiflik</i>
Orizari Dolno	Macedonian	Med	577	598	8.6		<i>Chiflik</i>
Orizari Gorno	Macedonian	Med	577	264	88		<i>Chiflik</i>
Paralovo	Macedonian	Small	820	321	523		<i>Chiflik</i>
Podino	Macedonian	Sm-M	680	341	130	115	<i>Chiflik</i>
Poeshevo	Macedonian	Sm-M	578	670			Mixed
Porodin	Turkish	Med	600	1154			<i>Chiflik</i>
Puturus	Macedonian	Small	670	446	167		<i>Chiflik</i>
Radobor	Macedonian	Sm-M	531	752			<i>Chiflik</i>
Rastani	Macedonian	Small	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Ribarci	Macedonian	Small	550	538			<i>Chiflik</i>
Rotino	Macedonian	Med-L	1020	373	585		<i>Chiflik</i>
Sekirani	Macedonian	Small	625	280	935		<i>Chiflik</i>
Slivica	Macedonian	Small	610	346	792		<i>Chiflik</i>
Snegovo	Albanian	Small	1100	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Rayatsko</i>

<sup>20</sup> Village deserted as a result of military conflict from World War I.

<sup>21</sup> Kochishta village was destroyed by a foreign paramilitary band in 1907.

<sup>22</sup> Following Ottoman rule Konjari village was renamed Germijan.

<sup>23</sup> Following Ottoman rule Kenali village was renamed Kremenica.

<sup>24</sup> Village deserted as a result of military conflict from World War One.

Suvodol	Macedonian	Small	650	581	280		<i>Chiflik</i>
Sveti Todor	Macedonian	Sml-M	660	510	224	339	<i>Chiflik</i>
Tepavci	Macedonian	Med-L	750	683	506		<i>Chiflik</i>
Trap	Macedonian	Sm-M	573	581			<i>Chiflik</i>
Trn	Macedonian	Sm-M	573	1059			<i>Chiflik</i>
Trnovci	MM + MC	Med	620	664	202	232	Mixed
Vashareyca	Macedonian	Med	584	537	86.4	22.3	<i>Chiflik</i>
Veleselo	Macedonian	Small	700	201	426	6.1	<i>Chiflik</i>
Vraynevc	Macedonian	Small	660	506	376		<i>Chiflik</i>
Zhabyani	Maco/Turk	Sm-M	585	269	53	6.4	Mixed
Zhivoyno	Macedonian	Med	710	1218	1500	-	<i>Chiflik</i>
Zmirnevo Novo	Macedonian	Large	595	80	211		<i>Chiflik</i>
Zmirnevo Staro	Turkish	Small	850	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Rayatsko</i>

Source and notes: Ethnic composition, *chiflik* status and existence of particular villages during Ottoman rule derived from interviews conducted and local knowledge; as well as, including additional data, from: M. Panov, *Enciklopedia na selata vo Republika Makedonija*, Skopje, 1998; D.M. Brancoff, *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne*, Paris, 1905; V. Kanchov, *Bitola, Prespa i Ohridsko*, Sofia, 1970 (1891); and, V. Kanchov, *Makedonija Etnografia i Statistika*, 1970 (1900), Sofia. Regarding the *chiflik* status of land, conflicting data has been identified between various sources and the writer has opted for what he considers the most reliable. In addition often a village might be partially *chiflik* land, where this has been identified the village is designated as mixed.

Figure 3.3: Novaci - Layout of typical Pelagonia plain village



Source: Bitola Land Titles Office (1932)

## Mariovo

ETHNICALLY HOMOGENOUS, THE Mariovo district was comprised exclusively of Macedonian villages. No Turkish, Albanian or Vlah villages existed in any part of Bitola's Mariovo district.<sup>25</sup> The central village in the district, and the largest, was

<sup>25</sup> Both the Bitola and Prilep districts of Mariovo were populated exclusively by Macedonians.

Gradeshnica, containing between 150 and 200 homes and in 1905 as many as 1,200 inhabitants.<sup>26</sup> Typically villages contained between thirty and sixty homes in Mariovo, with Petalino the smallest village in the district, with fewer than 10 homes. Material used for the construction of homes in Mariovo differed from those along the plain. Stone was readily available in the hills and mountain ranges and slate roofs were the norm. On the Pelagonia plain, homes were single storey, whereas in Mariovo there was a mixture of single and double storey dwellings. The ground floor was utilised to store items such as grains and to house farm animals, whilst family members resided upstairs. The interior and exterior of homes in both the Bitola plain and in the Mariovo hills were simple constructions and were not adorned by any architectural detail. Although the district was made up of a multitude of hills ranging between 1,000 and 1,500 metres, the terrain was not so rugged as to have high-density settlements (as generally found in typically mountainous areas).

Mariovo district villages contained an abundance of agricultural and grazing land compared to Pelagonia plain villages. The majority of villages in the Mariovo district constituted *chiflik* land. The main agricultural produce consisted of barley, rye and corn.<sup>27</sup> Due to plentiful grazing fields, sheep breeding was popular. The historian M. Zdraveva maintained that households commonly held a minimum of 250–300 sheep, with as many as 100,000 sheep and goats held throughout the Bitola and Prilep areas of Mariovo.<sup>28</sup> Generally the Mariovo district was seen as economically similar to villages on the plain, with *pechalba* migrations on a similar level but with the added advantage of significantly larger sheep holdings.

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<sup>26</sup> D.M. Brancoff, op. cit. p. 148.

<sup>27</sup> Rye bread was commonly consumed in the Mariovo district.

<sup>28</sup> M. Zdraveva, *Territorial changes in the Balkan Peninsula after the Berlin Congress and its effect on the economic life of Macedonia*, Skopje, 1981, p. 180. In the middle of the nineteenth century, according to D. Silyanovski editor, *Makedonia kako prirodna i ekonomska celina*, [Macedonia as a natural and economic unit], Sofia, 1945, p.312, there were 9,000,000 sheep (as well as 2,000,000 goats) in Macedonia. By 1907 this figure reduced to a combined figure of 5,312,413 sheep and goats in the land.

Isolated from urban Bitola, there was virtually no regular Ottoman Turkish presence in the area. Following the brutal suppression of the Ilinden Rebellion of 1903 and the subsequent disarray of the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement, the district suffered a general lack of security. These conditions exposed villages to the intimidation of foreign armed bands, especially hostile Greek bands who subjected the population to politically-motivated violence, forcing entire villages to adopt the religious jurisdiction of the Patriarchate.

Table 3.2: Bitola Mariovo District Villages

Mariovo	Ethnic Make-up	Village size	Metresa bove sea level	Agricultural Land in hectares	Grazing Land in hectares	Forests in hectares	Land status
Brnik	Macedonian	Sm-M	740	578	815	62	<i>Chiflik</i>
Budimirci	Macedonian	Med	800	737	1903	1936	<i>Chiflik</i>
Chegel <sup>29</sup>	Macedonian	Small	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Gradeshnica	Macedonian	V-Lrg	800	1471	2046	4755	<i>Chiflik</i>
Grumazi	Macedonian	Small	1090	223	639		<i>Chiflik</i>
Grunishta	Macedonian	Medium	800	352	1229	190	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Iveni	Macedonian	Small	940	289	1973	75	<i>Chiflik</i>
Makovo	Macedonian	Med-L	700	954	1409	185	<i>Chiflik</i>
Orle	Macedonian	Small	830	220	593	830	<i>Chiflik</i>
Petalino	Macedonian	Small	800	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Polog	Macedonian	Med-L	940	196	867	71	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Rapesh	Macedonian	Med	700	1119	791	98	<i>Chiflik</i>
Skochivir	Macedonian	Large	600	313	3836	4729	<i>Chiflik</i>
Sovich	Macedonian	Sm-M	1080	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Staravina	Macedonian	Med-L	850	1042	1357	3547	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Zovic	Macedonian	Sm-M	680	644	1287	257	<i>Chiflik</i>

Source and notes: Ethnic composition, *chiflik* status and existence of particular villages during Ottoman rule derived from interviews conducted and local knowledge; as well as, including additional data, from: M. Panov, *Enciklopedija na selata vo Republika Makedonija*, Skopje, 1998; D. Damcevska-Petreska and V. Kushevski, editors, *Nikola Petrov Rusinski Spomeni*, Skopje, 1997; D.M. Brancoff, *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne*, Paris, 1905; V. Kanchov, *Bitola, Prespa i Ohridsko*, Sofia, 1970 (1891); and, V. Kanchov, *Makedonija Etnografija i Statistika*, Sofia, 1970, (1900). Regarding the *chiflik* status of land, conflicting data has been identified from various sources and the writer has opted for what he considers the most reliable.

<sup>29</sup> Chegel was situated close to Polog and was an exclusively Macedonian Christian village. No data is available regarding the demise of the village.

Figure 3.4: Makovo - Layout of typical Mariovo village



Source: Bitola Land Titles Office (1932)

## Upper villages

SITUATED ALONG THE slopes of Mount Pelister were some of the largest villages in the Bitola region. Several villages contained a thousand or more inhabitants; notably, the Vlah villages of Nizhopole, Magarevo, Trnovo and Malovishte had a combined population of approximately 7,000 people.<sup>30</sup> The Macedonian villages of Capari, Gavato and Bukovo also contained over a thousand inhabitants each. Albanian villages typically were not as large as Macedonian and Vlah villages in the district; each village contained no more than a hundred homes each,<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> V. Kanchov, 1900, op. cit. p. 539. Malovishte was the smallest of the four villages with approximately 800 inhabitants in 1900. Ibid, p. 539.

<sup>31</sup> Stojan Spasevski (born 1922 in Graeshnica village, Bitola region), interview conducted in Melbourne on 30 March 1999 and 18 February 2002. Stojan's great-grandfather Yoshe Churchievski moved to Graeshnica from the village of Sveti Todor.

with a combined population of approximately 1,750 people.<sup>32</sup> The ethnically mixed village of Kazhani (Macedonians and Albanians) was the smallest village in the 'upper zone' with fewer than a hundred people. Villages in this zone were generally high density settlements (as was typical in mountainous areas) in comparison to the Pelagonia plain and the Mariovo district, situated between 640 and 1140 metres above sea level.

A limited supply of good quality agricultural land in the upper villages resulted in fewer *chiflike* estates. The main agricultural products in the district were corn, rye and barley. As with the Mariovo district, the upper villages notably had highly developed sheep breeding systems and ideal pastoral conditions in the mountainous landscape. However, due to regular raids by Albanian bandits, sheep numbers were constantly being depleted and alternative forms of economic survival were pursued.<sup>33</sup> Some worked on nearby *chiflikes*, others worked as tradesmen,<sup>34</sup> while others became traders such as those from Kazhani who purchased goods such as fish and apples from Prespa to resell elsewhere.<sup>35</sup> A market operated in the village of Malovishte and traded twice a week on Thursdays and Sundays.<sup>36</sup> Outside of urban Bitola the only industrial businesses operating were in the villages of Dihovo and Magarevo. The historian, D. Dimevski, states that in 1896 the Magarevo factory employed 220 people and was operational 24 hours a day.<sup>37</sup>

Although villages in the upper zone generally enjoyed greater prosperity compared to those in Mariovo and along the plain, the single most contributing factor for their economic success was their superior rate of *pechalba*. Towards the end

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<sup>32</sup> According to Kanchov, Zlokukani contained 500 inhabitants, Kishava 700 and Ostrec 550. Op. cit. (1900), p. 536.

<sup>33</sup> G. Dimovski-Colev and B. Pavlovski, *Nepokoreni* [Rebellious], Bitola, 1982, pp. 57–58. Both authors are prominent historians of the Bitola region.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 58.

<sup>35</sup> D. Konstantinov, M. Konstantinov, and K. Cingarovski, *Letopis na Bitolsko Lavci* [Chronicles of Lavci, Bitola region], Bitola, 1966, p. 22.

<sup>36</sup> G. Dimovski-Colev and B. Pavlovski, op. cit. p. 58.

<sup>37</sup> D. Dimeski, *Makedonskoto Nacionalnoosloboditelno Dvizhenie vo Bitolaskiot Vilayet 1893–1903* [The Macedonian National Liberation Movement in the Bitola Vilayet 1893–1903], Skopje, 1982, pp. 92–93.

of the nineteenth century every home in the village of Lavci had at least one male working abroad, and by the beginning of the twentieth century a process of discarding traditional village costumes for modern European clothing began.<sup>38</sup> Equally in Vlah villages, which were the most affluent of all upper villages, *pechalba* was particularly popular.<sup>39</sup> The relatively well-to-do nature of Macedonian and Vlah villages with high rates of *pechalba* was apparent by the size and quality of homes.<sup>40</sup> In contrast there was no tradition of *pechalba* in Albanian villages, where sheep breeding constituted their primary livelihood.<sup>41</sup>

Upper villages faced a similar predicament, but not as grave as the isolated Mariovo district in regard to incursions of foreign armed bands aimed at encouraging particular religious adherence. Equally, if not more distressing, were Albanian Muslim bandits, who were a constant threat to Christian inhabitants of the upper villages. Albanian extortion and violence was a constant source of distress to Christians in the district.

Upper villages were generally larger than those along the plain and in the Mariovo district. There was also greater ethnic diversity in this zone.<sup>42</sup> Exclusively Macedonian villages account for the majority, 22 of 36 villages, and Macedonians lived in mixed villages with Albanians (5), Vlachs (2) and Turks (1). Without exception both Albanian and Vlah villages were non-*chiflik* and often situated in isolated locations on high ground. Approximately 18 per cent of all upper villages were *chiflik*, and in every instance these villages contained Macedonians either as sole inhabitants or sharing with Turks.

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<sup>38</sup> D. Konstantinov, M. Konstantinov and K. Cingarovski, op. cit. pp. 5 and 24.

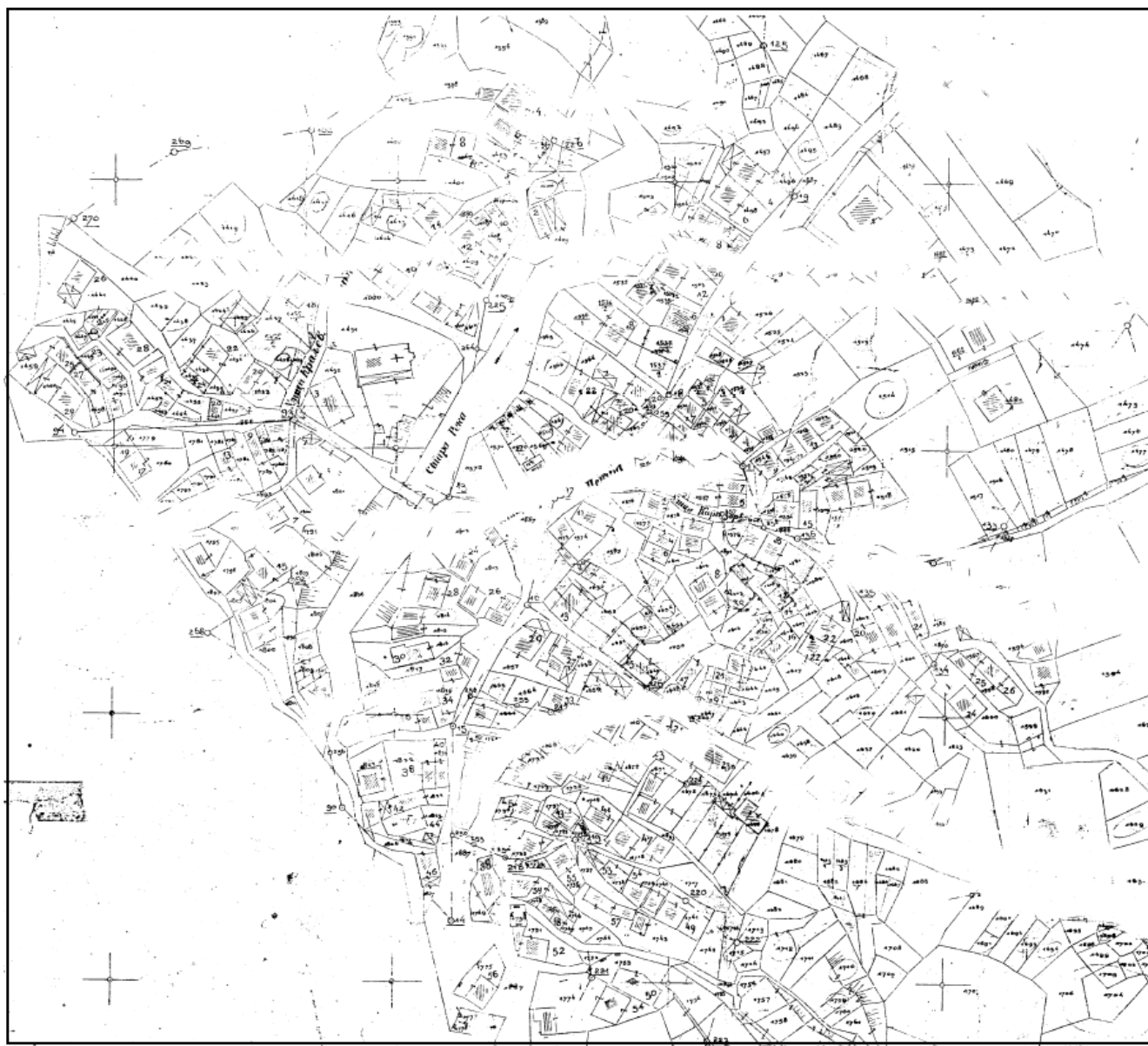
<sup>39</sup> G. Dimovski-Colev and B. Pavlovski, op. cit. p. 58. Apart from maintaining small-scale vegetable gardens, Vlachs were the least likely group found amongst the upper villages to engage in any significant agriculture. Ibid, p. 60.

<sup>40</sup> Although larger and well built, the homes were nevertheless constructed of the same materials (stone and slate) as homes in the Mariovo district.

<sup>41</sup> Stojan Spasevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> A sub-group within the district is located at the Giavato Pass (the entrance to the Prespa region) and is made up of ten villages. These are Metimir, Gopesh, Lera, Ramna, Srpci, Dolenci, Gavato, Kazhani, Capari and Malovishte.

Figure 3.5: Lavci - Layout of typical Upper village



Source: Bitola Land Titles Office (1930)

Table 3.3: Bitola Upper District Villages

Upper villages	Ethnic Make-up	Village size	Metres above sea level	Agri cultural Land (ha)	Grazing land	Forest land (ha)	Land status
Bareshani	Mac	Med	640	375	159	124	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Bistrica	Mac	Sm-M	650	419	98	2.1	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Bratin Dol	Alb/Mac	Small	830	362	494	4.8	Mixed
Brusnik	Mac	V-Large	860	305	295	245	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Bukovo	Mac	V-Large	720	913	591	146	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Capari	Mac	V-Large	1010	892	609	1612	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Crnovec	Alb/Mac	Med	650	647	334	324	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Dihovo	Mac	Large	830	501	218	446	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Dolenci	Mac/Turk	Large	790	218	82	421	<i>Chiflik</i>
Dragosh	Mac	V-Large	700	363	236	512	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Gavato	Mac	V-Large	850	340	185	1608	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Gopesh	Vlah	V-large	1140	51	132	703	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Graeshnica	Mac	Large	700	417	381	1059	<i>Chiflik</i>
Kanino	Mac	Med	640	259	161	96	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Kazhani	Alb/Mac	Small	860	364	123	315	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Kishava	Alb	Large	860	324	304	1913	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Krstoar	Mac	Sm-M	760	214	96	40	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Lavci	Mac	Large	760	231	492	149	<i>Chiflik</i>
Lera	Mac/Alb	Med-L	750	290	540	397	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Magarevo	Vlah	V-Lrg	1040	254	201	609	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Malovishte <sup>43</sup>	Vlah/Mac	V-L	1140	153	668	1675	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Mechkarica <sup>44</sup>	Mac	Small	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Metimir	Mac	Small	820	238	115	168	<i>Chiflik</i>
Nizhopole	Vlah/Mac	V-Large	1030	225	4230	200	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Oblakovo	Mac	Large	1100	209	333	156	Mixed
Oleveni	Mac	Small	650	301	148		<i>Chiflik</i>
Ostrec	Alb	Large		364	471	848	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Orehovo	Mac	Large	1060	385	1189	334	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Ramna	Mac/Alb	M-L	820	310	267	112	Mixed
Rotino	Mac	Med	1020	373	585		Mixed
Srpai	Mac	Large	640	1500	789	186	Mixed
Strezhevo	Mac	Sm-M		N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Svinishta	Mac	Small		N/A	N/A	N/A	<i>Chiflik</i>
Trnovo	Vlah	V-Large	960	203	217	193	<i>Rayatsko</i>
Velushina	Mac	V-Large	720	807	382	358	Mixed
Zlokukani	Alb	Large	980	113	1180	605	<i>Rayatsko</i>

Source and notes: Ethnic composition, *chiflik* status and existence of particular villages during Ottoman rule derived from interviews conducted and local knowledge; as well as,

<sup>43</sup> Kanchov claims there was only a handful of 'Bulgarian' homes in the village, the overwhelming majority were Vlachs.

<sup>44</sup> No data available, Mechkarica village has been uninhabited since the period between late Ottoman rule and the First World War.

including additional data, from: M. Panov, *Enciklopedija na selata vo Republika Makedonija*, Skopje, 1998; V. Kanchov, *Bitola, Prespa i Ohridsko*, Sofia, 1970 (1891); V. Kanchov, *Makedonija Etnografija i Statistika*, Sofia, 1970 (1900); D.M. Brancoff, *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne*, Paris, 1905; and, G.Dimovski-Colev and B. Pavlovski, *Nepokoreni*, Bitola, 1982. Regarding the *chiflik* status of land, conflicting data has been identified between various sources and the writer has opted for what he considers the most reliable. In addition often a village may be partially *chiflik* land, where this has been identified the village is designated as mixed.

Table 3.4: Ethnic Composition and Land Status of Villages in Bitola Region by Districts of Pelagonia Plain, Mariovo and Upper Villages

	Pelagonia plain		Mariovo		Upper villages		Bitola region total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Total number of villages</b>	83	61.5	16	11.9	36	26.7	135	100
<b>Ethnic make-up</b>								
Macedonian	71	85.5	16	100	22	61.1	109	80.7
Mixed Macedonian - Turkish	6	7.2	0	0	1	2.8	8	5.9
Albanian	2	2.4	0	0	3	8.3	5	3.7
Mixed: Macedonian - Albanian	0	0	0	0	5	13.9	5	3.7
Turkish	4	4.8	0	0	0	0	4	3.0
Vlah	0	0	0	0	3	8.3	3	2.2
Mixed: Macedonian - Vlah	0	0	0	0	2	5.6	2	1.5
<b>Land status</b>								
Total <i>chiflik</i> villages	68	81.9	13	81.3	8	22.2	89	65.9
Non <i>chiflik</i> villages	7	8.4	3	18.8	22	61.1	33	24.4
Mixed <i>chiflik</i> / non <i>chiflik</i>	8	9.6	0	0	6	16.7	14	10.4

Note: Numbers do not total 100 owing to rounding.

Photo 3.1: Traditional Mariovo-style Home



Photo 3.2 Home in Dolno Orehovo. The home is typical of the style found on the Pelagonia plain but is constructed of stone due to the village being situated on the fringes of the Mariovo hills



## Bitola: the urban scene

BITOLA HAS EXISTED as an urban centre since the fourth century BC, when it was known as Heraclea Lynkestis. Occupying a strategic geographical position, it was a central city under the reign of King Phillip II of Macedonia, with a population of 3,000 people. During Roman rule its strategic importance was elevated with the construction of the famous Via Egnatia roadway (constructed 148 AD) which connected it to the west to the port at Drach on the Adriatic coastline, and south east to Solun and Constantinople. During the Byzantine period in the Middle Ages the city was fortified. In 1385 it was conquered by the advancing Ottoman. The fate of the town would be similar to other Macedonian urban centres - it was subjected to intense Muslim colonisation and Islamicisation. Consequently the town took on the appearance of an Asiatic city and early travel writers noted its Oriental influences.

An Ottoman census of 1468 (census number 993 and 988) confirms the rapid Islamic predominance of the town, registering 278 Muslim families to 160 Christian families.<sup>45</sup> The town continued to grow steadily and in 1519, according to the Ottoman census of that year, there was a total of 1,086 families.<sup>46</sup> The Venetian ambassador Lorenzo Bernardo documented that in 1591 Bitola was made up of 1,500 homes, of which 200 were Jewish.<sup>47</sup> The famous Turkish travel writer Evliya Chelebi noted in 1662 that there were 3,000 large and small homes in Bitola, as well as 900 shops; Ottoman sources recorded the town as containing between 10,000 and 12,000 inhabitants in 1718, rising to 30,000 by 1783.<sup>48</sup> In 1836-1838, according to Ami Bue,

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<sup>45</sup> M. Sokoloski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV veka* [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census Registers from the XV century], Vol II, Skopje, 1973, p. 145. The editor of this particular volume of early Turkish documents points out that in the original document the total of non Muslim families are not recorded under the category 'Christian families' but under the term 'GEBR'. The definition of this Persian word is given as 'adherent of the Zaratystra religion', or 'those who worship fire'. In official Turkish census data it is symbolical of the word 'unbeliever'. It is clearly evident that it refers to Christians, as the detailed nature of the published documents provides the personal names of individuals together with their fathers' name, and these are distinctly Christian.

<sup>46</sup> P. Stavrev, *Bitola*, Bitola, 1999, p. 71.

<sup>47</sup> V. Bozhinov, and L. Panayotov, editors, *Macedonia - Documents and Material*, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, 1978, p. 105.

<sup>48</sup> P. Stavrev, op. cit. p. 71.

there were 35,000 inhabitants in Bitola.<sup>49</sup> By the beginning of the twentieth century when Macedonia found herself the object of intense rivalry between the Balkan States of Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, Bitola became one of the most contested towns and regions. Population estimates ranged anywhere from 37,000 to 65,000 people.

As elsewhere, ethnographic data on the Macedonian population notoriously reflected the expansionist foreign policies of the Bulgarian, Greek and Serb governments. Rivalry among the protagonists was clearly expressed through their ethnographic maps and purportedly academic publications. An amusing example demonstrating the Serb Bulgarian rivalry for Bitola has Gopchevitch claiming there were 20,000 Serbs and no Bulgarians in the town, whereas Kanchov claimed 10,000 Bulgarians and no Serbs! Despite the unreliability of data in relation to general population statistics and those of individual ethnic groups, particularly Christians in Bitola, a conclusion can nevertheless be drawn that Christians constituted approximately half of the overall urban population. There appears to be a consensus on this by Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian ethnographers.

Table 3.5: Balkan Estimates of Bitola's Religious Population, 1890–1909

<b>Bitola</b>	<b>Serbian 1890</b>	<b>Bulgarian 1900</b>	<b>Greek 1909</b>
Christian	21,850 (43.8 %)	19,500 (52.7 %)	32,000 (49.2 %)
Muslim/Jews	28,000 (56.2 %)	17,500 (47.3 %)	33,000 (50.8 %)
Total:	49,850	37,000	65,000

It is also generally considered that at the beginning of the twentieth century the Turkish element in Macedonian urban centres, including Bitola, was well into a state of decline as a result of unstable political conditions and uncertainty for the future. At the same time the Christian Macedonian element was increasing as people were moving out of villages and into the relative security of the town.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 71.

<sup>50</sup> V. Arsic, *Crkva Sv. Viličomyčenika Dimitrija u Bitoli (Povodom Proslave njene stogodišnice 1830–1930)*, [The Church Saint Dimitrija in Bitola, Celebrating its one hundred years, 1830–1930], Bitola, 1930, p. 17. This publication appeared in Bitola in 1930 when Bitola was under Serb rule and the Macedonian church was placed under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Orthodox church. The publication is in Serbian; M. Zdraveva, op. cit and

The ethnic nucleus of Bitola town was made up of Turks, Macedonians, Vlahs and Jews.<sup>51</sup> Albanians and Gypsies constituted the smallest ethnic minorities in the town.<sup>52</sup> Macedonians and Vlahs composed the Christian element in Bitola. Literature of the period often records Macedonians as 'Bulgarians' and Vlahs as 'Greeks'; this incorrect assertion was based on religious adherence to Exarchate and Patriarchate churches respectively. Loose labels of identification linked to religious affiliation was a re-curring problem in contested Ottoman Macedonia. In Bitola, Serbs and Bulgarians were drawn from Consular officials, teachers and priests. Similarly the Greek community in the town was virtually non-existent, and was drawn from Greek Consulate staff and religious and educational officials. Gopchevitch claims they numbered 50 people in 1890; both Kanchov (1900) and Brancoff (1905) put their number at 100. Greek sources claim a much larger community, based on adherence to the Patriarchate church. Greek ethnographers claim all Vlahs as the central Greek element in the town, as well as Macedonian Patriarchate adherents.

The complexity of ethnic identification is evident in oral accounts. Born in 1893, Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski lived in Bitola under Ottoman rule until he was nineteen years of age. The immediate neighbours beside his parents' home were a Macedonian family associated with the Serb party. Hristo recalled 'they were no different to us, my father was associated with the Bulgarian Exarchate, but we all

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p. 181 and M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski, G. Todorovski, editors, *A History of the Macedonian People*, Skopje, 1979, p. 109. New Macedonian arrivals from surrounding villages in the district were most often settling in *maali* around the fringes of the town, with popular destinations being Geni *male*, Smilevski *bair*, Poeshevsko *maalo*, Bela Cheshma and others. G. Dimovski-Colev, *Bitola - Istoriski Pregled*, [Bitola - Historical Overview], Bitola, 1981, p. 48. It appears that certain areas in Bitola took on the names of the villages from where people came. Note Smilevski *bair* and Poeshevski *maalo* – no doubt both areas are named after the villages of Smilevo and Poeshevo. The term *bair* is similar to a *maalo*.

<sup>51</sup> Konstantin Nicha (born 1919 in Bitola), interview conducted 30 March 2000. Konstantin Nicha is active in the Bitola Vlah community and a well-known, retired medical doctor in the city; Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski (born 1893 in Bitola), interview conducted in Bitola 21 March 2000. When interviewed, Hristo was the oldest living person in Bitola. His grandfather moved to Bitola from Novaci village in 1862, the same year his father Nikola was born. Hristo was conscripted into the Serb army during the First World War and served in the battles at the Solun Front; and Slobodan Ilievski (born 1943 in Bitola), interview conducted in Melbourne on 15 January 2002. Slobodan could trace his family tree back four generations to his grandfather's grandfather, Ognen, who moved to Bitola after buying a *chiflik* on the outskirts of the town. Ognen came from an unknown village on the Bitola plain.

<sup>52</sup> Konstantin Nicha interview, op. cit., Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski interview, op. cit., and Slobodan Ilievski interview, op. cit.

spoke Macedonian and culturally we were indistinguishable from one another - we all knew what we really were'.<sup>53</sup> The neighbour on the opposite side to the Dimitrovski household was a Vlah associated with the Greek party, 'but they did not speak Greek at home: they were not Greeks – they were Vlachs; everyone knew that'.<sup>54</sup> Although the three neighbouring homes were associated with different 'political parties', Hristo stated that 'we all lived well between ourselves, as most people did'.<sup>55</sup>

While the term *maalo* in Ottoman Macedonia referred to a section of a town (a town quarter), it could mean a group of several small streets or even a single street (for instance *Shirok Sokak maalo* - known in post-Ottoman Bitola as *Korzo*). In the fifteenth century Bitola was made up of seven *maali*. Six were inhabited exclusively by Muslims, and were known as *Demirdzhi Yusuf i Ismail*, *Kara Hamza*, *Burekdzhi Ali*, *Alaedin*, *Tabak Devlethan* and *Sarach Daut*. The one Christian *maalo* was known as *Dabizhiv*. The Christian quarter was the largest of the six and the Muslim quarters contained an unknown percentage of Islamicised Macedonian Christians, of whom some are identifiable. For instance, *Saruch Vasil* (Saruch is clearly a Muslim name and *Vasil* a traditional Macedonian Christian name) is recorded as an inhabitant of the *Kara Hamza* quarter and *Kasim, sin na Todorche* (*Kasim* is a Muslim name, whilst *sin na Todorche* signifies 'son of *Todorche*' (*Todorche* being a traditional Macedonian Christian name) in the *Sarach Daut* quarter.<sup>56</sup>

When the Ottomans originally captured Bitola, the sole inhabitants were Macedonian Christians. Large numbers of Jews began arriving in Macedonia at the

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<sup>53</sup> Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Similar remarks were also made by other interviewees from Bitola, reflecting that generally people co-existed harmoniously. Slobodan Ilievski interview, op. cit. Vera Tanevska (born 1924 in Bitola), interview conducted 24 March 2000. Vera was born and raised in the Arnaut male part of Bitola where traditionally the majority of the population was Turkish. Vasil Petrov (born 1911 in Bitola), interview conducted in Bitola on 1 April 2000. Vasil's father Giorgi moved to Bitola in the late nineteenth century from the village of Tepavci on the Bitola plain.

<sup>56</sup> From 'Bitolska nahia, ophirni popisni defteri broj 993 i 988 od 1468 godina' [Bitola nahia, detailed census registers numbers 993 and 988 in 1468], M. Sokoloski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV veka* [Turkish documents - Detailed census registers from the XV century], Skopje, 1973, pp. 141-145.

end of the fifteenth century and Vlachs did not appear in Bitola until much later in the eighteenth century. The growth of the town is apparent by the rise in the number of *maali*; in the mid-seventeenth century the number of Muslim *maali* grew to 17 and there was an unspecified number of Christian *maali*.<sup>57</sup>

The names of *maali* in the seventeenth century bore no resemblance to those of the fifteenth century.<sup>58</sup> According to an official Ottoman tax *defter* for absent Christian tradesmen of Bitola for the years 1841/1842, there were ten Christian *maali* registered in Bitola and all but one bore the name of a priest (*Pop Risto Mechka, Pop Anastas, Pop Trajche, Pop Risto Dragor, Pop Vasil, Pop Dimitri, Pop Jorgaki, Pop Naum, Pop Atanas, and Crkva*).<sup>59</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century there were at least fifteen *maali* in Bitola. Most were distinctly Turkish Muslim in name and differed from those recorded in the fifteenth, seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries.

Although particular areas of Bitola were associated with certain groups, the city was not strictly divided into separate groupings, as 'members of all groups were dispersed throughout most of the city'.<sup>60</sup> Vera Tanevska recalled that her grandmother Vasa was born in approximately 1850 and raised in *Arnaut Male* where the main ethnic group was Turkish. Vera was aware that there were no hostilities or conflicts between the two groups.<sup>61</sup> The Albanian Justref Metovski moved to Bitola

<sup>57</sup> From an Ottoman tax document dated 17 to 27 December 1639, M. Sokoloski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti za Istorijata na Makedonskiot narod - Seria I, 1607-1699, Tom III, od Januari 1636 do krajot na 1639*, [Turkish Documents on the History of the Macedonian people - Series I, 1607-1699, Vol III, from January 1636 to the end of 1639], Skopje, 1969, pp. 204-205.

<sup>58</sup> Seventeenth century Muslim *maali* in Bitola bore the names: *Softe Hodzha, Yakub-beg, Sinan-beg, Karadzha-beg, Azab-beg, Kara Oglan, Tabak Kara, Bostandzhi, Emir, Ogul-pasha, Chaush Ali, Husein Subashi, Bali Voyvoda, Dimishki-beg, Firuz-beg, Ine-beg and Kasim Chelebi*. Ibid, pp. 204-205.

<sup>59</sup> The *defter* represented a census of names and the tax categories of individuals, mainly tradespeople, who had left the Bitola region and from whom the authorities were unable to collect the personal tax known as *dzhizije*. *Defter za iminjata i dzhizijeto na rayata od Bitola i Bitolskata kaza koja zaradi trgovija se naogja vo drugi mesta (12) 56/7 1840/41 i 1841/42 godina* [Register of names and *dzhizijeto* of the *raya* in Bitola and the Bitola kaza who are in other places as a result of trade (12) 56/7 1840/41 and 1841/42], D. Gjorgiev, editor, *Turski Dokumenti za istorijata na Makedonija - Popisi od XIX vek*, [Turkish Documents of the History of Macedonia - Census' of the the XIX century], Book II, Skopje, 1997, pp. 13-46.

<sup>60</sup> Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski interview, op. cit. Vasil Petrov interview, op. cit. and Vera Tanevska interview, op. cit.

<sup>61</sup> Vera Tanevska interview, op. cit.

in 1915 and settled into the overwhelmingly Macedonian Christian area of *Gini Male*.<sup>62</sup> Although Christian minorities also inhabited Muslim dominated *maali*, and Muslim minorities were found in Christian dominated *maali*, it appears that they generally co-existed relatively peacefully. However, as Hristo Dimitrovski stated, ‘there were certain areas in Bitola where Turks and Muslims in general wouldn’t enter after dark, and the same applied to us, we avoided certain Muslim areas’.<sup>63</sup>

Illustration 3.1: Nineteenth-century streetscape in central Bitola (*shirok sokak*)



<sup>62</sup> Justref Metovski (born 1908 in Resen), interview conducted in Bitola on 23 March 2000. Justrefs family moved to Bitola from the town of Resen because ‘it was a bigger city, there were more opportunities’.

<sup>63</sup> Hristo ‘Caki’ Dimitrovski interview, op. cit.

Table 3.6: Ethnic Character and Location of Churches in Bitola *Maali*, circa 1900

Maalo/Male	Ethnic composition	Churches
Arnaut Male	Albanians, Turks and Macedonians.	
At Pazar	Gypsies	
Bair (Bayro) Male	Macedonians and Gypsies	
Bela Cheshma	Macedonians	
Badem Balari	Turks and Macedonians	
Chifte-furna	Macedonians	Sv Bogorojca church 1871
Chinarot	Turks	
Evrejsko Maalo	Jews	
Gini Male	Macedonians	Sv Nedela church 1863
Kachak Male	Predominantly Turks, some Macedonians	
Kazak Cheshma	Turks	
Madgar Male	Turks and Macedonians	
Mechkar Male	Macedonians	
Shirok Sokak Male	Turks, Vlachs and Macedonians	Romanian church 1900-1910 Catholic church 1854 Protestant church 1874
Vlashka Male	Vlachs	Sv Dimitrija 1830

Source and notes: Designating the ethnic make up of *maali* is predominantly derived from local knowledge in Bitola.

Jews concentrated in an area known as *Evrejsko malo*.<sup>64</sup> Gypsies predominantly lived in the *Bajro* area, sharing it with Macedonians. Albanians lived in *Arnaut male*, together with Turks and Macedonians. Vlachs were mostly found in *Vlashka mala* (also known

<sup>64</sup> Vasil Petrov interview, op. cit; Vera Tanevska interview, op. cit; and Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski interview, op. cit.

as *Grebka mala*) near the Patriarchate-controlled Sveti Dimitrija church.<sup>65</sup> Turks were dispersed throughout much of the city but were found in larger concentrations in the *maali* of *Kazak Cheshma*, *Chinarot*, *Shirok Sokak*, and *Kachak Male*. Macedonians were most concentrated in *Geni Male*, *Bela Cheshma*, *Bayro* and *Mechkar Male*. All four Macedonian concentrated *maali* contained at least one Exarchate school; two Exarchate schools (four schools) and single Patriarchate schools operated respectively in *Bayro* and the upper and lower parts of *Geni Male*.<sup>66</sup>

Fifteenth-century Turkish census data listed seven priests residing in Bitola in the year 1468<sup>67</sup> and, according to ‘the stories of the old folk of Bitola, legend has it that there were once 72 churches in the town and each church had its own water mill’.<sup>68</sup> Bitola is also known by the name Manastir (English – ‘monastery’) and it is believed that this was connected to the many churches and monasteries in the town before Ottoman domination. It is a commonly held view that many of Bitola’s mosques were built upon the foundations of destroyed churches. For instance, local legend has it that Isak Mosque (1508) was constructed upon the foundations of the church of Saint George (*Sveti Giorgi*).<sup>69</sup> Mosques were constructed from the earliest

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<sup>65</sup> Vasil Petrov interview, op. cit. Note: *Vlashka maalo* was also known as *Grebka maalo* (Greek *maalo*) reflecting the pro-Greek element of a section of the Vlah inhabitants.

<sup>66</sup> V. Kanchov (1900), op. cit. pp. 389-394 and the historian K. Bitoski, *Dejnosta na Pelagonskata Mitropolija 1878-1912*, [The activities of the Pelagonija Archiepiscopal Diocese 1878-1912], Skopje, 1968, pp. 107-108.

<sup>67</sup> M. Sokoloski 1973, op. cit. pp. 143-144. In addition two other males are designated as being sons of priests.

<sup>68</sup> Giorgi Dimovski-Colev (born 1923 in Bitola), interview conducted in Bitola on 13 March 2000. A lifelong resident of Bitola, Giorgi Dimovski-Colev is also a prominent local historian. Slobodan Ilievski stated that seventeen monasteries existed in Bitola before the Ottomans, Slobodan Ilievski interview, op. cit. Hristo ‘Caki’ Dimitrovski stated that there were dozens of churches in Bitola at the time of the Turkish arrival. Hristo ‘Caki’ Dimitrovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>69</sup> P. Stavrev, op. cit. p. 56. See also V. Arsic, op. cit. p. 17. According to Father Ruben Boiceski officials of the Macedonian Orthodox church (Pelagonia-Prespa Eparchy, Episcopal seat in Bitola) are aware of several sites in Bitola where there once stood Orthodox churches, but were destroyed under Ottoman rule. One known former church site in the *voblasta* part of Bitola (*pod kasarna*) has had a home erected upon it for many years. In the last decades of the twentieth century the home has been owned by a Turkish family. In the early 1990s a cross appeared on one of its external walls and the owner of the home painted over it, but it reappeared the next day. Again the Turk painted over it, yet it continued to reappear. Soon after the family moved out and the home has remained uninhabited at the beginning of the twenty-first century, yet the image of the cross remains. In the vicinity of the Sveta Nedela church, on a hill beside the Jewish cemetery (at a location known as *Krkadash*), 40 Macedonians were executed by the authorities during Ottoman rule. A church was later erected on the site and known as *Sveti Cheterieset Machenica* (‘Saints Forty Martyrs’). The Ottoman authorities later destroyed the new church. Notes of interview with Father Ruben Boiceski (born Krivogashtani 1968), Parish Priest, Sveti Ilija church Footscray (Melbourne), Melbourne 21 January 2002.

period of Ottoman rule in the town corresponding to Muslim colonisation. An array of significant Muslim structures were constructed in the sixteenth century, including Isak Fekiy Bey Mosque (1505–1506), Isak Mosque (1508), Hadzhi Bey Mosque (1521–1522), Kodzha Ahmed Efendi Mosque (1529), Yeni Mosque (1558–1559) and Khazi Haydar Mosque (1561–1562). At the end of the 1880s there were 24 mosques in Bitola, according to the Ottoman geographer and publicist Sami-Bey Fraschery.<sup>70</sup> By 1912 there were 32 mosques in Bitola,<sup>71</sup> and even though mosques were built throughout the course of Ottoman rule, churches were not. When the *Sveti Dimitrija* cathedral church was established in 1830 it was the sole church in Bitola at that time. Under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate church, *Sveti Dimitrija* served as a bastion of Greek propaganda and remained the sole Patriarchate-controlled church in Bitola until the end of Ottoman rule.<sup>72</sup> Under Exarchate jurisdiction were the churches of *Sveta Nedela* (1863) and *Sveta Bogorjica* (1870). Other churches in Bitola were the Romanian Orthodox church *Sveti Konstantin i Elena* (established between 1905 and 1910), a Catholic church (1854) and a Protestant church (1874). All three were located in the central part of town. For the religious needs of the Jewish population there were three synagogues as well as three Jewish schools.<sup>73</sup> Alongside the infiltration of church organisations, the governments of the Balkan States also financed the establishment of Greek, Bulgarian and Serb educational institutions.

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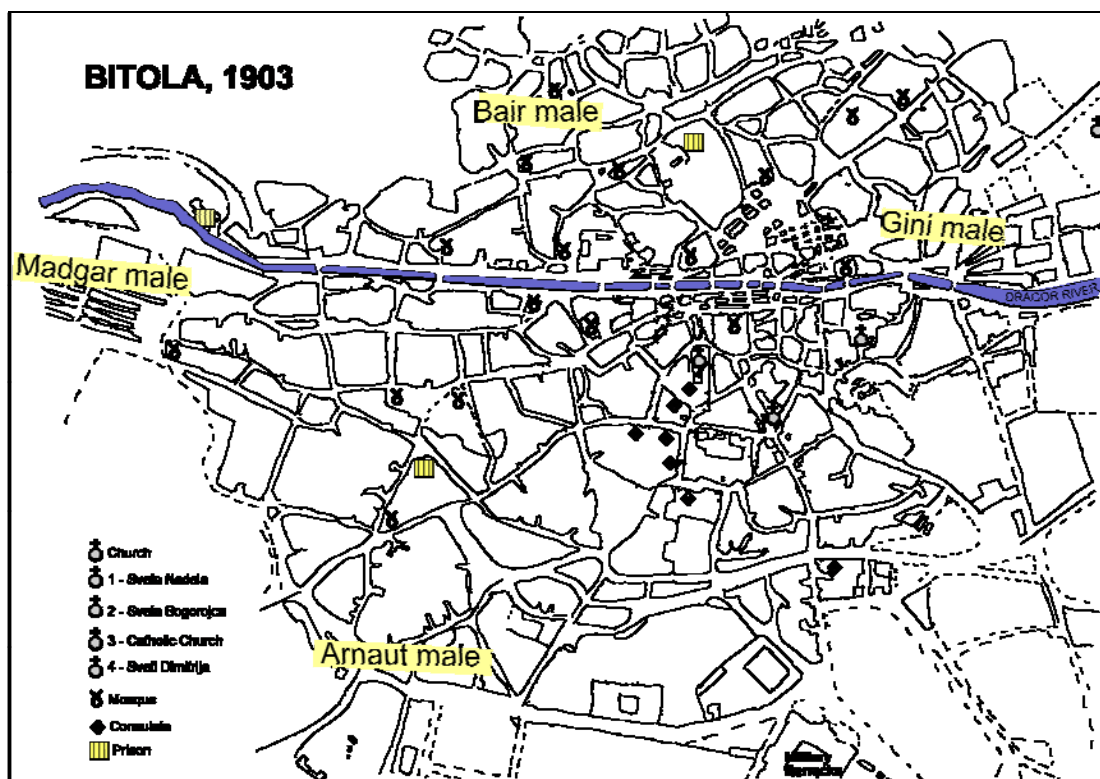
<sup>70</sup> Sami-Bey Fraschery, Ch. *Dictionnaire universelle d'histoire et de geographie*. I-IV. Constantinople, 1889-1898 as cited in V. Bozhinov, and L. Panayotov, op. cit. p. 442.

<sup>71</sup> From a Serbian military report (number 6260) by D.G. Alympich, dated 20 August 1913, G. Todorovski, op. cit. p. 223.

<sup>72</sup> For a historical account of the Sveti Dimitrija church see V. Arsic, *Crkva Sv. Velikomychenika Dimitrija Y Bitolj (povom proslavenjene stogodishnjice 1830-1930)*, Bitola, 1930.

<sup>73</sup> J. Pshchulkovska-Simitchieva, *Naselenieto i uchilishtata vo Bitola i Bitolsko kon krajot na XIX I pochetokot na XX vek* [The population and schools in Bitola and the Bitola region at the end of the XIX and beginning of the XX centuries], Bitola, 1980, p. 672.

Figure 3.6: Bitola town map, 1903



Prominent religious rituals celebrated in Bitola were the central Christian celebrations of Christmas, *Vodici*, Easter and *Dubovden*, however, other holy days commonly celebrated in villages did not pass unnoticed in Bitola.<sup>74</sup> As each village celebrated its respective saint's day Macedonian Christians of Bitola celebrated *gradski Veligden* ('city Easter'). Easter was celebrated as the town's saints day and was considered equivalent to a saint's day village celebration.<sup>75</sup> On *gradski Veligden* a church service was held in the *Sveta Nedela* church and the celebrations drew Macedonians from all over the city and nearby villages; as one interviewee, Vera Tanevska, noted, 'it was just like a village celebration and was celebrated in the *Gini Male* square'.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Vasil Petrov interview, op. cit. Vera Tanevska interview, op. cit.

<sup>75</sup> Vera Tanevska interview, op. cit.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

Homes in Bitola generally abutted directly onto the road, and those that did not typically had a high fence erected along the front boundary. Although commonly associated with Muslim homes, in urban centres such as Bitola both Muslims and Christians lived behind high barriers. Most homes were attached dwellings on small blocks of land, typical of high-density European urban living. With the influx of Macedonians from the surrounding countryside villages into Bitola, Macedonians were often buying the homes of departing Turks at the end of the nineteenth century. The interior design of Turkish homes contained variations from traditional Macedonian dwellings, and newly constructed Macedonian homes during this period adopted these elements.<sup>77</sup> The principal distinguishing feature of homes in late nineteenth century Bitola was based on economic status; affluent families constructed large and impressive residences compared to the smaller attached homes of the masses. Amongst the lower classes there was limited variation in the exterior appearance of homes. Affluent Macedonians had elaborately designed and colourful ceilings skilfully crafted by tradesman from towns as far as Lazaropole and Galitchnik in the Debar region.<sup>78</sup> The homes of wealthy Jews also contained similar interior features such as high ceilings (approximately 3 metres) of elaborate timber construction.<sup>79</sup> A distinctive feature in Orthodox homes in Bitola was the presence of at least one religious icon adorning a corner or wall of a room – these were traditionally handed down from generation to generation.<sup>80</sup> The typical Macedonian home in Bitola was dominated by home made items considered essential and practical, with a distinct absence of luxuries that offered no practical use.<sup>81</sup>

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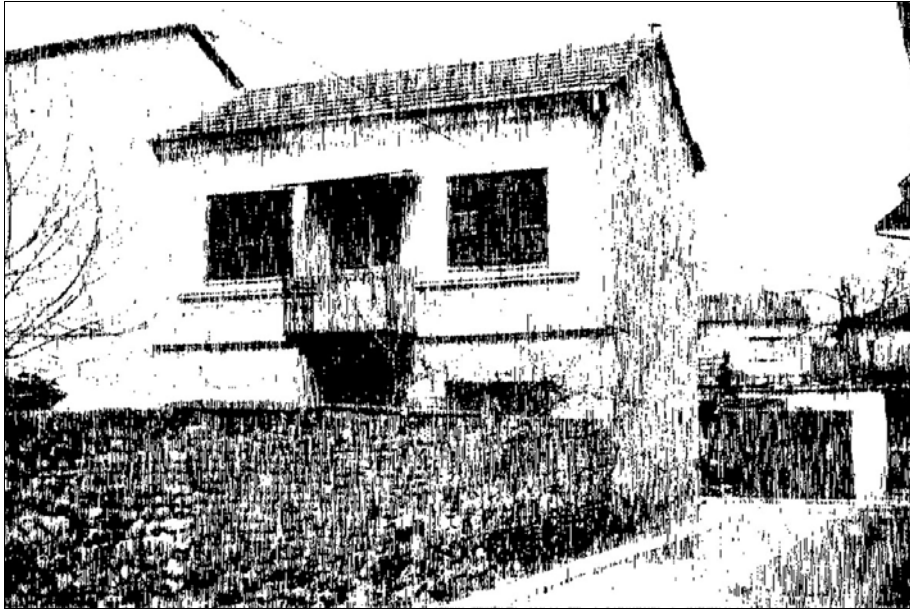
<sup>77</sup> A. Svetieva-Anastasova, *Nekoi Sogleduvajna za vnatreshnoto ureduvajne na Bitolskata kučka od krajot na XIX vek do osloboduvajneto* [Aspects of the interior design of Bitola homes from the end of the XIX century to the liberation], Bitola, 1981, p. 540.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, p. 542.

<sup>79</sup> Kole Eftimov (born 1924 in Carev Dvor, Resen region), interview conducted in Bitola on 20 March 2000. Koles family moved to Bitola in 1927 after his father had previously purchased a hotel in the city from income acquired through *pechalba* in the United States.

<sup>80</sup> A. Svetieva-Anastasova, op. cit. p. 542.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. 545

Illustration 3.2: Macedonian home in Bitola (*Gini Male*)

## Ottoman civil administration

AT THE END of the nineteenth century the bulk of the Turkish population was situated in the urban centres of Macedonia and was engaged in two main areas of occupation, as government employees or as small business operators. As employees of the Empire, Turks constituted the bulk of officials employed in the military and civil service, in the form of tax collectors, as postal officials, customs officials, and elsewhere.

Bitola was the central town in the Bitola vilayet (known as the Manastir vilayet to the Ottomans) and the vilayet was one of six that made up European Ottoman Turkey.<sup>82</sup> Similar to a province, each vilayet contained a range of civil administrators, with the most important being the civil governor who was known as a ‘vali’, and had the rank of a ‘Pasha’.<sup>83</sup> Larger vilayets were usually sub-divided into two to four sections known as *sanjaks* or *mutesarrefats*, and they each had a governor who also

<sup>82</sup> The six vilayets were Manastir (Bitola), Selanik (Solun), Uskub (Skopje - but sometimes also referred to as the Kosovo Vilayet), Edirne (Adrianople), Iskodra (Scutari) and Janina (Epirus).

<sup>83</sup> A Pasha was equal in rank to a military general.

ranked as a 'Pasha', but was known as a 'mutessarif'. The next administrative division in size was a *kaşa* and was governed by a 'kaimakam' (prefect). The 'kaimakam' ranked as a *bey* (or *beg*), and was equal to a military colonel. The smallest district was known as a *nahie*, it was governed by a 'mudir' (sub-prefect) and consisted of a group of between five and ten villages.<sup>84</sup>

In Bitola as in other central towns of each province, there stood a government building known as a *konak*. Distinguished by its size, the *konak* was often larger than many of the surrounding buildings and was guarded by armed sentries. As the seat of government the representative of the state was found there and he acted as the supreme authority of the state. It is from the *konak* that 'justice [was] dispensed, grievances rectified, and every civil order inquired into'.<sup>85</sup> Organs of the vilayet administrative structure were comprised of 19 separate bodies (most were sub-departments). These included: (1) Finance and administration (*defter-darlık*); (2) Correspondence (*Tabiriat kalemi*). The general secretariat (*mektubcilik*) was also responsible for the official Vilayet printing house; (3) Foreign Affairs (*Hariciye odasi*); (4) Education (*Moarif dairesi*); (5) Electoral registry (*Tabiriri nüfuss dairesi*) Formed alongside the introduction of the census law of 1886; (6) Taxation registry; (7) Tithe committee; (8) Treasury; (9) Agriculture and trade (*Ziraat ve ticaret odasi*); (10) Chamber of trade and agriculture (*Ticaret ve ziraat odasi*); (11) Forestry and mining; (12) Public works department; (13) Passport office; (14) Titles office; (15) Vakuf committee (*evcaf*); (16) Statistical registry; (17) Sanitary inspectorate; (18) Veterinary registry; and, (19) Vilayet archive.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia Its Races and their Future*, London 1906, p. 6. Brailsford's work on Macedonia is a well known and often quoted work. A journalist by profession, Brailsford spent five months during the winter of 1903/1904 in Macedonia together with his wife working on behalf of the British Relief Fund after the Ilinden Uprising.

<sup>85</sup> T. Comyn-Platt, *The Turk in the Balkans*, London, 1906, pp. 24-25. An Englishman, Comyn-Platt lived in Turkey for two and a half years and travelled on a 'journey of some months in Macedonia'. *The Turk in the Balkans* is based on the eye-witness accounts of his travels and knowledge of the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>86</sup> D. Dimeski, op. cit. pp. 75 - 76.

Civil servants were notorious for their corruption and hunger for wealth, as they became accustomed to the system of master and servant. Chaos prevailed: at times the Sultan himself was unable to maintain order in the distant Balkans from his royal palace in Constantinople. The administration of European Turkey was in the hands of territorial pashas. Amassing large estates, exerting total control over what was to become their own territorial domain, some effectively broke away from the State and operated as despotic rulers in their own little kingdoms. Ali Pasha of Janina became so uncontrollable that the Ottoman army was sent to crush him. Passvan Oglou, pasha of Vidin, prepared to march an army onto Constantinople when his independence was threatened. And the pasha of Scutari openly rebelled against the Empire.<sup>87</sup> The historian and contemporary commentator B. St John noted in the middle of the nineteenth century that every Ottoman official functioned as though he were a Sultan to those below him.<sup>88</sup>

Unlike the early Ottomans who were known for their discipline, by the nineteenth century corruption had become firmly instilled in the Empire as a way of life. The normal route for advancement to a much-prized posting was through one of the Ministries. To obtain an administrative post, it was a requirement that someone be bribed in order that the appointment be achieved. Upon appointment it was then accepted that they would 'recoup themselves by bribes and presents for the price which they paid for their posts'.<sup>89</sup> All posts from the highest to the lowest were sold for money, including pashaliks and kadiaships which were 'knocked down to the highest bidder'.<sup>90</sup> The contemporary commentator I. Ivanov stated in 1895 that a

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<sup>87</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 3.

<sup>88</sup> B. St John, *The Turks in Europe*, London, 1853, pp. 166-167.

<sup>89</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 5.

<sup>90</sup> B. St John, op. cit. p. 21. The immediate effect of a purchased pashalik is that the pasha begins his administration with a violent oppression and that the pasha plays an instrumental role in the levying of the taxes. Fraser stated that 'if a man pays a high official 5000 Pounds for a post worth 500 Pound, both understand that the money will be recouped by squeezing somebody else'. J.F. Fraser, *Pictures From the Balkans*, London, 1906, p. 154.

kadiaship commonly sold for between 200 and 300 lira and a mutesariflik up to 500 lira.<sup>91</sup>

In the case where a significant sum had been spent purchasing the post of pasha, the purchaser was then continually obliged to send presents to maintain himself in his post.<sup>92</sup> In the early 1890s the Bitola valia was paying the influential Dervish pasha, a military marshal and close advisor to the Sultan, 3,000 lira annually – and a further hundred or more bureaucrats in Macedonia were obliged to make annual payments to the pasha.<sup>93</sup> J.F. Fraser, having travelled extensively through the Balkans at the beginning of the twentieth century, recognised that corruption had become an ordinary and natural thing, and things were such that the only person in the Empire who had no need to pay for his dignity was the Sultan: ‘everybody beneath pays in some way or another’.<sup>94</sup>

Ottoman officials were generally lowly paid; C. Eliot, the Secretary at the British Embassy at Constantinople (1893-1898), noted that subsequently it was an accepted practice that officials were allowed the opportunity to make money through other means available.<sup>95</sup> At the same time they had to perform their official duties, the most necessary and important function being the collection of funds to be sent to the Ottoman Treasury in Constantinople. A former resident of Turkey, T. Comyn-Platt, who travelled through Macedonia at the beginning of the twentieth century, commented that a combination of low salaries and Treasury demands resulted in

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<sup>91</sup> I. Ivanov, *Polozenieto na Blgarite v Makedonia* [The situation of the Bulgarians in Macedonia], Sofia, 1895, p. 29.

<sup>92</sup> B. St John, op. cit. p. 24. B. St John added that a *firman* had been made forbidding all officials from receiving presents. However in the Ottoman territories in the Middle East, an Ottoman official was still permitted to receive the following, two sheep, twelve and a half pounds of butter, fifty eggs and two fowls. This could only be received once from a friend. However some of the local functionaries considered that they could receive a cantar of butter, if divided into small quantities, and spread out over several days. B. St John compared this to European Turkey where it would be looked upon with contempt, as everything there is conducted on the system of *baksbesh* (giving of gifts, i.e. payment made as a gift).

<sup>93</sup> I. Ivanov, op. cit. p. 29.

<sup>94</sup> J. F. Fraser, *Pictures from the Balkans*, London, 1906, p. 156. Regarding Ottoman corruption, H.N. Brailsford states, ‘corruption is universal and inevitable’ op. cit. p. 5.

<sup>95</sup> C. Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*, London, 1965 (1900), p. 137.

Ottoman officials functioning as little more than ‘financial agents’<sup>96</sup>, whereby tax gathering was the remedy and cure for the Ottoman, but a huge burden on the Macedonian Christian. The practice of bribery in the Ottoman Empire was rampant and from time to time the Ottoman government issued formal edicts intending to put an end to the practice. The edicts were never taken seriously, for even the Sultan's court was actively engaged in the practice.<sup>97</sup> Bribery and corruption affected all levels of Ottoman administration and was not limited to monetary bribes; lower-level officials routinely accepted bribes in the form of eggs, butter, chickens, sheep, and other material items.

Ottoman administrative positions were exclusively held by male Muslims. The only exception was where Christians held positions in advisory councils known as *idare medzhlisi* and these were connected to each of the vilayet administrative bodies. An advisory council consisted of approximately ten Muslim official functionaries and four-elected non-officials, two Muslim and two non-Muslim. Stringent conditions applied making eligibility to stand for the positions based upon economic status. But these positions were typically in the hands of individuals loyal to the Patriarchate or Exarchate churches. In many respects the advisory councils played a symbolic role, as the valia was authorised to veto any decision he disapproved of.<sup>98</sup> Another field open to Christians and non-Muslims was the gendarmie. Ottoman reforms in the Rumelia vilayets in 1896 specified a maximum of 10 per cent of any gendarme regiment could contain non-Muslim members.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> T. Comyn-Platt, op. cit. p. 22. The author equates tax gathering in the Ottoman Empire as being like extortion.

<sup>97</sup> The contemporary commentator, E.F. Knight, *The Awakening of Turkey*, London, 1909, pp. 43–44. E.F. Knight suggests that whilst allowing the navy to deteriorate, the Sultan appears to have connived at the embezzlement by his Minister of Marine of ten million sterling, which was to have been devoted to naval expenditure.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, pp. 70-73.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, pp. 70-73. Dimeski adds that due to the substandard and irregular wages morally undesirable elements were recruited (op. cit. p. 77). In 1885 the Bitola vilayet contained four battalions of gendarmes with 400 men each.

Over 30,000 soldiers belonging to the Third Ottoman Military Corps were dispersed throughout the vilayet. The headquarters of the Third Corps was in Bitola and there was a constant military presence in the town that was supported by a large military administrative apparatus.<sup>100</sup> As an important military, trade and administration centre, Bitola also became the site of foreign diplomatic branches for the powerful European states and developed a reputation as the ‘city of consulates’ (*konzulski grad*).<sup>101</sup> Austria established the first Consulate in 1851, Britain soon followed, then France and in 1860 a Russian Consulate opened with Mihail Alexandrovitch Hitrovo its first Consul General. Later Bitola was to see an Italian Consular presence before Macedonia’s interested neighbours Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania opened Consulates from where they sought to expand their propaganda activities. Although instrumental in sowing division and discord as well as enflaming political intrigues, consuls and their families did bring a ‘sense of Europe’ to Bitola, ‘influencing wealthy local Christian families with their lifestyles and European clothes and modern way of life’.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> In 1896 there were 39 infantry battalions with a total of 30,850 soldiers, 8 cavalry battalions of 1250 men, 35 battalions with 127 heavy cannons and 2,570 artillery men and one logistics unit with 400 soldiers. Ibid, p. 80. The enormous Ottoman army barracks were constructed in 1837 (known as the ‘white barracks’) and 1844 (the ‘red barracks’). Later in 1848 a military and art school was constructed in the vicinity of the barracks and during the reign of Abdul Kerim Pasha (1895-1901) a large military hospital was constructed.

<sup>101</sup> The interviewee Hristo ‘Caki’ Dimitrovski referred to the city as ‘*grad na begoyte i konzulite*’ - ‘city of *begs* and consuls’. Op. cit.

<sup>102</sup> P. Stavrev, op. cit. p. 40. See also D. Grdanov, *Bitola i Heraklea niz Hronikata na Vekovite*, [Bitola and Heraclea through the Chronicles of the Ages], Bitola, 1969, pp. 28-29.

Illustration 3.3: One of several consulate buildings in Bitola



## Commercial activity

URBAN NON-CIVIL SERVANT Turks were most prevalent in small business activities, predominantly as tradesmen,<sup>103</sup> and to a lesser degree in small-scale commercial ventures.<sup>104</sup> Turkish small business operators established themselves in

<sup>103</sup> E. Bouchie de Belle, *Makedonija i Makedoncite* [Macedonia and the Macedonians], Skopje, 1992, p. 95, original title *La Macedoine et les Macedoniens*, Paris, 1922. E. Bouchie de Belle found himself in Macedonia as a member of the French military immediately after Ottoman rule (during the First World War). He spent a total of three years in Macedonia in the regions of Ostrovo, Lerin, Bitola, Prilep and finally in Skopje where he tragically died in 1918. *La Macedoine et les Macedoniens* was not published until four years after his death.

<sup>104</sup> The Turk was not renowned for his enterprising business skills, according to C. Eliot, Secretary at the British Embassy in Constantinople from 1893 to 1898: 'he is not much of a merchant; he may keep a stall in a bazaar, but his operations are rarely conducted on a scale which merits the name of commerce or finance'. Op. cit, p. 92.

urban centres in support of the needs of the Turkish population, and introduced new oriental crafts into Macedonia.<sup>105</sup> A particular craft related to Muslim custom was the manufacture of wooden-based clogs, known as *nalandžhi*, for the use of Turkish women. Elaborately decorated clogs were produced for the wealthy and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, according to the historian, M. Konstantinov, there were 10 *nalandžhi* stores in Bitola exclusively operated by Turks.<sup>106</sup> Other businesses catered for the culinary tastes of the Turkish community. Notable amongst these was the manufacture of *halva*, *boza*<sup>107</sup> and coffee. In the early nineteenth century these trades were exclusively operated by Turks – in 1825 one *oka* (measuring system, one *oka* is equivalent to 1.282 kilograms) of *halva* sold for 72 coins and one *oka* of coffee for 20 *grosh*.<sup>108</sup>

In the nineteenth century, Bitola was the next most important commercial hub in Macedonia, second to the principal-city and chief port, Solun. In 1827 Bitola contained approximately 1,093 ateliers and shops.<sup>109</sup> By 1837–1838 the number of small businesses had slightly increased to approximately 1,100.<sup>110</sup> During this period Muslims dominated small business in Bitola in all trades, with Orthodox Christians accounting for only 13.2 per cent of all business operators and Jews constituting 4.2

<sup>105</sup> D. Siljanovski, opt. cit. pp. 263–264, M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski, and G. Todorovski, op. cit. p. 86.

<sup>106</sup> M. Konstantinov, *Zanaeti i Esnaf i vo Bitolsko* [Trades and Guilds in Bitola], Bitola, 1966, p. 40. A pair of *nalani* was selling in 1825 for between 14 and 19 coins. The *nalandžhi* stores were in close proximity to one another, grouped together near *saat kula* (the Bitola clock tower). Konstantinov also states that the gunsmith trade (*pushkarskiot*) was exclusively in Turkish hands and that it was born in the early eighteenth century with the production of Kremenki rifles for use by the Ottoman infantry. Towards the end of the nineteenth century there were four gunsmiths operating in Bitola (selling and repairing rifles and pistols). Ibid, pp. 40–41. However it should be noted that according to the historian, K. Vakalopoulos, *Modern History of Macedonia 1830 – 1912*, Thessaloniki, 1988, in 1856 there were 6 Christian gunsmiths in Bitola and 3 Muslim gunsmiths. See Table 3.7.

<sup>107</sup> *Boza* is a thick flour based drink which has also been adopted by Macedonians and commonly sells in cake shops. Bitola is renowned as producing the finest *boza* in Macedonia.

<sup>108</sup> M. Konstantinov, op. cit. pp. 30 and 32.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>110</sup> From 'Defter na nedvizhnost imot vo Bitola 1837/38 godina' [Register of property in Bitola 1837/38]. This register was a complete inventory of real estate in the city of Bitola in 1837–1838, and included the total number of small businesses and the religious adherence of the business operators. D. Gjorgiev, A. Sherif and L. Blagadusha, editors, *Turski Dokumenti - Popisi od XIX vek* ['Turkish Documents – Census' of the XIX century], Book I, Skopje, 1996, pp. 153–219.

per cent of all businesses.<sup>111</sup> Trades with the highest number of Muslim Turks by occupation were tailors (11.9 per cent), silk manufacturers (9.9 per cent), shoe/slipper makers (7.1 per cent), grocers (5.6 per cent), textile makers (4.9 per cent), painters (3.9 per cent), barbers (3.4 per cent) and goldsmiths (3.4 per cent).<sup>112</sup> By the middle of the nineteenth century small business and trade had reached its peak in Bitola and in 1856 there was a total of 1,875 ateliers and shops.<sup>113</sup>

The craft industry in Bitola was made up of numerous guilds – consisting of Muslim, Christian or Jewish members – each headed by a president. By the 1850s Christian movement into the commercial craft industry was expanding, and of the 68 guilds in 1856, 41 were Christian, 19 Turkish and 8 Jewish.<sup>114</sup> There were few fields of occupation remaining where Muslims constituted the dominant factor, for example the tailoring industry, previously the largest Muslim field of business, was completely overtaken by Christians by 1856. The diminishing role of Muslims in business continued into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> K. Vakalopoulos, *op. cit.* p. 140.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 140.

Table 3.7: Guilds of Bitola, 1856

<b>Guild</b>	<b>Affiliated Firms</b>	<b>Denominations of affiliated firms</b>
<b>Food Trades</b>		
Flour Millers	15	5 Christian, 10 Jewish
Mill Employees	23	Christian
Butchers	18+	11 Christian, 7 Jewish, many Turkish
Bakers	75	Christian
Fishermen	9	Christian
Greengrocers	86	Christian
Grocers and Fruiterers	133	100 Christian, 13 Turkish, 20 Jewish
Chick Pea Sellers	19	Christian
Vintners	153	Christian
Hoteliers	?	
Innkeepers	?	
Cooks	13	Turkish
Coffee House Keepers	29	Christian, Turkish
Confectioners	?	Christian, Turkish
Yoghurt Producers	5	Christian, Turkish
Halva Producers	?	Christian, Turkish
Ice Cream Producers	?	Christian, Turkish
Barley and Oats Merchants	38	20 Christian, 18 Jewish
<b>Craft Industry</b>		
Cotton carders	10	Christian
Weavers	3	Christian
Hatters	3	Christian
Dyers	40	Christian
Tailors	186	Christian (73 European)
Embroiderers	10	Christian
Ribbon makers	49	28 Turkish, 21 Jewish
Furriers	25	Christian
Tanners	7	Christian
Cordwainers	68	Christian (7 Europeans)
Clog makers	20	10 Christian, 10 Turkish
Saddlers	13	Turkish
<b>Metal Workers</b>		
Coppersmiths	20	Christian
Blacksmiths	19	Christian, Turkish
Keymakers	?	Christian, Turkish
Farriers	28	Turkish
Tinkers	7	Christian, Turkish
Tinsmiths	10	Jewish
Card makers	4	Christian
Small bell makers	4	Christian
Goldsmiths	30	26 Christian, 4 Jewish
Gunsmiths	9	6 Christian, 3 Turkish

<b>Other trades</b>		
Quilt makers	36	6 Christian, 30 Turkish
Bag and Strap makers	6	Christian
Rope Makers	6	Christian
Pack saddle makers	16	Christian
Saddlers	52	Turkish
Carpenters and joiners	27	Christian
Leather goods manufacturers	12	Christian
Chairmakers	16	Christian, Turkish
Turners	16	Turkish
Coopers	8	Christian
Brick makers	15	Christian
Pharmacists	37	20 Turkish, 17 Jewish
Chandlers	7	Christian
Tobacco Merchants	27	Turkish, Jewish
Timber and Charcoal merchants	20	Christian, Turkish
Lime sellers	4	Christian
Barbers	17	Christian, Turkish
Itinerant workers	34	Christian

Source: K.A. Vakalopoulos, *Modern History of Macedonia 1830–1912*, Thessaloniki, 1988.

By the beginning of the twentieth century Christian participation in small business and trade further widened. Christian business and trade was divided between the two sole Christian ethnic groups, Vlahs and Macedonians. Vlahs were renowned as shrewd business operators and many of the largest businesses such as fur traders and textile manufacturers derived from this minority. The Danvash, Ikonomou, Sonti and Katsuyani families were amongst the most prominent and wealthy.<sup>115</sup> Macedonians were predominantly found amongst small business operators and tradesmen, and spread throughout most trades.<sup>116</sup> Towards the end of Ottoman rule, particular trades such as bakers, tailors and hairdressers were almost exclusively in Macedonian hands.<sup>117</sup> Notable Macedonian business and merchant families in Bitola included the Rizovci, Dafkovci, Kiprovcı and Spanakovci. The Robevci family was also well known through its involvement in general practice and medicine.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Konstantin Nicha interview, op. cit.

<sup>116</sup> Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski interview, op. cit. Vasil Petrov interview, op. cit.

<sup>117</sup> M. Konstantinov, op. cit. p. 66.

<sup>118</sup> Kole Eftimov interview, op. cit.

The historian A. Assa refers to Bitola as a significant Jewish centre in Macedonia.<sup>119</sup> Amongst the wealthiest Jews were merchants, industrialists and moneylenders.<sup>120</sup> Konstantin Nicha recalled that a prominent Jewish family in Bitola was the Chelebon family.<sup>121</sup> Jews were the only ethnic group in Bitola town that was not found in the rural villages of the region. According to one interviewee, Vasil Petrov, they were ‘born for trade; they did not work in agriculture’.<sup>122</sup>

Turks were mainly small business owners operating stalls and involved in a wide spectrum of trades. Many Turkish *begs* lived in Bitola and owned property in the town from which they drew rental income, in addition to that received from their *chifliks* in the villages.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> A. Assa, *Makedonia i Evrejskiot Narod* [Macedonia and the Jewish People], Skopje, 1992, p. 66. (Originally published in Jerusalem, 1972).

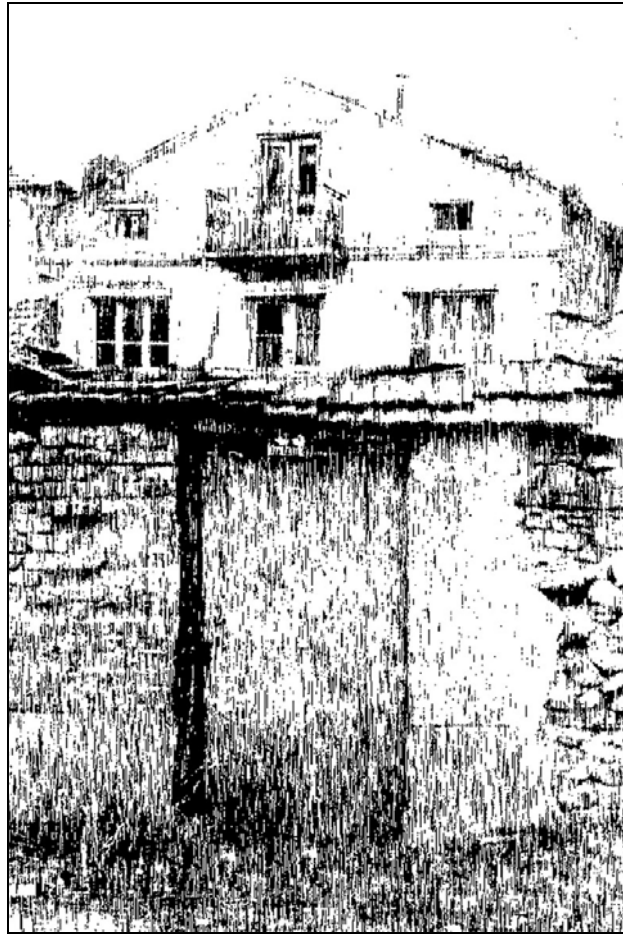
<sup>120</sup> The eminent Macedonian historian, A. Matkovski, *A History of the Jews in Macedonia*, Skopje, 1982, p. 57.

<sup>121</sup> Konstantin Nicha interview, op. cit.

<sup>122</sup> Vasil Petrov interview, op. cit.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

Illustration 3.4: Jewish home in Bitola



Gypsies were most prevalent as blacksmiths, and this trade continues to be associated with them at the beginning of the twenty-first century in Bitola. Gypsies also commonly worked as porters and carriers.<sup>124</sup>

Specialty markets operated at various locations in the town. These included: *zhitni pazar* (cereals market); *ribni pazar* (fish market); *pekmez pazar* (jam market); *emish pazar* (fruit market); *odun pazar* (firewood and coal market); *ovchni pazar* (sheep market); *at pazar* (horse market); *mas pazar* (dairy goods market); *lenski pazar* (flax and rope market); and *solski pazar* (salt and spice market).

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. As carriers, Gypsies carried goods on their backs, and later developed small carts that they wheeled around the town delivering goods for payment.

As a thriving commercial centre in a strategic location,<sup>125</sup> Bitola was linked by roads (although often inadequate) in all directions to other market towns and ports. However, the establishment of railway connections to Skopje and Solun in the late nineteenth century provided local trade with efficient access to major ports and the European interior. As a result of access afforded by railway links there was a marked increase in goods exported from Bitola. For instance, in 1893 total exports accounted for 30,000 Turkish lira, whereas in 1897 exported goods increased to 68,000 Turkish lira (an increase of 226 per cent). The major exported goods consisted of 5,200,000 kilograms of cereals (28,000 Turkish lira), 600,000 kilograms of flour (6,000 Turkish lira), 265,000 hides of leather and furs (20,000 Turkish lira), rope and textile (8,000 Turkish lira), and timber, paprika, fish, beans, and underwear (6,000 Turkish lira).<sup>126</sup> Industry in the Bitola Vilayet was concentrated in Bitola town, where 23 manufacturing companies operated out of a total of 35 in the vilayet.<sup>127</sup> Throughout the whole of Macedonia, Bitola accounted for 27.7 per cent of Macedonian industry and the majority of companies in 1904 were involved in foodstuff manufacturing. Approximately 10 flour mills operated, two beer factories, a sweets factory (manufacturing Turkish Delight, *lokum*), two textile factories in Dihovo and a soap factory.<sup>128</sup>

With the Ottoman economy in a state of continual decline from the 1870s onwards as a result of debts owed to Western European nations, the Muharrem Decree of 1881 was forced upon Ottoman Turkey. Consequently Ottoman finances and the economy were to be influenced by Western Europe, which saw her European

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<sup>125</sup> Ancient Bitola was a centre of trade and the city has maintained this function throughout the course of its history until the end of Ottoman rule. The eventual Balkan Wars and division of Macedonia had an economically devastating effect upon the city and its function as a centre of trade. Although Greece and Bulgaria fought intensely for the town it was to fall under Serbian rule and became a frontier town effectively cutting it off from its historical commercial routes into Southern Macedonia and most importantly to Macedonia's principal city and seaport, Solun.

<sup>126</sup> D. Dimeski, *opt. cit.* pp. 91-92.

<sup>127</sup> Industrial operations outside Bitola were located in Prilep (4), Ohrid (2), Krushevo (2) and one each in Sorovich, Resen and Kozhani. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97-100.

creditors regulate imports and exports from the Empire.<sup>129</sup> The Decree aimed that 'the Empire should be a source supplying West European industry with raw materials and a market for the placement of its industrial products'.<sup>130</sup> European goods penetrated Macedonia to the detriment of manufacturers and local craftsmen, and at the end of the nineteenth century up until the Balkan Wars, Macedonian commercial centres such as Bitola were in decline amid a worsening economic situation.<sup>131</sup> A systematic increase of imported goods continued to arrive from Austria, Britain, Germany, Belgium, Russia, Italy, France, Switzerland and Greece.<sup>132</sup>

As well as introducing new commercial activities into Macedonia, Turks made some impact into the agricultural sector in Macedonia. Although respondents from mixed Macedonian-Turkish villages indicated that Turks worked the land in an identical manner to Macedonians, they did not consider that they introduced any new farming techniques, but spoke of Turks as having a strong work ethic.<sup>133</sup> However, certain products were newly introduced to Macedonia such as rice,<sup>134</sup> and others which previously were grown to a limited extent, were now more widely cultivated. These included tobacco, cotton, sesame, opium poppies, maize, saffron, aniseed, chickpeas and certain green vegetables.<sup>135</sup> The basic difference between Macedonian

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<sup>129</sup> M. Zdraveva, *Territorial changes in the Balkan Peninsula after the Berlin Congress and its effect on the economic life of Macedonia*, Skopje, 1981, p. 184. For a detailed account of Ottoman dependence on West European financiers see D.C. Blaisdell, *European financial control in the Ottoman Empire: a study of the establishment, activities, and significance of the administration of the Ottoman public debt*, New York, 1929.

<sup>130</sup> M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stojanovski, and G. Todorovski, op. cit. pp. 132-133.

<sup>131</sup> M. Konstantinov, op. cit. p.75.

<sup>132</sup> D. Dimeski, 1982, op. cit. p. 94. The ripple effects of the economic decline of the Ottoman Empire were firmly felt in Macedonia. Trade fairs had been held in Macedonia as far back as the middle-ages and reached their pinnacle during the early to mid nineteenth century along with Ottoman economic growth (M. Zdraveva, op. cit. p. 183). Under the Ottomans numerous fairs operated from at least the end of the eighteenth century in Seres, Prilep, Doiran, Struga, Enidzhe Vardar, Petrich and Nevrokop (M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stojanovski, and G. Todorovski, op. cit. p. 109). In the past the Prilep fair reportedly attracted as many as 100,000 people from destinations including Venice, Austria, Greece, Smyrna and other provinces in European Turkey (M. Zdraveva, op. cit. p. 183). With the economic decline of the Ottoman Empire fairs were no longer attracting crowds as they once were and some such as the Prilep fair ceased operating altogether.

<sup>133</sup> Macedonians from mixed villages commented that Turks were capable workers and considered them to be on par with themselves. It is interesting to note that urban Turks are sometimes described by commentators of the period as not being inclined towards hard work. See E. Bouchie de Belle, op. cit. p. 95.

<sup>134</sup> D. Siljanovski, op. cit. p. 264.

<sup>135</sup> M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stojanovski, and G. Todorovski, op. cit. p. 85. Tobacco growing was to become one of the largest industries in Ottoman Macedonia.

and Turkish systems of work was that Turkish women, unlike Macedonian women, did not work the fields.<sup>136</sup> Turks also introduced new working animals to Macedonia. The buffalo was brought from Asia Minor and the use of the camel also spread.<sup>137</sup> New animal husbandry techniques were introduced to Macedonia during the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the influx of Yuruks, a nomadic Turkic sheep-breeding people from Asia Minor. Whereas Macedonian sheep breeders would leave their villages for periods of weeks, grazing their herd along high mountain ranges, the Yuruks settled in mountain villages at lower altitudes and herded their sheep along lower lying areas. They predominantly settled a large area expanding from the Halkidik Peninsula in a northerly direction to Plachkovica Mountain (on the eastern side of the Vardar River). The territory is considered to be amongst the driest climate in Macedonia and was similar to that in Asia Minor from where the Yuruks originated.<sup>138</sup>

## 3.2. Life on the land

### *Chifliks, begs and taxes*

THE INTRODUCTION OF the *chiflik* agricultural system in Macedonia was a radical change from the *Timar-Spahi* system which had been in place since the beginning of Ottoman rule. Under the *Timar-Spahi* system, the supreme owner of the land was the Ottoman Sultan, whilst the immediate owner was the *raya*. Between the two there was a small-scale feudal landlord known as a *Spahi*, who in return for

<sup>136</sup> Respondents from mixed Macedonian Turkish villages stated that Turkish women did not work the fields. Bouchie de Belle makes the same observation (op. cit. p. 97) and also draws a comparison between urban and rural Turkish women pointing out that the urban women played an active role in their husbands small businesses.

<sup>137</sup> M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski, G. Todorovski, op. cit. pp. 85-86. There are no traces of camels remaining in Macedonia at the beginning of the twenty-first century; however the buffalo has remained.

<sup>138</sup> D. Silyanovski, op. cit. pp. 264–266. Regarding the territorial settlement of the Yuruks in the southern regions of Macedonia, some historians and commentators of the period consider it to be a matter of strategic colonisation aimed at driving a wedge between the Macedonian population spread on both the eastern and western sides of the Vardar river. Silyanovski doubts the strategic colonisation theory and considers that conditions there were closest to those in Asia Minor. Following the Balkan Wars and the population exchanges between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s, the majority of the Yuruks returned to Turkey and their villages became uninhabited.

military service ‘received a fief out of the state land but without the right to dispose of it, and a strictly defined income in the form of feudal rent from the *rayas* living on his fief’.<sup>139</sup> Christian peasants were able to exercise rights under the *Timar-Spahi* system as the relationship between the *Spahi* and the peasants was under ‘the direct control and protection of the state’.<sup>140</sup>

With a weakening of the Ottoman State from the seventeenth century, including military defeats, territorial losses and a general decline in government authority and control, this ‘created a suitable situation for the usurpation of the small-scale military fief by the more powerful large scale military lords’.<sup>141</sup> Whereas previously the Ottoman government set stringent conditions for the *Spahi*, now large parcels of land were freely handed out to friends of government officials, at first secretly, and later were auctioned off to the highest bidder.<sup>142</sup> These parcels were known as *chifliks*, and unlike the *Spahis* who administered the land as lease-holders, *chifliks* became private property of the new owners whose children could legally inherit the land.<sup>143</sup> The first recorded *chifliks* in Macedonia appear from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Their establishment was often opposed by Macedonians, as was the case in Mogila (a Bitola region village) in 1621 when the villagers violently attacked the *chiflik* and its owner Kerim.<sup>144</sup> The expanding *chiflik* system and the *Timar-Spahi* system operated simultaneously until the mid-nineteenth century when

<sup>139</sup> M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski, and G. Todorovski, op. cit. p. 82.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, pp. 82-83.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, p. 88.

<sup>142</sup> D. Pop Giorgiev, *Sopstvenosta vrz chiflicite i chifligarskite agrarno-pravni odnosi vo Makedonia* [Proprietorship of *chifliks* and labour agreements in Macedonia], Skopje, 1956, p. 62. The historian, D. Pop Giorgiev's *Sopstvenosta vrz chiflicite i chifligarskite agrarno-pravni odnosi vo Makedonia* is based on his doctoral study conducted in the early 1950s.

<sup>143</sup> Omer *Aga* was a large *chiflik* holder in Gorno Aglarci at the end of the nineteenth century. When he died the entire *chiflik* was inherited by his spouse Hayrula, following her death the *chiflik* was inherited by her children, sons Ismail Efendi, Besim Efendi, Kenan *Aga* (not specified whether he was a son), and daughters Aisha Hanum and Gulishak Hanum. Details derived from five original Ottoman Land Titles dated 21 July 1906, Volume 52, Document 20, Number 91; Volume 52, Document 29, Number 100; Volume 52, Document 31, Number 102; Volume 52, Document 34, Number 105; and, Volume 52, Document 38, Number 109;

<sup>144</sup> D. Pop Giorgiev, op. cit. p. 64.

the *Timar-Spahi* system came to a complete demise.<sup>145</sup> The following legal definition of *chiflik* is derived from Article 131 of the Ottoman Land Laws:<sup>146</sup>

Chiflik, in law, means a tract of land such as needs one yoke of oxen to work it, which is cultivated and harvested every year. Its extent is, in the case of land of the first quality from 70 to 80 dunims; in the case of land of the second quality from 100 dunims, and in the case of land of the third quality from 130 dunims. The dunim is 40 ordinary paces in length and breadth, that is, 1,600 pics. Every portion of land less than a dunim is called a piece (*kita*). But ordinarily speaking 'chiflik' means the land of which it is comprised, the buildings there, as well as the animals, grain, implements, yokes of oxen and other accessories, built or procured for cultivation. If the owner of a chiflik dies leaving no heir or person having a right of tapou, the chiflik is put up to auction by the State and adjudged to the highest bidder. If he leaves no heir with right of inheritance to the land and the buildings, animals, grain, and so on pass to the other heirs, then the land is granted to the latter on payment of the equivalent value, as they have a right of tapou over the land possessed and cultivated as subordinate to the chiflik, as stated in the chapter on Escheat. If they decline to take it, the land by itself, apart from such property and goods as devolve upon them, shall be put up to auction and adjudged to the highest bidder.

A significant portion of agricultural land in Macedonia came to belong to powerful Turkish feudal landlords, known as *begoi* (*beg* or *begot* denoting individual landlord, however, also known as *aga*). Villages situated along the fertile plains of Macedonia were typically under the proprietorship of a Turkish *beg*. It was not unusual for a village to have two or more *begoi* owning the land and often ownership also included the village homes.<sup>147</sup> The *beg* operated a profit-sharing system with the villagers; they worked the estates supplying their own agricultural implements and draught animals, whilst the *beg* supplied the seed.<sup>148</sup> In a position of servitude,<sup>149</sup>

<sup>145</sup> D. Pop Giorgiev, op. cit. p. 69.

<sup>146</sup> R.C. Tute, *The Ottoman Land Laws with a commentary of the Ottoman Land Code of 7<sup>th</sup> Ramadan 1274*, (No date or place of publication), pp. 119–120.

<sup>147</sup> The contemporary commentator, A. Razboinikov, *Chifligarstvo vo Makedonija i Odrinsko* [The *chiflik* system in Macedonia and Adrianople], Solun, 1913, p. 132.

<sup>148</sup> According to the contemporary commentator, B. Tatarcheff, the *beg* supplied the seed. *Turkish Misrule in Macedonia*, New York, 1905, p. 177. The French contemporary E. Bouchie de Belle, who spent a total of three years in Macedonia with the French military during the First World War claims that the peasant was required to supply the seed (op. cit. p. 50). Other contemporary commentators stated that the *beg* was the supplier of seeds – H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 51, A. Razboinikov, op. cit. pp. 40–41 and C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 328. Vane Tanchevski from the village of Lopatica (Bitola region) was of the opinion that in his village the *beg* provided the seed and working animals. Vane Tanchevski (born 1935 in Lopatica), interview conducted in Melbourne on 6 March 2002. Vane Tanchevski was able to name five consecutive generations of male ancestors on his father's side. Vane's father was Bosilko, his father was Angele, his father was Tanche, his father was Dime, and his father was Stojan. Vane Tanchevski arrived in Australia in the mid-1960s. It was common practice for the *beg* to provide the seed. However in some instances he took back the seed initially handed to the peasant, at

villagers were liable to extensive demands in the form of unpaid labour on the *beg*'s private farm and in his mill, and forced to chop wood for him and transport his produce to the marketplace.<sup>150</sup> Although villagers were to receive one half of the produce from the *chiflik*, after taxes and other contributions were paid, there was little left for the villager, just enough to maintain a 'miserable existence'.<sup>151</sup> The *beg*'s primary concern for the village was the payment of taxes and contributions.<sup>152</sup> As Macedonian Christians constituted the dominant element of the rural population, they were directly exploited by the *chiflik* system of agriculture.<sup>153</sup>

Mountainous villages had limited and often poor quality land,<sup>154</sup> instead relying on sheep breeding and animal husbandry for their economic survival. Villages without agricultural fields on plains, or only limited land, were excluded from the *chiflik* land system. In mountainous regions such as Debar, Reka and Gostivar in

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harvest when he took his share of the produce. Depending upon the agreement between the *beg* and peasant, the peasant may be required to provide the seed, but took back seed from the harvest. Responsibility for providing seed and whether there was a requirement for it to be returned was regulated by local custom, if there was no agreement in place between the peasant and *beg*. D. Pop Giorgiev, op. cit. p. 133.

<sup>149</sup> The contemporary commentator, I. Ivanov, *Polozhenieto na Blgarite vo Makedonia*, [The Situation of the Bulgarians in Macedonia], Sofia, 1895, p. 30. Commenting on the relationship between the villagers and the *beg*, Zivko Dimovski (born 1929 in Gorno Aglarci, Bitola region), stated, 'we were slaves to the *aga (beg)*'. Interview conducted 17 March 2000 in Gorno Aglarci.

<sup>150</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 51. *Begs* often demanded that Christians display great respect towards them in their greetings. Mile Derushovski (born 1927), from the village of Kuratica (Ohrid region), recounted the following story that occurred sometime towards the end of Ottoman rule. 'My father was returning home from church one morning and happened to come across the *beg* on the path. Because he did not greet the *beg*, as the *beg* expected to be greeted, he took off his belt and hit my father. The *beg* instructed my father that in future he should always greet him with the words '*mnogu ti godini aga*' ('may you have a long life aga').' Notes of interview, 1 December 2001.

<sup>151</sup> Vlado Jankulovski (born 1921 in Novaci, Bitola region), interview conducted in Novaci on 11 March 2000. Vlado Jankulovski is from the prominent Tantarovci family in the village. His father Jovan lived to 104 years-of-age (1870-1974) and his father before him, Jankula was originally from the nearby village of Dobromiri. Jankula moved to Novaci after buying land in the village and later married Mitra, who was also from Novaci.

<sup>152</sup> Stojche Petkovski (born 1920 in Makovo, Mariovo district of Bitola region), interview conducted in Makovo on 18 March 2000. Stojche Petkovski is from the Tanevci family, he has never moved out of the village and continues to herd a small amount of cattle over the Mariovo hills at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

<sup>153</sup> Commenting on his stay in the *chiflik* village of Chegel, the revolutionary leader from the IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation), Nikola Petrov Rusinski, stated that he found the 'same misery as in other *begovski chifliks*'. Commentary by D. Pachemska-Petreska and V. Kushevski, *Nikola Petrov Rusinski - Spomeni* [Nikola Petrov Rusinski - Memoirs], Skopje, 1997, p. 248.

<sup>154</sup> Stojche Petkovski stated that no *chifliks* existed in the villages on the north side of the Crna River in Mariovo (Rapesht, Chanishte, Dunya, Beshishta, etc. This part of Mariovo is known as 'Old Mariovo' - *Staro Mariovo*) because of the poor quality agricultural land. He further added 'if the land was no good for growing wheat, the Turks were not interested and the land would never become *chiflik* soil'. Old Mariovo villages primarily engaged in sheep breeding. Stojche Petkovski interview, op. cit.

Western Macedonia there was not a single *chiflik* village,<sup>155</sup> whereas most villages along fertile plains were operated under the *chiflik* land system.<sup>156</sup> Turkish landlords constituted the ruling class in Macedonia outside of the major urban centres, however, by the beginning of the twentieth century a minority of wealthy Christian businessmen also emerged as feudal landlords. Macedonian *chiflik* owners included the well-known 'Bomboli' family from Prilep<sup>157</sup> and the Strezovi family in the Resen region.<sup>158</sup> Christian *chiflik* landlords constituted 7.15 per cent (158 individuals) of all feudal landlords in the year 1900 in the part of Ottoman Macedonia that today is the Republic of Macedonia. Half of all Christian landlords operated estates under 75 hectares.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> A. Razboinikov, op. cit. p. 35.

<sup>156</sup> I. Ivanov, op. cit. p. 30.

<sup>157</sup> Giorgi Dimovski-Colev interview, op. cit.

<sup>158</sup> Most villages in the Resen region were not burdened with *chiflik* estates. Of the limited *chiflik* estates, the Strezovi family were the only non-Muslim landlords. S. Radev, *Simeon Radev - Rani Spomeni* [Simeon Radev - Early memoirs], Sofia, 1967, p. 47. The Bitola Pelagonia plain village of Skochivir was also a *chiflik* village under the ownership of a Christian landlord. The Macedonian Christian village inhabitants were not subjected to the 'degradation' that Muslim *chiflik* owners were renowned for subjecting Christians to. From the memoirs of Nikola Petrov Rusinski, D. Pachemska-Petreska and V. Kushevski, op. cit. p. 248. The Grunchevitch brothers from Ohrid were *chiflik* owners in the Ohrid region village of Konjsko. The village was populated by Macedonian Christians and contained 360 inhabitants (V. Kanchov, op. cit. p. 552). The brothers owned 70 hectares of cereal growing agricultural land and 12 hectares of forest. Seven village families worked for the Grunchevich brothers. Jachim Ristevitch from the Macedonian Christian village of Peshtani was also a *chiflik* owner in Konjsko village. Jachim Ristevitch owned 75 hectares of agricultural land and 84 hectares of forest. Twenty-seven families worked the Ristevitch *chiflik*. In total 34 families worked 145 hectares of agricultural land and 96 hectares of forest. From a 1914 Serb interior ministry report by J. Kirkovich, outlining the general conditions in the Ohrid region. Report number 4958, G. Todorovski, op. cit. p. 405. According to the encyclopaedia of villages in the Republic of Macedonia, in 1998 Konjsko village had 355 hectares of agricultural land, 574 hectares of forest and 780 hectares of pasture. M. Panov, *Enciklopedija na selata vo Republika Makedonija* [Encyclopaedia of villages in the Republic of Macedonia], Skopje, 1998, p. 156.

<sup>159</sup> Of a total of 2029 *chiflik* landlords in the part of Macedonia that constitutes the modern Republic of Macedonia, 158 landlords (7.15 per cent) were Christians with half operating estates under 75 hectares in size at approximately 1900. The vast majority (91.85 per cent) of landlords were Turks. D. Pop Giorgiev, op. cit. pp. 118–119.

Table 3.8: *Chiflik* Ownership, 1900

<i>Chiflik</i> (hectares)	<i>Chiflik</i> ownership 1900				Total
	Turkish	Christian	Vakaf	Church or monastery	
Up to 25	703	50	4	2	759
25 - 50	497	51	1	2	551
50 - 75	212	21	1	5	239
75 - 100	139	11	-	1	151
100 - 150	129	9	-	3	141
150 - 200	68	6	-	-	74
200 - 300	82	3	-	2	87
300 - 400	66	3	1	-	70
400 - 500	24	2	-	-	26
over 500	109	2	-	-	111
Total	2,029	158	7	15	2,209

Source and notes: D. Pop Giorgiev, *Sopstvenosta vrz chiflicite i chifligarskite agrarno-pravni odnosi vo Makedonija*, Skopje, 1956, p. 119. Note: the data provided in this table only refers to that part of Macedonia which in 2004 constituted the independent Republic of Macedonia (25,713 square kilometers or 38 per cent of Macedonia).

The majority of *chiflik* estates were small to medium holdings, with some *chifliks* as small as 1 to 3 hectares.<sup>160</sup> Razboinikov details the number of *chifliks* for the year 1910 but only includes villages under the religious jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate. Of a total of 2,325 villages in Macedonia, Razboinikov claims that 1,838 were ‘Exarchate villages’, and that 552 villages were fully *chiflik* land, 336 villages contained a combination of *chiflik* soil as well as land owned by the villagers themselves and 920 villages did not contain any *chiflik* soil.<sup>161</sup>

The Bitola Pelagonia plain and the Bitola Mariovo district were overwhelmingly made up of *chiflik* land, whilst the upper villages along Pelister Mountain contained a greater proportion of non-*chiflik* land owned by the villages

<sup>160</sup> From a 1914 Serb interior ministry report by J. Kirkovich, report number 4958. G. Todorovski, op. cit. pp. 402-406.

<sup>161</sup> A. Razboinikov, op. cit. p. 35. It should be noted that Razboinikov’s data regarding land status in Exarchate villages comes to 1,808 villages, slightly short of the figure of 1,838 villages.

and known (in Christian villages) as *raytsko* land.<sup>162</sup> *Chiflik* villages were also characterised by the presence of a Turkish tower in each village (*Turska Kula*), with some villages containing two or even three towers. The tower was used by the *beg* when he occasionally travelled to the village, usually when threshing of grains was performed.<sup>163</sup> The tower was otherwise utilised as longer-term accommodation by the *beg's* representatives known as *kaaite* (normally Turks, but also Albanians) who spent periods during summer in the village monitoring the work performed on the *chifliks*.<sup>164</sup> Macedonian villagers viewed the tower as a symbol of the *beg's* authority and oppression and resented its presence.

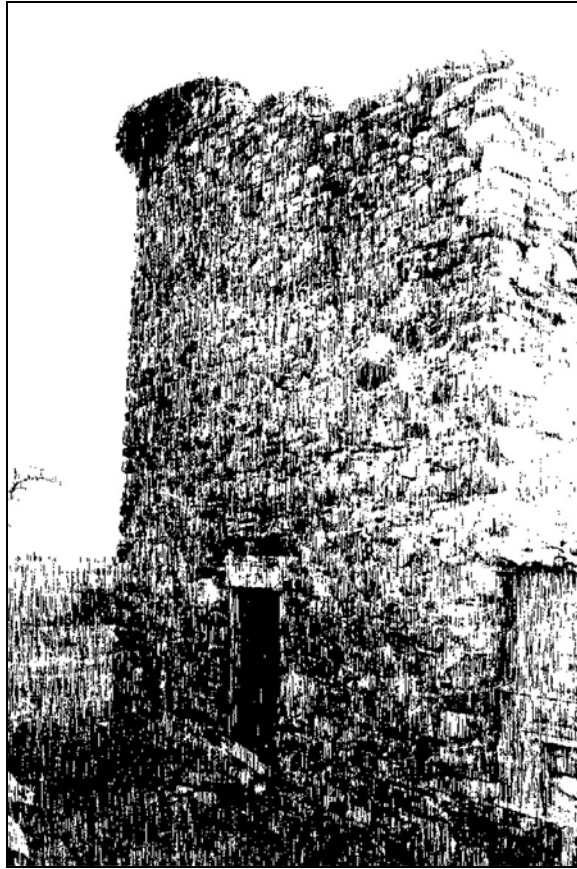
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<sup>162</sup> The term *rayatsko* land no doubt has been derived from the Turkish word 'Raya' denoting non-Muslim inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire. Rayatsko land does not include land purchased from *begs* at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.

<sup>163</sup> Ljuba Stankovska (born 1923 in Gorno Aglarci, Bitola region), interview conducted in Dedebalci on 15 March 2000. Ljuba Stankovska married into Dedebalci village in the 1940s. Stojche Petkovski interview, op. cit. Trajan Micevski (born in 1930 in Novaci, Bitola region), interview conducted in Novaci on 22 March 2000. Trajan Micevski is from the Maznikashovci family, one of the oldest families in the village. According to Todor Veljanovski the *beg* visited the village 'once or twice a year'. Todor Veljanovski (born 1930 in Dolno Aglarci, Bitola region), interview conducted in Bitola on 2 April 2000. Todor Veljanovski was a primary schoolteacher in the Bitola region villages.

<sup>164</sup> Trajan Micevski interview, op. cit. Trajan Micevski believed that the *begs'* representatives may have been known as *seizi*. The tower was not inhabited all year round, the *begs'* representatives appear to have stayed in the tower during the harvesting season only. According to the memoirs of Stefan Dimitar Janakievski (born 1879), an IMRO unit under the command (*voivoda*) of Petre Lisolaycheto used the Turkish tower in the village of Lisolay to conceal themselves whilst engaging in an operation in the village prior to the Ilinden Rebellion. Stefan Dimitar Janakievski memoirs as cited in T. Gorgiev, *Po Tragite na Minatoto* [Tracing the Past], Skopje, 1967, p. 14. In the 1960s T. Gorgiev conducted interviews and compiled oral histories of elderly Macedonians that served in the Macedonian revolutionary struggle during the Ottoman era. The largely unknown book, *Po Tragite na Minatoto*, contains a collection of thirty memoirs.

Illustration 3.5: A partially erect Turkish tower, Lazhec village



The Ottoman collection of taxes was a major point of conflict between Macedonian Christians and the Ottoman authorities dating back as far as the fifteenth century. Certain early revolts against Ottoman rule in Macedonia were directly related to the collection of taxation.<sup>165</sup> The most despised tax was the ‘blood tax’, which involved the kidnapping of young male children. This abhorrent practice did not

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<sup>165</sup> The earliest form of struggle against the Ottoman system was due directly to the economic exploitation of the Macedonian agricultural class. Unable to endure the unjust taxes and contributions, many villagers and sometimes, entire villages, migrated to isolated areas, usually in the mountainous regions away from the main roads and the taxman. As this process grew, the Ottoman authorities’ revenue collection began to reduce and efforts were taken to return the people to their former inhabited places. This was not always successful, so in order to compensate this loss the authorities began to seek increased payments from neighbouring villages which brought further misery to the Macedonian population. Instances exist where entire villages refused to pay taxes to the Ottomans, in the Ohrid region a number of villages displayed their protest by not paying taxes for three years. An official Turkish document dating from the year 1571 described their actions as a ‘revolt’. M. Minoski, *Osloboditelnye Dvizhenja i Vostanija vo Makedonia (1564 –1615)* [Liberation Movements and Rebellions in Macedonia (1564–1615)], Skopje 1972, pp. 58 and 76.

cease until the beginning of the nineteenth century, and there is evidence that this practice was most common in Macedonia and Albania.<sup>166</sup>

Taxation was the primary source of income for the Ottoman government. It was often unfairly assessed and it left the people in constant fear of new and increasing taxes.<sup>167</sup> Of the numerous taxes collected by the Ottoman authorities, by far the most common and heaviest tax was the tithe, also known as *dekati* or *dime*, but generally known by Macedonians as *desetok*. It was based on agricultural production and the legal limit was 10 per cent on agricultural produce.<sup>168</sup> Officially, according to

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<sup>166</sup> A. Pallis, *In the Days of the Janissaries (Old Turkish Life as Depicted in the 'Travel Book' of Evliya Chelebi)*, London, 1951, p. 34. Every four years strong healthy well-built young male children, usually around 10-12 years-of-age, were forcibly taken from their parents. Taken to Turkey, they were indoctrinated in Islam, received specialised education and attended the Imperial Military School of the Sultan. By adulthood, they were trained as the elite fighting force of the Ottoman army, the Janissary Corps. They were often sent back to their land of origin and were infamous for their brutality and cruelty. The Ottomans adopted this strategy throughout the Christian lands they possessed in the Balkans. Aimed at preventing the seizure of their children, Macedonian families were known to arrange marriages for their 8 - 9 year olds, as the Ottomans were reluctant to take married children. Another form of resistance was the painful task of amputating one or more fingers from their child, the child would then be rejected by the Ottomans. At the beginning of the twenty-first century traditional Macedonian folk songs continue to be sung about children forcibly taken from their parents. A particular song about a mother's pain on losing her child, tells the story of the child's return many years later as an adult to his village of origin. Whilst brutalising the villagers, his mother recognises him through a birthmark, and rejoices that her son is alive. However, as he can only speak Turkish, he is unable to understand her Macedonian tongue, and kills her with his sword without realising he has murdered his mother. There is also evidence that this practice continued throughout the course of Ottoman rule in various forms. The British General Consul in Bitola, Charles Blunt, reported in a diplomatic report in 1896 of the removal of a boy from his adoptive Christian family by the Vali of Bitola. Blunt states, 'the boy still remains in the Vali's house and it appears, is about to be or has been already made a Mussulman'. British Foreign Office, Public Record Office 373 FO 294/22. Dated 9 February 1896 (obtained from the Archive of Macedonia).

<sup>167</sup> Ilias *aga* purchased the *chiflik* in Yankovets village (Prespa region) in 1874. The villagers contributed 15 grosh per year for use of the land. Ilias *aga* applied to the administrative council in Bitola for permission to raise the payments from 15 to 50 grosh per household on a monthly basis. The council approved for Ilias *aga* to extract 120 to 420 grosh annually from each household, according to the prominent Macedonian historian, L. Lape, in *The Razlovtzi Uprising of 1876*, Skopje, 1976, p. 129. In the Bitola region there were significant increases to taxes during the years 1875-76. War taxes for the village Gavato rose from 12,976 grosh to 21,600 grosh, in Stezhevo from 2,869 grosh to 4,200 grosh and in Capari from 7,870 grosh to 15,680 grosh. G. Dimovski-Colev, and B. Pavlovski, *Nepokoreni [Rebellious]*, Bitola, 1982, p. 49. The historian, D.M. Perry, states that for the vast majority of peasants the chief point of contact with the government was through the tax collector. D.M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movements 1893-1903*, Duke University Press, 1988, p. 26. A bodyguard accompanied the Ottoman tax collector when attending Visheni village in the Kostur region. M. Prstnarov, *The History of the village Visheni (The English translation)*, No date or place of publication, p. 47. The two English women, G.M. MacKenzie and I.P. Irby, who travelled through Macedonia in the nineteenth century, also attest to tax collectors being accompanied by armed guards. 'We ourselves saw the tax gatherer swooping down on the villages, accompanied by harpy-flocks of Albanians armed to the teeth'. *The Slavonic Provinces of Turkey in Europe*, London, 1866, p. 21.

<sup>168</sup> Agricultural tax was rarely collected at the prescribed rate, another 1 per cent was collected for the increase in the agricultural treasury, 0.5 per cent on public schooling, and 0.5 per cent on supporting the military – the 10 per cent tithe tax in reality was a 12 per cent tax.

the law the collection of tithe was invited through auction or public tender by private individuals (payable through a lump sum to the government) to collect one-tenth of the forthcoming harvest and other agricultural produce.<sup>169</sup> The surplus over the offer was to be the profit of the tax gatherer. The tax gatherer, together with the local officials, conducted valuations of each peasant's next harvest.<sup>170</sup> Valuations were customarily excessive, and although avenues were open for him to appeal, he did not do so, as 'he is well aware by experience that their decision would be against him, and he therefore makes the best arrangement as to the valuation that he can, without wasting time on appeal'.<sup>171</sup> If individuals refused to accept an excessive valuation, they would not be permitted to gather their harvest until the authorities gave their consent, and consent normally was not given until the tax levied was paid. Therefore if the tax levy remained unpaid and the peasant's harvest turned to ruin, he was still unable to avoid the tax gatherer. In the service of the tax collector were the local police officers, known as *zaptiehs*, who did not hesitate to seize and sell the peasant's cattle and property.<sup>172</sup>

Each family worked a specified area of the *chiflik* estate and was required to meet a set quota prescribed by the *beg* or his representative.<sup>173</sup> Specific parcels were

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<sup>169</sup> These were normally the local *beys*. It was generally known beforehand who the successful bidder would be, and under whose patronage, according to the nineteenth-century commentator, B. St John, *The Turks in Europe*, London, 1853, p. 32.

<sup>170</sup> The tax gatherer visited the peasants' crop together with the peasant and the local official, whereupon he made a valuation and advised on the amount of tax to be paid. An arrangement was also made for the peasant to make payment to the local authorities. The historian, and long serving nineteenth-century, English consular official in Constantinople, E. Pears stated, 'in all probability it is just in consideration of such a private arrangement that his tender has been accepted': E. Pears, *A Description of the Turkish Government*, New York, 1905, p. 24.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, p. 24. Brailsford considers that 'to complain would be not only useless but dangerous'. Op. cit. p. 46. On the other hand, rich Muslims, owners of large estates, 'who consequently ought to pay larger sums, pay far less than his due, and moreover is allowed to defer payment'. B. Tatarcheff, op. cit. p. 175.

<sup>172</sup> E. Pears, op. cit. p. 26. Generally the collection of the tithe was conducted through the manner described. In some instances the local authorities did not receive a sufficient offer to contract out the collection of the tax. In such cases, the local officials perform the task. In other areas, as noted by the English commentator, J.F. Fraser, who travelled through Macedonia at the beginning of the twentieth century, such as where a railway line was in construction, the taxes were collected by the Department of Public Debt, 'representatives of the foreign bondholders, competent men as a rule, certainly just, who avoid the bloodsucking which is elsewhere so general'. J.F. Fraser, *Pictures from the Balkans*, London, 1906, pp. 157–158.

<sup>173</sup> Petko Atanasovski (born 1913 in Makovo, Mariovo district of Bitola), interview conducted in Makovo on 14 March 2000. Petko Atanasovski has been a lifelong resident of Makovo village, his grandfather Atanas settled

thus allocated to particular families and were in a sense ‘inherited’, to be worked on by the sons.<sup>174</sup> Wheat was the most popular grain grown on the *chifliks*. During harvesting the wheat was gathered in large bundles known as *snopye* and ‘from every 100 bundles the beg took 10 as a tax payment’.<sup>175</sup> There was a specified area in Gorno Aglarci known as *chairo*<sup>176</sup> where the *desetok* tax was paid, however, the threshing of the wheat grain was to be completed before the 10 per cent tax transaction was complete. The option of paying the *desetok* in cash was available if one chose to keep the wheat.<sup>177</sup> The remaining 90 per cent of the wheat threshing was conducted in each individual family property and ‘the *beg* enjoyed being in the village at this time and was known to command the villagers to bring him food so that he may eat whilst watching the work being done’.<sup>178</sup> When the work was completed half of the threshed grain was made as a payment to the *beg*<sup>179</sup>, ‘but it was not a tax, it was a rental payment’.<sup>180</sup>

One informant, Cvetan Jankulovski of Novaci, believed that a further tax was also paid on the remaining half of the produce and that this caused further animosity

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in Makovo from the nearby village of Chegel. Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit. Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit. Nikola Giorgievski (born 1927 in Gorno Aglarci, Bitola region), interview conducted in Gorno Aglarci on 17 March 2000. A member of the Spasevci family, Nikola Giorgievski recalled that as a child Gorno Aglarci contained 32 homes. According to Petko Atanasovski, villagers were compelled to achieve the set quota of work. If this did not occur the villager was required to obtain a loan from the *beg* (usually in wheat) and repay him with extra labour. Petko Atanasovski interview, op. cit. Traditionally Macedonians referred to Ottoman officials and wealthy older male Turks by the term *beg* or *aga*. Due to this long-standing tradition, it was apparent during the collection of oral histories that there was no differentiation made (in name) between an official Ottoman tax collector, a *chiflik* owning *beg*, or a wealthy Turk as *beg*.

When the *beg* visited Gorno Aglarci, he was known to ride his horse through the fields to observe the villagers working on the *chiflik*. Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit. According to Nikola Giorgievski, there were three, or possibly four *begs* that owned the *chiflik* estates in Gorno Aglarci. Nikola Giorgievski interview, op. cit.

<sup>174</sup> E. Bouchie De Belle, op. cit. p. 51. When a family became too large to work limited parcels of land, the *beg* allocated further portions to be worked.

<sup>175</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>176</sup> *Chairo* refers to a level wide-open space.

<sup>177</sup> Stojche Petkovski interview, op. cit. The historian Vakalopoulos stated that the tithe was paid in cash after 1850, however interviewees typically believed that that payment of *desetok* was commonly made in wheat. According to the historian, Pop Giorgiev, when tax gatherers sought *desetok* payment in cash, they quoted the highest possible market price. Op. cit. p. 154.

<sup>178</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>179</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit. N. Giorgievski interview, op. cit.

<sup>180</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit. Atanas Vasilevski similarly described villagers in Vranjevci as being ‘renters’ (*kiradzhi*). Atanas Vasilevski (born 1928 in Vranjevci village, Bitola region), interview conducted 16 March 2000 in Bitola.

towards the *beg*.<sup>181</sup> *Meto beg* in Lopatica village 'took whatever he could; he split the agricultural produce 50/50 with the villagers, but he also wanted more in the form of a cash payment of one or two coins from each family'.<sup>182</sup> Petko Atanasovski, another interviewee, stated that one-quarter of the total harvest collected by each family was all that remained. It was a difficult task for the villager to predetermine what tax would be paid as they 'were not always standard, sometimes they were higher and other times lower than anticipated, it was an unstable system'.<sup>183</sup> People felt pressured to comply with the wishes of the *beg*, because 'if you caused him any trouble you would get a smaller slice of your dues (wheat), and people had very little anyway; he would have left them to starve'.<sup>184</sup>

Therefore it comes as no surprise that during the liberation of the eastern Macedonian town of Razlovtsi (the Razlovtsi Uprising of 1876) there was a direct attack upon the Turkish landowners in the town. The historian M. Pandevski explains that the people of Razlovtsi destroyed the *begs'* account books and deeds in a burning house, 'thus ending their dependence on and submission to the Turkish authorities in a symbolic and dramatic way'.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Vlado Jankulovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>182</sup> Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>183</sup> Petko Atanasovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid. It is interesting to draw a comparison with the *rayatsko* village of Kradzheyvo in the Gorno Dzhumaya region (since Bulgarian rule the village and region have undergone name changes, the village is now known as Balgarchevo, and the city of Gorna Dzhumaya is known as Blagoevgrad). Villagers primarily engaged in sheep breeding and trade (there was no tradition of *pechalba*), and the village was situated up on a hill. A *chiflik* was situated below the hill along the plain, there was a small settlement known as *Chiflichko Maalo*, but considered a part of Kradzheyvo (it eventually became its own village). A beg lived in the *maalo* and even though Kradzheyvo was a *rayatsko* village every home was forced to provide a days work on the *chiflik* (per annum) according to the number of inhabitants in the home. It didn't matter who performed the work, as long as each person, elderly or infant was accounted for. There was no sharing of the wheat, the work was considered as the tax payment for each household. As many as two thousand people inhabited Kradzheyvo at approximately 1900 and they did not consider the *beg* cruel or exploitative. In relation to work performed for the *beg*, Vasil Tilev recalled that his grandfather Giorgi would say, '*eden den za begot, a tsela godina za familiyata, a posle toa tsela godina bez pari za komunizmot*' ('one day for the beg, a year for oneself, and afterwards a full year without money for communism'). Vasil Tilev (born 1952 in Gorna Dzhumaya), interview conducted in Melbourne on 20 January 2002. Vasil Tilev left Bulgaria in the early 1970s after illegally crossing the border into Greece. After a short stay in Western Europe, he migrated to Australia. Vasil is from the 'Dobravci' family (*soi*), named after the village Dobrava where his grandfather, Giorgi, was born (before he moved to Kradzheyvo village).

<sup>185</sup> M. Pandevski, *Macedonia and the Macedonians in the Eastern Crisis*, Skopje, 1978, p. 44.

There is no evidence of differing tax categories based on Exarchate or Patriarchate religious affiliation as compiled from oral accounts. Separate tax categories applied to Muslims and Christians as two independent groups.<sup>186</sup>

Due to the heavy tax burden imposed and the threat to wheat supplies for the coming year, Macedonian villagers had little choice but to learn how to adapt to the situation at hand, and made every effort to maximise their supply. During the period between harvesting and threshing they made every attempt to conceal wheat from the *beg*,<sup>187</sup> often under the cover of night.<sup>188</sup> In Petoraci the *beg* suspected what was occurring and sent a young Turkish man to oversee Christians threshing the wheat and to 'monitor that they accurately declare a correct amount of produce and do not steal extra for themselves'.<sup>189</sup> In Lopatica, villagers believed the *beg* was aware of the practice of not declaring all the wheat, but 'he turned a blind eye to it'.<sup>190</sup> The IMRO openly promoted this practice amongst the rural population in order to ease the weight of taxation contributions.<sup>191</sup>

Much depended upon the personal character of the *beg*. Some treated the villagers relatively fairly. For instance, in the village of Brod there were four *begs* who controlled the *chifliks* and they often competed with each other to attract the best

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<sup>186</sup> Unfortunately there was no documentary tax data available to the writer for the period after 1870, however there was no conflicting information obtained from respondents regarding this matter.

<sup>187</sup> Mihailo Todorovski (born 1921 in Dolno Orehovo, Bitola region), interview conducted on 30 March 2000 in Makovo village. Mihailo moved to the village of Makovo in 1948, his wife is from Novaci village. Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>188</sup> Mihailo Todorovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>189</sup> Kocho Duakis (born 1934 in Petoraci village, Lerin region), interview conducted 20 January 2001 in Melbourne. Kocho Duakis is from the Dujakovci family, Kocho's father was Ilo, his father was Nase, his father was Petre and before him there was Mitre. Kocho explained that it was through Petre that the family was to obtain the name Dujakovci, '*kolku visok, tolku širok – Dujak*'. Petoraci has been renamed Hrizohori by the Greek authorities.

<sup>190</sup> Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit. Vane recalled hearing stories from the old folk about people hiding wheat in *bardina* (drinking vases).

<sup>191</sup> M. Minoski, *Vnatreshnata Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija od Osnovajneto do Ilindenskoto Vostanie* [The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation from its Inception to the Ilinden Rebellion], Skopje, 1993, p. 50.

workers in the village to work on their estates.<sup>192</sup> Stories handed down indicate some *begs* were not unnecessarily oppressive whilst others were incorrigably greedy, with no regard for their *chiflik* workers.<sup>193</sup> Sometimes families were forcibly removed from villages by the *beg* and relocated to other villages<sup>194</sup> and the expelled family would be replaced with another.<sup>195</sup> There were a number of reasons for expulsions – for example if the *beg* took a disliking to a particular family, if a family were not working the *chiflik* land hard enough, or when a family was growing too large and was at the point where it would divide itself into separate households. When the family of Stefan Trajchevski's mother was dividing itself into separate homes (*deleyne*), his uncle was not permitted by the *beg* to remain and moved to the neighbouring village of Makovo. Ljuba Stankovska was aware that she has distant relatives in Kravari who were expelled from their native village Vashareyca by the *beg*<sup>196</sup> and Atanas Srbinovci was driven out of his native village Chegel by the village *beg* and relocated to Makovo.<sup>197</sup> Vane Tanchevski recalled playing around a destitute house in the village (Lopatica) as a child which was originally inhabited by the Pashovci family who were driven out of the village by the *beg*, who then set fire to the home.<sup>198</sup> Other families in the villages of Strezhevo and Utovo originally hailed from Lopatica before being driven out by the village *beg*.<sup>199</sup> In some instances this process could continue from one village to another, such as the case of Petre and Stojan, two brothers from Petalino. Initially driven out of their native village, they relocated in Grunishta where they remained for a few years until they were expelled once again and moved to

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<sup>192</sup> Ilija Josevski (born 1947 in Brod, Bitola region), interview conducted 21 January 2002 in Melbourne. Ilija stated that the four *begs* lived in the nearby village of Malo Konjari (Turkish village). There was a Golemo Konjari village close by and it was a mixed Macedonian-Turkish village. These two villages later became one village and appear on modern twenty-first century maps as Germijan. The homes in Brod were not owned by the *begs* and no towers existed in the village, which at approximately 1912 consisted of approximately 170 homes.

<sup>193</sup> Nikola Giorgievski interview, op. cit. Stojche Petkovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>194</sup> Nikola Giorgievski interview, op. cit. Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit. Stefan Trajchevski (born 1913 in Dolno Orehovo, Bitola region), interview conducted on 01 April 2000 in Dolno Orehovo. Stefan Trajchevski has been a life long resident of the village and is from the Tanevci family.

<sup>195</sup> Stefan Trajchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>196</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit. Ljuba Stankovska explained that it was her grandmother's uncle (*vujko*) that was expelled from Vasharejca.

<sup>197</sup> Petko Atanasovski interview, op. cit. Atanas was Petko's grandfather.

<sup>198</sup> Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

Alinci. Their victimisation did not cease and after two years in Alinci they were driven out again, this time moving to Armatoush. But this was not to be their permanent home either. After being driven out of the village they finally arrived in Dolno Orehovo, remaining there without any further expulsions.<sup>200</sup>

The *beg Meto* treated the Lopatica villagers as if they were 'his personal possessions, like servants'.<sup>201</sup> A well-known story in the village revolves around *Meto beg* approaching a villager one particular summer during the harvest season whilst the *beg* and his family were staying in the village *kula* (tower) and summoning him to bring his bulls and wooden cart to the *kula*.<sup>202</sup> The villager was instructed to transport the *beg*, his wives and children to a nearby river in the forest where they would have a recreational day out. During the journey the villager was under strict instructions not to look at the *beg's* wives. After dropping them off at the river the villager was made to wait until late in the afternoon, several hundred metres away, to prevent him from gazing at the women. The *beg* spent the day hunting wildlife and upon their return to the village, other villagers were made to prepare and deliver dinner to the *beg's* family at the *kula*.<sup>203</sup>

*Begs* were renowned for their economic exploitation of Christian villages; however, in many instances they also treated their workers with contempt and behaved in a sadistic tyrannical manner. In times past the old people of Dolno Orehovo told stories of hangings that occurred beside the *beg's* tower.<sup>204</sup> Similarly, in Lazhec, villagers are aware of hangings occurring.<sup>205</sup>

The abhorrent treatment of Christian women displayed a lack of morality and religious tolerance, and was one of the central points of conflict between Macedonian

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<sup>200</sup> Stefan Trajchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>201</sup> Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>202</sup> *Meto beg's* permanent home was in Bitola.

<sup>203</sup> Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>204</sup> Stefan Trajchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>205</sup> Stojan Spasevski interview, op. cit.

Christians and Muslim rule. In Dolno Orehovo the *beg* would at times visit the village during Macedonian *sred selo* (village square) celebrations. 'He would come to eat and drink, people were fearful of him, not just because he could expel you from the village, but from having women forcefully taken and placed in his harem.'<sup>206</sup> A notorious Albanian *beg* named Lyocho owned a *chiflik* in Ramna and intended to organise a workforce exclusively made up of women and girls from Srpci to work the *chiflik*. The men of Srpci were outraged at his intentions and Kote Obednikovski, Riste Gulabovski and Tane Shakovski refused to allow Lyocho's plan to come to fruition. Instead they murdered him outside the village of Ramna and joined Giorgi Sugarev's IMRO cheta.<sup>207</sup>

The villagers of Graeshnica particularly despised Sadik, the village *beg*. He lived in the village and 'was a tyrant who paid particular attention to the women'.<sup>208</sup> On one occasion Sadik sent his courier Adem to the home of Lazo Olevski requesting that his wife attend Sadik's home the following day to perform some work (*'da zhnija kaj negovata kuyka'*). Disgusted by Sadik's intentions, Lazo sought an alternative arrangement. The following day whilst Adem was travelling to the neighbouring village of Kishava, Lazo Olevski, together with his co-villager Mile Sarievski, captured Adem at a place known as *Kuchkin Dolo* (*Sharkoyca*). They tied and tortured him terribly before murdering him for 'injustices perpetrated against the villagers'.<sup>209</sup> Lazo Olevski and Mile Sarievski left their homes after this incident to become revolutionaries belonging to the IMRO. Sadik's disregard for Christians continued – but the final straw came after he organised the murder of two brothers from the village belonging to the Terzievski family. Their brother Filip responded by

<sup>206</sup> Stefan Trajchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>207</sup> G. Colev-Dimovski, and B. Pavlovski, op. cit. p. 51. A *cheta* is a paramilitary unit or detachment.

<sup>208</sup> Stojan Spasevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid. Stojan Spasevski heard this story directly from Lazo Olevski who lived in the village until he passed away in 1955.

murdering Sadik and his son. The remaining members of Sadik's family left the village and were never to return. Filip Terzievski became an IMRO revolutionary.<sup>210</sup>

It was not surprising that the IMRO stood firmly for a reconstruction of the agrarian land system in Macedonia, and in the case of despotic and cruel *begs*, the organisation often sought to deal with such individuals in their own way (as there was no effective legal alternative). An example of IMRO dealing with such a matter occurred in the Enidzhe Vardar region where the *beg* Ali Chaush ruled over Christian Macedonians in the village of Melnici with a terrifying brutality. His evil doings stretched out to neighbouring villages as well. Attempting to Islamicise and add a young woman named Lesava to his harem, the local IMRO leader, the legendary Apostol Petkov Voivoda, refused to tolerate the oppressive Ali Chaush further and issued an official death warrant for the *beg*. Ali Chaush was murdered soon after by two members of Apostol Petkov's *cheta* and his body concealed where it would never be found. The disappearance of the *beg* brought a great sense of relief to Macedonian villagers who were liberated from the constant misery he inflicted. As a warning to others, Apostol Petkov sent a letter to the *begs* in the district. It wrote, 'All you *begs* which have raised your heads and terrorise the innocent population, if you do not cease with your lawlessness, you will also disappear one day, just as the bloodthirsty Ali Chaush has disappeared'.<sup>211</sup>

It was not just the *begs* that ill-treated Christian villagers and women. Their representatives, known as *kaaite*, were sometimes brutal and cruel, subjecting

<sup>210</sup> Ibid. Lazo Olevski and Filip Terzievski were secret representatives of IMRO in the village prior to the incidents described. Petre Sariievski also became a full time IMRO revolutionary. Stojan Spasevski stated that there were approximately ten men from the village that joined the ranks of the IMRO as full time fighters for the liberation of Macedonia.

<sup>211</sup> Memoir of Giorgi Kostov Trajanov (born 1877), from T. Giorgiev, op. cit. pp. 46–47. Giorgi Trajanov was a member of Apostol Petkov's *cheta*, and it was he, along with another member, Risto, who murdered Ali Chaush. In order to protect themselves certain *begs* commenced using Christian middle men in their dealings with *chiflik* villages under their control, the IMRO opposed this and appealed to Christians to refrain from engaging as representatives for the *begs*. D. Pop Giorgiev, op. cit. pp. 154–155. Christian middle-men were appointed by the *beg* from the village of Bonche in the Prilep region; he employed two Vlah brothers from Prilep who ran the *begs* affairs in the village (they also spent periods over the summer living in the village tower). Trajche Tosiski, born 1956, Bonche, Prilep region, Notes of interview 10 January 2002 Melbourne.

Christian villagers to physical abuse. In the village of Armatush the *kaaite* were notoriously cruel, and following a despicable incident (at around the end of the nineteenth century) a group of male villagers took an oath in the village cemetery promising to kill the *kaaite* (*'ovie pci mora da gi jadime, da ne ostanime zhivi ako ne gi zakolime'*). Subsequently the three *kaaite* were brutally killed with axes by the five men who then permanently left the village, with each settling in five separate respective villages.<sup>212</sup>

*Kaaite* in Novaci generally stayed for a period over summer, especially towards the end of the working season.<sup>213</sup> On occasions they were known to terrorise people and if they harboured any suspicions towards an individual (for any reason) they would not hesitate to apprehend the individual and incarcerate him in the tower for as long as they wished. During the late 1890s in revolt at the oppressive nature of their presence, a group of male villagers vandalised and set fire to the tower. Jovan Jovanovski (from the Bozovci family) and his son Nikola were singled out and imprisoned in the tower without any court ruling or accepted legal procedures. Both were physically beaten. Nikola was released soon after, however Jovan was chained and hung upside down and beaten with rifle butts. His release was negotiated with sheep traded for his freedom.<sup>214</sup>

Meanwhile, *kaaite* in Lopatica were full-time residents in Bitola and stayed in the village *kula* for short periods during summer with their families. Villagers were forced to cook for them. Often, specific dishes were demanded and the village *kmet*

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<sup>212</sup> Nikola Giorgievski interview, op. cit.

<sup>213</sup> The tower in Novaci was located where the village primary school is situated (at the end of the twentieth century).

<sup>214</sup> Cvetan Jovanovski interview, op. cit. In a particular Prilep region village denoted as 'K' (by the historian D. Pop Giorgiev) the village *kaja* was known to conduct kangaroo court sessions at the tower whilst he played the role of judge. He brought villagers before his court on various charges. The *kaja* prosecuted individuals and forced them to pay fines and also punished them by beating individuals with a wooden rod. D. Pop Giorgiev, op. cit. p. 151.

(headman) was responsible for organising a rotation system so that everyone in the village took turns at cooking.<sup>215</sup>

Taxes of a non-agricultural character included the personal wealth tax known as *vergja* (or *vergž*). The *ibtissab* or *rusonmat* taxes were various indirect taxes such as tolls charged by guards on mountain passes, stamp duty, tax on private commercial transactions, a traders' tax based upon the value of their stock, and a fisheries tax, amongst others. The capitation tax (*harac*) was imposed on all adult male non-Muslims and stood at 60 piastres a year.<sup>216</sup> Other taxes included a special head tax for male non-Muslims in lieu of military service, and, although their Christian subjects did not receive education from the Ottomans, they were obliged to pay an education tax.<sup>217</sup> Personal taxes included the *bedel*, which was payable for every newborn Christian male (equivalent to seven shillings per annum). When a child turned fifteen his family was required to pay the *hidjaret* tax, which commenced from six shillings per annum upwards depending on the means of the family. For each male individual aged from eighteen to sixty, four to six shillings yearly was payable, which was provided for the maintenance of Ottomans who pass through his village or town.<sup>218</sup>

There were various additional taxes directed at Christians, taking the form of contributions for different needs of the state, and paid a year in advance. Taxes of this nature were sought when there was a state emergency, however, an emergency was declared by the Porte once a year, with urgent demands then 'sent to every Vali

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<sup>215</sup> Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>216</sup> K. Vakalopoulos, op. cit. p. 124. Interviewees were most familiar with the *desetok* tax, although Cvetan Jovanovski from Novaci recalled that there were other taxes collected for the animals (stock) and a particular tax was known as *ariat*. Vane Tanchevski believed there was no tax payable on animals, but Meto *beg* (in Lopatica) 'took any small amount he could get'. The *beg* was known to ask for payment to be made with sheep and would say '*ajde tuka porastile vo moj chiflik*' ('Come on, they grew up on my *chiflik*'). Nikola Giorgievski was aware of taxes known as *vergja* and *beglik*, but was uncertain of their purpose.

<sup>217</sup> The historian, D.M. Perry, op. cit. p. 26. Regarding military service in the Ottoman army, Perry states that Christians were barred from serving in the Ottoman military by law until the eighteenth century and thereafter by custom.

<sup>218</sup> B. Tatarcheff, *Turkish Misrule in Macedonia*, New York, 1905, p. 178.

ordering him to remit money to Constantinople'.<sup>219</sup> A further range of contributions and taxes were forcibly imposed upon Christians for a variety of reasons and were collected as ordinary tax. Another tribute or tax that was forcibly imposed was the *derudeshilik*. It was paid to local *beys* or bandit chiefs for protection from the plunder of bandits. The *derudeshilik* was demanded of the entire village:

often a village is summoned to pay it within two or three days, or even hours, and if it does not, it is liable to be attacked by the *beys* bravoes [men], pillaged and burnt; its cattle, horses, and sheep are driven away, and perhaps some of the richest men or their children are carried off to the mountains, and only released on payment of large sums.<sup>220</sup>

This practice was particularly prevalent in the western part of Macedonia where the oppression and banditry was not directly from the Ottoman, but by Albanians in the service of the Ottomans.<sup>221</sup>

*Desetok* tax constituted the single largest portion of total Ottoman tax revenue in the Bitola and Ohrid regions. In 1855 it comprised of 72.65 per cent of total revenue in the Bitola *pashalik* and 67.48 per cent in the Ohrid *pashalik* in 1855.<sup>222</sup> The high proportion of *desetok* tax in the Bitola region was due to the fertile Pelagonia plain providing for large-scale agricultural production in the region. Actual tax collected, compared to that paid into the treasury, would inevitably have been of a

<sup>219</sup> Ibid, p. 176.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid, p. 169.

<sup>221</sup> As Muslims, Albanians enjoyed special privileges that allowed them to plunder and terrorise local Christians without fear of retribution from the Ottoman authorities. The local authorities very often shared the plunder and ransom collected by Albanians. Ibid, pp. 169–170; N. Limanoski, *Izlamizacijata i etnichkite promeni vo Makedonija* [Islamisation and ethnic changes in Macedonia], Skopje, 1993, pp 73–74; H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. pp. 47–49; and, G. M. Terry, *The Origins and Development of the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement with Particular Reference to the Tayna Makedonsko-Odrinska Revolutsionerna Organizatsiya from its Conception in 1893 to the Ilinden Uprising of 1903*, Unpublished MA thesis, University of Nottingham, 1974, p. 55.

<sup>222</sup> K. Vakalopoulos, op. cit. p. 124.

<i>Sanjak</i>	<i>Tithe</i>	<i>Vergi</i>	<i>Ihtissab</i>	<i>Harac</i>	Customs Duty
<b>Bitola</b>	11,405,000	1,428,400	1,109,000	1,756,000	
<b>Ohrid</b>	4,927,000	673,300	552,000	448,100	700,000
<b>Korcha</b>	3,377,000	260,800	269,500	241,7000	

greater amount.<sup>223</sup> The method of tax farming adopted by the Ottomans was on a number of occasions abolished by imperial decrees, but continued to endure due to two specific reasons. Firstly it obliged the local Muslim gentry to remain loyal, as the profits they made maintained them as 'passive and tolerant malcontents'.<sup>224</sup> Secondly, the system was maintained because the bureaucracy also profited from it.<sup>225</sup>

It was the Christian subject, the Macedonian peasant, who worked his crop from sunrise to sunset, who felt the full effect of the corrupt Ottoman administration, and this was passed down to him in the form of a burdensome taxation system which left him often incurring debts.<sup>226</sup> The Macedonian did not expect justice from the authorities: even if a case went before the court, Christian evidence was never accepted against a Muslim.<sup>227</sup> There was no objective judiciary that could assess his grievances and overturn or modify the assessment of the tax collector.<sup>228</sup>

Christians believed that they would not receive a fair hearing from the Ottoman legal system.<sup>229</sup> Due to a dispute with the *beg* arising from the payment of

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<sup>223</sup> St John also expresses the same opinion and provided the following example. 'Instead of forwarding the tribute they raised to Constantinople, they seized the greater part for themselves, and only sent, as a kind of bribe for impunity, a small portion to headquarters. I know an instance of a district from which was annually levied the sum of 400,000 piastres, whilst only 38,000 found their way to Constantinople.' Op. cit, p. 27. Brailsford sums it up like this: 'The tax collector defrauds his master as well as his victims'. Op. cit. p. 41.

<sup>224</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 45.

<sup>225</sup> Brailsford states that 'if a tax farmer has been notoriously tyrannical, he can always be made to disgorge a portion of his plunder as hush money, and of the difference between the legal tithe and the sum actually collected, I suspect that a very fair proportion goes into the pockets of the officials'. Ibid, pp. 45–46.

<sup>226</sup> The commentator, B. Tatarcheff, claims that many of the peasants were never able to repay the amounts owed, and consequently their obligations to the money-lender increased with an additional 30 per cent interest added to the debt. Op. cit. pp. 177–178.

<sup>227</sup> J.F. Fraser, *Pictures from the Balkans*, London, 1906, p. 156. Fraser states, theoretically, by law the evidence given by a Christian against a Moslem is accepted, but in practice it is not.

<sup>228</sup> E. Bouchie de Belle, op. cit. pp. 61–62.

<sup>229</sup> Tatarcheff explains that 'if two witnesses can be found who will declare before the administrative council that a certain Christian owes money and is solvent, he is instantly thrown into prison; the ordinary legal formalities are omitted, and any appeal to justice is illusory. Many native Christians, who really owe nothing at all, are compelled to remain in prison by the order of the collector. Deprived from work, their families suffering from hunger, they are obliged to pawn even their household utensils, or borrow money at an exorbitant rate of interest'. Op. cit. p.176. If the peasant or his family has nothing to sell which can pay the tax collector, he must join the gangs which 'are said to be repairing the roads'. H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 47. Brailsford further points out that he could never discover what these gangs actually do for the roads showed

taxes, Jankula Jankulovski from Novaci did not pursue the matter with the legal authorities as 'he had no confidence in them'.<sup>230</sup> According to Petko Atanasovski from Makovo, 'people did not trust the Turkish judiciary; they had no faith in the system, because they were Muslims'.<sup>231</sup> Vane Tanchevski similarly stated, 'although technically one could appeal to the authorities, and could go to the Mudir in Bitola, it was of no use'.<sup>232</sup>

The judicial administration in Ottoman Macedonia came under the responsibility of the Minister of Justice. Unlike Western Europe where one system of jurisprudence existed in a given jurisdiction, in the Ottoman State at the beginning of the twentieth century, two systems co-existed. The first of the two systems was the *Shariah*, religious law based on the sacred law of the Muslim religion. The Muslim of the Ottoman Empire accepted the Koran as the supreme guide in all matters, legal as well as religious.<sup>233</sup> Contemporary commentators of the period accept that the *Shari* law would have been quite adequate if it had been administered to an exclusively Muslim population, however, in the Christian lands that it ruled it was inappropriate for it to be administered on Christian subjects, or on a mixed Muslim and Christian population.<sup>234</sup> The law was formulated in the interests of the Muslim rulers, and not for the Christian subjects. It left the Christian 'absolutely without protection'.<sup>235</sup> There was no equality before the law. A Muslim could rarely be punished for a crime perpetrated against a Christian, as evidence provided by Christian witnesses was

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little evidence of their labour. G.M. MacKenzie and I.P. Irby explained that a poorly constructed new road (the 'Imperial') between Solun and Voden was constructed with the forced labour of villagers. Although a new tax was raised in order to pay the workers, the responsible Pasha put the money in his own pocket. Op. cit. p. 57.

<sup>230</sup> Vlado Jankulovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>231</sup> Petko Atanasovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>232</sup> Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>233</sup> The contemporary commentator and historian, E. Pears, points out, 'he is aided in its interpretation by certain "traditions", and by recognised collections of ancient legal texts and decisions, called *fatvas*, of special questions, the most important collection being one which was largely compiled in the early days of Islam from the Pandects of Justinian'. Op. cit. p. 19. The commentator and historian, C. Eliot, stated that 'this law is religious only in the sense that it is derived from religious works'. Op. cit. p. 133.

<sup>234</sup> This view was generally held by contemporary commentators of the time, see B. St John, *The Turks in Europe*, London, 1853; E.A. Freeman, *Ottoman Power in Europe*, London, 1877; and, T. Commyn-Platt, *The Turk in Balkans*, London, 1904.

<sup>235</sup> E.A. Freeman, op. cit. p. 75.

inadmissible in a sacred court. Although in theory the Christian was entitled to protection under the law, in practice this did not occur because ‘the witness of an infidel cannot by the Mahometan law be taken against the true believer’.<sup>236</sup> In this environment Muslims committed murders against Christians ‘every day, and as long as the victims are rayahs the authorities take no notice’.<sup>237</sup> Muslim courts would not hesitate to rigorously punish a Christian who had injured a Muslim whilst acting in self-defence or in the defence of another.<sup>238</sup> MacKenzie and Irby, two nineteenth century travellers in Macedonia and the Balkans, noted that these vexations would not end until the Turkish governors punished Muslims with rigid justice, however, this they would not do ‘inasmuch as their rule depends for support on the interest which the Mussulman element has in perpetuating it’.<sup>239</sup> As such the Christian found himself outside the protection of the law, consequently he sought to purchase certain rights, the security of his life, his property, and the exercise of his religion, by the payment of tribute.<sup>240</sup>

The second system of law in the Ottoman Empire was the general Civil law that was adapted from the Code Napoleon. It was used by both Christians and Muslims; however, its law courts were terribly corrupt with the wealthy class from both creeds manipulating outcomes through bribery.<sup>241</sup>

## Village private land ownership

ALTHOUGH THE MAJORITY of villages along the Pelagonia plain and in the surrounding region were *chiflik* villages, it was nevertheless common for Macedonian Christians in *chiflik* villages to possess limited holdings of their own land. Privately

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<sup>236</sup> Ibid, p. 75. Freeman suggests that the only hope for a Christian in an Ottoman law court was to bribe the judge and hire Muslim witnesses (p. 76).

<sup>237</sup> G.M. MacKenzie and I.P. Irby, op. cit. p. 76.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid, p. 76.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid, p. 113.

<sup>240</sup> E.A. Freeman, op. cit. p. 77.

<sup>241</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 40.

owned land was known as *rayatska zemya* ('Rayatska land'), no doubt deriving from the Turkish term used in the Empire for non-Muslim subjects, *Raya*.

In the Pelagonia plain sample villages of Gorno Aglarci and Novaci, a small number of individuals, no more than 10 per cent of families, owned *rayatska* land. Approximately ten families in the *chiflik* village of Novaci owned *rayatska* land around 1912<sup>242</sup> (there was approximately 60 homes in the village). Similarly, in Dobrushevo, of approximately 80 homes in the village, only 5 or 6 owned *rayatska* land and these were smallholdings of between 5 and 15 *dekari*.<sup>243</sup> The situation was similar in the other villages of Vrajevci, Suvodol<sup>244</sup> and Makovo, as well as in the mixed Macedonian-Turkish villages of Dolno Orehovo, Lazhec and Petoraci. According to the English Consul in Bitola, *rayatska* parcels were generally small-scale holdings, under 1.5 acres in size.<sup>245</sup>

*Rayatska* land did not include land purchased from *begs* as a result of late nineteenth - and early twentieth-century *pechalba*, but only signified land owned before this period. For instance, although the Kleshtev family possessed considerable land holdings in Gorno Aglarci at the end of the nineteenth century (purchased from the *beg* as a result of *pechalba* earnings), Ljuba Stankovska did not consider the holdings to constitute *rayatska* land, instead pointing out specific parcels which did constitute *rayatska* land.<sup>246</sup> It is clear that some families owned private land for generations during Ottoman rule whilst the bulk of the village land was *chiflik* soil.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> D. Pachemska-Petreska and D. Kushevski, op. cit. p. 243.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, p. 256. One *dekar* is equivalent to 1000 square metres of land.

<sup>244</sup> In Suvodol, only four homes out of a total of approximately 30 owned *rayatska* land. Kosta Markovski (born 1930 in Suvodol, Bitola region), interview conducted on 20 March 2000. Kosta Markovski could recount six generations back commencing from his father Tole, Anasto, Marko, Petko, Trajche and Marge (Marge moved to Suvodol from Krklino village, Bitola region). Kosta Markovski is from the Margevci family.

<sup>245</sup> G. Dimovski-Colev and B. Pavlovski, op. cit. p. 44.

<sup>246</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

Regarding the acquisition of *rayatska* land, Nikola Giorgievski was of the view that *begs* may have sold parcels of land to villagers where he considered the land to hold inferior soil.<sup>248</sup> Vane Tanchevski was aware that three families in Lopatica owned *rayatska* land, two were Popovci families (priests) and the third was the Dimitriovci family, and according to the stories in the village 'the *beg* sold the land because he was in need of money'.<sup>249</sup> According to Vasil Tilev from the *rayatsko* village of Kradzheyvo Gorna Dzhumaya region<sup>250</sup>, the village was formed as a result of a male ancestor on his mother's side who was given land along the uninhabited hillside as a wedding gift by the village *beg* from the neighbouring village of Dilanzino.<sup>251</sup> Later, after his three sons married, the single home on the hillside expanded to four homes and over time it continued to grow into a large village.<sup>252</sup> These vivid stories concerning land obtained from the *begs* is an interesting sign of how rare and difficult it was for the peasantry to prise acreage off the local elite.

The land was intrinsic to peasant culture. Village fields were scattered around the village in all directions and within the boundaries of the village fields there existed distinct areas, each labelled with its own name. The fields represented a way of life to the villager that had been handed down from generation to generation. The importance of the fields was reflected in a personal relationship between the villager and his land. He referred to each parcel by a specific name. This personal connection was not exclusive to men, but was also apparent with women and reflected the system of labour employed with working the land. It was not the sole domain of males, but was equally shared between both sexes. Distinct areas of Gorno Aglarci village fields were made up of the following: *Adzhica*, *Belo Pole*, *Branenica*, *Brazda*,

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<sup>248</sup> Nikola Giorgievski interview, op. cit. *Rayatsko* land (in amongst *chifliks*) was often utilised to grow vegetables and '*furanzhni kulturi*' ('*furazh*' - forage, fodder, provender). D. Pop Giorgiev, op. cit, p. 134.

<sup>249</sup> Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>250</sup> Kradzheyvo has been renamed by the Bulgarian authorities as Bulgarchevo and the city of Gorno Dzhumaya as Blagoevgrad.

<sup>251</sup> The Bulgarian authorities have renamed Dilanzino as Zelendovo.

<sup>252</sup> Vasil Tilev interview, op. cit.

*Cheshma, Dolni Nivi, Domuzica, Golinye, Kalnabara, Krusha, Krushi, Malo Lozje, Pesoci, Poroiniche, Preku Reka, Slozovi, Trnka/Trnki, Tymba and Tymbe.*<sup>253</sup>

A neighbouring villager, commenting upon the Gorno Aglarci fields, would refer to them collectively as '*Aglarchanski nivi*' ('Aglarski land'). However a villager of Aglarci saw a deeper structure within his own village and only referred to 'Aglarski land' in general terms when speaking to someone from another village. Otherwise he referred to specific sub-sections of the land. Each part had its own characteristics, for example *Dokoici* had good earth and *Branenica* had ample water (due to its proximity to the Crna River). The peasant saw the land as constituting a living entity and treated it with respect. When a villager possessed a parcel of land outside of the village's agricultural boundaries, it was simply referred to as *Armatoushka* (in Armatoush village) or *Dobromirska* (in Dobromiri village), signifying the neighbouring village name, but not the corresponding sub-section label used in the neighbouring village. Thus the relationship between the peasants and the land was also geographical – the further the distance from home, the less likely the peasant would give the land an affectionate name. The size of some of these parcels is given in Table 3.9.

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<sup>253</sup> Bitola Titles Office records. Dated 1932 - Kat Opshtina, Gorni Aglarci, Broj 22 List Broj 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Razmera 1:2500

Table 3.9: Kleshtev Family Land Holdings (Acquired through *Pechalba*) in the Village of Gorno Aglarci, approx. 1912

Village sub-section	Land Parcels	Land Size (Pogoni)
Porojnica	Poroinicheto	3
Pesoci	Slogoy (do rekata)	5-6
Pesoci	Yazo	12
Pesoci	Tumbata	7
Pesoci	(?) Kaj pato do dzhadeto	3-4
Pesoci	(?) Tornovo mofche	12
Preku Reka	Branenica	5
Preku Reka	Dokoici	30
Preku Reka	Popoica	7
Preku Reka	Brazda	1
Patche Dobromirsko	Dobromirsko patche	6
Patche Dobromirsko	Dobromirsko patche	7
Patche Dobromirsko	Branenica	12
Patche Dobromirsko	Kalnabara	2
Patche Dobromirsko	Kalnabara	3
Patche Dobromirsko	Peshinata	10
Patche Dobromirsko	Ogradata	3
Patche Dobromirsko	Lozyeto	1
?	Gaskarka	5
?	(Kamen) Crvenica	5
?	Podupki	5
?	Kaj Dabjato	2
?	Na rekata (Meglenska)	5
?	" "	5
?	Na chairo (nad Joskovci)	2
?	Na chairo	2
?	Kraj Dzhade	2
?	Kraj Dzhade	2
Approximate land holdings in Gorno Aglarci		165 Pogons

Source and notes: Ljuba Stankovska interview.<sup>254</sup> One *pogon* is equivalent to 2000 square metres of land.

<sup>254</sup> According to the recollections of Ljuba Stankovska (Kleshteva) who worked much of the land whilst in her teens during the 1930s, before marrying out of the village (into the neighbouring village of Dedebalci). A great bulk of the land outlined in tables 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11 was confiscated by the state (Yugoslavia) in the late 1940s during the nationalization programme. Total land holding for the Kleshtev family was in the vicinity of 350-360 pogons. Having spent ten years in America on *pechalba* Petre from Rakovo village purchased approximately 15 acres of land 'for a hatful of gold coins' from a Turkish family in Gorno Kleshtina. The plots were known by specific names, *Buka* in Dolna Kleshtina, *Leska* near the graveyard in Kleshtina, *Kula* near the *Damchea Vodenitsa*, *Panoata Niva* at the upper end of Gorno Kleshtina and *Livadata* in Dolna Kleshtina. In the late 1920s

Table 3.10: Kleshtev Family *rayatsko* Land Holdings, approx. 1912

Village	Land parcel	Land size (pogoni)
Dolno Aglarci	?	7-8
Gorno Aglarci	Lozjeto	1
Total approximate <i>rayatsko</i> land holdings		9 Pogons

Source: Ljuba Stankovska interview.

Table 3.11: Kleshtev Family Land Holdings (Acquired Through *pechalba*) Outside the Boundaries of Gorno Aglarci, approx. 1912

Village	Land Parcels	Land Size (Pogons)
Armatoush	Armatoushka	7
Dedebalci	Dedebalska	?
Dobromiri	Dobromirska	1
Dobromiri	Dobromirska	6
Dobromiri	Dobromirska	7
Radobor	Radoborska	5
Radobor	Radoborska	5
Dolgobevci	Dolgobevska	5
Total approximate land holdings		36 Pogons

Source: Ljuba Stankovska interview.

Boundaries between villages were not always clearly discernible to the outsider, but villagers themselves were well aware where their village fields ended and where the neighbouring village-land started. The boundary between Gorno Aglarci and the villages of Meglenci, Suvodol and Armatoush was clearly defined by a road known to the locals by the name *drumo*. On the other hand the boundary separating Gorno Aglarci from Dolno Aglarci, Radobor and Trn was not obvious, as there were no distinguishing physical features marking it. In some instances a river, creek or road

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Petre and his family were dispossessed of practically all their land which was given to colonizing *prosfigi* families by the Greek government which did not recognise Turkish titles. K. Sapurma, and P. Petrovska, *Children of the Bird Goddess*, Politecon Publications, 1997, pp. 28-29. *Children of the Bird Goddess* is an autobiography of Kita Sapurma that spans over a century and explores the lives of four generations of Macedonian women commencing from the Ottoman era to the Macedonian struggle for independence during the Greek Civil War. It is one of the few books dealing with Macedonian village life and culture from the perspective of women.

marked the boundary, in others it may have been a tree, a rock or even a *potka* (a small erect mound of earth standing approximately one foot high).<sup>255</sup>

Fencing was not erected around property holdings. Between each parcel of land there was a space approximately one foot in width that was not worked; this represented the limits of each parcel. This particular method was utilised on fields where wheat, cereals and other grains were grown. Parcels exclusively used for grazing did not have a gap between properties, instead, large rocks were placed at intervals along the boundary. Parcels of land along the Bitola plain were generally rectangular in shape and on each corner it was common for *potki* to be erected.<sup>256</sup> Boundaries of specific land parcels are described in official Ottoman Turkish land titles according to who owned adjoining parcels. One such parcel in Gorno Aglarci is described as bordering with Toshe Cvetko on the eastern side, a road on the west, Hadzhi Raif Efendi on the north and Hurshids fields to the south.<sup>257</sup> This system denoted a landholding tradition where property rarely changed hands.

## A rural life

THE PRINCIPAL AGRICULTURAL products in Macedonia during the nineteenth century were wheat, cotton and tobacco.<sup>258</sup> The typical agriculture along the Bitola Pelagonia plain villages was predominantly wheat – but corn, rye, oats, and barley were also grown. The most popular vegetables making up the staple diet were garlic, onion, leek, beans, peppers and tomatoes. In *chiflik* villages vegetables were grown in small portions of the *chiflik* land. Bread was a mixture of wheat, rye, and maize, whilst

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<sup>255</sup> Mihailo Kleshtev interview, op. cit. According to official Ottoman land laws relating to the demarcation of village boundaries, 'if the fixed and distinguishing ancient boundary marks of towns or villages have disappeared or are no longer distinguishable, there shall be chosen from among the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns or villages, trustworthy persons of mature years who shall go to the spot and through mediation of the religious authority the four sides of the ancient boundaries shall be fixed and new marks shall be put where necessary'. R.C. Tute, op. cit. p. 118.

<sup>256</sup> Mihailo Kleshtev interview, op. cit.

<sup>257</sup> Ottoman Land Title dated 21 July 1906, Volume 52, document 38, number 109.

<sup>258</sup> M. Zdraveva, op. cit. pp. 178-179.

in the Mariovo district rye bread was common. A villager's diet was predominantly vegetarian and drawn directly from the land. Pelagonia plain villages maintained small numbers of sheep holdings, far less in comparison to Mariovo and the Pelister upper villages, where sheep breeding was a traditional practice.<sup>259</sup> Sheep provided multiple benefits for the villager. As a source of income young lambs could be sold and they also provided the villager with a supply of meat and dairy products such as milk, cheese and yoghurt (part of the basic diet). Wool produced from sheep was used for the manufacture of clothing for the entire family, as well as all the blankets in the home.

Generally meat was reserved for special occasions, most often for religious celebrations. Traditionally a turkey was killed at Christmas, and a lamb on Easter Saturday and *Dubovden*, while a pig in October provided the meat supply for the cold winter months.<sup>260</sup> There were also strict religious periods throughout the year when meat was not consumed. These included six weeks before Christmas, six weeks before Easter, three weeks before *Petrovden* and the two weeks before *Bogorjica Golema*. Meat was never eaten on Fridays and most abstained on Wednesdays as well. During periods of religious fasting peasants also abstained from consuming dairy products. Everyone, regardless of age or sex, strictly observed fasting periods.

Villagers used the most basic of agricultural implements. Equipment used in the typical Macedonian village in the Bitola region during the late nineteenth century under Ottoman rule largely remained unchanged until the 1940s. The animal-driven plough continued to be the instrument used to work the fields. In the Ottoman era villagers used a wooden plough known as a *ralo*. The instrument that ploughed

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<sup>259</sup> The typical villager in Gorno Aglarci maintained a minimum of twenty to thirty sheep, whilst in the Mariovo district the average villager maintained at least two hundred sheep.

<sup>260</sup> Villagers also kept chickens but rarely killed them for consumption, instead using their eggs as a part of their diet. It is interesting to note that during the construction of *Saat Kula* (Clock Tower) in central Bitola during the nineteenth century, sixty thousand eggs were gathered from the Bitola region villages and mixed with the mortar during the building of the 35 metre high tower. D. Grdanov, *Bitola i Heraclea niz bronikata na vekovite* [Bitola and Heraclea through the Chronicles of the Ages], Bitola, 1969, p. 32.

through the earth was of steel construction (it did not turn the earth over, it only ploughed through it).<sup>261</sup> Other instruments were the *motika* (hoe), *villa* (pitchfork) and *griblo* (rake). All were constructed of metal, had wooden handles, and were purchased from gypsy blacksmiths in Bitola. Working animals were crucial for the villager to be able to work the land. Every household, even the poorest, had at least one or two working animals (horse, bull), whilst a wealthier household could have a dozen or more such animals. To lose such a creature through illness or accident was a tragic event for the home and the loss was considered a great misfortune.

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<sup>261</sup> Later in the 1920s and 1930s steel ploughs became available and these turned the earth over when being driven through the earth. The steel plough was known as a '*plugh*'. Tractors appeared after the Second World War and were first used on state operated estates.

Table 3.12: Agricultural Calendar in the Bitola Region, approx. 1900

Month	Activities (Men, Women)		Celebrations
January	Indoor work making mattresses of straw, straw handbags and cane ceilings. General maintenance around the home, and of farming equipment.	Make clothing for the family, trousers, socks, jumpers, etc. (Indoor work).	<i>Badnik</i> Christmas – (killing a turkey)
February	As above.	As above.	<i>Vodici</i> .
March	Sowing of tobacco and vegetables.	Sowing of tobacco and vegetables. Collect cow manure, mix with hay and create bricks to be used as fuel for winter fire.	
April	<i>Shamak</i> gathered by villagers near <i>blato</i> .		Easter – (killing a lamb on Easter Saturday)
May	<i>Shamak</i> gathered near <i>blato</i> . 1. Weeding of the crops. 2. Sowing and planting of corn, melons, etc.	1. Weeding of the crops. 2. Sowing and planting of corn, melons, etc.	
June	1. Digging the fields. 2. Removing/cutting the wheat.	1. Digging the fields. 2. Removing/cutting the wheat.	<i>Duborden</i> – (killing a lamb)
July			
August			
September	Planting the wheat.	First day of wheat planting, the women cook <i>maznik</i> and <i>zelnik</i> . Clean the wheat seeds. Clean and wash wool at Crna River in preparation for winter clothes manufacturing.	Wedding celebrations
October	Killing a pig (winter meat). Collection of soap – ' <i>Rusa Sreda</i> '		Wedding celebrations
November			Wedding celebrations
December	Indoor work making mattresses of straw, straw handbags, and cane ceilings. General maintenance around the home, and of farming equipment.	Collecting dried tobacco leaves (indoor work).	

In the central Pelagonia plain region, local male villagers utilised the natural resources available from the large swamp known as *blato*. Surrounding villages had direct access to cane that was increasingly used for the construction of ceilings during the latter stages of Ottoman rule. Lengths of cane (*trska*) were tied together (so as to roll out like a blanket), and formed a ceiling in the home (to be whitewashed afterwards). Rolls were prepared and taken to the market places in Bitola and Prilep to be sold. Cane helped to supplement the earning capacity of these villages. The manufacture of cane ceilings was performed over the winter months.<sup>262</sup> Other products manufactured by men during the winter period included carry bags known as *zimbili*, made from a straw-like weed found in the *blato* known as *shamak*. *Shamak* was also used for the manufacture of sleeping mats known as *raguzini*. Both bags and sleeping mats were made over the winter months and were sold at the Bitola market either to a wholesale trader, or to the retail market by the villager himself.<sup>263</sup>

During the summer months the water level of the marsh dropped and men from the surrounding villages came to collect a particular grass known as *shavar*,<sup>264</sup> to be used as stock feed for the winter months. There was an abundance of carp in the swamp which men fished and either used as a source of nutrition or sold in Bitola or to villages which did not have access to the *blato*. Central Pelagonia plain villages as far as the fringes of the Mariovo district, such as Suvodol and Vrajevci, utilised the *blato*, whereas the Mariovo villages did not have access to these resources.<sup>265</sup>

<sup>262</sup> Interviewees could recall cane ceilings being manufactured and becoming popular during the 1930s and 1940s. During field research conducted in Bitola the author came across a 'ceiling roll' of cane on the road side near the village bus terminal.

<sup>263</sup> Mihailo Kleshtev interview, op. cit. Trajanka Talevska interview, op. cit.

<sup>264</sup> *Shavar* grass grew to approximately two feet in height.

<sup>265</sup> Kosta Markovski interview, op. cit. Atanas Vasilevski interview, op. cit.

Villagers in Makovo purchased cane rolls, *raguzini* and other *Blato* products from the Bitola marketplace. Petko Atanasovski interview, op. cit. In 1959/1960 the *blato* was drained by the authorities and large tracts of agricultural land was subsequently made available. A state firm (*Zik Pelagonia*) took over the administration of agricultural production and created numerous employment opportunities for the local villagers. It has had a particularly positive effect on the village of Novaci, which contains its central base for the collection of agricultural goods. Cane Micevski (born 1938 in Novaci, Bitola region), interview conducted 22 March 2000 in Novaci. Cane Micevski is from the Maznikashovci family, one of the oldest families in the village.

Winter indoor work performed by women involved the making of clothing. As one saying put it, 'winter was the cocoon for the women's handiwork'.<sup>266</sup> Clothing for all family members was made from wool throughout winter. Women wore hand-loomed and embroidered outfits, caftans, vests and aprons, in the colours of red, black, white, green and pastel yellow.<sup>267</sup> Men wore trousers of thick-cloth with a sash or waist belt, and a sheepskin coat in winter. Men wore caps and, unlike their western counterparts, it was considered a mark of disrespect if a man remained uncovered in the presence of a stranger. 'Far from removing his head gear as a courteous greeting, he would, supposing he were uncovered, promptly replace it as an act symbolical of respect.'<sup>268</sup> Women wore an apron-like garment. Younger ones wore bright colours, whilst older women wore a combination of white dominated by black. A scarf was worn around the head by young and old alike and was decorated by colourful embroidery and at times with coins. Often a large decorated silver buckle was worn across the waist. The texture of male and female garments was coarse and rough – as raw wool was commonly used. Children were also similarly dressed, as were the adults.

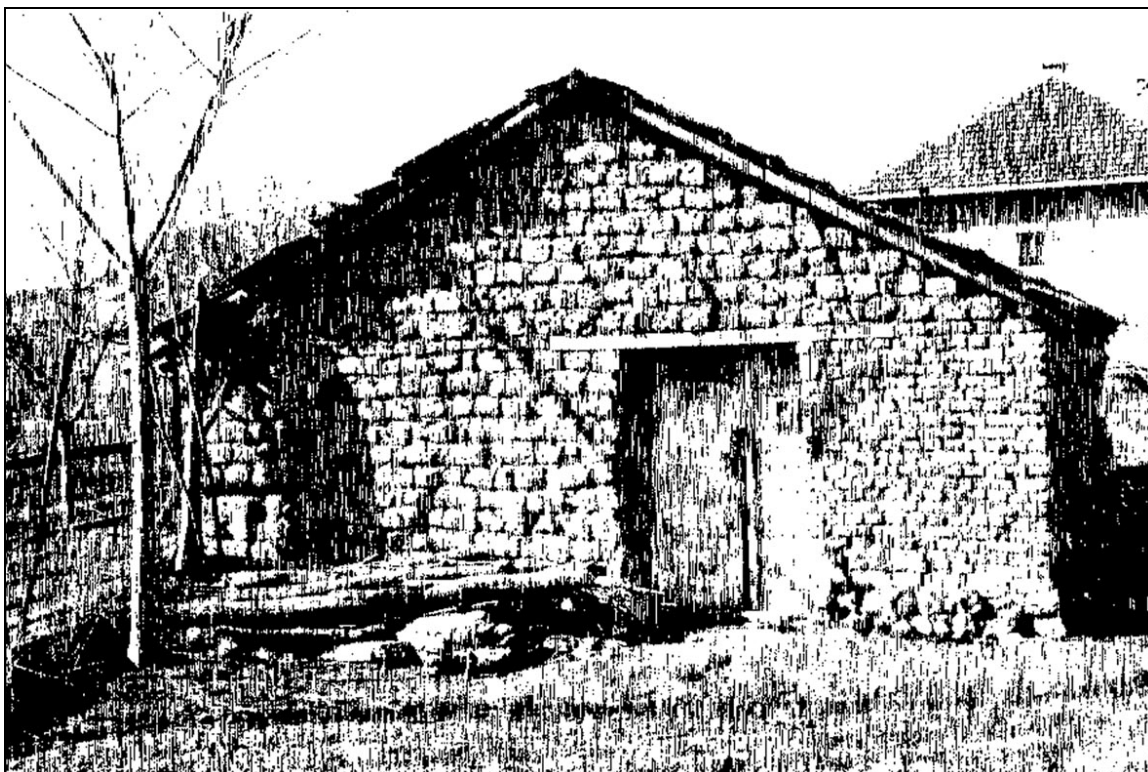
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<sup>266</sup> K. Sapurma, and P. Petrovska, op. cit. p. 59.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid, p. 60. Older women wore white and black for mourning.

<sup>268</sup> A. Goff and A. Hugh, *Macedonia: A Plea for the Primitive*, London, 1921, p. 28. It is interesting to note that mid-nineteenth century Ottoman tax data also gave a physical description of the individual taxpayer. Practically all adult Macedonian males in the Bitola region wore a moustache. D. Gorgiev, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Popisi od XIX veka* [Turkish Documents - Censuses of the XIX century], Book II, Skopje, 1997, pp. 11-115.

Illustration 3.6: Mud brick outer building, Novaci village



### 3.3 Structure and social systems in a typical Bitola region village

THE MACEDONIAN HOUSEHOLD was based on a patriarchal system. It was a male-dominated society where it was common for three generations of the one family to live in the one, often small, home. The typical household comprised the patriarch and his wife, his sons and their wives, and their children. Daughters, once married, left their family home and joined the home of their husbands. At the passing away of an elderly patriarch, the eldest son took his place. In relation to the inheritance of land or of a son moving into a home of his own, the division of agricultural land was the sole responsibility of the patriarch and his decision was final.<sup>269</sup> All members of

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<sup>269</sup> Entire families worked their land together and only divided it into smaller parcels when the family became too large. Agricultural land was typically inherited amongst sons only. Over a period of time this process created smaller parcels of land and a hundred years after Ottoman rule numerous small plots abound. At the

the household gave great respect to the family patriarch. The prominent Macedonian scholar Tome Sazdov, considers the patriarchal family as being the 'only nucleus of independence under Turkish rule, impervious to the attacks of the overlord'.<sup>270</sup>

The role of the *kmet* (village headman) was that of official representative of the village, including all dealings with the authorities. He might also deal with any disputes arising with neighbouring villages and even mediate in disputes between villagers themselves. Necessary qualities for a male (the position was exclusive to males) to be appointed *kmet* of the village required at minimum a basic level of literacy, that he be a respected member of the village community, and preferably that he be relatively affluent (by village standards). It was important that he was able to represent the village well in all dealings with outsiders. For instance, if an Ottoman or other official arrived in the village, he would be directed to the *kmet's* home and it was up to him to discuss any matter of importance on behalf of all the villagers. Typically the *kmet* was an older male member of the village, most often over 50 years of age and his appointment was made by a majority vote in a democratic election. Elections were conducted in the open in the village-square, usually on or close to the religious day of *Gurgorden* (23 May). Only males were eligible to vote, generally the patriarch of each family (*domaikinot*) as well as other older males.<sup>271</sup> Votes were cast openly

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end of the twentieth century villagers on the Pelagonia plain have commenced a difficult process of trading parcels amongst one another in order to combine parcels into the formation of single larger land holdings.

<sup>270</sup> T. Sazdov, *Macedonian Folk Literature*, Skopje, 1987, p. 41. T. Sazdov is a former professor at the School of Philology at the University of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, Macedonia.

<sup>271</sup> This group of older men ('village *domaikini*') comprised the village council. The village council thus did not comprise of elected officials. Although they directly voted for the *kmet*, *goidar* and *polyak* they were also free to gather at any other time and discuss any other village issues. During the Ottoman period over the warmer months they gathered out in the open along the fringes of the village-square, and during winter they appear to have used the *trem* (church hall). Following the Balkan Wars and the division of Macedonia, the Bitola region fell under Serb rule and the new administration placed high priority on education (Serbian language education) and constructed a large number of schools in the countryside. A school was built to accommodate every four to five villages. In villages where new schools were built, these buildings were to be utilised for village council meetings (during the period 1913 to 1941).

Along the central Bitola plain region the Serbs constructed schools in Novaci (for the children of Ribarci, Logovardi and Bilyanik), Gorno Aglarci (for Dolno Aglarci, Meglenci and Dobromiri), Dedebalci (Dolgobevci, Trap, Crnichani and Puturus) and Dobrushevo (Budakovo, Noshpal, Erekovci and Alinci).

During the Second World War, Bulgarian occupation of the Bitola region emphasized a need for education amongst the peasant population. More schools were built in the villages as Bulgarian teachers arrived following

through the raising of hands when two or more candidates nominated for the position. The successful candidate was appointed for a period of one year. Ljuba Stankovska believed that the *beg* did not exert any influence on the appointment of the village *kmet*.<sup>272</sup> It is not clear whether this was the case in all villages, although Bouchie de Belle agrees that the *kmet* was appointed through a democratic process and this was the norm in exclusively Macedonian villages.<sup>273</sup>

Although the *kmet* held the highest position in the village, in the Ottoman official hierarchy he was at the lowest point. Every village had its own village seal issued by the Ottoman authorities and kept in the possession of the *kmet*. As the first point of contact for the village *beg*, the *kmet* was provided with the opportunity to develop personal relations with him. Andon Delov was the *kmet* of Armenoro (Lerin region) in approximately 1900 and due to developing friendly relations with the village *beg* he was granted special privileges.<sup>274</sup> Most notably, he openly carried a firearm in the village. Andon Foudoulis (Delov) described his grandfather as ‘a Christian *aga* in the village’.<sup>275</sup>

Employed by the villagers as a watchman of the fields, the primary role of the *polyak* was to ensure that animals were not laid to pasture on the village fields. His role also involved maintaining general security of the village lands. The village council appointed the *polyak* by democratic election. A *polyak* was normally a poor member of the village who may have had insufficient land and several children at home. Each member of the village made payment to the *polyak* in proportion to their land

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Bulgarian troops. Consequently since the end of the war most villages have school buildings and these have commonly been used for village council meetings over the winter months.

<sup>272</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>273</sup> E. Bouchie de Belle, op. cit. p. 61. In contrast Andon Foudoulis (born 1919 in Armenoro, Lerin region), interview conducted 2 November 1999 in Melbourne; Vane Tanchevski (Lopatica) interview, op. cit. and Cvetan Jovanovski (Novaci) interview, op. cit., believed that the Ottomans did exert influence on the appointment of the village *kmet*. Having returned from serving as a Ottoman soldier in the middle of the nineteenth century Dime Tanchevski was appointed *kmet* of Lopatica village. Dime was the great great grandfather of Vane Tanchevski. Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>274</sup> The village has been renamed by the Greek authorities as Armenohori.

<sup>275</sup> Andon Foudoulis interview, op. cit. The *kmet* Andon Delov was born in approximately 1860 and was fluent in Turkish.

holdings. Payment was often made in wheat whilst wealthier village members paid their dues in cash.<sup>276</sup> In other instances, particularly in Macedonian *chiflik* villages, the villagers were not always free to democratically elect a *poljak* as often the *beg* would intervene and appoint a Muslim to perform this task. Muslim *poljaks* were always armed, were frequently Albanians, and were intended to be a deterrent to IMRO *cheti* utilising villages as safe havens. Muslim *poljaks* were often another source of oppression for Macedonian villagers.<sup>277</sup>

Village labour was essentially required to work the fields along the Pelagonia plain, so men were unable to take their animals grazing individually on a daily basis. Instead the village council elected a *goidar* to perform this function. Depending on the size of the village (and the number of animals) there could be one, two or three *goidari* employed. Every morning during the summer months, and in the mild winter days, a male member of each home gathered the animals and herded them to a designated place where the *goidar* awaited. The *goidar* took care of cows, horses, and donkeys and in some villages the pigs, however, normally a village employed another *goidar* who exclusively maintained pigs. A *goidar* was never required to look after sheep.<sup>278</sup> *Goidari* were often poor men, and, as with elected *poljaks*, received payment for services in wheat (sometimes cash) from individual households in proportion to the number of animals maintained.<sup>279</sup> A prospective *goidar* normally nominated himself for the position by approaching the *kmet* and expressing his intention. The *kmet* would

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<sup>276</sup> Mihailo Kleshtev interview, op. cit.; Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>277</sup> The IMRO often targeted notorious Muslim *poljaks* to be killed and this would bring relief to victimised villages and maintained IMRO's reputation amongst the population. See I. Katardzhiev, editor, *Spomeni - S. Arsov, P. Klashev, L. Dzherov, G.P. Hristov, A. Andreev, G. Papanchev, L. Dimitrov* [Memoirs - S. Arsov, P. Klashev, L. Dzherov, G.P. Hristov, A. Andreev, G. Papanchev, L. Dimitrov], Skopje, 1997.

<sup>278</sup> In the Bitola plain villages 3 to 5 houses in the village would group together, usually on a blood basis, and one male would take responsibility for grazing the sheep. Such a person was known as an *ofchar*. As most villagers in the Bitola plain did not depend upon sheep breeding as their primary livelihood they were able to group themselves as they did not possess what was considered large numbers of sheep. For example, a household with 40 to 50 sheep would group them with others, even those with up to 100 sheep would do so. However, there were those who had larger numbers, as did the Kleshtev family, with 200 sheep, they did not combine theirs with any other household. Mihailo Kleshtev interview, op. cit.

<sup>279</sup> Apart from the payment received for his services herding the animals, when any one of the villagers animals in the care of the *goidar* happen to breed, the *domaikinka* of the household would cook maznik or pitulici and these would be presented to the *goidar* to celebrate the event.

announce a meeting and gather the village *domaikini* to jointly decide on the matter. Once appointed his term was for a period of six months from *Gurgovden* (May) to *Mitrovdan* (November). The appointment could be extended or renewed for another six-month period only, from *Mitrovdan* to *Gurgovden*. Agreements between the village and the *poljak* or *goidar* were verbal agreements.<sup>280</sup>

The elected positions of *kmet*, *polyak* and *goidar* exclusively comprised male members of the community and reflected traditional Macedonian patriarchal culture. Women played no part in village appointments, men were the decision-makers regarding public matters, and eligibility to vote for village appointments was exclusive to males. The highest public profile attainable by a woman was as a *basmarka* (medicine woman) or *bayach* (holy woman). Both roles were monopolised by women: they could be performed by men, but rarely so.<sup>281</sup> The primary role of the *basmarka* was to lift evil curses from individuals who might be ill, from a family who had experienced a run of misfortune, a villager's farm animals (if they were suffering from disease) or from an epidemic affecting an entire village.<sup>282</sup> The anthropologist J. Obrebski, conducting field research in the Macedonian village of Voltche (Gostivar region) in the 1930s, examined village rituals and social structure. Obrebski noted that prior to lifting a curse, the *basmarka* had to diagnose the sickness and discover its source, whether it be 'from God, evil spirits or witchcraft'.<sup>283</sup> The *basmarka* utilised a collection of rituals in her work, manual acts and secret spells. She did not necessarily need to see the sick individual in person, but might only need to see and feel a piece of their clothing. Similarly, with farm animals afflicted by disease, a leather strap from

<sup>280</sup> Mihailo Kleshtev interview, op. cit.

<sup>281</sup> Bosilka Cvetkovska (born 1910 Dedebalci, Bitola region), interview conducted in Dedebalci on 2 April 2000. Bosilka is the village *bayach* and also serves as the *bayach* for the neighbouring villages.

Regarding male *basmar*, Dragica Kleshteva recalled that her grandfather Tale Vasilevski, (from the Tchkorlevski family) although not an 'official' *basmar*, he did nevertheless perform a limited amount of *basmarstvo* upon his extended family members. Tale only treated throat conditions (swelling of glands, tonsilitis) and performed his work only at night during a full moon. Using a yellow pencil he rotated it in a circular motion around the inside neck area whilst speaking secret words. Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit.

<sup>282</sup> Bosilka Cvetkovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>283</sup> The anthropologist, J. Obrebski, *Ritual and social structure in a Macedonian village*, Research Report No. 16, Department of Anthropology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1977, p. 15.

a working animal was sufficient.<sup>284</sup> Her work was considered a public function and was highly respected: she 'saves' the people.<sup>285</sup> Receiving only symbolic payments for her work, her true reward was the elevation of her status.

She attains privileges otherwise denied with men. She does not have to stand up to greet them. At any social gathering, such as a wedding reception, she may mingle freely with men, sit at their table, drink brandy with them and converse with them as an equal. If she so wishes, she may even indulge in profane language otherwise used only by men.<sup>286</sup>

According to Trajanka Talevska, both the *basmarka* and *bayach* were substitutes for medical doctors which were non-existent in the rural villages in earlier times.<sup>287</sup> Ljuba Stankovska stated that 'in earlier times *basmarki* were respected the way we respect doctors today. The *basmarka* was the most respected woman in the village'.<sup>288</sup> Velika Spirova had never met a qualified medical practitioner until she migrated to Australia in 1939.<sup>289</sup>

The status of the *bayach* in village life exceeded even that of a *basmarka*. A greater Christian orientation is linked to the skills of the *bayach* as she was considered to be in communication with the saints. Individuals visited with a range of problems that might include health issues, troubles at home and even one's love life. The *bayach* relied on divine visions and dreams for answers, and sought a positive outcome to their problems by directing them to visit a certain church or monastery, drink water from a particular natural spring (usually found in a monastery), make an offering to the saints and prayer.<sup>290</sup> A *basmarka* attained her skills through inheritance, not training; a *bayach* acquired her role following divine instructions received usually in a

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<sup>284</sup> Bosilka Cvetkovska interview, op. cit.

According to Velika Spirova, the *basmarka* in the village of Krpeshina (Lerin region) only required a piece of clothing and did not need to see the sick person. The piece of clothing would remain with the *basmarka* for a short period of a few days and when returned to its owner it would have healing powers. Velika Spirova interview, op. cit.

<sup>285</sup> J. Obrebski, op. cit. p. 15.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>287</sup> Trajanka Talevska interview, op. cit.

<sup>288</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>289</sup> Velika Spirova interview, op. cit.

<sup>290</sup> Bosilka Cvetkovska interview, op. cit; J. Obrebski, op. cit. pp. 16–17.

series of dreams or visions.<sup>291</sup> A *bayach* did not accept payments for her services, but would accept a donation towards a small meditation chapel built in her yard and to which she retired to for her visions.<sup>292</sup> A *bayach* received great respect from the villages as her home

develops into a centre of religious thought and moral reflection expressed in traditional terms. Her main concern was not so much the preservation of the existential values cherished by the villagers but with the fundamental normative values of peasant society. The main and constantly recurring theme of her teachings has been the sacred nature of the society's mores and the imminence of supernatural punishments for bad conduct.<sup>293</sup>

It was not uncommon for an elderly *domaikinka* (woman head of the house - matriarch) to have basic *basmar* skills utilised as remedies for family members for common ailments such as a headache.<sup>294</sup> Dragica Kleshteva knew of three elderly women in her village who practised some *basmarstvo*, but these were not considered to be true *basMari*. Dragica's mother Velika treated family members when inflicted with headache. She would tie a piece of string around the individual's forehead and rub a piece of soap between each ear and temple. This was followed by further massaging the middle of the forehead with the soap before removing the string and again wrapping it around the person's head to measure whether there had been any change in the circumference.<sup>295</sup>

## Marriage

AS SUMMER WAS the busiest working period of the year, weddings were traditionally held in autumn when the work began slowing down before winter. Girls normally married outside the village and it was males who traced their lineage within

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<sup>291</sup> Bosilka Cvetkovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>292</sup> Bosilka Cvetkovska interview, op. cit.; J. Obrebski, op. cit. p. 16. It is interesting to note that *bayachi* are still popular in Macedonia at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the village of Kravari (Bitola) in the summer of 1989 at 7.30-8.00am the author saw a group of approximately fifteen people waiting to see a renowned *bayach* at her home. The tradition of *bayachi* in Macedonian village life is very old and powerful. There are also Macedonian *bayachi* in Australia at the beginning of the twenty-first century, some are known to have meditation chapels in their back yards.

<sup>293</sup> J. Obrebski, op. cit. p. 16–17.

<sup>294</sup> Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit.; Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit. Mara Tancevska (born 1933 in Sekirani, Bitola region), interview conducted in Melbourne on 6 March 2002. See also J. Obrebski, op. cit.

<sup>295</sup> Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit.

the village. Due to the tradition of marrying outside the village, the village was not a group of blood relatives.<sup>296</sup> The Orthodox Church strictly forbade marriage between relatives for up to several generations and marriage with a member of the *numko's* (godfather) or *dever's* (bestman) family was treated in the same manner as a close blood relative.<sup>297</sup>

Courtship was not the norm in Ottoman Macedonia. Parents normally arranged marriages for their children and such arrangements were unquestionably accepted. Through word of mouth parents would make it known that they had a daughter of the marrying age; often a go-between was used, known as a *stroinik*. The potential father-in-law (the family patriarch) would first inquire about the family reputation (*domaikinstvo* - that they are good people) and if considered suitable would then make arrangements to meet her father and ask questions about their land or stock holdings. If all went well, the potential bride and groom would meet for the first time on their wedding day.<sup>298</sup> In the late 1800s whilst on *pechalba* in Wallachia, two Macedonian men from Rakovo and Bitusha (both villages from the Lerin region) struck a close friendship and decided that as each had a son and daughter of marrying age they should become in-laws.<sup>299</sup> Both men wrote home to their families with the news that there would be a wedding upon their return and gave instructions for preparations to commence. The day the groom Petre and his clan arrived at the brides (Cveta) home in Bitusha it was 'the first time the bride and groom had laid eyes on each other'.<sup>300</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> It appears that later in the twentieth century some villages commenced marrying within their own village and became protective about allowing their girls to leave the village. Examples include Kuratica in the Ohrid region and Smilevo in the Demir Hisar region.

<sup>297</sup> *Numko* refers to godfather and *dever* is the bestman.

<sup>298</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit., Mara Tancevska interview, opt. cit.

<sup>299</sup> Both villages are now in the political boundaries of the Greek state, Rakovo has been renamed as Krateron and Bitusha is now officially known as Parori.

<sup>300</sup> K. Sapurma and P. Petrovska, op. cit. p. 36.

Table 3.13: Male Macedonian Orthodox Christian interviewees from the Bitola region

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year of birth</b>	<b>Place of birth</b>	<b>Father</b>	<b>Mother</b>	<b>Grand-father</b>	<b>Grand-mother</b>
Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski	1893	Bitola	Novaci	Prilep	Novaci	Novaci
Vasil Petrov	1911	Tepavci	Tepavci	Paralovo	Tepavci	Skochivir
Vasko Altiparmak	1912	Dolenci	Dolenci	Ivajnefci	Dolenci	Dolenci
Stefan Trajchevski	1913	Dolno Orehovo	Dolno Orehovo	Dolno Orehovo	Dolno Orehovo	?
Petko Atanasovski	1913	Makovo	Makovo	Orle	Chegel	Dolno Orehovo
Cvetan Jovanovski	1914	Novaci	Novaci	Orizari	Novaci	?
Ilija Najdovski	1920	Suvodol	Suvodol	D. Aglarci	Suvodol	Orle
Stojche Petkovski	1920	Makovo	Makovo	Mojno	Makovo	Brnik
Vlado Jankulovski	1921	Novaci	Novaci	Radobor	Dobromiri	Novaci
Mihailo Todorovski	1921	Dolno Orehovo	Dolno Orehovo	Dolno Orehovo	Dolno Orehovo	Paralovo
Stojan Spasevski	1922	Graeshnica	Sv Tadori	Graeshnica	Sv Tadori	Graeshnica
Atanas Kotevski	1923	Vrajnevci	Vrajnevci	Paralovo	Vrajnevci	?
Nikola Giorgioski	1927	Gorno Aglarci	Gorno Aglarci	Puturus	Gorno Aglarci	Dedebalci
Atanas Vasilevski	1928	Vrajnevci	Vrajnevci	Vrajnevci	Vrajnevci	Vrajnevci
Zivko Dimovski	1929	Gorno Aglarci	Gorno Aglarci	Podmol	Gorno Aglarci	? (not from the village)
Kosta Markovski	1930	Suvodol	Suvodol	Puturus	Suvodol	Dobrushevo
Trajan Micevski	1930	Novaci	Novaci	Vrajnevci	Novaci	?
Todor Veljanovski	1930	Dolno Aglarci	Dolno Aglarci	Radobor	Dolno Aglarci	Dobrushevo
Mihailo Kleshtev	1934	G. Aglarci	Gorno Aglarci	Klepatch (Prilep)	Gorno Aglarci	Novaci
Vane Tanchevski	1935	Lopatica	Lopatica	Kukurechani	Lopatica	Lisolaj
Stojan Vasilevski	1937	Kukurechani	Kochishta	Krstoar	Kochishta	Mogila
Trajan Popovski	1939	Lazhec	Lazhec	Graeshnica	Lazhec	Graeshnica
Slobodan Ilievski	1943	Bitola	Bitola	Doiran (Doiran region)	Bitola	Bitola
Ilija Josevski	1947	Brod	Brod	Brod	Brod	Brod
Vasil Slavevski	1954	Dolno Orehovo	Dolno Orehovo	Makovo	Dolno Orehovo	Paralovo

Notes: Data regarding parents' and grandparents' place of birth was not obtained by the writer from interview conducted with Giorgi Dimovski-Colev (born 1929 in Bitola). The parents of interviewees born after 1940 were likely to have been born after the end of Ottoman rule in 1912.

Table 3.14: Systems of Marriage, Bitola region, 1870–1912

	<b>Married within village</b>	<b>Married outside village (less than 5 kilometres)</b>	<b>Married outside village (5–10 kilometres)</b>	<b>Married outside village (over 10 kilometres)</b>
Respondent's Father	3	8	5	6
Respondent's Grandfather	3	7	3	4

Source and notes: From 22 interviews in the Bitola region of interviewees born to 1940 (excluding Giorgi Dimovski-Colev interview). Five respondents were uncertain from which village their grandmother originated.

Just as the Turks were notorious for kidnapping Christian girls to be taken as brides (or placed in a harem), Macedonian men were also known to engage in the practice. Instances of kidnapping occurred when parents would not give their daughter to a family who sought her as a daughter-in-law.<sup>301</sup> Sometimes men chose the girl they wished to marry but were not brave enough to kidnap her; they would pay an individual who specifically hired out his services for the kidnapping of brides.<sup>302</sup> Stojche Petkovski stated that 'many marriages in the Turkish period occurred like this', and continued even after the Ottomans had left.<sup>303</sup> Once kidnapped and held overnight (at the male's home), it was rare for the girl to be taken back by her distraught parents.

<sup>301</sup> Stojche Petkovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid. Stojche Petkovski's sister in law (wife's sister) was kidnapped against her will in the early 1920s and married a man in the neighbouring village of Rapeshe. Even though her marriage was 'unconventionally' arranged, she did remain with him.

## Role of women

WOMEN GENERALLY WERE in an inferior position within the patriarchal village social system, and depending upon age and ties to the men were unofficially allocated a position within the status system of the family home. Female subordination was evident by the naming system allocated to women. A young bride was referred to as *nevesto* (literally meaning 'young wife') and later would be known by a modified form of her husband's name; for example, the wife of Kole became *Koleytsa*, Mendo's wife became *Mendoytsa*, Pavle's wife became *Pavleytsa*. With a dozen or more family members in the home, the new bride was subordinate to everyone, her mother in law, her father in law, her husband, her brothers-in-law and her sisters-in-law. It is she who would approach her father in law with a jug of water and bowl so he might wash his hands; she would then do the same for all other adult males in the home.<sup>304</sup> She would emerge out of a subordinate position when she became established as the head-woman of an independent joint family household, and the 'status she achieves becomes complementary and comparable to that of her husband'.<sup>305</sup> She would no longer work the fields or attend to the farm animals, she would not be required to care for young children (an older daughter-in-law would stay home to perform this function) and would instead be the organiser of everyday household work.<sup>306</sup> Her responsibility would also include the observance of holy days and 'in the organisation and performance of household ritual she acts as the supreme authority, superceding the position of the masculine family head, be it her husband or son'.<sup>307</sup> As a

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<sup>304</sup> If there is no young bride in the home this task would be performed by the eldest daughter. Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit. and Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>305</sup> J. Obrebski, op. cit. p. 7.

<sup>306</sup> Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit.; J. Obrebski, op. cit. pp. 12-13.

<sup>307</sup> J. Obrebski, op. cit. p. 13. Adult men in the central and western parts of the Pelagonia plain played an active role in the traditional ritual performed on a particular day known as *Rusa Sreda* (29 May). Riding their horses or donkeys to a site, on a hill above the village of Baldovenci, they dug into the earth beside the river extracting a grey coloured clay-like material which was gathered into sacks and transported back to the village. The material was known as *uma* and deposited into a barrel, water added and left to set for a period of time. Once it had sufficiently hardened, the women of the household moulded the *uma* into round balls, left them to dry and used it as soap. Mihailo Kleshtev was aware the practice persisted well into the twentieth century (to the early 1960s) even though soap was readily available throughout the region. Mihailo Kleshtev interview, op. cit.; Ilija Josevski from Brod was also aware of the practice and stated men from Brod as well as the surrounding villages engaged

consequence, in the sphere of village religious ritual activities women played the dominant role and were the keepers of traditional village rituals and customs.

### 3.4 Religious rituals and celebrations

VILLAGE CELEBRATIONS AND festivities were held in the village square. As the central point of each village, the square comprised a large open space containing the central village well. Larger villages often had two such squares, one in each *maalo* (quarter); however, villagers traditionally gathered in one of the village squares and celebrated together. The village square played an important role in the lives of villages. Along with the village church it was the most socially significant area in the village. Otherwise known as the *sred selo* (literally meaning ‘middle of the village’) the term itself has come to be closely associated with ‘celebration’ or ‘festival’.<sup>308</sup> Five times a year the village gathered as a whole to celebrate the principal religious celebrations of Christmas (*Bozhiĳe*), Easter (*Veligden*), Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles (*Dubovden*), Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Vodici*) - these are characterised from other religious celebrations as each are celebrated over three consecutive days - and the village saint's day.<sup>309</sup>

The celebration for the Patron Saint of the village was always held during the summer period and is a single day celebration.<sup>310</sup> The *sred selo* celebrations were important events to the village community and were attended by the entire village, young and old. Villages commonly had a bagpiper or drummer providing the music

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in the custom. Ilija Josevski (born in 1947 in the village of Brod, Bitola region), interview conducted in Melbourne on 21 January 2002.

<sup>308</sup> Preston Makedonia soccer club in Melbourne (Australia) holds an annual fund raising day at its home ground in a village-like celebration with food, a musical band and dancing in the wide open space of the soccer field. The day is promoted as a *sred selo* celebration. Other Macedonian-supported soccer clubs in Australia are known to engage in this practice.

<sup>309</sup> Every Christian village celebrated the religious day associated to its patron saint. Gorno Aglarci celebrated Petrovden, Vrajevci - Mitrovden, Novaci - Sveti Atanas, Suvodol - Bogoroica, Meglenci - Sveti Nikola and Paralovo - Gurgovden.

<sup>310</sup> The village saints day is never in winter, although there can be two such saints days over a twelve month period. These are designated separately as the winter day and the summer one.

for dancing. Macedonian dancing involves forming a large circle with individuals joined by the holding of hands; however, in the late nineteenth century men and women danced separately, and depending on the number of musicians they either danced in two separate groups simultaneously or alternated with the same musicians.<sup>311</sup> Another important religious celebration, but not celebrated collectively, is the *domashna slava* (literally meaning 'home celebration'). It is a celebration for the patron saint of the family home and held once a year. It is a hereditary tradition handed down from father to son.<sup>312</sup>

Ritual celebrations occurred during the many holy days celebrated over the course of the Orthodox calendar. A series of specific ritual acts were linked to individual religious celebrations, and together with ritual folksongs the peasants strictly adhered to them, as they were 'indivisible from the life and work of the Macedonian peasant, bound up with his conception of magic, mythology and religion'.<sup>313</sup>

Two significant celebrations, Christmas (*Bozhik*) and Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ (*Vodici*), may be singled out for particular emphasis. Both days fall within the most revered Christian observances and continue to be celebrated at the

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<sup>311</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit; Trajanka Talevska interview, op. cit; Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit. The village-square was also a popular meeting place for young people, particularly during summertime. Fetching water from the central well or tap was the role of the young girls in the home. Young girls also joined adult women at the central well to do the laundry washing. In Gorno Aglarci the village well was used to wash everyday articles of clothing. Larger items such as blankets and *diftiks* (a thick heavy blanket) were washed at the Crna River in September, wool was also cleaned and washed in preparation for the making of clothes in wintertime. Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit; Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit. Women and young girls were conspicuous around the central well, young boys were not too far away; however, adult men were noticeably absent from the central well and could be found sitting in groups along the fringes of the square. The significance of the central water supply was expressed in a ritual act performed by a new village bride. At the family home of the groom on the day of her wedding she was required to bow three times before her father-in-law and mother-in-law, the *numko* (godfather) and the *dever* (best-man). This was followed by the wedding party walking into the village-square, where the villagers had gathered to witness the new bride 'give recognition to the well by bowing three times before it, demonstrating her respect to the water supply from which she will live off'. Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit. It is interesting to note that at Macedonian weddings in Australia it is common to see the bride and groom bow three times each to both sets of parents before taking their seats at the head of the main table.

<sup>312</sup> For instance a *domashna slava* celebrated may be Saint Nicholas day on 19 December of each year. Sons will compulsorily retain the *slava* after they are married and living in their own homes, however a daughter will not retain the *slava*, she will celebrate the *slava* of her husband's family.

<sup>313</sup> T. Sazdov, op. cit. p. 33.

beginning of the twenty-first century with specific ritual acts remaining. Long extinguished is the ritual celebration of *dudule*, conducted in periods of drought to bring on rain. Few respondents were able to recall witnessing the unique ritual act in the early part of the twentieth century.

## Christmas

OVER THE THREE days of Christmas, Macedonian Orthodox Christian villagers in the Bitola region attended church services each day, later followed by a *sred selo* celebration. However, Christmas Eve (6<sup>th</sup> January) known as *badnik*, was characterised by a series of ritual acts. Family dinner on *badnik* was made up of traditional dishes such as *pitulici*, *zelnik* and *piftija*.<sup>314</sup> Each member of the household would cross themselves (in a Christian manner) before sitting down for dinner, and then would sit down as one, together with the *domaikin* (male head of household). At the completion of dinner all stood up in unison with the *domaikin*. The purpose of the ritual was that the hens have an abundance of chicks ('*Za kvatchkata da praj pilina*').<sup>315</sup> After dinner on *badnik* the *domaikin* would give every member of the house a share of boiled chestnuts, potatoes, apples, pears, figs and other fruits.

A ritual performed on the plough during *badnik* was symbolic of village lifestyle. The plough was dismantled so that the metal instrument that cut through the dirt (*emish*) was separated. The *emish* was brought into the house and bread that had been baked into the figure eight was hung onto it. Beside it a candle was lit and kept burning for three days throughout the Christmas Holy days. On the ninth of January the bread was given as feed to the animals and the plough was re-assembled. This ritual was aimed at making the land prosperous.<sup>316</sup> People visited their neighbours and relatives in the village carrying with them small pieces of bread baked the size of

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<sup>314</sup> *Pitulici* - similar to crepes; *zelnik* - a pastry cooked in a round dish; *Piftija* - jellied pork.

<sup>315</sup> Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid. Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

golf balls and offered them to one another. In the evening a great bonfire was set ablaze in the village square and considered the highlight of *badnik* celebrations. Men stayed out until very late socialising, drinking *rakia* and wine, and children were permitted to stay out late.<sup>317</sup> They gathered around the bonfire singing '*Kolide babo kolide*'. Women did not attend the *badnik* bonfire. That evening the entire family would stay up late at home, playing games such as tying the feet together of the first person who fell asleep. Even children were permitted to do this to the older people, something that normally would never be tolerated.

Normally the floor of a village home was swept on a daily basis, however over the three days of Christmas it was not swept at all. Instead hay was thrown around the floor of the home and remained until the end of the third day of Christmas.<sup>318</sup> On January 9 the hay was gathered by the *domaikin* and fed to the animals. Apart from tending to the animals, no work was performed whatsoever over the three days of Christmas. It was forbidden to work on a religious day, and this was adhered to by all. The villagers feared what might happen if they went to work in the fields; they believed it to be a sign of disrespect to God and the saints, and one could expect Holy disapproval in the form of a misfortune befalling their home.<sup>319</sup> By displaying respect to the Holy days, people believed good health and blessings would come to their families.<sup>320</sup>

On Christmas morning every family attended the church service. Afterwards when each family returned home, each individual gathered three twigs from the yard, and after having greeted the *domaikin* and *domaikinka* with the words '*na pomosh denot da e*', each threw the twigs into the home fire saying the words '*Zhenski Jagnina, Mashki*

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<sup>317</sup> *Rakia* - a home made distilled alcoholic drink popular with Macedonians.

<sup>318</sup> Trajanka Talevska interview, op. cit. Trajanka Talevska believed that the hay was symbolical of the birth of Jesus Christ.

<sup>319</sup> There are numerous such stories of people who did not respect the Holy Days falling victim to unfortunate accidents that usually cost the life of a family member.

<sup>320</sup> These matters were taken very seriously and it is not entirely unusual even at the beginning of the twenty-first century to come across older *domaikinki* in Australia forbidding their families from working on Holy Days.

*Dechinja'* ('female sheep, male children'). On Christmas day the *domaikin* would visit friends and relatives in the village, and was served traditional Christmas dishes including *piftija* (jellied pork) and *storen rasol* (pickled cabbage). *Domaikinki* stayed home on the first day of Christmas. During the second and third days of Christmas, following the church service, entire families visited one another and each afternoon a *sred selo* celebration was held.

Over the Christmas holy days, in each home two branches from a basil (*bosilok*) plant were tied together into the shape of a cross and attached onto the top of a clay drinking vase (*barde*). Every member of the household would drink from the vase on a daily basis from Christmas (7 January) until *Vodici* (19 January). The period between the birth of a baby and his/her communion (*molitva*) is known as *leonka*. The water in the barde was known as *leonka* water. As this custom ran from Christmas to *Vodici*, it symbolised the period between the birth of Jesus and his baptism (*Vodici*) by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. Celebrated over two days, the first day was known as *Mashki Vodici* (Mens *vodici*) and the second as *Zenski Vodici* (womens *vodici*).

Photo 3.3: Traditional clay drinking vases (*bardina*)



## The Epiphany

ON THE FIRST day of *Vodici* (*Mashki vodici*) every Macedonian Orthodox community in the villages and large towns gathered for the ‘throwing of the cross’ (*frlajne na kerstot*) into a lake or river. The priest would throw a cross into the water as a group of young men (always an odd number) prepared to dive in to retrieve it, with the successful person receiving various gifts for his success. As the water was considered blessed, people would leave with a bottle full and it would be used throughout the year to be rubbed into a part of the body where one experienced pain or discomfort during times of illness. Furthermore, if the working animals or sheep became inflicted with disease, the blessed water would be used in a similar manner.<sup>321</sup>

During the two days of *Vodici*, villagers attended church and on the first day entire families went to the village cemetery to light candles in remembrance of loved ones. After the Church service on the second day, all young unmarried girls gathered in the village square, joining in pairs to form a column. Two girls led the column and were known as *Golem Chelnik* and *Mal Chelnik*.<sup>322</sup> In formation they visited every house in the village; if possible they would enter all houses. *Golem* and *Mal Chelnik* would commence singing a song for every individual member of the household, with the column of girls joining in. Specific songs were sung only on *Vodici* and they usually did not exceed a dozen verses. When the singing was complete, the *domaikin/domaikinka* of the house made an offering of *rakia*, wine, cheese or flour. From the flour and other products *Chelnici* and their mothers baked bread, *maznik* and *čelnik*. The food and drink were taken to the village square where the entire village had gathered to celebrate. All the young girls involved in the *Vodici* singing then served food and drink to the villagers and the rest of the day was spent in great celebration with the village musicians playing tunes as the villagers danced.<sup>323</sup>

<sup>321</sup> Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit. Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit. Velika Spirova interview, op. cit.

<sup>322</sup> To be a *Chelnik* was a great honour for a young girl, in particular to be the *Golem Chelnik*.

<sup>323</sup> Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit.

Various songs were performed in Vrajnevcı village by young girls on *Vodici*.<sup>324</sup>  
One song was sung to a home that had sons and daughters of the marrying age:

*Jankula zbito sejeshe*  
*I na gulabi frlashe*  
*Oi gulabi sivi gulabi*  
*Kolvajte shto ke kolvajte*  
*Letajte shto ke letate*  
*Na esen da se vratite*  
*Imam kerka za mazhejne*  
*A I sin za zbenejne*  
*Da dochekash za mnogu (godini)*  
*Do godina po veseli*

Yankula was planting grain  
And throwing to the pigeons  
Hey pigeons, grey pigeons  
Peck what you may peck  
Fly where you may fly  
Return in autumn  
I have a daughter for marriage  
And a son for marriage  
May you welcome the New Year  
And the following year happier

Another song featured a bride who had not seen her family for some time:

*Izlegla nevestitsa srede dvorje*  
*na nalonı*  
*I so sonce razgovara*  
*Oi ti sonce, letno sonce*  
*Dali a vide moita majka*  
*Moita majka, moj tatko*  
*Moite brajka, moite sestri*  
*Da do cheka za mnogu (godini)*

The bride stepped out in the middle of  
the yard in her clogs  
And spoke with the sun  
Hey sun, summer sun  
Did you see my mother  
My mother, my father  
My brothers, my sisters  
To welcome the New Year

Another song concerned a young bride:

*Oi nevesto Donkoice*  
*Shto te poli omasheni*  
*A rakavi isukani*  
*Oi ti zolvi, mili zolvi*  
  
*Jas imam teshka kujka*  
*Od mesejne, od pechejne*  
*I svekor I svekervaa prechekvajne*  
*Da dochekash za mnogu (godini)*

Hey bride Donkoice  
What dirty breast  
And sleeves folded  
Hey you sisters-in-law, dear sisters-in-law  
  
I have a difficult home  
From kneading, from baking  
And from welcoming the in-laws  
May you welcome the New Year

<sup>324</sup> Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit. Dragica Kleshteva stated that the songs sung in Vrajnevcı were identical to those she heard in Gorno Aglarci, the village into which she married.

## *Dudule*

DURING LONG PERIODS of drought, when the survival of vegetation and farm animals was in doubt, and the villagers were threatened, a rain ritual was performed, commonly known in the Bitola region as *dudule* or *vaidudule*.<sup>325</sup> In the Bitola region the ritual was conducted by a young orphan girl, no more than 13 or 14 years of age.<sup>326</sup> In other regions, such as Gevgelija, a young woman of the marrying age played the part of *dudule*.<sup>327</sup> Nevertheless the central figure was always female and often an orphaned girl or from a very poor family. Completely covered in leaves, including her head, arms and legs, the young girl would visit every home in the village. After knocking on the front door the inhabitants would come out into their front yard and sprinkle water on her as she sung *dudule* songs, believing that this would bring rain.<sup>328</sup> In different regions there were variations of *dudule* songs. These two versions were recorded by the Miladinovci brothers (a)<sup>329</sup> in the mid nineteenth century and Ivan Ivanic (b)<sup>330</sup> at the beginning of the twentieth century:

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| a. | <i>Odletala peperuga, oj lule, oj!</i><br><i>Od oracha na oracha</i><br><i>Od kopacha na kopacha</i><br><i>Od rezhacha na rezhacha;</i><br><i>Da žarosit sitna rosa</i><br><i>Sitna rosa beriketna</i><br><i>I po pole I po more</i> | A butterfly flew, <i>oj lule, oj!</i><br>From ploughman to ploughman<br>From digger to digger<br>From cutter to cutter;<br>Fine dew to drizzle<br>Fine fertile dew<br>Upon the plain and sea |
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<sup>325</sup> Ljuba Stankovska, born in Gorno Aglarci, Bitola region, knew it as *dudule*, whilst Dragica Kleshteva, born in Vrajevci, Bitola region, knew it as *vaidudule*. In other regions of Macedonia it has been also known as *dodole*, *ojlule*, *lijache*, etc. The anthropologist, M. Kitevski, *Makedonski Narodni Praznici i Običaji* [Macedonian National Celebrations and Customs], Skopje, 1996, p. 109.

<sup>326</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>327</sup> M. Kitevski, op. cit. p. 109.

<sup>328</sup> According to T. Sazdov, op. cit. pp. 35–36, other rain songs were sung by a group of young girls, during dry summer periods. These songs were usually accompanied by ritual acts containing elements of magic:

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| <i>Day mi, Božhe, temen oblak,</i><br><i>Da žarosi sitna rosa,</i><br><i>Da žaprašhi crna zemja,</i><br><i>Da se rodi žito, proso,</i><br><i>Da se ranat sirachinya,</i><br><i>Sirachinya, siromasi.</i> | Give me, Lord a dark grey stormcloud<br>That the fine rain might start raining,<br>That the black earth might be sprinkled,<br>That it might bear wheat and millet,<br>That the orphans might be nourished,<br>Starving orphans, starving paupers. |
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<sup>329</sup> M. Kitevski, op. cit. pp. 109–110.

<sup>330</sup> I. Ivanic, *Makedonija i Makedoncite* [Macedonia and the Macedonians], Novi Sad, 1908, p. 101.

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| <p><i>Da se rodit s' beriket</i><br/> <i>S' beriket voio-žbito</i><br/> <i>Cheinicite do gredite,</i><br/> <i>Yachmenite do streite,</i><br/> <i>Lenoite do poyasi,</i><br/> <i>Uroite do kolena;</i><br/> <i>Da se ranat siromasi.</i><br/> <i>Darvete ne so sito,</i><br/> <i>Da je sitna godina;</i><br/> <i>Darvete ne so oshnica,</i><br/> <i>Da ye polna koshnica;</i><br/> <i>Darvete ne so yamache,</i><br/> <i>Da ye tuchna godina.</i></p> | <p>Fertile birth<br/>         This grain in good harvest<br/>         Wheat to the beams,<br/>         Barley to the eaves,<br/>         Flax to the waist,<br/>         Ditches up to the knees;<br/>         To feed the poor.<br/>         Donate not with a seave,<br/>         For the year to be sated;<br/>         Donate not with regret,<br/>         For the basket to be filled;<br/>         Donate not with cavity,<br/>         For the year to be brassy.</p> |
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| <p>b. <i>Duduleva mayka</i><br/> <i>Sret more stoye,</i><br/> <i>Boga si mole:</i><br/> <i>Dosh da zaverne!</i><br/> <i>Ej dudule, mili Bozhe,</i><br/> <i>Bog da ni dade,</i><br/> <i>Dosh da zaverne,</i><br/> <i>Beriket da stane,</i><br/> <i>Ey dudule, mili Bozhe,</i><br/> <i>Of livadzha kal,</i><br/> <i>A of iadzhi testo</i><br/> <i>Ey dudule, mili Bozhe!</i></p> | <p><i>Dudule</i> mother<br/>         Standing in the middle of the sea<br/>         Pleading to God:<br/>         For rain to fall!<br/>         Hey <i>dudule</i>, dear God,<br/>         May God give us,<br/>         Falling rain,<br/>         From the meadow mud,<br/>         Hey <i>dudule</i>, dear God,<br/>         From the meadow mud,<br/>         And from silos dough<br/>         Hey <i>dudule</i>, dear God!</p> |
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### 3.5 *Pechalba*

TEMPORARY MIGRATORY LABOUR known as *pechalba* was a widespread Macedonian custom during the nineteenth century. As early as the sixteenth century men had left their homes to find seasonal or longer-term work in Macedonia and abroad. The oldest tradition of *pechalba* in Macedonia is said to come from the town of Galitchnik in north western Macedonia. Otherwise the tradition was to become particularly widespread in the western regions of Ohrid, Bitola, Lerin and Kostur. The dramatic rise in the number of Macedonian men seeking work away from home between 1870 and 1913 was not solely an economic consideration, but was often forced through political circumstances. The underlying cause was the general political

insecurity in the country, linked to associated causes such as economic hardship, the taxation burden and the outlawry of Albanian Muslim bandits. Factors of a secondary nature that influenced the rise in *pechalba* include Macedonians buying back *chiflik* land and the process of chain migration.

The economic problem in late nineteenth-century Macedonia was a consequence of a decaying feudal system<sup>331</sup> that placed a significant portion of fertile land in the ownership of the powerful Turkish *begs*. Under these circumstances a large portion of the population did not have their own land to work, but were forced to work on *chiflik* soil. Even though *chiflik* soil was often in the most fertile districts, the methods employed at working the land were primitive, resulting in a failure to maximise agricultural output,<sup>332</sup> severely affecting the economic potential of the agricultural population. The *chiflik* system was one of exploitation of the peasant population; average annual earnings of a village household was approximately 25 pounds, however after taxes and other contributions the remaining amount was between 10 to 15 pounds,<sup>333</sup> which was barely enough to maintain a typical household.

Injustice commonly experienced at the hands of corrupt tax collectors was an annual source of misery that weighed heavily upon the population. In some instances the excesses of the tax collectors plunged individuals into financial ruin. Consequently there were those who saw greater potential working abroad and therefore avoiding becoming the victim of Ottoman corruption inside Macedonia.<sup>334</sup> The outlawry of Albanian Muslim bands also contributed towards Macedonians seeking employment outside of their villages and fields. Villages were plundered as bands stole livestock and looted possessions, possessions Macedonians could ill

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<sup>331</sup> B. Tatarcheff, op. cit. p. 176.

<sup>332</sup> G.M. Terry, op. cit. p. 54; M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski and G. Todorovski, op. cit. p. 133.

<sup>333</sup> B. Tatarcheff, op. cit. p. 177; H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 52.

<sup>334</sup> Brailsford comments upon the position of the Macedonians in relation to Ottoman tax officials: 'the peasantry has abandoned the struggle with the tax collector...and lives by migratory labour'. Ibid, p. 50.

afford to lose. The most notorious method employed in order to 'extort' money from the unfortunate victims involved kidnapping individuals and keeping them until the payment of a ransom. At the beginning of the twentieth century, and having personally visited Macedonia, Brailsford commented that 'these exactions are a constant cause of migration, and the Ohrid villages only maintain themselves by sending their more enterprising members to labour in Austria'.<sup>335</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century the Ottoman-Turkish element was in a state of decline in Macedonia. Turkish landowners were selling *chiflik* land back to the local villagers, most often to those who had spent time abroad as *pechalbari*.<sup>336</sup> This occurred in the case of Anasto

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<sup>335</sup> Ibid, p. 50. Furthermore, Brailsford gives the following account of the activities of the Albanian bands: 'Perhaps the worst scourge of these regions is the Albanian pastime of kidnapping, to which the tribes of Debar are especially addicted. The method is to capture stragglers, usually a solitary lad or an old man who is surprised cutting wood or herding sheep at a distance from the village. He is carried off to Debar and kept there until his ransom is paid. An enterprising *beg* will sometimes have several of these captives at once in his tower. They are sometimes fettered and driven out at sunrise with the cattle to labour in the fields till evening. I know one family in the Ohrid region to which this catastrophe has happened thrice within the memory of a young man who cannot have been more than thirty years of age. I knew another case in which the ransom demanded for a young boy was as much as 100 Lira (about 93 pounds). His family were no more than peasants, though of the wealthier class. Half the money was found by selling their flocks and their land, the other half was provided by the elder brother, who earned it by leaving his wife and children and working for five years in Constantinople'. Ibid, pp. 49-50.

<sup>336</sup> Lopatica was not renowned as a *pechalba* village, only a handful of men had gone abroad seeking work during the Ottoman era. Following the Ilinden Rebellion the village *pechalbari* travelled to Argentina and then to the United States in search of work. According to the interviewee, Vane Tanchevski, the village *beg* (Meto) knew that the end of Turkish rule was approaching. Meto *beg* said to the villagers '*eh tie gjaurite ke go krenat kargata, da ne chekale ushte dve godini da go prodajme imotot, nie znaeme deka ke begame sega, ama ke begame so ugurma (kavga) - ke ne brkat so pushki*' - ('those *gjaurs* will start the arguments, if they could only wait a couple of years for us to sell our possessions, we know we'll be leaving soon, and will leave in dispute, they'll drive us from here with their guns'). Eager to sell up the *chiflik* land Meto *beg* accepted deposits from some of the villagers, including Vane Tanchevski's grandfather, and handed over titles to the land before receiving the full balance. The villagers did not pay the remaining balance. During the final stages of Ottoman rule Meto *beg* would not visit the village and instead sent his wife to collect the remaining money. She was unable to collect any further money and was known to curse people because of it. Nevertheless, by the time Meto *beg* left for Turkey all the land was sold and the purchasers had legal titles to the land (no titles were issued to those who purchased the forest around the village. Later the Yugoslav government confiscated that land). Lopatica villagers sold everything they possessed including wool, cows, bulls, gold, coins from female traditional costumes, wheat and personal possessions in order to buy as much land as possible, including *chiflik* land in the neighbouring village of Chagor. When the *beg* was selling the village land in Chagor, Albanians from Drevenik offered more money than the Macedonians, but he refused to sell it to them as they had a history of harassing his *chiflik* workers and driving them away. Subsequently Macedonians from Lopatica owned so much land in both Lopatica and Chagor that they did not have the resources to work it all. Subsequently a large portion of the Chagor land was re-sold to a Macedonian from Zagoriche village who had returned from working in the United States. Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit. The contemporary commentator, E. Bouchie de Belle stated that feudal landlords were anticipating the end of Ottoman rule from 1902 as a result of various revolts, Bulgarian and Greek

Kleshtev. Having worked in Romania for several years, he returned to his native village of Gorno Aglarci during the 1880s and purchased a substantial *chiflik* from the Turkish *aga*.<sup>337</sup> In many cases *pechalba* was directly linked to the realisation that *chifliks* were becoming available as Turkish landowners left gradually and villagers took the opportunity to buy back *chiflik* land which they always considered to belong rightfully to them.<sup>338</sup>

Buying *chiflik* land was the intention of the Delov brothers from Armenoro (Lerin region). Ilo (at 20 years of age) and Trajko Delov (28) left their village to work abroad with the aim of returning with enough money to buy *chiflik* land. The *pechalba* tradition in Armenoro took men as far as South America in search of economic advancement. Both Ilo and Trajko left Armenoro with a larger group of men from the village in 1894 and worked in Buenos Aires for several years.<sup>339</sup>

The rise in *pechalba* could also be explained by the news of foreign lands reaching the village through letters. The impact of these letters, describing the conditions and wages in the foreign lands, was a matter of great interest for the

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propaganda activities and the meddling of the European Powers. As of 1902 there was a sense of urgency associated with the sale of *chiflik* estates and thanks to those working abroad, villagers were able to purchase *chiflik* land. Op. cit. p. 52.

<sup>337</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit. He paid for the land with the gold coins that he returned with. Between the 1870s to the end of Ottoman rule in 1912 the Kleshtev family amassed land holdings of approximately 360 *pogons*.

<sup>338</sup> Vane Tanchevski from Lopatica stated 'the (*chiflik*) land our people worked upon, they considered as theirs. They believed one day they would be the rightful owners. Vane Tanchevski interview, op. cit. Atanas Vasilevski recalled hearing from his father that the village *beg* commented that once *chiflik* land had changed ownership the villagers worked the land harder than they did when it belonged to him. Atanas Vasilevski (born 1928 Vrajevci, Bitola region), interview conducted 16 March 2000 in Bitola.

<sup>339</sup> Andon Foudoulis interview, op. cit. Andon Foudoulis stated that Argentina and Sveta Gora in Macedonia (timber cutting) were the most popular destinations for men from the village. Others also travelled to France to work on farms and to the USA where they were employed as labourers. K. Sapurma, and P. Petrovska, (*Children of the Bird Goddess*, Politecon Publications, 1997), describe a village farewell for a group of men in the Lerin region during the early part of the twentieth century (following the Balkan Wars). 'Each spring the young men who were leaving to work afar would all gather in the village square early on the morning of their departure. They took with them a few scant belongings: a change of clothes, a razor, a yellowing photograph, hearts filled with anticipation and one long last look at their loved ones they farewelled. The *teshko om* would be played, echoing the heavy drumbeat and a slow deliberate melody. They joined together holding one another by the shoulders and arms and danced to the bitter melody of music and weeping. No emotion was shown on their sullen, ashen faces. The music was the way in which their feelings were generated, hence the name *teshkoto* (*teshko* being 'heavy' in Macedonian). The dance of the heavy heart was a male dance and portrayed the feelings of pain in separation and tortuous heartache' (pp. 20-21).

*pechalbar*'s family as well as for the entire village. According to the United States Commissioner General for Immigration, such letters were 'read by or to every inhabitant of the village, or perhaps even passed on to neighbouring hamlets'.<sup>340</sup> An even greater impression was made when *pechalbari* returned to their villages and told fabulous stories of distant prosperous lands.<sup>341</sup> In one instance Trifun Hadzianev from the town of Voden, having left for New York at the end of the Ottoman era, returned to his hometown in 1923 bringing with him a film projector that provided his fellow townsfolk with a rare insight into American life.<sup>342</sup> One could only imagine the excitement moving images would have created amongst the townsfolk and the lasting impression left on the young men.<sup>343</sup>

The introduction of a railway system in Macedonia in the late nineteenth century provided a modern alternative to traditional forms of transport such as the horse and donkey, and provided greater access to major centres and ports. Funded by West European industrialists and governments (particularly Austrian), they were established to meet strategic economic needs. In 1873 the first railway in Macedonia was constructed between Solun and Skopje (243 kilometres) and the following year it was extended from Skopje to Mitrovica in Serbia (119 kilometres). It was not until 1894 that Bitola was connected by rail to Solun (218 kilometres) and in 1896 the Solun-Constantinople railway line opened.<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> *Report of the Commissioner General for Immigration*, Washington, 1907, p.60 as cited in C.A. Price, *Southern Europeans in Australia*, Oxford University Press, 1963, p.108.

<sup>341</sup> Such stories were told to an exclusively male audience, often in the village-square. They left deep impressions upon the young listeners. C.A. Price states that 'with semi-literate peasant peoples intimate direct conversation and visible signs of success in the form of gold watches or brand new clothes and shoes have had even more spectacular effects than letters from abroad'. Ibid, p.108.

<sup>342</sup> I. Chapovski, *The Macedonian Orthodox Church of St. George – A Cultural and National History*, Melbourne, 1992, p. 18.

<sup>343</sup> The tradition of *pechalba* became such an integral part of village life that it was 'considered irresponsible' if a young man did not want to go abroad to work. K. Sapurma, and P. Petrovska, op. cit. p. 20.

<sup>344</sup> MPO (Macedonian Political Organisation), *Makedonski Almanac* [Macedonian Almanac], 1940, p. 67.

Note: The railway link between Bitola and Solun took three years to complete.

An interesting insight into the construction of the railway system in Macedonia was provided by the Austrian Rudolph Kindinger. Born in Macedonia in 1884, his father was employed by the European railroad company 'Chemins de fer orientaux' to oversee technical aspects of the railway construction between Skopje and Veles. A fluent Macedonian speaker, Kindinger remained in Macedonia until 1912, leaving with his family a month before the outbreak of the First Balkan War. According to Kindinger, construction on the railway line between

Increased opportunities to work abroad were also derived from the numerous shipping companies that established offices in Macedonian urban centres.<sup>345</sup> French, British, Italian and other companies competed with one another, attracting fares for transportation upon their respective vessels. Representatives of shipping companies were found throughout Macedonia and they advertised positive images in newspapers and appointed ticket agents to praise the New World.<sup>346</sup> Intense competition developed between shipping agencies with advertisements appearing in newspapers making various claims in order to attract *pechalbari*, such as 'ours is an honourable shipping company' and denying that they exploit men, 'as do other agencies and shipping lines which transport people to America'.<sup>347</sup> In their advertisements agents advertised for a wide range of workers required in both North and South America – including building and construction workers, tanners, farm workers, factory workers, printers, machinists, blacksmiths, tailors, etc. To further entice customers the Agence Maritime Muscombul claimed to provide 'the quickest and cheapest travel to America', as well as offering hotel accommodation and detailing the expected wages one could earn, 'dependent upon skills and experience earnings ranged between 31.5 grosh a day to 3150 grosh per month'.<sup>348</sup> However, fares to America were a substantial amount of money, roughly the average annual savings for the ordinary villager, so it was not uncommon for the *pechalbar* to borrow money or sell

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Skopje and Solun, was performed exclusively by Macedonians. Groups of men worked from sunrise to sunset throughout the summer period and received a daily cash payment. There was no shortage of men willing to do the difficult work and as part of their employment the workers were armed with Martini rifles. An interesting agreement was negotiated between Ottoman Turkey and European financiers of the project aimed at maintaining security over the investment. At five kilometre intervals along the railway, groups of Muslim watchmen (known as *gavaži*) lived in barrack style accommodation. Kindinger also remarked on the role of the Debar district Macedonian builders in support of the railway system in Macedonia, stating that railway stations, bridges, warehouses and other buildings could not have been built so skillfully and economically without the Debar region builders. R. Kindinger, *Isechoci od moite sekavanja pred, za vreme i po Ilinden (1903) vo Makedonija* [Scenes from my memories, before, during and after Ilinden (1903) in Macedonia], Skopje, 1970, pp. 153-154.

<sup>345</sup> The historian, K. Karpat, *The Ottoman Emigration to America 1860-1914*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 188.

<sup>346</sup> C. Price, op. cit. p. 108.

<sup>347</sup> Newspaper advertisement for shipping agency 'Agence Maritime Muscombul' in *Vjesti* newspaper (printed in Constantinople) dated 27 January 1910. Issue Number 61, Year XX, p. 4. (Note: this was a Serb newspaper that was also distributed in Macedonia).

<sup>348</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

possessions in order to raise funds to work abroad.<sup>349</sup> No fewer than eight transatlantic shipping agencies operated in Bitola in 1906. Approximately half of the *pechalbari* managed to secure their fares and the others relied on loans administered through the agencies at a rate of 2.5–3.0 per cent interest calculated monthly.<sup>350</sup> In the Resen region villagers commonly borrowed money from a group of 10 businessmen situated in Resen town who were known as *policadzhi*. They regularly provided loans to *pechalbari* and travelled three times a year to Constantinople to collect money owed them.<sup>351</sup> There was no shortage of men willing to go into debt in order to finance their travel abroad.

Seasonal workers within Macedonia left their homes for periods of months, but *pechalbari* leaving for foreign lands were normally absent from their homes for much longer periods. It was common for men to be away for one or two years, whilst others for up to several years and more.<sup>352</sup> *Pechalbari* were predominantly married men aged between their late teens and 40 years of age.<sup>353</sup> The unmarried Trifun Kalcovski from the village of Brajchino (Prespa region) left for the United States in 1913 at the age of 16, whilst the married Anasto Kleshtev from Gorno Aglarci (Bitola region) spent several years in Romania during the 1870s, having left the village in his thirties. In some instances *pechalbari* did not spend the entire period in a particular country but moved around in search of work. Pando Stojkov from Lagen (Lerin region) started off as a *pechalbar* at the age of thirteen, initially in Anatolia (Ottoman Empire), then in Romania, Bulgaria and finally as a sawyer in Austria.<sup>354</sup> Having

<sup>349</sup> Fares to the one destination varied between shipping agents. Fares ranged between 13 to 27 *napolyoni* for direct travel from Macedonia to North America, whilst a fare to South America was as much as 45 Turkish *lira*. D. Konstantinov, *Pechalbarstvo*, Bitola, 1964, p. 18.

<sup>350</sup> Diplomatic letter (number 33) by Dr Ranci from the Austrian Consulate in Bitola, dated 11 July 1906. D. Zografski, editor, *Avstriski Dokumenti 1905-1906* [Austrian Documents 1905-1906], Vol I, Skopje, 1977, p. 158.

<sup>351</sup> S. Radev, *Simeon Radev - Rani Spomeni* [Simeon Radev - Early Memoirs], Sofia, 1967, p. 48.

<sup>352</sup> It was not uncommon for men to return home intermittently.

<sup>353</sup> According to statistics published by K. Karpat regarding 'Age characteristics of the Ottoman migrants arriving in the United States in 1889' of a total of 202 men, 21 were under 15 years of age, 162 were between the ages of 15 and 40, and 19 were above 40 years of age. K. Karpat, op. cit. p. 197. An Austrian diplomatic report from 1906 states that *pechalbari* are generally made up of men aged 20 to 40 years of age. Letter by Dr Ranci dated 11 July 1906, D. Zografski, editor, cit. p. 158.

<sup>354</sup> Lagen has been officially renamed as Triandafilla by the Greek government.

returned to Macedonia he set off once more, leaving for America in 1903. After two or three years there he returned to his village, but stayed for only a short while and again made the long journey back to the United States where he stayed until 1914. When World War One was over he departed for the third time to America accompanied by his eldest son Dimitar, staying there for a further eight years, finally returning in 1928 to Macedonia.<sup>355</sup>

Districts and more specifically villages developed their own characteristic trades. Particularly famous was the town of Galitchnik in north western Macedonia, renowned for its builders and woodcarvers, with some of the finest iconists in the Balkans and beyond made from the skilled craftsmen of the town.<sup>356</sup> Other villages developed a reputation for market gardening, carpenters, masons, bakers, dairy goods or the provision of day labourers.<sup>357</sup>

The destinations where Macedonian men travelled in search of temporary work meant they could be classified into three categories: those who worked in various regions of Macedonia, those who sought work within the Ottoman Empire, and those who found employment outside the Empire. Due to limited cultivable land in the mountainous districts of Macedonia, and the tradition of land being divided amongst male heirs, villagers were forced to supplement their earnings by engaging in sheep breeding. Sheep herding was conducted on a seasonal basis, leaving in autumn for greener pastures and returning in spring.<sup>358</sup> A 'natural process' occurred where seasonal work was found in the *chifliks* and large towns of southern Macedonia, and

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<sup>355</sup> I. Chapovski, op. cit. pp. 16-17. There were also those who left their wives and children in the village and remarried setting up a new life abroad.

<sup>356</sup> Rudolph Kindinger remarked that the Debar region builders were renowned for their skill 'and virtually no building, house or bridge throughout all of then European Turkey, especially in the Macedonian provinces, was built without them having a hand'. (*odvaj mozhesh da ima izgradba na zgradi, kujki ili mostovivo cela togashna Evropska Turcija, osobeno vo Makedonckite provincii, na koja sbto ovie Debarski majstori ne beja zele uchestvo*). Op. cit. p. 154.

<sup>357</sup> During visits to Belgrade (Serbia) in 1989 and 1996 I learned that Macedonians were renowned for operating bakery businesses, and that they have a long-standing tradition in the industry. Macedonian bakers in Belgrade are usually from the Tetovo region.

<sup>358</sup> Velika Spirova pointed out that men from the village of Nered (Lerin region) went sheep herding for extended periods as far south as Sveta Gora (Macedonia) over the winter months. Velika Spirova interview, op. cit.

the sheep herding was then handed down to the next eldest male in the family.<sup>359</sup> Seasonal work was performed in *chifliks* in the regions of Drama, Kavala, and the Halkidik Peninsula, while others went coke-burning in Katerini.<sup>360</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century Constantinople was the most popular destination for Macedonian *pechalbari* from the Bitola region.<sup>361</sup> By the late nineteenth century a Macedonian colony established itself in the cosmopolitan metropolis on the Bosphoros. Estimates of the number of *pechalbari* in Constantinople vary; in a 1922 publication Draganoff stated that prior to the Ilinden Rebellion of 1903 the city hosted 2,500 workers from Lerin and 2,000 from Kostur,<sup>362</sup> whilst drawing on a source from 1890 Radev indicates that there were as many as 7,000 people from the Resen region alone.<sup>363</sup> Numerous Macedonians in Constantinople engaged in market gardening and in the dairy business, whilst in Anatolia timber-cutting was a popular means of earning money.<sup>364</sup> Constantinople was also a favoured destination for men from the wider Prespa region. Eftim Tantski from Carev Dvor (Resen district of the Prespa region) travelled to Constantinople in 1898 with a group of men from the

<sup>359</sup> D. Siljanovski, editor, *Makedonia kako prirodna i ekonomska celina*, Sofia, 1945, p. 266.

<sup>360</sup> Skopje, in northern Macedonia, was also a popular destination with internal *pechalbari* in the mid-nineteenth century. A 1846 tax register describes the number of Christians and Jews temporarily residing at Skopje inns and outlines various data such as, their place of origin, their name, physical description, profession (trade), age and tax category. 'Defter za profesijata, iminjata i dzhizieto na rayata - doidenci privremeno naseleni vo Skopje. (12)62 (1845/46) Godina'. D. Georgiev, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Popisi od XIX vek* [Turkish Documents - Censuses from the XIX century], Skopje, 1997, pp. 116-160.

<sup>361</sup> 'Defter za iminjata i dzhizieto na rayata od Bitola i Bitolskata kaza koja zaradi trgovija se naogja vo drugi mesta (12) 56/7 (1840/1 i 1841/2)', (Register of names and *dzhizieto* (a tax) of the raya from Bitola and the Bitola kaza who are in other places because of trade), *ibid*, pp. 11-115. According to this Ottoman tax register Macedonians from the Bitola region travelled to the eastern limits of the Ottoman Empire as far as Damascus, Egypt and Jerusalem in search of work.

<sup>362</sup> P. Draganoff, *La Macédonie et les Macédoniens* [Macedonia and the Macedonians]. Paris, 1922, p. 28.

<sup>363</sup> S. Radev, *op. cit.* p. 47. Radev cites this figure from an 1890 issue of the newspaper, *Zornitsa*.

<sup>364</sup> P. Hill, *Macedonians*, Angus and Robertson, 1988, p. 686.

In the memoirs of S. Radev, he states that the large colony of men from the Resen region, in Constantinople, predominantly worked as market gardeners, and constituted the bulk of the people in the trade. The market gardens were situated on opposite sides of the city, but the men from Resen came together for religious celebrations in the Bulgarian church of 'Sveti Stefan'. The priest in the church was a native of Resen. S. Radev, *op. cit.* pp. 47-48. The revolutionary leader, Slaveyko Arsov, also outlines the high rate of *pechalba* in Constantinople, by men from the Resen region. The majority worked as market gardeners and only very young men and the elderly remained in the villages. Slaveyko Arsov memoirs from I. Katardzhiev, editor, *Spomeni - S. Arsov, P. Klashev, L. Džherov, G.P. Hristov, A. Andrejev, G. Papanchev, L. Dimitrov*, Skopje, 1997, p. 65. Slaveyko Arsov memoirs were originally published in P. Glushkov, *Vostanichkoto dvizhenje vo Jugozapadna Makedonija (do 1904 god.)*, Sofia, 1925, and were derived from the extensive memoirs collected by L. Miletich, and published in the series *Materijali za Istorijata na Makedonskoto Osloboditelno Dvizhenje*.

district and worked there for a period of six years as a market gardener, selling produce door to door.<sup>365</sup>

*Pechalbari* sought work in the neighbouring and European states of Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania and (to a lesser degree) Greece,<sup>366</sup> Austria-Hungary, Germany and France. Colonies of Macedonian *pechalbari* were formed in the neighbouring countries, with substantial numbers in the popular Bulgaria and Romania (Wallachia). Three generations of the Trpchevski family went to Romania in search of work. Trpche Trpchevski first went there in the 1870s, and upon his return to the village he purchased more land to add to the existing fields and built a larger family home. Around the turn of the century he took his son Cvetan with him to Romania, and later Cvetan was also to take his son Trpche along too. The Trpchevski men worked in the Caracal region, along with other men from their village. Macedonians also established businesses that operated as meeting places for other Macedonians. Trpche was to open a restaurant in the town with a fellow villager named Dobre; newly arrived *pechalbari* were directed to the restaurant and provided with valuable information to help them find work and accommodation.<sup>367</sup> Similarly Boris Kalcovski of Brajcino (Prespa region) obtained employment through a Macedonian-operated club in Detroit which led to four years' work with the one company.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Kole Eftimov (born 1924 Carev Dvor, Resen district - Prespa region), interview conducted in Bitola 20 March 2000. Eftim Tantski was Kole's grandfather.

<sup>366</sup> Through interviews and discussions with Macedonians both in Australia and in Macedonia the writer is not aware of anyone's ancestors going to Greece to work during the Ottoman period. However, it may have been the case with Macedonians from the Southern districts close to the Greek border. H.N. Brailsford makes a reference to a Macedonian village having a tradition of *pechalba* in Athens. 'One little village has a traditional connection with the building trade of Athens, and nearly half of its families own houses in the Greek capital, which they have built with their own hands, and from which they draw a comfortable rent'. H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 50.

<sup>367</sup> Although a great number of Blace's men went to Romania, it was not the sole destination. Others from the village were known to travel to Bulgaria in search of work. Bogdan Nedelkovski (born 1960, Blace Tetovo), interview conducted on 7 October 1999 in Melbourne. Macedonian *pechalbari* worked in various regions of Romania. There was also a colony in Turnu-Severin, where they established a Macedonian Society. The society sent a letter of support and financial assistance for the Kresna Uprising in 1879. Letter dated 7 January 1879, from, H. Andonov-Poljanski, editor, *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, Vol One, Skopje, 1985, pp. 286–288.

<sup>368</sup> Vancho Kalcovski (born 1942, Brajchino, Prespa region), interview conducted in Melbourne on 2 November 1999. Vancho Kalcovski lived in Brajchino village until he was 18 years-of-age. Several years earlier his brother Giorgi had left by illegally crossing the border into the neighbouring state of Greece, and after a

Sokole Zhitoshanski (born 1878), from the village of Zhitoshe in the Krushevo district, left his native village in his early twenties in search of work in Bulgaria. Following a number of years there he returned to sell his home in the village (a mixed Christian and Muslim Turkish village) and purchased a larger home in Krivogashtani, which was a predominantly Macedonian Christian town. This new home, together with accompanying fields, was purchased from the local Turkish *Aga*. Soon after Sokole returned to Sofia, and was eventually to operate his own inn in the Bulgarian capitol. Similar to Trpche Trpchevski, Sokole's establishment was utilised as a meeting place for Macedonian *pechalbari* in Sofia.<sup>369</sup> The famous revolutionary leader Pitu Guli, from Krushevo, also spent a short period in Sofia in 1900. He too operated an inn that was used as a meeting place for Macedonian *pechalbari*, particularly for those from the Krushevo region, as well as for Macedonian political and revolutionary activists.<sup>370</sup>

Following the Ilinden Rebellion of 1903, the sizeable Macedonian colony of *pechalbari* in Constantinople began to be discriminated against by the Ottoman government and many were forced to move elsewhere. Thousands moved to North America.<sup>371</sup> Unlike the Balkan countries which failed to maintain records on immigration, and the Ottoman Empire which did not keep official figures,<sup>372</sup> the United States government did maintain records, although the country of origin was recorded only as 'European Turkey', a category larger than Macedonia. Nevertheless these figures do provide an approximation of the extent of emigration from Macedonia, particularly after 1878 and the Berlin Congress, when the territory of

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period in detention, came to Australia via Italy. Giorgi made Melbourne his home and later sponsored Vancho to Australia.

<sup>369</sup> Dragutin Ristevski (born 1935 in Vrboec, Krushevo region), notes of interview, 6 October 1999 in Melbourne.

<sup>370</sup> K. Topuzoski, *Pitu Guli (1865–1903) Zivot i Potoa* [Pitu Guli (1865–1903) Life and Beyond], Krushevo, 1995, pp. 23–25.

<sup>371</sup> C.A. Price, op. cit. p. 314. A Macedonian *pechalbar* from the Resen district, working in Constantinople, stated to the contemporary commentator M. Durham, 'The Turks in Constantinople were very frightened of the bands. All Macedonians were ordered to leave at once. I had to go'. M. Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, London, 1905, p. 120.

<sup>372</sup> K. Karpat, op. cit. p. 181. K. Karpat claims that the Ottomans did not keep official figures on emigration because it was formally forbidden.

European Turkey was substantially reduced and because *pechalba* took on the form of a mass movement amongst Macedonians.<sup>373</sup>

The American statistical records on emigration from European Turkey enable observations to be drawn from the data.<sup>374</sup> *Pechalba* can be broken down into four distinct periods that correspond to the deteriorating political environment from 1870 to the Balkan Wars of 1912–1913.

1. *The period 1871–1878* is characterised by an insignificant number of people leaving European Turkey for the United States. According to the immigration records for the period 1871 to 1878, a total of 284 people arrived in the United States. During the 1870s, *pechalbari* were commonly working in the neighbouring states of Romania and Bulgaria (Table 3.15).

Table 3.15: Emigration (*pechalba*) from European Turkey to the United States, 1871–1878

Year	Number
1871	21
1872	34
1873	78
1874	21
1875	36
1876	46
1877	25
1878	23

2. The statistics for *the period 1878 to 1902* reflect the unstable political climate and are characterised by a gradual increase in emigration. From 1880 to 1889 a total of 1,380

<sup>373</sup> European Turkey after the Congress of Berlin was made up of Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Thrace and eastern Rumelia (Bulgarian territory that subsequently joined with Bulgaria in 1885). Of the minorities in Macedonia it was only Vlahs that embraced *pechalba*, Turks and Albanians in Macedonia were not renowned for working abroad.

<sup>374</sup> The American data used here is cited from the historian H. Andonov Poljanski, *The Attitude of the USA Towards Macedonia*, Skopje, 1983, pp. 40–42; and, K. Karpat, op. cit. p. 196.

people arrived in the United States; during the following ten years, from 1890 to 1899, 2,375 people arrived. The numbers dramatically increased at the beginning of the twentieth century, as 2,475 people arrived in America over a short period of three years from 1900 to 1902. Increased economic and political instability after the Russian-Turkish wars of 1876–1878 contributed to this increase of Macedonians seeking work abroad from 1878 to 1902. Following the Congress of Berlin there was a general increase in revolutionary activity throughout Macedonia (commencing with the Kresna Rebellion in 1878), and the unleashing of religious and educational propaganda by the Balkan States in Macedonia. However, the completion of the Bitola-Solun railway connection in 1894 did not appear to have encouraged *pechalba* to the United States as there was no significant rise in numbers until 1900/1901.

Table 3.16: Emigration (*pechalba*) from European Turkey to the United States, 1879–1902

Year	Number
1879	29
1880	24
1881	72
1882	69
1883	86
1884	150
1885	138
1886	176
1887	206
1888	207
1889	252
1890	206
1891	265
1892	227
1893	555
1894	278
1895	215
1896	169
1897	152
1898	176
1899	132

1900	393
1901	1,044
1902	1,038

3. *Following the Ilinden Rebellion of 1903* and the brutal repercussions the Ottoman army inflicted upon Macedonian villages, there was a large increase in people leaving Macedonia. Ottoman reprisals against the Macedonian people included over 10,000 houses being burned in 110 villages, leaving over 50,000 people homeless. (The destroyed villages were exempt from taxation, but in order to make up the expenses of the Ottoman State caused by the rising, taxes were raised elsewhere.<sup>375</sup>)

Emigration continued during the turbulent years of 1904–1907 when the Macedonian population was subjected to an invasion of Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian bands from the neighbouring states. According to the American statistical data from 1903 to 1907, a total of 40,692 people arrived in the United States. However during the period from 1902 to 1907, there are estimates that as many as 75,000 people left Macedonia.<sup>376</sup>

Table 3.17: Emigration (*pechalba*) from European Turkey to the United States, 1903–1907

Year	Number
1903	1,529
1904	4,344
1905	4,542
1906	9,510
1907	20,767

4. The exodus of men became so great that in 1909 the Ottoman authorities banned emigration for all men under the age of thirty.<sup>377</sup> However, the ban does not appear to have been effective, as the following year emigration to the USA doubled. In the

<sup>375</sup> M.E. Durham, op. cit. p. 159.

<sup>376</sup> K. Karpat, op. cit. p. 191.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid, p. 187.

uncertain climate of the final years leading to the Balkan Wars *pechalba* continued in large numbers, but most continued to leave with the intention of returning to their homes.<sup>378</sup> In total, between 1908 and 1913, 81,752 people left for the United States.<sup>379</sup>

Table 3.18: Emigration (*pechalba*) from European Turkey to the United States, 1908–1913

Year	Number
1908	11,290
1909	9,015
1910	18,405
1911	14,438
1912	14,481
1913	14,128

<sup>378</sup> Trifun Kalcovski left his native village of Brajchino (Prespa district) as a 15-year-old boy to work in Pittsburgh USA. Trifun left the village with Petko Krinchev, a 35-year-old family friend from the village, both intended to work abroad temporarily and return to the village. However, Trifun did not return to Macedonia until he was in his eighties. In Macedonia the Kalcovski family received invaluable support from Trifun in the form of large packages with various household items and financial assistance which was used to build a new larger home on the family property. Vancho Kalcovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>379</sup> Up until the Balkan Wars America became the most popular destination for *pechalba*. However, when the gates were closed in 1924 the focus turned towards Australia. Macedonian *pechalba* to Australia confirms that the early arrivals came from those regions where the *pechalba* tradition was popular. Although generally Macedonians arrived in Australia after 1924, there was a small number who arrived earlier. A professor of Slavonic Studies, Peter Hill, considers that ‘according to legend, the first Macedonians arrived in Australia before the end of the nineteenth century’. Having worked in Salonika or Constantinople and hearing of the discovery of gold they travelled to Australia to work at Kalgoorlie and Broken Hill. P. Hill, *The Macedonians in Australia*, Hesperian Press, 1989, p. 12.

Stojan Kenkov from the village of D'mbeni in the Kostur region worked in Broken Hill from 1914 to 1933. Others from the same village (Boris Shmagranov and F. Kadiov) arrived before World War One, also from the same region, but from the village of Kosinec, were Numo Gulio and Vane Prcul arriving in Western Australia in 1908 and 1911 respectively. Ibid, p. 12. As noted, the tradition of *pechalba* was strongest in the regions of Ohrid, Bitola, Lerin and Kostur. The following data by C. Price (op. cit. p.23) confirms that the regional origin of Macedonians who entered Australia during the period from 1890 to 1940 predominantly came from Western Macedonia where the tradition of *pechalba* was strongest.

#### Macedonian Male Settlers in Australia 1890-1940

District of Origin	Number
Bitola-Ohrid	190
Lerin	670
Kostur	370
Other	60
Total	1,290

The most significant change in the lifestyle of the *pechalbar* upon his return to the village was the construction of a new family home. Data compiled from interviews in every instance demonstrates that *pechalbari* earned enough money to upgrade the family home and to purchase more land. All built new homes in their own villages, with the exception of Sokole Zhitoshanov who moved his family out of the ethnically and religiously divided village of Zhitoshani into the larger and predominantly Christian town of Krivogashtani. Aside from constructing new and larger homes, land was purchased (*chifliks*), usually from departing *begs*. Upgrading the home to accommodate an extended family was a practical move and a matter of improved lifestyle, however, the purchase of additional land provided the villager with his most essential need. After all, the primary industry in Macedonia was agriculture and by possessing their own land people took greater control over their own lives, would no longer be required to work on the *chiflik* soil and ‘helped to provide a more secure existence for the future’.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> P. Hill, 1989, op. cit. p. 10. H.N. Brailsford also makes the point that the conditions under which agriculture was carried out, particularly the system of land tenure, was ‘of the first importance for the happiness of the people’. Op. cit. p. 51.

Table 3.19: Purchases Made upon Return to Macedonia by *pechalbari*

Name	Region	Country Worked	Period	Purchased upon return
Anasto Kleshtev	Bitola	Romania	1870s	<i>Chiflik</i> land and new home built
Trpche Trpchevski	Tetovo	Romania	1870s	More land and new home built
S. Kalcovski	Prespa	Romania	Late 1870s or early 1880s	More land and new home built
Sokole Zhitoshanski	Krushevo	Bulgaria	Late 1890s or early 1900's	<i>Chiflik</i> soil and new home built
Ilo Delov	Lerin	Argentina	1894	<i>Chiflik</i> soil and new home
Pande Tantski	Prespa	USA	Early 1900s	More land, water mill and hotel
Trifun Kalcovski	Prespa	USA	Left 1913	New home built <sup>381</sup>

Other outward signs of personal wealth resulting from working abroad might have included the purchase of more working animals for the fields. Although villagers did not dress in European-style clothing, they wore traditional clothing regardless of personal wealth.<sup>382</sup> However, the wealthy were distinguishable from others in that their clothing would be recently made or of a higher quality. Depending on the level of *pechalba* a particular village possessed, it generally affected whether the village as a whole was visibly distinguishable from other villages. In villages that did have a strong tradition of *pechalba*, such as Smerdesh in the Kostur district, there were

<sup>381</sup> Trifun Kalcovski did not return to Macedonia until he was in his eighties, but sent money back to his family with which they built a new home.

<sup>382</sup> The village of Lavci in the Bitola region (upper zone) was one of the first villages in the region to commence discarding traditional village clothing and adopt modern European dress during the early 1900s as a direct result of large scale *pechalba*.

numerous outward signs differentiating it from other villages.<sup>383</sup> Brailsford described Smerdesh as the richest village he had come across, with large and comparatively well-built houses, a thriving school, three or four shops and a large church.<sup>384</sup>

A negative aspect of the new wealth *pechalbari* returned with was the unwanted attention they attracted from Ottoman tax gatherers, and more specifically from Muslim bandits. In the Prespa region one such bandit was the infamous 'Turk Luman'. Together with his band he built a notorious reputation for pillaging villages, often targeting those who had returned from *pechalba*. Intimidation, coercion and kidnapping were used to extract money from people.<sup>385</sup> Albanian bandits known as *katchatsi* were also active in the Prespa region and often targeted the families of *pechalbari* in order to extort money from them. Lesman (a Macedonian) from Carev Dvor spent approximately 10–12 years in the United States. Around the turn of the century he returned home with considerable wealth and was soon afterwards kidnapped by Albanian bandits. Although a ransom demand was made to Lesman's family, he was nevertheless murdered.<sup>386</sup> Due to the pressures of banditry, many families, along with the Tantski family, moved out of their villages to the relative security offered in Bitola.<sup>387</sup> Another aspect affecting returning *pechalbari* was the increased price of *chiflik* land. In regions where *pechalba* was widespread, land prices reached artificial heights, for example a *dolum* (approximately 910 square metres) of good quality agricultural land which had a normal value of 2 silver lira, grew to a value of 5 to 10 silver lira.<sup>388</sup>

<sup>383</sup> In the 1920s Smerdesh was renamed Krustalopigi by the Greek authorities.

<sup>384</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. pp. 50–51.

<sup>385</sup> Vancho Kalcovski interview, op. cit. Luman was later murdered by Macedonian revolutionaries from the IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation). The event was celebrated in the district.

<sup>386</sup> Kole Eftimov and Lesman's son were childhood friends. Later, Lesman's son explained to Kole Eftimov that he considered his father's murder may have also been politically linked to his support for the IMRO. Kole Eftimov interview, op. cit.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

<sup>388</sup> Diplomatic letter from the Austrian Consulate in Bitola, letter number 33, by Dr Ranci, dated 11 July 1906, D, Zografski, editor, op. cit. p. 160. A 'donym' of land is defined as constituting an area 40 paces long by 40 paces wide (910 square metres). It is also known by the name 'dulum'. *Pechalbari* were willing to pay high prices for land, according to Dr Ranci. '*Poradi faktot shto ovdeshniot selanec se gordee so svojata tatkovina i po mozhnost vo samoto selo, kade shto porano bil naematel i chifdzhija, saka da spechali sopstvena zemja. Taa zhelba e tolku prisutna shto vrednosta na*

Table 3.20: Agricultural Land Prices in Gorno Aglarci, 1906

Size of land in donums	Purchase price	Administrative costs
4	1052 grosh	40.15 grosh
4	1356 grosh	49.30 grosh
3.5	920 grosh	39.30 grosh
3	793 grosh	32.30 grosh
3	1184 grosh	53.00 grosh

Source: Ottoman Turkish land titles - Volume 52, Document 20, Number 91; Volume 52, Document 29, Number 100; Volume 52, Document 31, Number 102; Volume 52, Document 34, Number 105; and, Volume 52, Document 38, Number 109. All five titles are dated 21 July 1906.

*Pechalbari* often returned to Macedonia having acquired new skills that were utilised in business enterprises. As outlined earlier, Macedonians set up their own cafes and inns whilst working abroad and upon their return set up similar businesses in Macedonia. For instance, Pande Tantski from Carev Dvor left for the United States in 1901 (at 17 years of age) together with a group of five other men from his village. They travelled by train from Bitola to Solun, and from there embarked on the long voyage by sea. Pande initially worked with other Macedonians constructing railway lines in Detroit, and later found work in a warehouse. With his hard-earned savings he purchased a restaurant in Detroit, and operated it for six years before returning to Macedonia. In Macedonia, Pande purchased a substantial amount of *chiflik* land in the Prespa region, as well as a water mill located between the villages of Bela Crkva and Kozjak. He again returned to Detroit to work in the hotel and restaurant industry for approximately eight years. Upon his return to Macedonia in approximately 1918, utilising the skills acquired through his experience in the hospitality industry in America, Pande purchased a large hotel in Bitola, in partnership with another *pechalbar*, Paun Spirov (from the village Prostrajne in the

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*zemjata chestopati se plaka dvojno i trojno povejke.* ('Due to the fact that local villagers are proud of their fatherland as well as their own village, whereupon previously he lacked ownership and was a *chiflik* worker, he wishes to acquire his own land. The desire is so great that the value of the land often is paid for twice or three times more'). Ibid, p. 159.

Kitchevo region). Pande and Paun paid a Turk (from Kitchevo) 600 gold coins (*napoljoni*) for 'Hotel Kitchevo'.<sup>389</sup>

Industrial skills acquired abroad were less likely to be utilised in Macedonia, given that the Ottoman Empire was not an industrialised state. *Pechalbari* principally derived from the rural sector of the population, and as evident from the sample interviewed they overwhelmingly purchased *chiflik* land in their villages in order to continue their traditional agricultural way of life. Along with increased wealth, *pechalbari* brought back new skills and some utilised them through self-employment, but just as important was the greater sense of self-confidence, familiarity with new languages and alternative ways of life to which *pechalbari* were exposed.<sup>390</sup> Due to the scale of *pechalba* in Western Macedonia, it is likely that returning *pechalbari* had a positive effect on the general economy in the region.

There is also evidence indicating that their experiences abroad, particularly in the democracies of Western Europe and the USA – but also in the neighbouring liberated Balkan lands – were characterised by a taste of freedom outside of Ottoman subjugation which exposed them to new political ideas. Politicisation of Macedonian *pechalbari* is evident as early as the 1880s. An official diplomatic report by Stojan Novakovic in Constantinople, dated 16 August 1888, refers to '*pechalbari* postal couriers' who maintained a communication link between *pechalba* colonies in Constantinople, Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia with their families and villages. Novakovic states that certain individuals from the Ohrid region engaged in this activity, visited the Macedonian colony in Constantinople, and then travelled to

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<sup>389</sup> The partnership operated the business successfully until 1931 when Pande bought Paun's share and continued to operate the business until 1948 when the property was confiscated by the communist Yugoslav regime. Kole Eftimov interview, op. cit.

<sup>390</sup> The contemporary commentator, E. Bouchie de Belle, stated 'periods spent abroad gave the villager greater experience and courage'. Op. cit. p. 52. A 1913 Serb military report suggests that *pechalbari* returned having gained 'some culture' (*po malo i kulture*). Report number 6260, dated 20 August 1913, by D. Alympich, G. Todorovski, editor, *Srpski Izvor za istorijata na Makedonskiot Narod 1912-1914* [Serb sources regarding the history of the Macedonian people 1912–1914], Skopje, 1979, p. 221.

Romania spreading news that ‘others will be heading for the Bitola and Prilep regions to agitate that Macedonia raises a rebellion against the Turks’.<sup>391</sup>

Simyan Simidzhiev (from the village of Velmevci in Ohrid region) adopted revolutionary views whilst on *pechalba* in Bulgaria where he mixed with other Macedonian *pechalbari* as well as Macedonian emigrants there who were involved in the IMRO. In Bulgaria Simidzhiev came to understand the ‘seriousness of my duty towards the liberation of my people’.<sup>392</sup> Similarly Zhivko Kirov Yanevski from the village of Drenoveni (Kostur region) left his village due to economic considerations and worked in Burgas (Bulgaria) as a bricklayer.<sup>393</sup> Mixing with members of the Macedonian emigrant community who were active in the IMRO, upon his return to his native village he became an active participant in the revolutionary struggle working with the local commanders Vasil Chakalarov, Mitre Vlahot and Pando Klashev.<sup>394</sup> A report by the Serb Minister for Internal Affairs to the Minister for Foreign Affairs outlines the uncovering of a plan to blow up the Ottoman railway (at the Macedonian village Zibevchu) by five Macedonian *pechalbari* from Bitola (who resided in the Serb city Kragujevac).<sup>395</sup> A group of approximately 100 *pechalbari* from

<sup>391</sup> Report number 37, dated 16 February 1888, Constantinople. K. Dzhambazovski, editor, *Gradja za istoriju Makedonskog naroda (iz arhiva Srbije)* [Material on the History of the Macedonian people (from the Serbian Archive)], Vol IV, Book III (1888-1889), Belgrade, 1987, pp. 75-76.

<sup>392</sup> Simyan Simidzhiev memoirs, from T. Giorgiev, op. cit. p. 39.

<sup>393</sup> The Greek government has renamed Drenoveni as Kranionas.

<sup>394</sup> Zhivko Kirov Yanevski memoirs, T. Giorgiev. Ibid, p. 48. Emigrant Macedonian communities in the Balkan lands not only helped foster a political consciousness amongst Macedonian *pechalbari* but also were instrumental financial supporters of the revolutionary struggle. Ilija Stojchev Bozhinovski memoirs, from T. Gorgiev, ibid, p. 45. In the memoirs of the IMRO revolutionary, Slaveyko Arsov, he stated that the principal supporters of the IMRO in Resen were people who had travelled abroad. '*Vo Resensko, kako i po drugi mesta, semeto na Organizacijata se seeshe od gradot Resen, od posvesnite zhiteli, proshetani po tygi zemi.*' ('In the Resen district, as in other areas, the seeds of the Organisation were sowed in the city of Resen, through prominent citizens, who had travelled in other lands.') Slaveyko Arsov memoirs, from I. Katardzhiev, editor, *Spomeni - S. Arsov, P. Klashev, L. Dzherov, G.P. Hristov, A. Andreev, G. Papanchev, L. Dimitrov*, op. cit. p. 70. Further confirmation of the connection between *pechalba* and politicisation can be found in the following works. The former IMRO revolutionary leader, I. Mihailov, *Spomeni, Tom IV, Osvoboditelna Borba 1924-1934* [Memoirs, Vol IV, The Liberation Struggle 1924-1934], Indianapolis, 1973; K. Pandev and Z. Noneva, editors, *Borbite v Makedonia i Odrinsko 1878-1912 Spomeni* [Battles in Macedonia and Adrianople 1878-1912, Memoirs], Sofia, 1981; the historian, H. Andonov-Poljanski, *The Attitude of the USA Towards Macedonia*, Skopje, 1983; and I. Katardzhiev, editor, *Spomeni - I.H. Nikolov, D. Grujev, B. Sarafov, J. Sandanski, M. Gerdzhikov, H. Tatarchev*, [Memoirs - I.H. Nikolov, D. Grujev, B. Sarafov, J. Sandanski, M. Gerdzhikov, H. Tatarchev], Skopje, 1995.

<sup>395</sup> The report was directed to the Foreign Minister in order that the Turkish authorities were notified of the threat. Report number 15.832, dated 3 November 1889, Belgrade, K. Dzhambazovski, op. cit. p. 621.

Capari and surrounding villages (Bitola region) working in Katerini, returned to their villages at the outbreak of the insurrection in 1903 after having secured arms from over the nearby Greek border.<sup>396</sup> It was not uncommon for *pechalbari* to return home to assist in the revolutionary movement during the Ilinden Rebellion and afterwards, as was the case with Iliya Stoychev Bozhinovski from Armensko (Lerin) who travelled from the United States in 1907 and joined a cheta under the command of Krsto Londov.<sup>397</sup>

Increased political consciousness appears to have been a consequence of working abroad, widespread *pechalba* in the western regions might have a direct link to the intensity of the 1903 Ilinden Rebellion in the Ohrid, Bitola, Lerin and Kostur regions. Western Macedonia was a central focus point of the rebellion, and of 110 Macedonian villages attacked during Turkish reprisals, approximately 70 villages were located in the Ohrid, Bitola, Lerin and Kostur regions.<sup>398</sup>

Bitola provides a useful frame for understanding the anthropology of traditional Macedonian life in the late nineteenth century. The detail of everyday Macedonian life has in large part been ignored by other commentators, owing to their lack of focus on the insider's perspective.

As the following chapter shall demonstrate, the churches of the Balkan States attempted to expand their religious jurisdiction as widely as possible and outwardly to register Macedonians as Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians respectively. Understanding the

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<sup>396</sup> G. Abadzhiev, editor, *Borbite vo Jugozapadna Makedonia po spomenite na Luka Dzherov i Lazar Dimitrov*, [Battles in south western Macedonia according to the memoirs of Luka Dzherov and Lazar Dimitrov], Skopje, 1952, p. 24.

<sup>397</sup> Iliya Stoychev Bozhinovski memoirs, T. Giorgiev, op. cit. p. 45. Politicisation did not always evolve independently or naturally. *Pechalbari*, particularly those in the neighbouring states were at times recruited for the purposes of advocating foreign political agendas in Macedonia. See diplomatic report by Stojan Novakovic, report number 84, dated 1 April 1889, Constantinople, K. Dzhambazovski, op. cit. pp. 371–372. The Greek authorities renamed Armensko as Alonas.

<sup>398</sup> Furthermore the western regions of Macedonia may have been more sufficiently armed due to the greater wealth resulting from wide-scale *pechalba*. This needs to be thoroughly investigated, as there were other important factors that may have influenced the intensity of the rebellion in the western regions of Macedonia.

defining characteristics of Macedonians generally, and especially those in the Bitola region, is essential in order to measure the effects of denationalisation and assimilation strategies on Macedonian identity.

# Chapter Four: A Contest for Souls

## 4.1 Introduction

EXAMINING THE NATURE of daily Macedonian life in the Bitola region is fundamental to understanding the landscape under which the Balkan churches engaged in a fierce contest for jurisdictional dominance. The religious struggle in Macedonia was conducted primarily through the Greek Patriarchate and the Bulgarian Exarchate. During the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the Balkan States, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia anticipated the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. The Empire was already in a state of decline and was commonly referred to as ‘the sick man of Europe’. The struggle for Macedonia took various forms, and the religious rivalry that developed over the Macedonian Christians was the climax of Balkan propaganda activities. As this Chapter describes, the establishment of foreign religious organisations in Macedonia – in particular the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian churches – aimed at expanding their jurisdiction in line with their respective national states’ territorial ambitions. Effectively, religious jurisdiction was seen as outwardly demarcating people and villages as belonging to the nationality of the church in question. Intense competition among the parties eventually resulted in open armed conflict by guerilla bands sent from the neighbouring states. Each party sought, by any means possible, to obtain religious jurisdiction over Macedonian territory, in order to justify their territorial aspirations. The role of the priest as the principal religious figure in countryside villages is examined in order to evaluate any effect upon the identity of the village community. The lives of Macedonian villagers are scrutinised to ascertain whether relations between adherents of opposing religious jurisdictions had broken down, or whether a common Macedonian identity was in the process of being formed.

Without a recognised independent Macedonian church (previously abolished by the Ottomans in 1767), the Macedonian people were exposed to the activities of the neighbouring religious propaganda. The Balkan churches played a treacherous role, manipulating and coercing the Macedonian Christians to win their adherence, which in fact had nothing to do with the Christian faith but was entirely political in nature. English commentators at the beginning of the twentieth century, such as Brailsford, referred to the Balkan churches in Macedonia as 'national organisations', whilst Comyn-Platt referred to them as 'missionary enterprises' as well as the commonly used term, 'propaganda'.<sup>1</sup> Propaganda activity in Macedonia, 'although political in their ends, are religious and educational in their methods',<sup>2</sup> although it was not Christianity itself at fault; the Balkan church leaders rather than attending to the spiritual well-being of the people were 'the prime movers in every political campaign that it started'.<sup>3</sup>

The Balkan churches preyed upon the religious disposition of a people who, throughout centuries of Muslim rule, maintained a powerful link to their church and Christian faith. Denied the right to own land, with public gatherings forbidden unless in the confines of their church or to celebrate a religious festival, the people saw the church as the one thing that truly belonged to them. Another early twentieth century English commentator, Abbott, pointed out that 'even the smallest and most obscure village is sanctified by a place of worship'.<sup>4</sup> The people accepted their faith without question: being a Christian was an integral part of their identity. However, without their own recognised national church, which before its abolition was a leader of the

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<sup>1</sup> T. Comyn-Platt *The Turk in the Balkans*, London, 1904, p. 34. T. Comyn-Platt suggests that Macedonian politics can be summed up in one word: 'propaganda'.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. T. Comyn-Platt provided a descriptive account of Macedonia at the beginning of the twentieth century: 'Orthodoxy today, or its prototype, is the horse ridden by every shade of politician in the Near East, and in the race for possession of Macedonia, the entire hierarchical machinery is set in motion by way of advancing the cause of the various claimants. Here then, is material enough for Eastern difficulties. Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbians, and indeed, every Christian element that goes to make up the mosaic of Balkan nationalities, fight among themselves, the Porte knocks their heads together by way of embittering the contest, whilst the Great Powers, from selfish motives, not only prevent an amicable settlement, but add fuel to the fire by furthering their own ends.' Ibid, p. 45.

<sup>4</sup> G.F. Abbott, *Macedonia A Plea for the Primitive*, London, 1903, p. 43.

people, their national development was hindered and the Macedonians were left ‘as a flock without their shepherd’.

Throughout this struggle for the souls of Macedonia, the people maintained a powerful link to their church, which was not necessarily expressed as loyalty to the Patriarchate or Exarchate religious organisations, but to the church building itself, which constituted a holy place for them. Brailsford recognised the strong tie to their church when he visited Macedonia just after the Ilinden Rebellion in 1903. In discussions with villagers living in what he described as ‘monotonous exploitation and servitude’, he asked them why they did not leave their villages and emigrate to Serbia or Bulgaria where they might be both prosperous and free. They replied, ‘who would care for the monastery if we abandoned it? The Turks would seize it.’<sup>5</sup> As he travelled through villages that had been plundered and ravaged by the Ottomans after the rebellion, he ‘was always led first of all to inspect the burned or looted church. Its destruction affected the people far more profoundly than the loss of their homes.’<sup>6</sup>

## 4.2 Archbishopric of Ohrid

HISTORICALLY, THE MACEDONIAN Archbishopric of Ohrid was a large and important Christian institution in the Balkans, operating as a centre of arts, letters and learning. The historian J. Shea considers that the church played a significant role in ‘defining and in defending’ a uniquely Macedonian culture.<sup>7</sup> For over eight centuries (from 995 to 1767) the Archbishopric of Ohrid maintained its autocephalous status

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<sup>5</sup> H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future*, London, 1906, p. 59. Brailsford is perhaps one of the most widely quoted contemporary commentators on Macedonia.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 60. Similarly, the writer found during a field visit to Macedonia in 2000, that the village church was the central object in each village – and it was spoken about with great pride. Often the church was a small simple structure and there was no relevance given to foreign jurisdiction (Patriarchate or Exarchate) during Ottoman rule. In few instances, Greek script remained on frescoes or icons, but this was not seen to be of any consequence and was understood by younger people to have a part in Macedonia's turbulent past. It is interesting to note that no efforts have been made to modify or eliminate foreign script from churches. In contrast, pre-1912 churches in southern Macedonia have had all traces of Macedonian script completely eliminated and replaced with Greek script after 1913.

<sup>7</sup> J. Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a new Balkan Nation*, 1997, p. 172.

through Serbian, Bulgarian, Byzantine and – for the first three and a half centuries – Ottoman Turkish rule.<sup>8</sup> During early Ottoman rule the authority of the church was not threatened. Instead, with the support of the Ottoman Turks the powers of the church were substantially increased in order to weaken the authority of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.<sup>9</sup>

General conditions in European Turkey began to deteriorate from the middle of the sixteenth century, initially due to the strengthening of the feudal system and then later as a result of a weakening of the Ottoman Empire. Subject to new and increasing taxes, levies and other compulsory payments to the Ottomans, Macedonians were forced to endure a burdensome financial hardship that directly affected the position of the church, which largely relied on the generosity and donations from its adherents. The Archbishopric began to weaken as the Ottomans ended their religious tolerance and began to attack all things Christian. Sultan Selim II (1566–1574) described himself as sent by God to ‘exterminate the Christian religion’,<sup>10</sup> and thereafter the attack against Christianity intensified.

Seeking support for the Macedonian church, Archbishop Gavril journeyed to Russia in 1585 requesting assistance from the Russian Czar. The Ottomans, enraged at his actions, fined the Archbishopric of Ohrid 16,000 lira.<sup>11</sup> Centuries-old churches and monasteries were destroyed in the fierce attack against the Christian faith. Buildings decimated by Ottoman fanaticism included the churches and monasteries

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<sup>8</sup> The Ohrid Archbishopric is generally considered to be identical with and a continuation of the Archbishopric Justinia Prima, founded by the Emperor Justinian in 535 with its ecclesiastical seat in Skopje. Y. Belchovski, *The Historical Roots of the Macedonian Orthodox Church*, Skopje, 1987, p. 142. Also, see D. Ilievski, *The Macedonian Orthodox Church*, Skopje, 1973. To the eleventh century the Macedonian Ohrid church was a Patriarchate.

Following the defeat of Samuels Empire at the hand of Byzantine, it was downgraded to an Archbishopric.  
<sup>9</sup> During the course of the fifteenth century a number of eparchies were subjected to the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Ohrid. Among them were the eparchies of Sofia and Vidin; the eparchies of the Serbian Patriarchate of Pech; Wallachia, Moldavia, and the Orthodox regions of Italy (Apulia, Calabria, and Sicily), together with Venice and Dalmatia. D. Ilievski, op. cit. pp. 28–29.

<sup>10</sup> D. Ilievski, *Avtokefalnosta na Makedonskata Pravoslavna Crkva* [The Independence of the Macedonian Orthodox Church], Skopje, 1972, p. 45.

<sup>11</sup> S. Dimevski, *Crkovna Istorija na Makedonskiot Narod* [The Church History of the Macedonian People], Skopje, 1965, p. 67.

of Saint George (*Sveti Giorgi*), Saint Arhangel (*Sveti Arhangel*) in Reka, Saint John Bigorski (*Sveti Jovan Bigorski*) in Debar, and the church of the Immaculate Mother of God (*Sveta Prechista*) in Kitchevo. Others, such as the cathedral church of Saint Sofia in Ohrid, were transformed into mosques.<sup>12</sup>

As the sole religious institution of the Macedonian people, the Archbishopric of Ohrid actively sought assistance from various European leaders with a clear political aim of liberating Macedonia from Ottoman Muslim rule. During the latter half of the sixteenth century and up to the middle of the seventeenth century, Archbishops of the Ohrid Church travelled to various European countries (Russia, Poland, Bohemia, Germany, and others) seeking assistance for the liberation from Ottoman rule. In 1589 Archbishop Gavril was actively seeking support from Western Europe to drive the Ottomans from Macedonia.<sup>13</sup> In 1615 Archbishop Atanasius travelled to Italy, Austria and Spain, requesting aid in support of an uprising to free

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<sup>12</sup> During the rule of Murat IV (1623-1640) the Ottomans attempted to transform the famous church of Saint Kliment into a mosque. It was only saved after many of its precious treasures were sacrificed in order to buy it back. During travels in Macedonia the writer has on a number of occasions been alerted by locals to mosques which were transformed from churches, or were built on the foundations of a destroyed church. The following story, was told by an elderly local in Ohrid, in 1996 about a mosque known locally as 'krst dzhamija' ('cross mosque'). It was built from the ruins of a church (Saint George) which had been devastated in earlier Ottoman rule. With partially erect walls, the Ottomans commenced to rebuild it as a mosque. Over three consecutive days during construction, in the morning it was found that the work performed the previous day on the walls had collapsed. Rebuilding continued and to prevent further damage occurring an armed guard was stationed at the site. At its completion it was noticed that where there should have been only a crescent symbol on the dome, there was in fact a small cross within it. The authorities promptly replaced the religious symbol, believing that someone had swapped it over. The following day, the cross re-appeared. The authorities, furious that this should happen again, again stationed an overnight guard before the building. The following morning the cross again re-appeared. Unable to explain the event, the Ottoman authorities allowed it to remain and it stands there today.

<sup>13</sup> Archbishop Gavril described the conditions under which the people were subject to in a letter to the Archduke Ferdinand of Habsburg, dated 8 October 1589: 'We take the liberty humbly to complain to your noble radiance (as a person) loved by God, a Christian and Catholic nobleman, of the tyrant, the bloodthirsty persecutor of Christianity, the Turk, who from day to day has pursued and blackmailed us and our ancestors, not only our Orthodox and old Catholic bishops, monasteries and the like in the whole of Macedonia, Greece and the nearby countries, and our loyal followers as well who we rule and live according to God's will, are also attacked; therefore we receive little tax from them now. On the contrary, we alone have to give to the Turks 18,000 Hungarian ducats in tax, which for us and our followers is a great evil, first of all it is an evil to the name and glory of Christ, preventing the spreading of his teachings.' H. Andonov-Poljanski, editor, *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, Vol I, Skopje, 1985, pp. 152–153.

Macedonia from Ottoman rule and expressed confidence that the surrounding Balkan countries would join the struggle.<sup>14</sup>

During this arduous period for the Macedonian church, the Patriarchate of Constantinople threatened its position by pursuing various intrigues against the Church, with the aim of abolishing its independence as a means to realise its aspirations to dominate the Christian Orthodox Balkans (under Ottoman rule). Signs are evident from the beginning of the eighteenth century that the Patriarchate undermined rival churches in the Balkans and sought to elevate its status through the ideal of the restoration of the Byzantine Empire and the central role the church would take in it.<sup>15</sup> In an attempt to arrogate the autocephalous Ohrid Church in 1737, 'John Ypsilanti tried to persuade the Porte that Ohrid was a centre of Austrian intrigue and ought to be directly subordinated to Constantinople', according to the historian and former Secretary at the British Embassy in Constantinople from 1893 to 1898, Charles Eliot.<sup>16</sup>

The Macedonian church found itself weakening under the financial strain of the Ottomans. Whilst in a vulnerable state with heavy debts owed to the Ottomans, the synod of the Constantinople Patriarchate appealed to the High Porte that the

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<sup>14</sup> The following is an extract from a letter by Archbishop Atanasius, seeking assistance to overthrow the Ottoman Turks. The letter is dated June 1615: 'And so I proposed when five or six thousand infantry men would be given to me by his Highness of Spanish and Italian nationality, weapons and ammunition for arming 15,000 men, saddles and harness for 4,000 horses, in a short time I would deliver Macedonia under his rule and power, promising to pay back the aforementioned weapons and ammunition and that food would be given to the soldiers, since those regions are rich and abundant in foods...Hence after this action succeeds, the whole of Bosnia and Dalmatia, Bulgaria and Greece will doubtless raise their weapons against the Turk in order to help us and join our loyalty and obedience without requiring assistance, since they outnumber the Turks.' Ibid, pp. 157–158. Earlier, Archbishop Atanasius raised an unsuccessful rebellion in 1596 without assistance from Western Europe. He maintained a long-term campaign, attempting to rid Macedonia from the Ottomans from 1596 to 1615. For a fascinating account of the Archbishops travels to the European Courts and conditions in Macedonia, see M. Minoski, *Osloboditelne Dvizhenja i Vostanija vo Makedonija 1564–1615* [Liberation Movements and Rebellions in Macedonia 1564–1615], Skopje, 1972.

<sup>15</sup> A. Trajanovski, *Godishen Zbornik (Stremezhot na Carigradskata Patriashija za ukinuvanje na Pechkata Patriashija i Ohridskata Arhiepiskopija i prisvojuvanje na nivnite eparhii)* [Annual Codex (The Aspirations of the Constantinople Patriarchate to abolish the Pech Patriarchate and Ohrid Archbishopric and annex their eparchies)], Book 4, Skopje, 1998, pp. 155–156.

<sup>16</sup> C. Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*, London, 1965 (1900) p. 251. C. Eliot goes on to state that the Ottomans thought of Ypsilanti's proposition as an intrigue and duly executed him.

debts owed would be covered by the Patriarchate if the Archbishopric of Ohrid were abolished. The Patriarchate argued that under such circumstances the church would come under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate. Under pressure from the Ottomans, Archbishop Arsenius was removed as the head of the Archbishopric of Ohrid on 16 January 1767. This was followed by an *irade* (royal act) from Sultan Mustafa III (1757–1773) abolishing the Archbishopric of Ohrid as an autocephalous institution. The abolition of the church was initiated by the Constantinople Patriarch (Samuil Handzheri 1763–1768), and un-canonically administered by a Muslim ruler. Playing into each other's hands, the Ottoman Turks and Greeks developed a long-standing relationship under which 'the Sultan could never have crushed the heart out of his Christian subjects without the aid of a Christian middleman, and the Greek has used the brute force of his Mohammedan employer to complement his own cleverness and guile'.<sup>17</sup> The abolition of the Macedonian Archbishopric of Ohrid emerged from political manoeuvring, and was motivated by a desire to strengthen the position of the Patriarchate in non-Greek territories under Ottoman rule.<sup>18</sup>

## 4.3 Religious organisations in Macedonia from the 1870s

### Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople

FOLLOWING THE ABOLITION of the Archbishopric of Ohrid, the Macedonian church was annexed to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which took ecclesiastical control of Macedonia and, in place of native Bishops of one interest with the people, Greeks were sent from Constantinople'.<sup>19</sup> Greek bishops and metropolitans

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<sup>17</sup> G.M. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby, *The Slavonic Provinces of Turkey in Europe*, London 1866, p. 29. See also Y. Belchovski, 1987, op. cit. p. 147.

<sup>18</sup> Greek Patriarchate aspirations towards spiritual dominance of the Ottoman-occupied Balkans is also evident by a similar process employed a year earlier. In 1766, the Serbian church (Patriarchate of Pech) was abolished and placed under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Both churches were 'destroyed by the Phanariots, with the double object of extending Greek influence and filling the exhausted treasury of the Constantinople Patriarchate with additional tithes and revenues'. C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 250.

<sup>19</sup> G.M. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby, op. cit. p. 28.

reinforced Greek religious domination in Macedonia by attempting to wipe out traces of the Macedonian character of the Archbishopric of Ohrid. They set upon destroying centuries-old books, records and religious texts and often replaced Macedonian church inscriptions with Greek. In monasteries on the Holy Mountain of Sveta Gora, 'the Greek clergy acted drastically', throwing old Macedonian parchments into the sea or burning them in furnaces, and at the Monastery of Saint Naum on Lake Ohrid, the Greek prior Dionysius burned the manuscripts.<sup>20</sup> In Prilep there was a burning of the religious books, whilst the books stored at Veles were destroyed in a bonfire in the marketplace under the orders of the Greek bishop.<sup>21</sup> As much as 300 kilograms of parchments and religious books belonging to the Ohrid Archbishopric were lost forever.<sup>22</sup>

New ecclesiastical tax contributions were enforced under the privileges and wide-ranging powers bestowed to the Patriarchate of Constantinople by the Ottoman Sultan. Macedonians were required to finance the activities of this new oppression that was often collected with the assistance of armed Turkish guards. Eliot described the Greek clergy as 'little more than a body of rapacious and extortionate tax gatherers',<sup>23</sup> who demanded payment for the performance of all religious functions. There was a tax paid for the maintenance of the Patriarch, for the consecration of priests, for saying prayers, for prayers for the dead, for consecrating a church, and for numerous other services.<sup>24</sup> The Patriarchate became merely a 'Turkish deputy,

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<sup>20</sup> S. Pribitchevich, *Macedonia - Its People and History*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982, p. 108.

<sup>21</sup> G.M. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby, op. cit. pp. 102 and 111.

The library of the Patriarchs of Trnovo in Bulgaria, although surviving significantly longer, was destroyed by fire in 1825 at the hands of the Greek Metropolitan Hilarion. The journalist, J.D. Bourchier, *The Balkan States - Their Attitude Towards the Macedonian Question*, New York, 1905, p. 52. Vlah texts and documents also met the same fate at the hands of the Greek Patriarchate clergy. The historian, I. Arginteanu, *Istoriija na Armn Makedoncite (Vlasite)*, [A History of the Macedonian Vlachs], 1998, pp. 172-173 [original title in Romanian - *Istoria Romanilor Macedoneni*, Bucharest, 1904].

<sup>22</sup> I. Ivanic, *Makedonija i Makedonci* [Macedonia and Macedonians], Novi Sad, 1908, p. 377.

<sup>23</sup> C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 251.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 251.

The historian Vakaloploulos also makes note of the 'oppressive nature' of heavy taxes imposed by the Patriarchate on the Christian population in order to obtain their church dues. K.A. Vakalopoulos, *Modern History of Macedonia 1830-1912*, Thessaloniki, 1988, p. 22.

developing into a royal tax gatherer and regarding its ecclesiastical functions as of secondary importance.<sup>25</sup>

Under Patriarchate jurisdiction, church services, particularly in the larger towns, were conducted in Greek, a foreign language imposed upon Macedonia. Greek priests and bishops aimed to consolidate Greek religious domination by establishing schools alongside churches. In addition, the young Greek bourgeoisie undertook to expand into Macedonia with the support of the Patriarchate, in the field of business.<sup>26</sup> As such, Greek propaganda was given an unobstructed monopoly in Macedonia with the support of the Ottoman authorities. So powerful was the Patriarchate through the centuries that it has been said that it operated as a pseudo-state within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>27</sup> Wielding immense power, the Patriarchate church dominated ecclesiastical and educational life in Macedonia, Bulgaria and Serbia, and assumed administrative control of Romania.<sup>28</sup> The object of the Patriarchate 'was to hellenise the Christian races of the Ottoman Empire, which meant that those unfortunate races had to submit to a double yoke – Turkish and Greek'.<sup>29</sup> The Porte bestowed a level of authority upon the Patriarchate to the extent that its jurisdiction included matters relating to marriage and succession, the collection of taxes and mediation of disputes. Even criminal matters were handled by the clergy, with Christian criminals being imprisoned.<sup>30</sup>

Greek political interests and territorial aspirations were represented in Macedonia through the domination of the Greek Patriarchate, which sought to

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<sup>25</sup> T. Comyn-Platt, op. cit. pp. 39-40.

<sup>26</sup> S. Pribitchevitch, op. cit. p. 108.

<sup>27</sup> A.N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 84. The Ottoman historian, K. Karpat, states that the Patriarchate, 'shielded by Ottoman might, enjoyed power and prestige to a degree unknown even during the heyday of Byzantium'. *Ottoman Population 1830-1914*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, p. 46.

<sup>28</sup> C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 250; K. Karpat, op. cit. p. 46.

<sup>29</sup> C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 250.

<sup>30</sup> R. Von Mach, *The Bulgarian Exarchate: Its History and the Extent of its Authority in Turkey*, London, 1907, p. 9; A.N. Karakasidou, op. cit. p. 84; and, T. Comyn-Platt, op. cit. p. 39.

modify Macedonian national development and to transform it to reflect a Greek character. The imposition of the Patriarchate and the appointment of Greek bishops was met with a strong wave of discontent in Macedonia from the 1850s onwards. Resentment by the Macedonian movement was also aimed at Greek traders and bankers who entered Macedonia under the authority of the Patriarchate and relied upon its support. Together with pro-Greek Vlachs, they assumed a commanding position in economic life in many parts of the country and enjoyed a special status under the privileges given to the Patriarchate by the Ottoman authorities. The Macedonian intelligentsia and the emerging bourgeoisie in the late nineteenth century struggled to reinstate the Macedonian Ohrid Archbishopric and to end the monopoly of Greek ecclesiastical domination in Macedonia.

## **Bulgarian Exarchate**

SEEKING TO PROTECT Russian interests in the Balkans, Count Ignatiev, the Russian ambassador to Turkey, lobbied the High Porte from 1864 onwards to improve relations with Bulgaria, with the aim of supporting the establishment of the Bulgarian church. Ignatiev instigated the formation of a number of Bulgarian-Greek commissions to review Bulgarian demands for a proposed separate church. Bulgarian Turkish relations dramatically improved in 1868 when the Bulgarian bourgeoisie declared its loyalty to the Ottomans during the Greek rebellion on Crete. Following several years of campaigning, with Russian diplomatic support, a *firman* was issued on 28 February 1870 proclaiming the establishment of the Bulgarian church that was known as the Exarchate.

Although 1870 is widely recognised as the year that the Exarchate was established, it did not actually come into existence until May 11, 1872, following vehement opposition from the Patriarchate, which protested against the name 'Bulgarian Exarchate' and advocated the name 'Exarchate of the Haemus' (or

Balkan).<sup>31</sup> The Exarchate reclaimed control of religious and educational institutions in Bulgaria, however its jurisdiction was extended to include non-Bulgarian territories, with the Exarchate taking over the Veles Eparchy in Macedonia and the Nish and Pirot Eparchies in Serbia. Furthermore, according to Article 10 of the Ottoman *firman*, any other Eparchy in Ottoman Turkey was free to come under the jurisdiction of the Exarchate if two-thirds of the population voted in favour of union. With this decree the base was laid for Greece and Bulgaria to struggle for the political and ideological contest over Macedonia.

In accordance with Article 10, voting was organised to take place at the Skopje and Ohrid dioceses. In spite of difficulties presented by the Greek clergy of the Patriarchate, notably that the Patriarchate declared all potential adherents to the Exarchate to be schismatic, the population of both dioceses voted overwhelmingly in favour of the Exarchate. The Exarchate was far preferable to remaining with the oppressive and exploitive Patriarchate whose official Greek language was incomprehensible to Macedonians. Macedonians favoured the Exarchate principally due to the similarity of the Bulgarian language to Macedonian. However, in doing so they were exposed to the influence of the Bulgarian government, 'which used the Exarchate to further its own political ambitions in Macedonia'.<sup>32</sup> Bulgarian chauvinists constructed an argument based upon the successes of the Exarchate, as confirmation of the 'Bulgarian character' of Macedonia. It is a misleading interpretation, as Eliot states: 'the Church of the Exarchate was really occupied in creating Bulgarians'.<sup>33</sup> The historian T.R. Georgevitch explained that official church documentation, such as birth, marriage and death certificates, all bore Bulgarian subscriptions and seals:

Persons who could not write were entered in the Osmanli papers (papers giving a person's name, surname, religion, nationality and occupation, and with which every

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<sup>31</sup> R. Von Mach, op. cit. p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> J. Shea, op. cit. p. 173.

<sup>33</sup> C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 319.

Turkish subject must be provided) as Bulgars. Thus Macedonia began gradually to be outwardly Bulgarian.<sup>34</sup>

Table 4.1: Religious and Educational Budget of the Bulgarian Exarchate in Macedonia, 1878–1896

Year	Leva
1878	30,000
1879	30,000
1880	31,000
1881/82	100,000
1882/1883	250,000
1883/1884	517,000
1884/1885	560,000
1885/1886	774,864
1890/1891	5,500,000
1891/1892	5,500,000
1892/1893	5,500,000
1894/1895	5,000,000
1895/1896	5,000,000

Source: A. Trajanovski, *Bugarskata Exarhija i Makedonskoto Nacionalno Osloboditelno Dvizhenje 1893–1908*, Skopje, 1982, p. 44.

Significant inroads were made by the Exarchate in a relatively short period of time. Its expansion was a serious threat to Patriarchate domination, and the Ottomans misjudged the consequences of Article 10, soon realising that it was not in their interests to allow the Exarchate to extend its jurisdiction throughout the country. Although initially pleased to encourage Bulgarian opposition to Greek hegemony, and to divide Macedonia's Christian subjects, the Ottomans did not intend on allowing the Exarchate to become too powerful an organisation.<sup>35</sup> In 1873, following Exarchate victories in the Skopje, Ohrid, Bitola and Kukush<sup>36</sup> sees, the Ottomans responded by suspending all further plebescites. The Exarchist victories of 1873 went unheeded by the authorities. *Berats* had not been granted for the

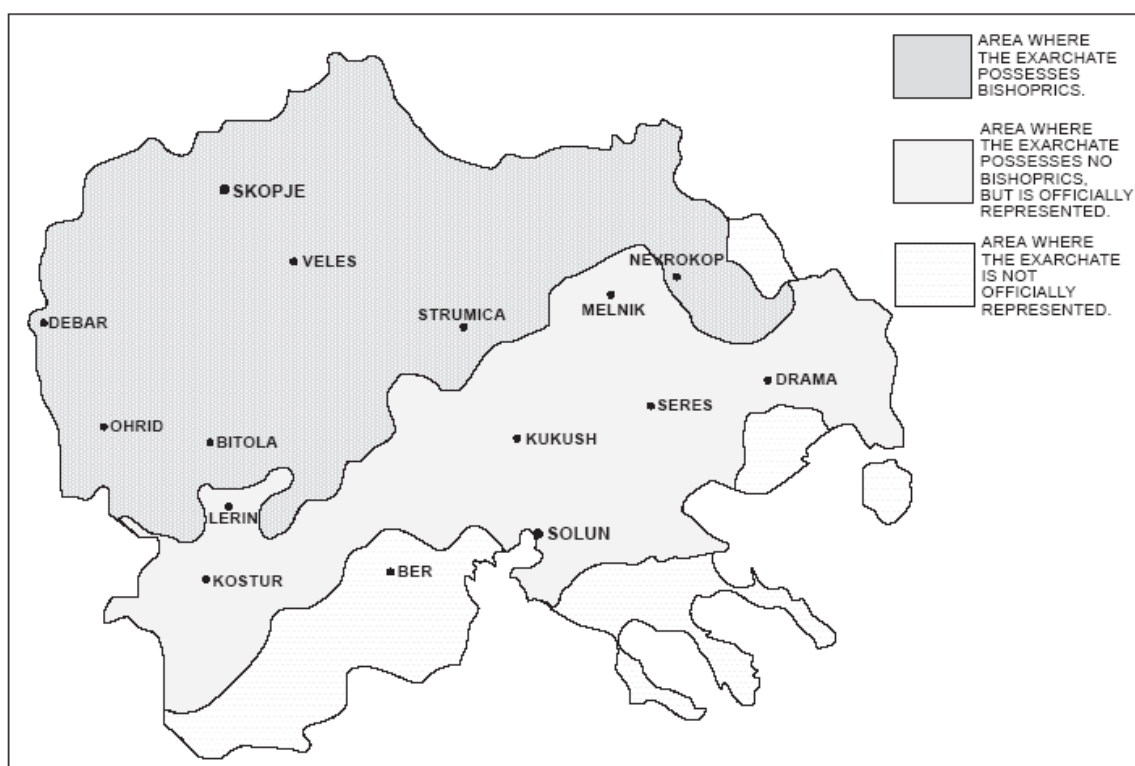
<sup>34</sup> T.R. Georgevitch, *Macedonia*, London, 1918, pp. 149–150.

<sup>35</sup> R.J. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878-1914*, New York, 1983, p. 135; and, C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 135.

<sup>36</sup> Kukush was renamed Kilis following Greek occupation of Southern Macedonia.

appointment of Bishops.<sup>37</sup> It was not until 1890 that the Porte issued *berats* for Skopje and Ohrid, allowing the bishops finally to proceed to their dioceses after thirteen years. Further *berats* were issued in 1894 in Veles and Nevrokop, and at the time of the Greek Turkish War in 1897 further dioceses were gained in Bitola, Debar and Strumica. But later the Ottomans prevented the Exarchate from spreading any further and no other bishoprics were gained, although the Exarchate did establish lower-ranked representatives in other dioceses.

Figure 4.1: Extent of Bulgarian Exarchate jurisdiction in Macedonia, 1907



<sup>37</sup> The situation remained stagnant until 1877 when the Russian Turkish War broke out. According to R. Von Mach, the Greeks and the Patriarchate took advantage of the circumstances and pointed at the Bulgarians as the 'disturbers of the peace'. R. Von Mach, 1907, op. cit. p. 19. The Ottomans suspended the Exarchist Bishop in Veles and the *berats* for the four bishoprics remained un-administered. The Union between the Principality of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia in 1885 did not help to improve Bulgarian Turkish relations, instead it brought about a reaction from Russia protesting against the expulsion of all Russian officers and agents in Bulgaria. Russia reacted through her consuls in Macedonia which switched their support from advocating that the Macedonians 'were in reality not Bulgarians but Serbians'. Ibid, p. 26.

## Serb religious propaganda

SERBIAN RELIGIOUS PROPAGANDA started to infiltrate Macedonia during the mid-1880s. In areas dominated by the Exarchate, particularly in the northern and central part of the Bitola vilayet, the Serbs sought to replace Bulgarian influence with their own. Owing to friendly relations between the Serbs and Greeks, in 1885 the Serbian government proposed to the Constantinople Patriarch, Joakim IV, that Greek metropolitans be replaced by Serbs in the towns of Skopje, Veles, Debar, Bitola and Ohrid.<sup>38</sup> Seeking agreement with the proposal, the Serbian government offered the Patriarchate one thousand Turkish lira annually for each position. Although the Patriarchate conditionally agreed to the proposal, the Serbian government could not agree to the conditions set.<sup>39</sup>

Disadvantaged by not having a recognised Serbian church in Ottoman Turkey, Serbs relied on political manoeuvring through their diplomatic consulates, agents and agitators. Although primarily focused upon establishing a religious footing in Macedonia through the Patriarchate, Serbs entertained ambitions of the creation of a recognised Serbian church in European Turkey. In August 1887 two Serbian agents, Dr Svetislav Pravica and Shpiro Koprivica, active in the Prilep region, formulated a ten-point plan for the advancement of Serbian national propaganda in Macedonia. Of particular interest are points one, three and seven. Point one recognised the dissatisfaction of the Macedonians under the Exarchate and recommended that they be supported in their efforts to emancipate themselves from Bulgarian influence. Point three provided for financial and material support for priests who declared their

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<sup>38</sup> The Serbs also proposed the same for Prizren, which was not in Macedonia, but in 'Old Serbia' or Kosovo.

<sup>39</sup> The key conditions set by the Patriarch Joakim for the Serbian candidates, involved: 1. That they be Turkish citizens; 2. That they complete theological education; 3. That they have served a term as monks or priests; 4. That they speak the Greek language; 5. That they be of good character; 6. That they have not previously have been compromised before the Turkish authorities; and, 7. That they be eligible for promotion as Bishops in the Patriarchate. S. Dimevski, *Istoria na Makedonskata Pravoslavna Crkva*, [History of the Macedonian Orthodox Church] Skopje, 1989, pp. 537–538.

readiness to leave the Exarchate and join the Serbian – Patriarchate party. Point seven called for Serbian teachers to enter Macedonia via Constantinople where they would receive their credentials via the Patriarchate church.<sup>40</sup>

Serb religious propaganda dramatically increased at the end of the nineteenth century. Advancing Greek Serbian relations saw the Patriarchate recommend that Greek metropolitans co-operate closely with Serbian consular authorities in Skopje and Solun. The relationship was further reinforced by agreement on their territorial aspirations in Macedonia, and the Patriarchate made a significant concession to the Serbian position through the introduction of the 'Slavonic' language in church services which were outside the Greek sphere of interest.<sup>41</sup>

Various political combinations were entertained between the Serbian and Greek governments in relation to religious jurisdiction in Macedonia. The friendly nature of their relationship was based on a common anti-Bulgarian position. This is clearly demonstrated through an agreement reached between Pezas, the Greek Consul at Bitola and Ristich, the Serbian Consul. The agreement stipulated that in the regions north of Prilep and Krushevo, the Serbian movement could act without hindrance, and the Serbs could rely on Greek support. On the other hand, south of Bitola, Serbian activities would be prohibited, but the Greek movement could rely on

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 543.

<sup>41</sup> K.A. Vakalopoulos, op. cit. p. 183. In 1899, the Greek government instigated a new phase of Greek Serbian relations when it drafted the following arrangement: 1. That the Greek sphere of influence would extend as far north in a line running from Nevrokop, through Melnik, Prilep and Krushevo, to Struga and for Serbian influence to stretch south to Radovich, Veles and Debar. 2. The Greek government undertook to influence the Patriarchate for Serbian Metropolitans to be appointed at Skopje, Veles and Debar, with the understanding that the Serbian government would close its consulates at Seres, Solun and Bitola. 3. Serb schools in the Greek sphere of influence, and Greek schools in the Serb sphere would no longer be subsidised by their respective governments, which would pledge to collaborate in every sector in the future. As a result of a combination of political circumstances, the Greek Serbian arrangement failed to be fully realised. Ibid, K.A. Vakalopoulos, p. 184. According to the historian, L.S. Stavrianos, several years earlier, in 1892, the Serbs and Greeks had tried to reach an agreement. "Their purpose was to combat Bulgarian propaganda and, in their words, to "propagate the idea that there exist in Macedonia only Serbs and Greeks". L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans 1815–1914*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1963, p. 101.

Serbian support. Finally, in the zone between Prilep, Krushevo and Bitola, ‘Greeks and Serbians would work together to subdue the Bulgarian movement’.<sup>42</sup>

The Greek government was not concerned with the actions of Serbian propaganda in Macedonia, as long as it remained in the northern part of the country outside the Greek sphere of influence. Equally, the Patriarchate was not affected that Serbs used the Patriarchate to agitate for the conversion of the inhabitants to Serbian nationality.<sup>43</sup> As the Ottomans previously permitted Bulgaria to establish and expand the Exarchate in Macedonia to compete with the Greek Patriarchate, so too were Serbian interests assisted by the Patriarchate in northern Macedonia to compete with the Exarchate. When the Serbs eventually succeeded in the appointment of their own Serbian bishop (Firmilijan) in Skopje (thanks to Russian aid), the Bulgarians, as well as the Greeks protested. Adherents to the Patriarchate in northern Macedonia were predominantly pro-Greek Vlachs and they came into conflict with the Serbian wing of the Patriarchate<sup>44</sup>: however, they presented a united front in opposition to the Exarchate. All this, of course, was pleasing from the Ottoman perspective, as no single foreign propaganda was permitted to dominate Macedonia on its own.

The most notable success enjoyed by the Serbian propaganda was at the end of the nineteenth century in the Skopje and Debar districts, and to a lesser extent in

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, pp. 184-185 Vakalopoulos outlined that according to the agreement reached between Pezas and Ristich, the Slepche and Zirze monasteries were ceded to the Serbs in the Pelagonia district in 1901, whilst, Serbian infiltration in the village of Rakovo in the Lerin district was halted, as well as the establishment of a Serbian school in Krushevo. Serb efforts to establish a Serbo-Greek alliance were continued, and, in 1891, the Serbian government sent its envoy Vladan Djordjevich to Athens. The proposal called for common action by the Serbian and Greek governments against the Exarchate and Bulgarian propaganda in Macedonia. M.B. Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia 1804–1918*, New York, 1976, p. 497.

<sup>43</sup> E. Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Thessaloniki, 1964, p. 29.

<sup>44</sup> The most notable conflict between the two Patriarchist groups occurred in Skopje for the ‘Sveti Spas’ church. The small colony of colonised Serbs, together with pro Serbian adherents, lobbied for the introduction of services in the Serb language. Resistance was met by the Vlachs. When the Metropolitan Metodi died, the Serbian government pushed for the appointment of a Serbian replacement. The Serbs were successful with the appointment of Firmilijan in 1897 (although he was not appointed until 1902). That date marks a downward slide in Greek religious propaganda in northern Macedonia. S. Dimevski, op. cit. p. 158. Regarding the small colony of Serbs that had migrated to Skopje in the 1890s, see section titled ‘Serbian Policies in Macedonia’, ibid.

the districts of Tetovo, Gostivar and Kumanovo.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless the Serbs were the least successful of the religious competitors in Macedonia and even in these districts where they did have limited influence, the Exarchate maintained its overall domination. In the dioceses of Debar and Skopje, which directly border onto Serbia proper and Old Serbia (or Kosovo), the Exarchate could claim a population of 228,462, compared to 72,036 Patriarchists.<sup>46</sup>

## Romanian activity

ROMANIAN ACTIVITY IN Macedonia was largely organised by Apostol Margarit (1832–1902) with the financial support of the Romanian government, and experienced its most notable successes in the educational sphere. The Romanian position aimed at detaching Vlachs from the Greek influence of the Patriarchate. As allegiance to the Patriarchate implied Greek nationality. The Patriarchate firmly resisted the potential loss of its core supporters. This was particularly the case in the cities where ‘the Greek Patriarchate element consisted almost entirely of Vlachs’.<sup>47</sup> The fundamental importance of Vlachs to the Greek cause in Macedonia brought an alarmed reaction from the Patriarchate. According to Brailsford: ‘it is only Vlachs who give Hellenism a foothold. Withdrawal from their Greek alliance, and Greece must disappear from Macedonia.’<sup>48</sup>

Vlah appeals in the 1890s to the Porte and the Patriarch for a Vlah metropolitan in Macedonia were unsuccessful. Instead, Vlah priests in the Patriarchate were won over to the Romanian cause by Margarit and his followers. However, as soon as they conducted services in the Vlah language they were

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<sup>45</sup> For a thoroughly Serbian view espousing a Serbian character of these regions see J. Trifunovski, *Makedonizirajne Juzhne Srbije* [Macedonianisation of Southern Serbia], Belgrade, 1995.

<sup>46</sup> R. Von Mach, op. cit. pp. 78–79. The statistical data are drawn from an internal Exarchate report that was never intended for external use or publication. Exarchate statistics are generally considered by ethnographers and statisticians at the time to have been most accurate. Various historians also support this view. It is interesting to note that historians from the Republic of Macedonia accept the data as legitimate.

<sup>47</sup> H. Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* London, 1995, p. 61.

<sup>48</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 188.

‘promptly excommunicated’.<sup>49</sup> The Patriarchate was forced to tolerate Vlah schools, but displayed no such tolerance for Vlah religious separation. Many Vlah priests who had left the Patriarchate to serve the Vlah community exclusively were forced to return to the Patriarchate as a result of pressure and threats. This occurred to the priests Zisi and Mihailo in Nizhopole, priest Naum in Trnovo and priest Naum in Bitola.<sup>50</sup> An independent Romanian church was never established in Macedonia, and Vlah bishops were not granted, because in no diocese did the Vlachs constitute a majority.<sup>51</sup> Even with the recognition of the Vlah millet (nationality) in Turkey in 1905 – a recognition obtained as a result of Romanian political lobbying in Constantinople<sup>52</sup> – only one Romanian Vlah church was established (outside Patriarchate jurisdiction), but as there were no Vlah Bishops it was never consecrated.<sup>53</sup> The Romanian government never seriously maintained any territorial ambitions in Macedonia. Its policy was aimed at creating leverage with the Bulgarians.

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<sup>49</sup> I. Arginteanu, op. cit. p. 191, and H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 188.

<sup>50</sup> K. Bitoski, *Dejnosta na Pelagonskata Mitropolija 1878–1912* [The Activities of the Pelagonia Metropolitan 1878–1912], Skopje, 1968, p. 142. Note that these data are taken from Greek Patriarchate documents.

<sup>51</sup> L. Villari, *Races, Religions and Propagandas*, New York, 1905, p. 155. Villari adds that Apostol Margarit considered converting the Macedonian Vlachs to Catholicism, on condition that the Pope would grant them their autocephalous church. Negotiations were entered into between Margarit and Pere Faveyral, a French missionary in Bitola. However, the movement met with little response and was abandoned. Ibid, pp. 155–156.

<sup>52</sup> H. Poulton, op. cit. p. 62.

<sup>53</sup> The church was constructed in Bitola, and known as ‘Sveti Elena and Konstantin’. Interview conducted 30 March 2000 in Bitola with the prominent retired medical doctor, the Vlah, Konstantin Nicha (born in Bitola 1919). The historian Bitoski adds that the church was not consecrated, even though considerable pressure was exerted by the Bitola *valia* upon the Greek Bishop to do so. K. Bitoski, op. cit. p. 143. The Vlah church in Bitola is rarely mentioned in the literature, but noted in a Serbian military report dated 20 August 1913 (during the Balkan Wars). G. Todorovski, editor, *Srpski Izvori za Istorijata na Makedonskiot Narod 1912–1914* [Serbian Sources on the History of the Macedonian People 1912–1914], Skopje 1979, p. 223.

Table 4.2: Growth of Financial Assistance to the Romanian Cause in Macedonia from the Romanian Government, 1870–1908

Year	Francs
1870	14,000
1879	40,000
1891/1892	250,000
1892/1893	450,000
1899/1900	724,643
1905/1906	821,973
1907/1908	1,336,840

Source: Rubin. A. *Les Roumains de Macedoine*, Bucarest, 1913, pp. 234–235, as cited in K. Bitoski, *Dejnosta na Pelagonskata Mitropolija 1878–1912*, Skopje, 1968, p. 144.

## Western church organisations in Macedonia

UNLIKE THE POLITICALLY-ORIENTED Balkan church organisations operating in Macedonia, the Catholic and Protestant missions were not politically motivated and did not have any territorial aspirations. Instead, the Catholic and Protestant missions were purely religious in nature. Early Catholic activity in Macedonia became visible following the Crimean War (1856) and emerged at the time when the Macedonian people intensified their struggle against the Constantinople Patriarchate. In 1879 a detailed plan for the development of Catholic activity was drawn up by the emissaries Paolo Purlang and Giovanni Battista Botca and was ‘founded on respect for the vernacular language and local customs’.<sup>54</sup> The establishment of missionary centres in Bitola and Solun supported Catholic infiltration into Macedonia and a foothold was gained in the central southern districts of Macedonia, in the Kukush, Doiran and Enidzhe Vardar regions.<sup>55</sup> At the height of

<sup>54</sup> M. Apostoloski, D. Zografski, A. Stojanovski and G. Todorovski, editors, *A History of the Macedonian People*, Skopje, 1979, p. 139.

<sup>55</sup> In 1859, Macedonians from Kukush, rejecting the oppression of the Greek Patriarchate, turned to the representatives of the Catholic church in Solun. They requested union with Rome and the termination of their links with the Patriarchate. The inhabitants of Kukush expressed their outrage at the Patriarchate and the activities of the clergy, ‘who expressed greater interest in gathering money than respecting the laws of the Holy scriptures’. In a letter to the Pope (dated 23 July 1859) the citizens of Kukush put forward the following conditions: 1. That the Roman Catholic Church not mix in the internal affairs of the Union; 2. That no

Catholic activity in Macedonia there were 3,950 Catholic households with a total of 20,000 members by 1886,<sup>56</sup> but by 1897 this number had reduced to 1,021 Catholic households as many transferred to the Exarchate.<sup>57</sup>

The other active non-Balkan Christian church was the Protestant mission, made up of American and British missionaries who first appeared in Macedonia during the 1850s. The Protestant mission was concentrated in the eastern Macedonian districts of Razlog, Bansko, Nevrokop and along the valleys of the Struma and Strumeshnitsa Rivers.<sup>58</sup> A Protestant campaign was also conducted in Bitola, yet despite the efforts of the missionaries 'which advocated a purely spiritual propaganda',<sup>59</sup> it met with limited success. According to Ivanic, in 1897 there were only 122 Protestant households in Macedonia.<sup>60</sup> However, the Macedonian

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modifications be made to the Orthodox teachings and rites; 3. To have a Bishop of Macedonian origin appointed; 4. That the Macedonian language be used in the church services and education be performed in the mother tongue; and, 5. The clergy to be chosen by the people. In a similar manner, the citizens of Enidje-Vardar, Doiran and Gevgelia also followed suit and went into union with Rome. S. Dimevski, op. cit. p. 372. The Catholic Church in Macedonia was solidly supported by the French Ambassador in Constantinople, Lavalette, and the church was considered pro-Ottoman, as it recognised Turkish rule in the Balkan Peninsula. The Russians reacted to the activity of the Catholic Church in Macedonia. Seeing themselves as the natural defenders of Orthodoxy, they feared their influence was being threatened by the Catholic Church. Brailsford stated that the Catholic Church 'frightened Russia into the creation of the Exarchate' and that when that did happen, Macedonians left the Catholic Church for the Exarchate. H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 73. S. Dimevski contends that as a protest to Bulgarianisation (through the Exarchate), in January 1874, six districts – Solun, Dojran, Voden, Kukush, Strumica and Maleshevo – seceded from the Exarchate and joined in union with the Papacy. Op. cit. 1989, p. 574.

Late nineteenth-century attempts to restore the Macedonian Orthodox church through the Catholic Church brought about a rare agreement between the Patriarchate and Exarchate churches, as both opposed such a move. Poplazarov, R. *Greckata politika спрема Makedonija vo vtorata polovina na XIX vek i pochetokot na XX vek* [Greek policy towards Macedonia in the second half of the XIX and beginning of the XX century], Skopje, 1973, p. 14.

<sup>56</sup> M. Apostoloski, D. Zografski, A. Stojanovski and G. Todorovski, editors, op. cit. p. 139.

<sup>57</sup> I. Ivanic, (1908) op. cit. p. 304. Furthermore, according to the newspaper *Makedonski Pregled* (Number 1, 1905, p.3) there were 2,432 Catholic Uniates in Macedonia, primarily in the Kukush, Gevgelija, Solun and Enidzhe Vardar regions, as cited in M. Pandevski, *Nacionalnoto Prashanje vo Makedonskoto Osloboditelno Dvizhenje 1893–1903* [The National Question in the Macedonian Liberation Movement 1893–1903], Skopje, 1974, p. 60.

<sup>58</sup> I. Ivanic, (1908), op. cit. p. 305. M. Apostoloski, D. Zografski, A. Stojanovski and G. Todorovski, editors, op. cit. p. 139.

<sup>59</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 74. Brailsford makes a number of interesting comments regarding the failure of Protestant missions in the Balkans.

<sup>60</sup> I. Ivanic, (1908), op. cit. pp. 306–307.

newspaper, *Makedonski Pregled* claimed 2,388 Protestants in Macedonia in 1905.<sup>61</sup> Overall, the Protestant mission did not achieve widespread success in Macedonia.

Table 4.3: Location of Protestant Churches in Macedonia and Date Established

Location of Protestant Church	Date established
Bitola	1874
Strumica	1890
Monospitovo (Strumica region)	1890
Solun	1894
Murtino (Strumica region)	1898
Radovish	1889
Koleshino (Strumica region)	1899
Drama	1900
Skopje	1901
Doiran	1901
Enidzhe Vardar	?

Source: *Sto Godini Evangelski Crkvi v Blgaria*, Sofia, 1958, pp. 229–238 (Author unknown).

## 4.4 Foreign armed bands (1903-1907)

THE ENTRY OF armed foreign bands into Macedonia, particularly after the suppression of the 1903 Ilinden Rebellion, was an extension of the religious struggle in its most extreme form. By itself, religious and educational propaganda failed to achieve desired outcomes. Paramilitary armed bands became a far more effective tool to mould villages into a particular nationality through forced church adherence. Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia each equipped and sent armed bands into Macedonia ‘to forward the rival interests of these land-lustful states’.<sup>62</sup> The systematic campaign conducted by the neighbouring states brought a new era of misery upon the Macedonian population. In pursuit of their aims, terrible acts of violence and murder were committed, entire villages were set ablaze and destroyed. Armed bands

<sup>61</sup> The newspaper *Makedonski Pregled* (Number 1, 1905, p. 3,) counted 2,388 Macedonian Protestants, primarily in the Razlog, Strumica and Seres regions, as quoted from M. Pandevski (1974), op. cit. p. 60.

<sup>62</sup> E.F. Knight, *The Awakening of Turkey*, London, 1909, p. 101.

represented the extremes of foreign propaganda in Macedonia, and funded by the state budgets of Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria,<sup>63</sup> they represented the government policy of their respective states of origin. These paramilitary units aimed at forcibly transforming Macedonians into 'Greeks', 'Serbs' and 'Bulgarians', destroying the Macedonian revolutionary movement, and creating a sense of instability and insecurity in order to prepare Macedonia for its partition. The influx of armed bands into Macedonia complicated an already difficult environment. A reign of terror fell upon Macedonia whereby law and order deteriorated to such a degree, that H.N. Brailsford commented in 1905 that 'Macedonia has passed during some eighteen months through a period of anarchy without parallel in its recent annals'.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, the contemporary commentator, Sir Edwin Pears, stated in 1911 that, according to the records of English and French consular reports, Macedonia was 'in a condition of anarchy which during the same period had no parallel in Europe'.<sup>65</sup>

There was a systematic rise in the number of murders committed by armed bands in the years preceding the 1903 rebellion. So, from 1 March 1903 to 28 February 1904, there were 350 murders, from 1 March 1904 to 28 February 1905 there were another 468 murders, and from 1 March 1905 to 14 December 1905 there were 685 more murders in Macedonia.<sup>66</sup> Austrian consular reports confirm that the greatest number of murders and terror inflicted upon the population was due to the

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<sup>63</sup> According to the historian R. Clogg, 'initially these rivalries were played out in ecclesiastical, educational and cultural propaganda. But at the turn of the century, this war of words gave way to armed struggle between guerilla bands supported and subsidised by the governments of the respective motherlands'. R. Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 70.

<sup>64</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 214.

<sup>65</sup> Sir E. Pears, *Turkey and Its People*, London, 1911, p. 233.

<sup>66</sup> From a report by Richard Openheimer, Austrian Civil Agent in Macedonia, dated 31 January 1906 (Number 15), from D. Zografski, editor, *Avstriski Dokumenti 1905–1906* [Austrian Documents 1905–1906] Vol I, Skopje, 1977, pp. 126–127; see also G. Todorovski, *Makedonskoto Prashanje i Reformite vo Makedonia* [The Macedonian Question and Reforms in Macedonia], Skopje, 1989, p. 204. The Bulgarian historian, Anastasoff, provides far higher figures. He claims that in the first eleven months of 1905, there were 1,010 murders of civilian villagers (Anastasoff refers to them as 'Bulgarians'): 330 due to Albanian bands or individuals, 195 to regular Ottoman troops, 451 to Greek bands or agents, and 34 to Serbian bands or agents. Sir Edward Grey, the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, declared in the House of Commons that from 1 January 1906 to 30 September 1906 there were 1,091 political murders in Macedonia. The information was supplied to Grey by consuls in Macedonia. The political murders were broken down into the following: 577 Christians were killed in the vilayet of Solun, 431 Christians were killed in the vilayet of Bitola, and 183 Christians were killed in the vilayet of Skopje. C. Anastasoff, *The Bulgarians*, New York, 1977, pp. 167–168.

activities of the Greek bands.<sup>67</sup> The rise in murders did not go unnoticed by those foreign governments that maintained diplomatic missions in Macedonia. The Russian government intervened and appealed to the Greek foreign ministry to stop armed bands from entering Macedonia. Great Britain and Austria-Hungary also protested, and the appeal was made to the three interested Balkan States (Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria).<sup>68</sup>

Foreign armed bands also engaged in battle against one another, particularly the Greek and Bulgarian bands. No such animosity existed between Greek and Serb bands, reflecting the political agreement between the two states.<sup>69</sup> The Macedonian revolutionary movement came under fierce pressure, as it was no longer engaged in battles solely against Ottoman forces and *bashibouzkus*,<sup>70</sup> but was to become simultaneously engaged in combat with Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian bands. Foreign bands focused upon forcing entire villages to adhere to their respective church organisations and generally avoided encounters with Ottoman troops. In fact, the Ottoman authorities tolerated foreign paramilitary bands in Macedonia, particularly Greek bands after 1903.<sup>71</sup>

## Greek bands

PARAMILITARY BANDS FROM all the neighbouring Balkan States were guilty of inflicting violent cruelty upon the Macedonian civilian population, but it was the actions of the Greek bands that left the deepest scars. The first armed Greek bands

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<sup>67</sup> Dr Raici from the Austro-Hungarian Consulate in Bitola refers to the Greek activities in Macedonia as 'Greek nationalistic terrorism'. D. Zografski, editor, op. cit. pp. 166–168.

<sup>68</sup> G. Todorovski (1989), op. cit. p. 206.

<sup>69</sup> D. Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897–1913*, Thessaloniki, 1966, p. 312. The British Consul General in Solun, provided figures of political crimes committed in 1907. These figures testify to the relationship between the Serbs and Greeks, as there were no murders between the two groups. According to R. Poplazarov, op. cit. p. 153, clear demarcation lines were agreed upon, separating the zones of activity for Serb and Greek bands in the Bitola kaza and the Skopje sandjak.

<sup>70</sup> *Bashibouzkus* were armed Muslim irregular fighters that typically engaged in undisciplined banditry.

<sup>71</sup> R. Poplazarov, op. cit. p. 157.

to enter Macedonia belonged to the ‘Ethniki Hetairia’ (The National Society) and crossed into Macedonia in 1896 under the leadership of Greek army officers.<sup>72</sup> According to the French Vice Consul in Bitola, Greek bands were operating in Macedonia ‘to imitate the example of the Bulgarian revolutionaries with the intention of establishing the principles of their pretensions to Macedonia’.<sup>73</sup> Largely active in the southern regions of Macedonia and supported by the Greek Consuls, the armed bands of the National Society entered Macedonia to prove that the ‘Greeks too had interests in Macedonia, and not just Bulgarians’. Fearing that Hellenism was in danger of losing Macedonia to the Bulgarians, armed Greek bands terrorised Macedonian Exarchate villages to accept the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate. The National Society was active in the years up to the 1897 Greek-Turkish War, but was to be discredited and dissolved later that year due to ‘the plundering and rape committed by the bands’.<sup>74</sup>

Although Greek bands recommenced incursions into Macedonia during 1903, the year of the Ilinden Rebellion, it was in the very next year that a ‘Macedonian Committee’ was formed in Athens under Dimitrios Kalapothakis, publisher of the newspaper *Ethnos*. The Committee recognised that the old methods of educational and religious propaganda were not sufficiently effective to advance the Greek cause in Macedonia. In support of this view were the Greek prelates in Bitola, Kostur, Seres, Nevrokop and elsewhere who ‘flooded the Patriarchate at Constantinople with

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<sup>72</sup> The ‘Ethnike Hetairia’ was founded in Athens in November 1894. It was an irredentist organisation with over three-quarters of its support derived from Greek army officers. It was an exclusively Greek organisation whose basic aims were ‘undeniably bound up with the Greek territorial claims in Macedonia’. K.A. Vakalopoulos, op. cit. p. 201. Furthermore, a 1896 British Consular report by Charles Blunt also confirms that Greek bands crossing into Macedonia were ‘under the leadership of Greek army officers’. Letter by Consul General Charles Blunt dated 13 September 1896, FO 294 / 22.

<sup>73</sup> K. Bitoski, *The Attitude of the Kingdom of Greece Toward Macedonia 1893–1903*, Skopje, 1982, p. 147.

That Greek bands entered Macedonia for the purpose of ‘establishing the principles of their pretensions’ is clear, as Vakalopoulos asserts, ‘in some cases [the bands] reached as far into the interior as Demir Kapija – this reflected the maximum extent of Greek territorial aspirations in Macedonia at that time’. K.A. Vakalopoulos, op. cit. p. 202.

<sup>74</sup> G.M. Terry, *The Origins and Development of the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement with Particular Reference to the Tayna Makedonsko-Odrinska Revolucionerna Organizatsiya from its Conception in 1893 to the Ilinden Uprising of 1903*, Unpublished MA Thesis, University of Nottingham, 1974, p. 111.

reports of the weak position of Hellenism in Macedonia ... Greek consuls in Macedonian cities sent similar reports to the Government at Athens.<sup>75</sup> The role of the committee was to organise and direct the Greek struggle in Macedonia. With the financial support of the Greek government it organised the formation of armed bands known as *andartes*, whose purpose was to enter Macedonia to advance the Greek cause. The headquarters of the armed struggle in Macedonia was the Greek Consulate in Solun where a new Consul General, Lambros Koromilas, had been installed. Shortly after his arrival in Macedonia in May 1904 Koromilas compiled a report to the Greek government, 'in which he stressed the need for a well organised armed defense of Hellenism in Macedonia and for an intensive propaganda designed to promote the Greek national spirit'.<sup>76</sup> Greek Patriarchate bishops worked with fanatical activity and were 'largely responsible for the atrocities committed by the Greek bands, and went so far as to draw up proscription lists of Bulgarian schismatics who had to be assassinated'.<sup>77</sup>

From Autumn 1904, Greek bands began to conduct systematic incursions into Macedonia. These bands, largely consisting of men recruited from Crete, were formed and armed in Greece and led by officers from the Greek army. The bands would threaten non-Patriarchate villages and pressure them to declare themselves as Greeks and accept Patriarchate jurisdiction. Threatening letters were sent to villages to encourage their return to the Patriarchate fold. In one such letter from 1908 sent to the village of Arapli (Solun region), the 'Greek Macedonian Defense' states:

You must understand that your only option for survival is for you to become Greeks ... if in your village there are people who are not convinced that you are from a

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<sup>75</sup> E. Kofos, op. cit. p. 34. Commenting on the weak position of the Greek Patriarchate in the Bitola eparchy, the Greek Metropolitan of Bitola stated, 'we must recognise that the field upon which we stand is not as certain as we may think. From the outside today we may appear stable, however in reality our position appears as the graves that Jesus Christ commented on: on the outside they are beautifully adorned, whilst inside are full of bones and uncleanness'. K. Bitoski, citing Greek Patriarchate documents, op. cit. p. 111. Since the Greek government took control over southern Macedonia, the town of Seres is also known as Serrai.

<sup>76</sup> D. Dakin, op. cit. p. 118.

<sup>77</sup> E.F. Knight, op. cit. p. 102. High ranking Greek Patriarchate clerics took a leading role in the affairs of Greek armed bands. The infamous Bishop of Kostur, Germanos Karavangelis, actually patronised the Greek armed struggle and actively assisted it. R. Clogg, op. cit. pp. 74–75.

Greek background, then we will teach you ... We will burn you and your children, even your pet cats. I will not leave one of you alive ... We wait no longer.<sup>78</sup>

In a similar letter to the village Nihor (Ber region), dated 19 April 1908:

I wrote to you previously and have waited until today that you declare yourselves as Greeks. Expecting that you would do so, I have left your village unpunished. But understand well, if within ten days you do not become Greek Orthodox, beware; as what will happen to you has not before occurred anywhere. Bayonets will enter all of you, you will all perish along with your families. If within ten days you do not all become Greeks, do not expect to survive ... we will come one night and burn you like mice; we know each of you individually; your only escape will be to flee to Bulgaria.<sup>79</sup>

Greek bands developed a notorious and feared reputation as the most brutal in the Bitola region, and especially in the Mariovo district.<sup>80</sup> According to Stojche Petkovski, who was born in Makovo village in 1920, and has never left, women and children were not exempt from the brutality of roaming Greek bands:

Nikola Damjanovski's mother was murdered because her family were with the Exarchate party and another young mother was murdered in the village - when her family found her, her baby was still feeding from her breast. In the neighbouring village of Rapesht three young children aged between ten to fifteen years of age were buried alive, the Greek *cheti* were sadistic in these parts - everyone knows stories about their murdering. Most villages in this district were with the Patriarchate out of fear.<sup>81</sup>

Even the church building was not immune from attack. In Makovo the church was burnt down because it was under Exarchate domination.<sup>82</sup> Born in the village of Makovo in 1913, Petko Atanasovski added that Greek bands often came to the village 'to check whether Bulgarian bands had visited' and, in order to demonstrate

<sup>78</sup> Letter dated 20 March 1908. K. Bitoski, op. cit. pp. 242–244. The Macedonian village Arapli was renamed by the Greek authorities as Sindos in the 1920s.

<sup>79</sup> Letter by Captain Joannis Ravnalis. K. Bitoski, *ibid*, pp. 244–245. The new Greek name for Nihor appears to be Nihoruda, whilst Ber has been renamed Veria by the Greek authorities. Trajan Micevski of Novaci was aware that a Greek band had threatened and pressured the Exarchate village of Novaci to return to the Patriarchate fold. Trajan Micevski (born 1930 Novaci, Bitola region), interview conducted in Novaci on 22 March 2000.

<sup>80</sup> Respondents in the Bitola region were generally aware that Greek foreign bands were most active in the region, compared to Bulgarian and Serb bands. Those interviewed were also aware of Macedonian revolutionaries actively operating in the region and the majority of those interviewed knew of at least one individual fighting in the ranks of the IMRO, either coming from their village or from a neighbouring village.

<sup>81</sup> Stojche Petkovski (born 1920 Makovo, Bitola region), interview conducted in Makovo on 18 March 2000.

<sup>82</sup> Stojche Petkovski interview, *ibid*.

their fearlessness, they set fire to a Turkish tower in the village.<sup>83</sup> In the nearby Mariovo village of Beshica during 1907–08, a total of eighteen people ranging from 17 to 65 years of age, including a 50-year-old woman Mitra Spasova, were murdered by Greek bands.<sup>84</sup>

The suffering experienced in the Mariovo district at the hands of Greek armed bands was expressed through traditional folk songs calling for the revered regional IMRO leader Giorgi Sugarev and his detachment to rescue the people from their terror:

*Zaplakalo e Mariovo  
Za toj mi Giorgi Sugarev:  
Kade si strashen voivodo,  
Od Grci da ne kurtulish!*

Entire Mariovo cried  
For Giorgi Sugarev:  
Where are you fearsome voivoda  
To rescue us from the Greeks!

Another brutal example of violent terror occurred in the Lerin region. The mountainous Exarchate village of Rakovo had approximately 7–8 men kidnapped by a Greek band and taken up into the mountain where they were decapitated and their heads delivered to the village as a warning to others to renounce the Exarchate church. From that moment onwards the village adhered to the Patriarchate.<sup>85</sup>

Finally, there is the story of Kochishta. Kochishta was a small village of 15–16 homes in the Bitola region, located along the hillside approaching the upper villages. Kochishta was not considered an upper village, even though it was above the Pelagonia plain and was not a *chiflika* village. According to Stojan Vasilevski, who was born in Kukurechani but whose heritage is from Kochishta, the village church Sveti

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<sup>83</sup> Petko Atanasovski (born 1913 Makovo, Bitola region), interview conducted in Makovo on 14 March 2000. According to interview with Konstantin Nicha (*ibid*), Greek bands also entered Vlah villages to intimidate pro-Romanian villagers into remaining with the Patriarchate. In retaliation for the murder of Vlachs by Greek bands, Romania expelled a number of Greek subjects from the country. A diplomatic conflict followed which saw peaceful relations between Greece and Romania broken off in October 1905. H.N. Brailsford, *op. cit.* p. 218.

<sup>84</sup> During the same period in the neighbouring village of Manastir there were three murders, a 27 year-old male and a 45-year-old father were murdered, together with his 23-year-old son. Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0007.0062/0189-0190, dated 4 November 1909. Regarding Greek armed terror in Mariovo, see R. Poplazarov, *op. cit.* pp. 152–160.

<sup>85</sup> Kocho Duakis (born 1934 Petoraci, Lerin region) interview conducted on 20 January 2001 in Melbourne. Following the division of Macedonia Rakovo was renamed as Krateron by the Greek authorities.

Atanas was 'neither with the Exarchate or the Patriarchate parties, there was only a Macedonian party in the village'.<sup>86</sup> One particular night in 1907 a Greek band attacked the village. Two villagers (Ilo Trajkovski and Krste) secretly owned rifles and they engaged the Greek band long enough to allow the villagers to escape into the mountains. The people returned to their village the following morning to find that it had been largely destroyed by fire, however the church was left untouched. The village was deserted after this incident and the people moved into neighbouring villages.<sup>87</sup>

## Bulgarian bands

BULGARIAN BANDS ALSO operated in Macedonia and were particularly active during the years 1904–1905. As with the Serb and Greek bands, they also sought to win over villages to the Exarchate by forceful means. There was, however, another aspect to the presence of Bulgarian bands in Macedonia, which involved 'assuming control of the organisation and to subsume it to the requirements of the Bulgarian state'.<sup>88</sup> The Bulgarian bands did not only single out Patriarchate villages in order to

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<sup>86</sup> Stojan Vasilevski (born 1937 in Kukurechani, Bitola region), interview conducted on 4 March 2002 in Melbourne. Stojan's father Riste was born in Kochishta in 1904. Stojan recalled hearing stories about the village from his grandfather Ilo (Stojan's father's uncle).

<sup>87</sup> Stojan Vasilevski interview, *ibid.* Following the devastation of Kochishta the bulk of the villagers settled into the nearby *chiflik* village of Kukurechani after agreeing to do so through the two village *begs* (the two *begs* were related, otherwise there were four *chiflik*-owning *begs* in the village). Each *beg* took half of the new village inhabitants as workers on their respective *chiflik* land. Of the remaining Kochishta villagers - two families resettled in Krklino village, one family in Dragozhani, one family in Sekirani and one family moved to Bitola. Stojan's family resettled in Kukurechani. Stojan Vasilevski described the *beg* that his family worked for as 'not creating any problems for us'. The *beg* resided in Bitola and only came to the village at harvest time, when he would stay for a few days in his *kula* (there were four *kuli* in the village, one belonging to each of the four *begs*). He travelled to the village with a horse-driven cart, the driver would return to Bitola. The *beg* also owned *chiflik* land in the nearby village of Trn. He had had two daughters and one son (Husein). They all returned to Turkey several months before the outbreak of the First Balkan War in 1912 after selling off the *chiflik* land. Although there were no *pechalbari* in Stojan's family (Kochishta was not a *pechalbarstvo* village), they did buy land from the *beg*, with money they had saved from selling sheep and goats in the Bitola marketplace (from the period when they lived in Kochishta).

A small portion of land in Kukurechani was made up of *rayatsko* land and belonged to a handful of families. Stojan's traditional family name (*soi*) was Trajkovci, however, after moving to Kukurechani, it became Kochishti after their original village.

<sup>88</sup> M. Apostoloski, D. Zografski, A. Stojanovski and G. Todorovski, editors, *op. cit.* p. 181, and I. Mihailov, *Macedonia A Switzerland of the Balkans*, St Louis, 1950, p. 70. In an open letter by the Regional Committee of the Seres Revolutionary region dated December 1907, outlining the policy of Bulgaria in relation to the Revolutionary Movement, Bulgaria was accused of bringing armed foreign national propaganda into Macedonia

bring about an allegiance to the Exarchate, but they also attacked villages which were loyal to the IMRO, regardless whether they were under Exarchate or Patriarchate jurisdiction. They singled out IMRO members in the villages using torture and murder, and even against teachers and priests who worked with the organisation.<sup>89</sup> The attempted infiltration of the IMRO by the Bulgarian state dated to the pre-Ilinden period, and intensified after the Ilinden Rebellion.

Bands entering Macedonia from Bulgaria were known as Supremists and were supported by the Bulgarian military. Often led by Bulgarian army officers and equipped with the latest standard-issue Bulgarian military rifles,<sup>90</sup> Bulgarian bands did not engage in indiscriminate murder of civilians as did Greek bands.<sup>91</sup> Interviews conducted in the Bitola region did not reveal stories of multiple killings in a single village as perpetrated by Greek bands. Ljuba Stankovska (born in Gorno Aglarci) was aware that a Bulgarian band set fire to Patriarchist homes in Bilyanik, as her grandfather was the band's guide.<sup>92</sup> Giorgi Dimovski Colev, historian and respondent, was aware that Bulgarian bands were active in the Bitola region, and

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and turning it into an arena of incessant destruction. 'In order to diminish the significance of the organisation and deflect it from the road of its natural development, Bulgaria uses all means to create discord among the activists of the Internal Organisation, aiming in this way to turn it into an instrument... [Bulgaria] has the need of acquisition of new territories for political and economic exploitation, so it uses all kinds of methods and means to infiltrate the organisation and direct it from within in conformity with its own interests'. H. Andonov-Poljanski, editor (1985), op. cit. p. 539.

<sup>89</sup> See I. Katardzhiev, *Borba do Pobeda* Vol I, Skopje, 1983, pp. 664-670.

<sup>90</sup> Each rifle also had the Bulgarian Kingdoms coat of arms inscribed upon it. From a telegram dated 22 March 1905 from Heindrich Miller (Austrian civilian agent) in Solun to the Austrian Foreign Minister. D. Zografski, editor, op. cit. p. 35.

<sup>91</sup> The fate of the village Zagorichani in the Kostur district is well known and particularly tragic. On 25 March 1905 Zagorichani was surrounded and attacked at dawn by an armed band of 300 men under the command of Vardas. Old and young alike were massacred and the village was set ablaze. The European press reported the event and it was made public that the notorious Greek Metropolitan of Kostur, Germanos Karavangelis instigated the massacre. Karavangelis hailed the massacre as a great victory. The attack upon Zagorichani was committed with the complicity of the Ottoman authorities. Other Greek terrorist bands committed despicable atrocities in the southern and central regions of Macedonia in 1905-1906. Most were veterans from the Cretan campaign or volunteers from Athens, and worked closely with the Greek consulates and the Patriarchate church. Another notorious bandit was Pavlos Melas who was known to subject innocent civilians to horrendous acts of violence. Melas was killed in Macedonia in a rare Greek skirmish with the Ottoman Turks.

<sup>92</sup> Luba Stankovska (born 1923 in Gorno Aglarci, Bitola region), interview conducted on 15 March 2000 in Dedebalci.

knew of the *cheta* leader Toma Davidov operating in the area.<sup>93</sup> Nikola Giorgievski from Gorno Aglarci recalled that a Bulgarian band contacted the village and instructed the villagers, 'Do not declare yourselves as Macedonians, you are all Bulgarians'. Nikola stated that people followed the advice of the bands – 'What could they do? They feared them, and feared losing their lives.'<sup>94</sup>

## Serbian bands

SERBIAN BANDS APPEARED in Macedonia in the beginning of 1904, under the direct control of the Serbian government and military circles. Serbian paramilitaries were sponsored by the government and 'after 1903 Serbian activity in Macedonia went beyond the educational and religious sphere into political action and the direct financial aid of guerilla bands'.<sup>95</sup> The following year, in 1905, Serbian armed action in Macedonia intensified and the systematic dispatching of bands was placed under the authority of the 'Serbian Defense Chief Committee' (*Srpska Odbrana Glavni Odbor*) in Belgrade. A strategically placed committee was also situated in Southern Serbia at Vranje near the Macedonia border.<sup>96</sup>

In support of Serbian policy in Macedonia, in 1905 there were eleven bands of more than a hundred men active in Macedonian territory. Serbian bands were active along the border regions,<sup>97</sup> particularly in the Kumanovo and Kriva Palanka areas, where the Serb campaign was directed at Macedonian Exarchate villages. Similar to

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<sup>93</sup> Giorgi Dimovski-Colev, historian and lifelong resident of Bitola (born 1929, Bitola), interviewed on 13 March 2000 in Bitola.

<sup>94</sup> Nikola Giorgievski (born 1927 in Gorno Aglarci Bitola region), interview conducted on 17 March 2000 in Gorno Aglarci. Nikola Giorgievski, further added that later during the Balkan Wars when Serbian soldiers entered the village and asked the inhabitants what their nationality was, they replied 'Bulgarians' – 'However they soon were forced to declare themselves as Serbs!'

<sup>95</sup> B. Petrovich, op. cit. p. 546.

<sup>96</sup> S. Pribitchevich, op. cit. p. 134.

<sup>97</sup> Encounters between the IMRO and the Serbian bands largely occurred in the northern border region between Macedonia and Serbia, particularly in the Kumanovo district during 1904. The historian, G. Todorovski (1989), op. cit., examines the conflict in the northern border regions through British diplomatic documents.

the Greek bands, the Serbs attempted to 'encourage' villages to renounce the Exarchate. The historian Dakin claims that by April 1905 'they had persuaded twenty-four villages to petition for Patriarchistic registration'.<sup>98</sup> Systematically penetrating from the north towards central Macedonia, 'the principal goal was to secure by force of arms Serbian predominance in those parts of Macedonia on which she had designs and which would provide her with an outlet to the Aegean'.<sup>99</sup> Serb bands established control in the northern districts of Macedonia, mainly in the villages north of Kriva Palanka, Kumanovo and Kratovo.<sup>100</sup> Villages were forced to adopt the Patriarchate church and the Serbian party, and during a single week in early 1905 twenty villages were forced to transfer jurisdiction and accept the Serb party. Serb bands operated under the patronage of the Serb Consul in Skopje, whilst the Ottoman authorities quietly tolerated their activities in the villages.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> D. Dakin, op. cit. p. 241. Dakin claims that the Serbian bands were received so well that 'on the whole they adopted gentle methods, avoiding force, paying for their food and distributing arms so that the villages could have their own defences'. (Ibid, p. 142). Research conducted by the author in Northern Macedonia during 1991 indicated that Serbian armed activities were of a violent nature in the Kumanovo, Kriva Palanka and Kochani regions and Serbian brutality continued in these areas well into the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century. Ivan Mihailov, a Macedonian revolutionary of the late Ottoman era, stated that Serbian armed bands that appeared in Macedonian villages near the Serbian frontier were made up of ordinary agents of the Serbian Ministry of War and the Interior. 'The Serbian bands had to rely exclusively upon bayonets and money in order to assure for themselves shelter within the poor border villages.' I. Mihailov, *Macedonia: A Switzerland of the Balkans*, St Louis, 1950, p. 69. The British diplomat, Sir Robert Graves commenting on Serbian armed action in northern Macedonia, stated that 'no great success attended this movement'. Regarding the incorporation of the north central part of Macedonia into the Yugoslav Kingdom after the Balkan Wars, Graves added that this 'was due, not to a propaganda which never had any hold on the people, but to the good fortune of the Serbs in finding themselves on the winning side at the end of the Great War'. R. Graves, *Storm Centres of the Near East: Personal Memoirs 1879-1929*, London, 1933, p. 224.

<sup>99</sup> M. Apostoloski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski and G. Todorovski, editors (1979), op. cit. p. 182.

<sup>100</sup> S. Dimevski (1989), op. cit. p. 721.

<sup>101</sup> From a Consular Report by the Austrian consul (Para) in Skopje to the Austrian Foreign Minister, dated 24 March 1905. D. Zografski, editor, op. cit. pp. 35-36. In an earlier report, to the Foreign Minister, dated 11 January 1905, similar details are provided regarding the activities of Serb bands in Northern Macedonia. The report outlines that the Serbs were forcing villages into the Patriarchate; that they forced villagers to declare themselves as Serbs; that they were attempting to Serbianise villages; and, that the bands operated under the patronage of the Serb Consul in Skopje. Ibid, pp. 9-13.

## 4.5 Ottoman policy

THE RULING OTTOMAN Turks were renowned for playing the Balkan States and their church organisations against one another. Although both the Patriarchate and Exarchate enjoyed favour with the Ottoman rulers during certain periods, it was the Patriarchate that maintained long-standing ties with the Ottoman Turks and the relationship especially flourished after the 1903 Ilinden Rebellion. Of particular significance was the 1904 report by Hilmi Pasha, Inspector General of the Roumelian vilayets, to the Sublime Port, recommending measures to prevent Patriarchists from joining the Exarchate:

Petitions are constantly arriving with requests to joining the Exarchate, but since force was used, and owing to other considerations of state, it is not in the interests of the state to increase the number of Bulgarians. For this reason, such requests are not complied with, and, at the same time, confidential advice is given to the Greek metropolitans as to how they should proceed in such cases ... To prevent the Patriarchists from going over to the Exarchate, the churches and the schools in such villages should not be given to the Bulgarians and they should not even be allowed to go to church.<sup>102</sup>

It is widely accepted that after 1903 the Ottoman authorities worked in co-operation with the Greek cause in Macedonia.<sup>103</sup>

By supporting one church organisation against another, above all else, the ruling Ottoman Turks sought to protect their own interests in Macedonia without allowing any of the Balkan churches obtain too powerful a position. Seeking to control the outward appearance of the Macedonian population, the authorities exerted the power to influence the extent of religious jurisdiction maintained by the neighbouring Balkan States of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia. That the Ottoman administration was a factor in the approval of the transferring of religious jurisdiction of village churches is apparent and appears to have been a long-standing practice.

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<sup>102</sup> V. Bozhinov and L. Panayotov, editors, *Macedonia, Documents and Material*, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, 1978, pp. 545-546.

<sup>103</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, the Bulgarians temporarily gained favour with the Ottomans due to the Greek Turkish War in 1897, otherwise it was the Greeks who enjoyed a privileged status under the Ottoman Turks.

Requests by villages to change from one church to another appear to have been common, and usually directed to the Bitola valia or in some instances directly to Constantinople. For instance, in 1898, the villagers of Meglenci sent a letter to the Bitola valia declaring themselves as Exarchists and requesting the valia to prevent the Patriarchate from taking over the village.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, in 1911, the villages of Ivanec, Oleveni and Metimir sent a joint petition to the Ottoman authorities in Constantinople declaring that they reject the Patriarchate and seek to come under Exarchate jurisdiction.<sup>105</sup>

Although the Patriarchate enjoyed the support of the Ottoman authorities, by all accounts the general trend was away from the Patriarchate and towards the Exarchate.<sup>106</sup> In 1904 in the Bitola eparchy, 26 villages transferred to the Exarchate, in the Kostur eparchy 39 villages, the Lerin eparchy 24 villages, and 17 villages in the Ohrid/Prespa eparchy.<sup>107</sup> However, Ottoman support for the Patriarchate also saw Exarchate churches and schools forcibly closed in many villages and towns and handed to the Patriarchate.<sup>108</sup> In 1906, Exarchate churches and schools were closed in 130 villages, some for months, others for years.<sup>109</sup> Applying for the restoration of a destroyed Exarchate church could be impeded for years.

Patriarchate villages wishing to transfer to the Exarchate were presented with obstacles preventing this from occurring. When a village did transfer from the Patriarchate to the Exarchate, and there was only one church in the village, the

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<sup>104</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate Document, number 01.0491.0001.0101 / 0319-0319, dated 17 October 1898.

<sup>105</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate Document, number 01.0491.0007.0140 / 0643-0647, dated 1 January 1911.

<sup>106</sup> C. Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*, London, 1965 (1900), p. 272.

<sup>107</sup> Consular report from the Austrian General-consul (Oscar Prohaska) in Bitola to the Austrian Foreign Minister, dated February 14, 1905. D. Zografski, editor, op. cit. pp. 19-24. The report also indicates that a number of villages (no number specified) were pressured to transfer their allegiance as a result of intimidation from Bulgarian bands.

<sup>108</sup> B. Tatarcheff, *Turkish Misrule in Macedonia*, New York, 1905, p. 172.

<sup>109</sup> R. Von Mach, op. cit. p. 93. Citing a 1905 French diplomatic source, Exarchate churches and schools were closed in 63 villages in the vilayet of Solun, 61 in the Bitola vilayet and 6 in the Skopje vilayet. Many churches did not reopen for several years. The villagers of Papradishte sent a letter to the Bitola valia in 1911 appealing that church services be permitted to recommence. The church was closed down by the Ottoman authorities. Bulgarian Exarchate, document number 01.0491.0007.0141/0648-0648, dated 1 January 1911.

authorities gave control of the church back to the Patriarchate, effectively leaving the village without the use of the church. In other villages where there was only one church and the majority of the village transferred its allegiance to the Exarchate, leaving a minority with the Patriarchate, the Ottoman authorities took the step of granting both parties use of the same church. There is no evidence that the same was true when the Exarchate party found itself in the minority of a particular village. Every attempt was made to thwart the progress of the Exarchate. As the German contemporary commentator, Von Mach remarked, 'all the disadvantage is on the side of the Christian who shows signs of leaning to the Exarchate, all the advantage is on the side of the Patriarchists'.<sup>110</sup> Having travelled extensively through Serbia, Macedonia, Albania and Bulgaria, the Englishman John Fraser commented on Ottoman favouritism at the beginning of the twentieth century, stating that 'a change in religion is the only means of securing comparative immunity from the Turks oppression - because the Turk is, for the time being, favourable to the Greeks'.<sup>111</sup>

The Ottoman position regarding the construction of new churches and monasteries appears at times to have been based on an anti-Christian attitude as well as politically motivated. Prior to the religious competition emerging between the Bulgarian Exarchate and Greek Patriarchate, Priest Peco from Berovo obtained approval from the authorities for the construction of a monastery in 1818 subject to certain conditions. It was to be built within a period of forty days, its height was not to be above the level of the road leading to the springs of the Bregalnica River,<sup>112</sup> and the priest was to give his youngest daughter to the harem. Conditions relating to the

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<sup>110</sup> R. Von Mach, *op. cit.* pp. 88–89.

<sup>111</sup> J.F. Fraser, *op. cit.* p. 208.

<sup>112</sup> It was common during the Ottoman period for churches to be built below ground level. The Ottomans did not favour churches being built on higher ground than mosques. It made churches less prominent, they were less likely to detract from local mosques, and generally the structural requirements appears to have been intended to undermine the Christian faith.

construction were met but the priest failed to give his daughter to the harem and was duly imprisoned.<sup>113</sup>

Similarly, before the onset of the Exarchate-Patriarchate rivalry, obstacles were placed before the villagers of Gradeshnica (Bitola region) by the regional authorities over the construction of a village church.<sup>114</sup> Having agreed to construct a church the villagers sought approval from the *muftiya* (Ottoman official) in Bitola. Permission was given for the church to be constructed on the condition that it lay two metres below ground level. In addition the *muftiya* stated that the church roof was to be completed in a period of two hours, otherwise the building could not gain approval to function as a church. When construction of the roof took pace the *muftiya* sent his representative to ensure that the task was completed in the set time frame. The villagers failed to complete the job within the two-hour period. Dejected, they returned to the *muftiya* and appealed for another opportunity to complete their church. He agreed to their request, however, the same time frame applied. On the second attempt the villagers gathered assistance from the villages of Dragosh, Lazhec and Velushina and completed it within two hours.<sup>115</sup>

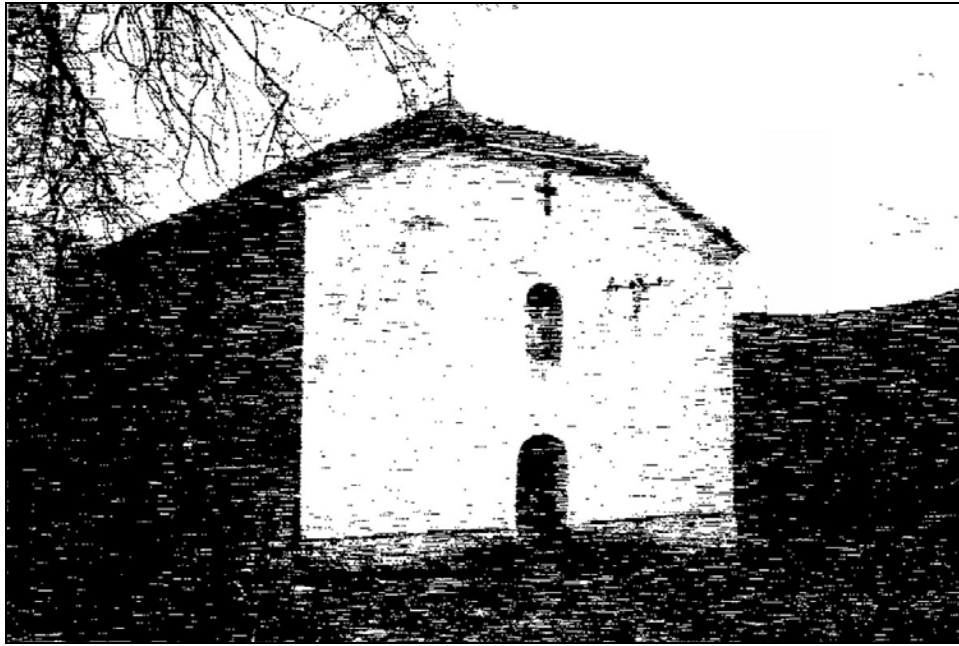
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<sup>113</sup> D. Cornakov, *Makedonski Manastiri* [Macedonian Monasteries], Skopje, 1991, pp. 167–169. Inscriptions in the monastery appear in Old Macedonian text. It is worth mentioning the motivation behind the building of particular monasteries and churches. Often inspired by a dream or vision, the individual in question is thereafter spiritually compelled to build the holy structure, usually with the help of co-villagers. Numerous stories abound throughout Macedonia of such instances. In the village of Visheni, in the Kostur region, a small church was built (*Sveti Bogorodisa*) after Pandovitsa (Pando's wife), Milova, saw Saint Mary in her dream. She appeared to her in a particular place known as *dabbo* (the Oak). This event occurred in the late 1920s. M. Prstnarov, *The History of the village Visheni* [English translation], no date or place of publication, pp. 12–13. In the village of Suvodol (Bitola region), in 1931, 'excavations, undertaken not in consequence of an aerial survey but on the inspiration of a local peasant's dream, disinterred the ruins of an early Byzantine basilica'. R.F. Hoddinott, *Early Byzantine Churches in Macedonia and Southern Serbia*, MacMillan and Co Ltd, London, 1963, pp. 202–203. A more recent example is the construction of a monastery outside the village of Novaci (Bitola region), inspired by the recurring dreams of a housewife in the late 1980s.

<sup>114</sup> Although the village did not have its own church, there were several small monasteries around it that did not come under the religious rivalry of the Patriarchate or Exarchate. They simply 'belonged to the villagers'. These are not really monasteries, but are small shrines. Villagers do not use them as places of assembly.

<sup>115</sup> From interview conducted with Stojan Spasevski (born 1922 in Graeshnica, Bitola region), interview conducted on 30 March 1999 and 18 February 2002 in Melbourne. Regarding the story of the construction of the village church (*Sveta Prechista*), Stojan Spasevski stated that he heard the story directly from his father Petre (who was born in 1876 and lived to 92 years of age). Further examples of constraints and requirements placed on the construction of churches in Macedonia during the nineteenth century can be found in A. Matkovski, *Kanuni i Firmani* [Canons and Firmans], Skopje, 1990. The following examples are drawn from official Ottoman documents, pp. 467–475. Firmans were issued approving the construction of new churches, and outlined the

Illustration 4.1: A typical village church in the Bitola region



Two further instances demonstrate Ottoman religious intolerance (and were possibly connected to Exarchate-Patriarchate religious political rivalry). In the non-*chiflik* Exarchate village of Dragozhani the village church *Golema Bogorojca* was originally situated on high ground above the village. Having attracted the attention of a Turkish official, he demanded that the church be relocated to a less visible site so that it would not be viewed from afar.<sup>116</sup> In the predominantly *chiflik* Exarchate

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required dimensions - specifying the length, width and height of a church. In some cases, approvals appear to have been granted directly from the Porte in Constantinople, and contained conditions that were to be confirmed by the local Ottoman authorities, most usually the kadia or the valia. Official approvals granted for the construction of new churches in the city of Prilep (Firman dated 27 October 1869) and the Bitola region village of Krklino (Firman dated 3 July 1875) were on the condition that they not be located in the 'Islamic quarters' (*Islamsko maalo*) of the city and village respectively. In the Bitola region village of Dragosh, a Firman dated 3 November 1870 specified that the new church was to be 17 metres in length, 7.5 metres wide and 3 metres high and was to be built upon the ruins of the old village church. Firmans often specified the type of material the church would be constructed of, including the number of doors and windows it would have. A Firman, dated 21 May 1884, granting approval for the construction of a new church in the village of Budimirovci (Prilep region) specified that the new church was to be of timber construction. Similarly, a Firman dated 20 May 1900 for the construction of a church in the village of Tomino (Kitchevo region) specified that it would have one door and two windows.

<sup>116</sup> Goce Domazetoski (born 1950 in Dragozhani, Bitola region), notes of interview, 11 June 2002, Melbourne. Goce Domazetoski added that the original site of the church remains untouched and is recognised by the villagers as *vakajsko* land.

village of Makovo (Mariovo district) the village church was located in the vicinity of the Turkish tower. When the *beg* stayed in the tower during the harvest season, he found it irritating being so close to the church and listening to women crying during funerals. He therefore demanded the church be relocated elsewhere and to this end he donated a parcel of land on an alternative site on the fringes of the village.<sup>117</sup>

Firmly in the hands of the Patriarchate, the Sveti Dimitrija Cathedral church was the sole church in Bitola servicing the needs of the Orthodox Christian inhabitants from 1830 to the 1860s. A strong desire for the conducting of church services in Macedonian saw the establishment of the Sveta Nedela church on the outskirts of Gini male in 1863. An agreement with the Patriarchate Bishop Benedict for consecration of the church in fact saw it deceptively placed under the jurisdiction of the Sveti Dimitrija church and church services conducted in Greek.<sup>118</sup> In response to the protests by the people of Bitola, Bishop Benedict replied: *‘Ovde ne e Rusia i ne e Srbija, ovde ne e Bosna i ne e Crna Gora, ne e Bugarija; zemjata ce vika Makedonija, vo koja zhiveat Grci ...’*<sup>119</sup> (‘This is not Russia and nor Serbia, not Bosnia and nor Montenegro, it is not Bulgaria; this land is called Macedonia, and Greeks live here ...’). The struggle for the introduction of Macedonian continued and was first introduced in the church service on 19 July 1864. It drew a violent reaction from the Patriarchist party, serious enough to warrant the intervention of the local Ottoman police.<sup>120</sup> Continued intense anti-Patriarchate agitation by the Macedonian population of Bitola, prominent individuals, guilds, as well as the village councils of Lopatica, Mogila, Dolno Orizari, Sekirani and Kukurechani, eventually resulted in the Sveta

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<sup>117</sup> Petko Atanasovski interview, op. cit. The original church site continued to be recognised by the villagers as *vakafsko* land. For more than a century women from the village would light candles on the ground, at the site of the original church. In the 1990s a monastery was erected on the site.

<sup>118</sup> A. Trajanovski, *Crkveno-Uchilishnite Opštini vo Makedonija* [The Parish Educational Councils of Macedonia], Skopje 1988, pp. 175–176.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p. 176.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, p. 177.

Nedela church breaking free from Patriarchate jurisdiction and becoming a self-administered Macedonian parish educational institution as of 23 October 1869.<sup>121</sup>

Under the initiative of the Sveta Nedela church council, preparations were soon after undertaken for the construction of a second Macedonian church in Bitola independent of Patriarchate jurisdiction. Appeals were made to the Ottoman authorities but were rejected. Nevertheless construction commenced without the relevant authorisation. The first to protest about the construction was the Greek Bishop of Bitola who reported it to the Turkish valia. The valia sent his representative to investigate. He determined that it was not a church because it did not possess an altar, and the workmen informed him that it was a private home. The Greek Bishop again protested to the valia, stating that it was in fact a church. This time the valia heeded the Bishop's warning and sent his men to demolish it. Upon their arrival at the site they instructed the Macedonian workmen to destroy the church. Hesitant to do so out of superstitious fear, the workmen requested that the Turk swing the first hammer, and they would thereafter demolish the structure. However, Turks were also wary of destroying a holy building, albeit a Christian one, and refused to do so. After returning to the valia, and reporting on the events at the church, the valia declared that it should be left alone and permitted to operate.<sup>122</sup> The Sveta Bogorojca church was completed and commenced functioning as of 21 September 1871.<sup>123</sup> The single Romanian church (Vlah) in Bitola, *Sveti Konstantin i Elena*, appears to have been constructed in a similar manner. According to a 1904 Greek publication, 'the suspicions of the public were confirmed by the fact that the said propaganda is building a house which has the strange resemblance to a chapel'.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>121</sup> A. Trajanovski (1988) op. cit. p. 178. Trajanovski outlines numerous similar instances of Macedonians struggling for the control of churches under Patriarchate jurisdiction throughout Macedonia, to the 1870s.

<sup>122</sup> G. Dimovski-Colev interview, op. cit.

<sup>123</sup> The Sveta Bogorojca church was situated in the *Chinarot maalo* nearby to *Gini male*. Both the Sveta Bogorojca and Sveta Nedela churches were later to be usurped by the Exarchate.

<sup>124</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 190

Illustration 4.2: Sveta Bogorojca church, Bitola



It was not uncommon for the authorities to prevent villagers from repairing or constructing an Exarchate church. The historian Crampton states that many new churches completed after 1878–79 remained unconsecrated, forcing the villagers to conduct religious services either in the Patriarchate church or in a school or alternative building.<sup>125</sup> In 1905 Villari stated that in some villages people were not even allowed to use the school buildings or alternative sites, often using the village cemetery to conduct religious services.<sup>126</sup> In the town of Resen permission was obtained to construct a new church after 20 years of agitation.<sup>127</sup> As there were no Exarchate Bishops in Macedonia after 1878–79, new village priests could not be ordained, with few villages able to finance the journey to Constantinople or Bulgaria. Therefore in a number of villages the inhabitants were left with no other option than to continue using the Patriarchate church. Effectively, and this position was taken up

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<sup>125</sup> R.J. Crampton, *op. cit.* p. 161.

<sup>126</sup> B. Tatarcheff, *op. cit.* pp. 172-173.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, p. 171.

by the Ottoman authorities, the local church, its funds and the cemetery remained in the possession of the Patriarchate, even though only a small minority or a few scattered houses in the commune belonged to it.<sup>128</sup>

Opposed to Greek language services in the Koleshino (Strumica region) village church, a group of villagers unable to take control of the church actively sought to construct another church in the village which would come under Exarchate jurisdiction.<sup>129</sup> Construction commenced with foundations set and walls partially erected before the church conflict intensified and the Exarchate church was demolished. Another group of people in the village, centred around the charismatic Mane Izev, perceived the Exarchate-Patriarchate struggle as political rather than spiritual. It was from this conflict, and their association with the Protestant mission in Macedonia, that the idea was born for the construction of a Christian spiritual church in the village where services would be conducted in the Macedonian language. Word of the intention to build an alternative church reached the Greek Bishop in Strumica, who was outraged to learn that a Psalter (Mane Izev) was gathering villagers and reading the Bible to them in Macedonian and that people had obtained Macedonian language bibles.<sup>130</sup> The Greek bishop sent individuals into the village to intimidate the villagers to hand over their bibles. Those relinquished were destroyed by fire. However, Mane was not easily frightened and refused to part with his. An evangelical

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<sup>128</sup> From a diplomatic report (dated 29 August 1890) by the Austro-Hungarian consul in Bitola, Pogacher, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs about the state of the population in the vilayet as regards the church question. V. Bozhinov and L. Panayotov, editors op. cit. p. 410.

<sup>129</sup> Jovan (John) Izev (born 1943 in Koleshino village, Strumica region), interview conducted on 4 June 2002 in Melbourne. Jovan Izev is a Macedonian of the Protestant faith. Jovan's grandfather Mane Izev was a central Protestant figure in the Strumica region.

<sup>130</sup> Jovan Izev explained that 'the villagers could not understand church services. Due to being conducted in Greek, they had no concept of the teachings of the bible and that this left the people spiritually empty. Therefore, when villagers were given the opportunity to understand the bible in their own language, they rejoiced, as the holy message became clear.'

Mane Izev was given a 'Macedonian language bible by a Macedonian from Solun', according to Jovan Izev. Mane first commenced reading the bible to his family, and later to friends in the village. Gradually the group grew and over the summer months Macedonian, American and English missionaries, some from the Protestant 'Robert College' in Constantinople, would visit Mane Izev.

church was constructed in the village on land donated by a villager<sup>131</sup> and the first official service was held in May 1890. Services were conducted in Macedonian and a local (Temkov) served as pastor. Opposition to the church remained, and Mane Izev was to be persecuted as much as anyone associated with the Exarchate-Patriarchate rivalry. The Greek Bishop activated the village priest to harass Mane and the miserable campaign forced Mane to flee the village for some months. He sought protection from the Russian consul in Bitola and also reported the matter to the Ottoman authorities. Whilst absent from the village the Protestant church in Koleshino was completely destroyed by fire, Mane's field of mulberry trees were also completely destroyed and an attempt was made to burn down Mane Izev's family home.<sup>132</sup> The Greek Patriarchate did not tolerate any religious opposition, not Exarchate, Protestant or any other Christian denomination. Both alternative churches to the Patriarchate church in Koleshino met the same fate.

In the village of Vrajevci there was originally a single church (Sveti Todor) situated above the village. After the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate the people in the village felt it appropriate that the Patriarchate church hand over jurisdiction to the Exarchate. The majority of villagers were in agreement, however 'the Greek church was too powerful and would not allow this to occur'.<sup>133</sup> The people in the village, led by the village *kmet* (headman) agitated for the establishment of an Exarchate church for a long, arduous period. After a number of years they finally received permission to build their own church on the opposite end of the village. The new church (Sveti Dimitrija) was built in a similar style as the existing

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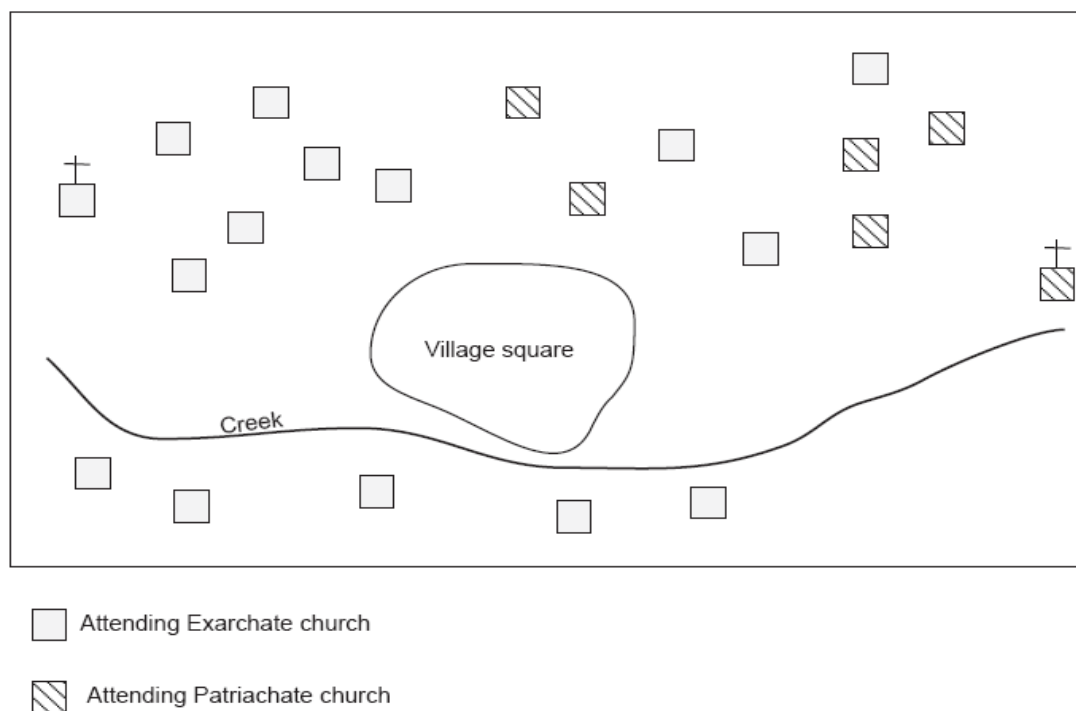
<sup>131</sup> The Protestant church was built on land donated by a member of Jovan Izev's grandmother's family. Jovan Izev interview, *ibid*.

<sup>132</sup> The home was saved when an adult male member of the household produced a rifle and stood up to the arsonists. Jovan Izev interview, *ibid*.

<sup>133</sup> Atanas Vasilevski (born 1928 in Vrajevci village, Bitola region), interview conducted on 16 March 2000 in Bitola.

one, but was larger in size.<sup>134</sup> A minority of villagers remained with the Patriarchate church (approximately 20 percent) and some animosity developed because of it.<sup>135</sup>

Figure 4.2: Vrajnevci village church adherence, 1912



Bitola region villages typically contained a single church and it was rare to see two churches in the one village. Dobromiri was a medium-sized village of approximately 30 exclusively Macedonian households along the Pelagonia plain. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a single household (the Popovci family) was under the influence of the Patriarchate Church, yet the Patriarchate maintained jurisdiction over the village church.<sup>136</sup> Similarly in Novaci, the village was made up of approximately seventeen families (*soiovi*). Only two to three families came under the

<sup>134</sup> It is interesting to note that village churches, regardless whether they were built under Exarchate or Patriarchate patronage, were architecturally similar, the main difference being the script appearing on the internal walls and icons.

<sup>135</sup> Atanas Kotevski (born 1923 in Vrajnevci village, Bitola region), interview conducted on 13 March 2000 in Bitola. Atanas Kotevski stated that although a handful of families continued to use the Sveti Todor church (Patriarchist), they did not consider it be foreign. The priest was a local Macedonian and 'he used our language when conducting services in the church as well as everyday communication with the people'.

<sup>136</sup> Nikola Giorgiovski interview, op. cit.

influence of the Patriarchate church, however jurisdiction over the church could not be removed from the Patriarchate.<sup>137</sup> Circumstances were similar in numerous Macedonian villages in the Bitola region as well as in Vlah villages attempting to break away from the bondage of the Greek Patriarchate church. In the Vlah village of Gopesh in the upper zone of the Bitola region, the village church Sveti Sotir became the central point of dispute between the minority Patriarchist Vlah element and the majority pro-Romanian Vlahs. Due to the aggressive anti-Romanian position of the Patriarchate, an alternative church was not constructed. Instead, the matter was settled to the dissatisfaction of the majority group with the existing church being shared between the two parties. Icons and frescoes were modified with one side containing Greek inscriptions and the other Romanian.<sup>138</sup>

## 4.6 Priests and agitators

INITIALLY THE CHURCHES of the Balkan States sent bishops and priests into the cities of Macedonia and sought to recruit priests from the local population in order to expand their church presence into the countryside. Native Macedonians were considered essential, as foreign priests would have been ineffective in the countryside villages – and an absence of foreign priests in the Bitola countryside at around 1900 is testament to this view. The recruitment of priests by the Exarchate and Patriarchate does not appear to have been a difficult task, as entering the priesthood was a hereditary profession. Most villages contained a family known as Popovci (*Pop*, priest in Macedonian), and in such families it was an expectation that

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<sup>137</sup> Trajan Micevski (born 1930 in Novaci, Bitola region), interview conducted in Novaci on 22 March 2000. According to Trajan Micevski, the oldest families in the village are Krushkovci, Masnikashovci, Tantarovci, Sankevcı, Bozovci, Glamnovci, Patorovci, Slabovci, Begovci, Suvodolci, Vrajnjata, Dukovci, Trapchanovci, Kerimovci, Giorgevcı, Kolarovci and Kavedzhiovci. Trajan is from the Masnikashovci family.

<sup>138</sup> Simo 'Hemtu' Simonovski (born 1925, in Bitola), interview conducted 30 March 2000 in Bitola. Simo Simonovski's parents were from the Vlah village of Gopesh.

one of the sons would become a priest.<sup>139</sup> For example, the Popovci family in Suvodol claims ninety-nine consecutive generations of priesthood.<sup>140</sup>

Table 4.4: Monthly Income of Patriarchate Priests in Bitola Region, 1901–1902

Village Priest	Payment in Turkish Lira
Krklino	6
Dobromiri	5
Egri	6
Dedebalci	3
Paralovo	6
Ribarci	3
Srpci	6
Trn	6
Dihovo	8
Makovo	3
Bitusha	6

Source and notes: K. Bitoski, *Dejnosta na Pelagonskata Mitropolija (1878–1912)*, Skopje, 1967, pp. 105–107. The official wage received by Patriarchate priests was considerably less than that received by Patriarchate schoolteachers at the time.

Generally priests were not permanently located in the one village, but conducted religious services in a group of villages. The administered villages were in the general surroundings of the priest's native village, and he would visit them on a rotational basis perhaps every six or seven weeks. Events such as wedding ceremonies and christenings were normally organised by the villagers to coincide with his visit, however, the priest would make exceptions and attend the village earlier for matters such as funerals and village religious days.<sup>141</sup> Priest Riste from Suvodol administered

<sup>139</sup> The surname 'Popovski' is a common Macedonian surname and typically signifies a tradition of priesthood in the family. In the Orthodox religion a man cannot be ordained as a priest if he is not married.

<sup>140</sup> Kosta Markovski (born 1930 in Suvodol village, Bitola region), interview conducted in Bitola on 20 March 2000.

<sup>141</sup> Trajanka Talevska (born 1925 in Vrajnevcı village, Bitola region), interview conducted in Novaci on 10 March 2000. Trajanka Talevska married into Novaci village.

six villages – Iveni, Grumazi, Dolno Orchovo, Paralovo, Vrajnevcı and his native Suvodol.<sup>142</sup> In the Mariovo district a group of five villages were administered by the Chanishte priest; these were Makovo, Orle, Rapesht, Brnik and Chanishte.<sup>143</sup> Villagers aid the priest for services conducted such as a wedding, a christening or the blessing of one's home. <sup>144</sup> The priests otherwise drew a regular monthly income from the

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<sup>142</sup> Kosta Markovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>143</sup> Stojche Petkovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>144</sup> The amount of payment made to a priest for services conducted was not a set amount. People gave whatever they could afford. Payment was not necessarily monetary, but could be in the form of wheat, eggs, flour, etc. Trajanka Talevska interview, op. cit.

church organisation they were employed by. In the Bitola region the average monthly income for a Patriarchate priest was between 3 to 6 Turkish lira during 1901–1902.<sup>145</sup>

Communication between priests and villagers in the Bitola region villages was exclusively in the Macedonian language, regardless of which respective church the priest was employed by. In all village interviews conducted there were no instances of village priests speaking any other language in their everyday dealings with their co-villagers or in the neighbouring villages they serviced. Regarding language used during village church services, in the case of Exarchate priests church services were routinely conducted in Old Macedonian,<sup>146</sup> and other parts of the service were conducted in the everyday Macedonian language. It was uncommon for Exarchate village priests to conduct services in other languages. Some Patriarchate priests appear to have been fluent in Greek and conducted at least a part of the service in the Greek language, but it was also common for Patriarchate priests to include everyday Macedonian in the service. It was reported that in Vrajevci the Patriarchate priest conducted services exclusively in Macedonian.<sup>147</sup> According to the ethnographer, V. Kanchov, services were similarly conducted by Patriarchate priests in the villages of Logovardi, Sekirani,

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<sup>145</sup> K. Bitoski (1968), *op. cit.* pp. 105-107.

<sup>146</sup> Old Macedonian is generally referred to as Church Slavonic or Old Church Slavonic. Data derived from oral sources asserted that the language of church services, and in particular Exarchate church services in the countryside villages was Macedonian (interviewees typically did not distinguish between Old Macedonian and everyday Macedonian). This issue is a point of contention with some specialists in the field.

<sup>147</sup> Atanas Vasilevski interview, *op. cit.*

Optichari, Dalbegovci, Radobor, Trap, Dolno Charliya and Gorno Charliya.<sup>148</sup> Vlado Jankulovski, born in Novaci in 1921, recalled that the older people in the village found it amusing that the village priest Jovan Popovski ‘mixed both Macedonian and Greek during church services’.<sup>149</sup> In the Suvodol church it appears that priest Riste may have conducted the service in Greek, as according to Kosta Markovski, who could trace his heritage in the village back six generations, ‘Priest Riste knew Greek well, the service was probably in Greek’.<sup>150</sup> In the village of Krpeshina (Lerin region) the Patriarchate Priest Tome (there was also an Exarchate church in the village) conducted services in Greek, but everyday communication with villagers was exclusively in Macedonian.<sup>151</sup>

Macedonian villagers did not understand services conducted in Greek. Generally village priests appear to have poorly understood the official languages of the churches they were employed by. Brailsford considered the average village priest to be not a particularly distinguished individual. Most were totally uneducated and led the life of the peasants and could ‘read enough to mumble through the ritual, and write sufficiently well to keep the parish registers; but there their superiority to the average peasant ends’.<sup>152</sup> Nevertheless, village priests were utilised practically by villagers in other areas outside their religious functions. Due to the priest at times being the sole literate person in the village, he would read and write letters on behalf of villagers, and other times the priest wrote letters on behalf of the village as a

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<sup>148</sup> V. Kanchov, *Bitola, Prespa i Ohridsko* [Bitola, Prespa and Ohrid], Sofia, 1970 (1891) pp. 389-394. In the text Kanchov states that services were conducted in ‘Slavic’ (Old Macedonian).

<sup>149</sup> Vlado Jankulovski (born 1921 in Novaci, Bitola region), interview conducted in Novaci on 11 March 2000. Vlado Jankulovski is from the ‘Tantarovci’ family, the surname Jankulovski appears to have been derived from his grandfather, Jankula (pronounced Yankula). Vlado has lived in Novaci village continuously.

<sup>150</sup> Kosta Markovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>151</sup> Velika Spirova (born 1911 in the village of Krpeshina, Lerin region), interview conducted on 19 January 2002 in Melbourne. Velika Spirova moved to Nered village (Lerin region) with her family as a young child and later married Vasil Spirov (from the ‘Mrkovci’ family – ‘soi’) from the village. Velika arrived in Australia in the early 1940s. Krpeshina was renamed Atrapos and Nered as Polipotamos by the Greek authorities in the 1920s.

<sup>152</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 69. Vane Tancevski advised that in Lopatica there were two village priests (one church in the village with two Popovci families) and he believed they had a minimum level of literacy. Vane Tancevski interview, op. cit.

whole.<sup>153</sup> In all instances, regardless of whether a priest was connected to the Exarchate or Patriarchate churches, interviewees stated that village priests spoke Macedonian at home with their families.<sup>154</sup>

According to De Belle, a contemporary French commentator who had travelled to Macedonia at the beginning of the twentieth century, the lower levels of clergy were not dissimilar to the peasantry, often with a bare minimum of education. If a church parish found itself without a priest, the villagers sought out an upstanding male with some level of education. Schoolteachers were highly sought after in such circumstances, but not always available. *Pechalbari* were highly considered for this function because of their worldly experiences. De Belle referred to them as '*Amerikancite*' ('the Americans') and tells of one such individual who once worked in a port in Montreal (Canada) unloading boats. Once appointed as a 'new priest', he was sent to a monastery for some weeks in order to familiarise himself with church dogma and services. Following a short period of training he could immediately take up his position and conduct all religious services. For the adherents of the Orthodox Church it was only the priest who was able to perform services such as christenings, weddings and funerals.<sup>155</sup>

In large urban centres such as Bitola, it was the Bishops who were the primary political movers. Propagandistic religious activities were most prevalent in the towns where churches operated with large budgets and attempted to win people over using financial means. The Exarchate, Patriarchate and Serb church organisations all engaged in this practice, but it was generally accepted that the Patriarchate stood apart from their rivals. Respondents were in general agreement that the Patriarchate

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<sup>153</sup> Nikola Giorgiovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>154</sup> It was typical of interviewees to mention that they personally knew the village priest's family and were sometimes friends with his children. Subsequently, as a result of direct contact, they were aware that the priest and his children did not know of or use any other languages.

<sup>155</sup> E. Bouchie de Belle, *Makedonija i Makedoncite*, [Macedonia and the Macedonians], Skopje, 1992, pp. 58-59. Original title *La Macedoine et les Macedoniens*, Paris, 1922. A significant, yet largely unknown publication, E. Bouchie de Belle's work gives an interesting insight into village life, drawn from his first-hand experiences in Macedonia, mainly in the Lerin region in 1918, where he also wrote the book.

operated with the greatest financial resources, paying individuals to agitate and attract adherents to the church. Born in 1911, Vasil Petrov commented, 'the Exarchate and Patriarchate competed for adherents, but it was easier for the Greeks because they had more money; they could find a poor family and get them to attend their church through the payment of money and food'.<sup>156</sup> Circumstances were similar in the Vlah community, in Gopesh. There were those with the Patriarchate whom 'were bought in all manner of ways. The Greeks (*Patriarchate*) had the most money and influence, including having most influence with the 'Turks'.<sup>157</sup>

Priests were not necessarily the prime political agitators. For instance, the Patriarchate employed a handful of agents in the Bitola region whose purpose was to socialise with the local population in city inns and at village religious celebrations in order to propagate the idea that they were Greeks.<sup>158</sup> There was no shortage of spies and agitators in Bitola at the beginning of the twentieth century according to Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski, a lifelong resident of Bitola, born in 1893. 'Their role was to draw people into the respective competing churches.'<sup>159</sup> Conflict between people was therefore more likely to occur within a large urban environment where a concentration of rival propagandas, agitators, bishops and consulates were based. There was greater intensity of political rivalry in Bitola in comparison to the countryside villages. As there were no armed bands operating freely in Bitola, the competing propagandas relied on their network of spies and agitators and these were the main cause of tensions between the people.<sup>160</sup> Hristo Dimitrovski recalled that Greek teachers in Bitola encouraged their young students to fight with students of the Exarchate school. Hristo had himself been involved in such fights.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Vasil Petrov (born 1911, in Bitola), interview conducted in Bitola on 1 April 2000. Vasil's father, Giorgi, moved his family to Bitola, from the village of Tepavci (Bitola region) at the end of the nineteenth century. Although living in Bitola most of his life, Vasil Petrov has also lived in Australia.

<sup>157</sup> Simo 'Hemtu' Simonovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>158</sup> K. Bitoski, citing a Greek Patriarchate document (1968), op. cit. p. 105.

<sup>159</sup> Hristo Dimitrovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>160</sup> Hristo Dimitrovski interview, *ibid*, Vasil Petrov interview, op. cit., Giorgi Dimovski-Colev interview, op. cit.

<sup>161</sup> Hristo Dimitrovski interview, op. cit.

In the countryside villages of the Bitola region, priests were generally cautious not to be seen openly agitating party politics. The prevailing opinion of respondents in the villages was that the priest did not publicly meddle in political matters. Village priests appear to have treaded carefully. According to one respondent, if the priest was seen to be stirring political conflict in the village he faced the threat of being murdered by the *komiti*.<sup>162</sup> Ilija Najdovski from Suvodol village recalled hearing from his grandfather that Bulgarian *komiti* murdered a Patriarchist priest in the village of Brod.<sup>163</sup> In the Lerin mountainous village of Krpeshina (non-*chiflik*), the village contained both an Exarchate and Patriarchate church, and both priests were native to the village. Tome the Patriarchist priest was seen by the villagers as a 'spy' (*shpion*) who intimidated them, and as the area was frequented by Greek armed bands he succeeded in driving out the Exarchate priest Jovan from the village.<sup>164</sup> In the Bitola region upper village of Velushina, the Patriarchist Priest Ilija led a Greek band under the command of Makris in July 1906 to the nearby village of Optichari, whereupon violent acts were perpetrated on the civilian population.<sup>165</sup> Generally village priests do not appear to have wielded significant influence over the village, and certainly did not exert influence over their flock as did Roman Catholic priests in other countries.<sup>166</sup>

Competition for adherence to churches, although aimed at the Christian population, was sometimes directed towards the priests themselves. The Greek Patriarchate utilised funds towards attracting Exarchate priests to join the Patriarchate. For example, Priest Marko was given 20 Turkish lira to renounce the

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<sup>162</sup> Nikola Giorgovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>163</sup> The priest was a local Macedonian. Ilija Najdovski (born 1920 in Suvodol, Bitola region), interview conducted in Novaci on 28 March 2000.

<sup>164</sup> Velika Spirova interview, op. cit. Velika Spirova further added that the Exarchate priest, Jovan conducted church services in Macedonian, and the Patriarchist priest Tome conducted services in Greek. Everyday communication between the two priests and the villagers was conducted in Macedonian.

<sup>165</sup> R. Poplazarov, op. cit. p. 150. The same Greek band under the command of Makris entered the overwhelmingly Vlah and Patriarchate village of Nizhopole in the Bitola upper zone and consulted with the Greek schoolteacher regarding which Vlah homes were to be burned for not submitting to the Patriarchate. Ibid, p. 148.

<sup>166</sup> C. Eliot, op. cit. p. 271.

Exarchate and transfer to the Patriarchate church.<sup>167</sup> Riste of the Popovci family from Dobromiri was recruited by the Patriarchate and sent to Greece to be trained as a priest. His family was handsomely rewarded for their sons adherence to the Patriarchate, with 3 gold napolyoni (coins) per month. In Greece he was trained and prepared to return to Macedonia to politically agitate that Macedonians were really Greeks, and to support Greek aspirations in Macedonia. During a stopover in Solun whilst returning from Greece, he met with the Russian consul who clarified that it was inappropriate that he be a Greek priest, when he was not Greek and nor was Greek his mother tongue. The Russian consul succeeded in convincing priest Riste to transfer his allegiance to the Exarchate, and upon his return to the Bitola region, priest Riste became the Exarchate village priest in Dolno and Gorno Aglarci.<sup>168</sup> Due to his priesthood training with the Greek Patriarchate, an unusual situation developed in that services were conducted in Greek even though the church was officially under the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate. This was not a point of contention with the villagers who were content that their church was outside Patriarchate jurisdiction.<sup>169</sup>

Prior to 1870, Macedonian priests were compulsorily employed within the Patriarchate church system.<sup>170</sup> Following the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 there was a transfer of priests away from the Patriarchate to the Exarchate. Macedonian priests active in the national struggle largely came from the ranks of the Bulgarian Exarchate in the late nineteenth century, and in some instances were to achieve positions of prominence within the Exarchate.

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<sup>167</sup> K. Bitoski (1968) op. cit. pp. 104-106.

<sup>168</sup> Nikola Giorgiovski interview, op. cit. Nikola Giorgiovski advised that he was aware of the circumstances relating to priest Riste's transfer to the Exarchate, as he was a close friend of the priest's son and heard the story from him.

<sup>169</sup> Nikola Giorgievski interview, ibid. According to Kanchov, the Exarchate village priests in the villages of Kukurechani and Novo Smilevo also conducted services in Greek. Circumstances may have been similar to the case of priest Riste from Dobromiri. V. Kanchov, *Bitola, Prespa i Obridsko*, 1970 (1891), Sofia, pp. 392–393.

<sup>170</sup> Similarly, prior to the establishment of the Exarchate, Macedonian schoolteachers were employed in the Patriarchate school system. The leaders of the Macedonian renaissance in the 1870s and 1880s were Macedonians educated in the Greek Patriarchate school system.

Theodosius Gologanov, the Exarchate Metropolitan of Skopje, was a Macedonian from the village of T'rlis in the Nevrokop region. He commenced his religious education in the Patriarchist Monastery of St John the Baptist in the Seres district, serving as a monk from the age of fourteen until the establishment of the Exarchate. Although elected Metropolitan to the Skopje Eparchy by the Exarchate in 1878, he remained in Constantinople until 1890 because the Ottoman authorities would not authorise his position.<sup>171</sup> Once appointment was conferred, Gologanov actively promoted Macedonian ecclesiastical independence from within the ranks of the Exarchate. Aware of the dangers facing Macedonia, Gologanov recognised that the aims of the Bulgarian Exarchate were in direct conflict with the interests of the Macedonian people. At the end of 1890 and beginning of 1891 he sought to reorganise Exarchate religious and educational institutions by appointing like-minded Macedonians to positions of authority.<sup>172</sup> Gologanov fearlessly confronted the Ottoman authorities, arguing the case for the closure of Greek and Serbian schools as 'there were no Greeks and Serbs, nor Bulgarians in Macedonia. The country was inhabited by Macedonians, who are ethnically distinct from the other three Balkan peoples'.<sup>173</sup>

Gologanov strove towards national emancipation in an unmistakably direct manner. He expressed his views in a letter to Archimandrite Dionysius in Sofia, a Macedonian from Strumica who shared Gologanov's views regarding the activities of the Exarchate. Gologanov wrote:

Its religious and educational activity here, in Macedonia, in fact carries out a most miserable task, it deprives a people of its name and replaces it with another name, it deprives them of their mother tongue and replaces it with another, alien one.<sup>174</sup>

Commenting on the ambitions of the Balkan States he added:

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<sup>171</sup> S. Dimevski, *Metropolitan Theodosius Gologanov, Macedonian Revivalist*, Skopje, 1977, p. 247.

<sup>172</sup> S. Dimevski (1965), op. cit. p. 150; Y. Belchovski, op. cit. p. 151.

<sup>173</sup> S. Dimevski (1977), op. cit. p. 249.

<sup>174</sup> From a letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1891. H. Andonov-Poljanski, editor (1985), *Documents on the Struggle...*, op. cit. p. 315. The entire text of the letter appears on pages 314-317.

We the Macedonians do not suffer as much by the Turks ... as by the Greeks, the Bulgarians and the Serbs, who have set upon us like vultures upon a carcass in this tortured land and want to split it up.<sup>175</sup>

Direction was given to the Macedonian Movement by Gologanov, as he spearheaded a national program aimed at the restoration of the Macedonian Archbishopric of Ohrid. Gologanov advocated that:

We clergymen, Macedonians in origin, should unite and urge our people to awaken, throw off foreign authority, throw off even the Patriarchate and the Exarchate, and be spiritually unified under the wing of the Archbishopric of Ohrid, our only true Mother Church.<sup>176</sup>

Although a Metropolitan in the ranks of the Exarchate, Gologanov became a Macedonian ideologue committed to the restoration of the Ohrid Archbishopric. He strove towards eliminating foreign propaganda from Macedonia; placing Macedonians in all positions of authority in religious, government and educational spheres; and, advocating that the Macedonian language be adopted as the official language of the nation.<sup>177</sup> The Balkan States were threatened by the revivalist activities of Gologanov, and his ability to influence Ottoman Governors.<sup>178</sup> Protests were filed with the Turkish government and the Exarchate protested against Gologanov's provocative and separatist activities, ordering him to Constantinople immediately. Three such requests went unheeded by Gologanov before the Exarchate approached the Ottoman authorities requesting that they take him to Constantinople by force.

In the face of great hostility he turned to the Roman Catholic Church, seeking the support and patronage of Pope Leo XIII, to restore the Archbishopric of Ohrid and advocated the

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid, p. 315.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, p. 315. Metropolitan Gologanov strove to replace Bulgarian with Macedonian in the schools and administration, as well as replacing Bulgarian textbooks with Macedonian. He engaged the vilayet authorities to support the establishment of a printing press, which would see Macedonian language publications. His intention met with fierce opposition from the Bulgarian Exarch. However, he did succeed in having all official church forms, including birth and marriage certificates, reprinted in Macedonian without the name 'Bulgarian Exarchate' appearing. Y. Belchovski, op. cit. pp. 151-152.

<sup>177</sup> S. Dimevski (1977), op. cit. p. 249.

<sup>178</sup> Vilayet Governors were corrupt, as were other officials of the Ottoman State. Bribery was an accepted practice.

historical right of the Orthodox Macedonian people to be freed from the jurisdiction of foreign churches – the Bulgarian Exarchate and Constantinople Patriarchate – and be united in its own Orthodox Church, acquiring all the characteristic features of a people who have a right to independent spiritual and cultural life and education.<sup>179</sup>

Gologanov's letter to Pope Leo XIII outlined the unlawful abolishment of the Archbishopric of Ohrid by Sultan Mustafa III in 1767, and requested its restoration in canonical unity with the Roman Catholic Church. Gologanov stressed that specific traits of the Orthodox religion be respected and sought assurances in relation to its independence.<sup>180</sup>

Metropolitan Gologanov's approach to the Pope aroused great interest in the Catholic Church and in certain political circles. Bishop Augusto Bonetti, head of the Lazarist mission in Constantinople, travelled to Macedonia, meeting with Metropolitan Gologanov in Skopje where they discussed the restoration of the Archbishopric of Ohrid under the patronage of the Roman Catholic Church. In Skopje, Bonetti came in contact with the Austrian Consul Schumuker, who was also enthusiastic about the possibility of transfer to union with the Catholic Church:

The consul indicated that Metropolitan Theodosius was in a very difficult position, persecuted for his nationalist activity not only by the Bulgarian Exarch but also by the Greek Patriarchate. The three Balkan governments, those of Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia, also stood against him ... According to the opinion of the Consul of Austria – Hungary, there should be prompt action in making a decision, since any delay may be fatal for Metropolitan Theodosius. My personal opinion (Bonetti) is that Metropolitan Theodosius is undertaking this action quite sincerely and that there are objective preconditions that he will be followed by the whole flock of Macedonia.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>179</sup> From a letter by Metropolitan Theodosius to Pope Leo XIII, dated 4 December 1891. (Archivio della S. Congregazione de Propaganda Fide – Roma: "Indice della Potenza" Marzo 1892-93, Somm XV, f. 132-141). From H. Andonov-Poljanski, editor (1985), op. cit. pp. 318-319.

<sup>180</sup> Specifically Gologanov outlined a list of six conditions of transfer to union with the Roman Catholic church. These were: 1. The Archbishopric of Ohrid be restored in canonical unity with the Roman Catholic church, with the immediate blessing of the Pope. 2. That Theodosius be head (Archbishop) of the restored Archbishopric of Ohrid. 3. Officials of the high clergy should be Macedonians, appointed by Theodosius. 4. The borders of the Archbishopric of Ohrid to conform with the borders of Macedonia. 5. Present Uniate eparchies to be included under the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Ohrid; and, 6. New Catholic missionaries not to be sent, and those already in Macedonia should not interfere in the internal church and educational life of the Archbishopric. Ibid, pp. 318-319.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, p. 321. Letter from Bonetti to the responsible Cardinal in Rome on the talks with Gologanov (dated 4 December 1891).

As a matter of urgency, Bishop Bonetti informed the College of Cardinals (Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith) in Rome, urging that Gologanov's request be supported. In the meantime the Ottoman government intervened, ordering his removal under guard to Constantinople where the Exarchate had prepared an indictment against him. Protests were sent to the Exarchate by the Ohrid, Seres, Solun, Nevrokop, Shtip, Strumica, Enidzhe Vardar and other eparchies throughout Macedonia condemning the Exarchate for the removal of Metropolitan Gologanov.<sup>182</sup> The removal of Gologanov in 1892 was an enormous setback to the Macedonian movement, and to aspirations for the restoration of the mother church and the foundations for a future Macedonian state.<sup>183</sup> Gologanov was banished to a Sofia monastery until his death in 1926.

Following the destruction caused by repercussions from the Ilinden Rebellion, foreign churches in Macedonia provided various forms of 'humanitarian aid' to the victims. Donations from the governments of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia were distributed through their respective churches, but the intention was political in nature rather than innocently humanitarian. Strategically, the outcome sought was to attract adherents to their churches, whereby the recipients and their villages were to be registered as belonging to the Greek, Bulgarian or Greek nationality respectively.<sup>184</sup> The Bulgarian government donated a total of 1,000,000 francs for distribution by the

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<sup>182</sup> S. Dimovski (1977), op. cit. p. 251.

<sup>183</sup> In a letter dated 12 March 1892 to 'The Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith', Bonetti outlined that had the Catholic church 'acted more effectively' there would have been a successful outcome to the matter. Describing the revolt in Macedonia, at the ousting of Gologanov, Bonetti stated, 'my suggestion is based upon confirmed reports from Macedonia, where the congregation of the Skopje eparchy, as well as the whole of Macedonia, reacted strongly against the replacement of Metropolitan Gologanov and declared that they were ready to pass into union with our Holy church'. Ibid, pp. 328-329.

<sup>184</sup> Genuine humanitarian aid (not politically motivated) was sent to Macedonia from England and the USA. A center for the distribution of aid was established in Bitola. Flour, clothing, blankets and sanitary material were distributed, and even a hospital opened. The total value of goods distributed in the Bitola area was 22,203 pounds. H. Polyanski-Andonov, *The Attitude of the USA Towards Macedonia*, Macedonian Review, Skopje, 1983, p. 72. See pages 64 to 72 for further details regarding American aid for the victims of the Ilinden Uprising. That Protestant aid was not being used for political purposes appears to be evident by the fact that in the Bitola region Protestant missionaries did not enjoy any success converting people to Protestantism, even though an extremely large sum of money had been spent. Furthermore, the aid collected from England and America was donated as a result of public appeals, and not from their governments as was the case with Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia.

Exarchate in Macedonia, of which 285,000 was apportioned to the Bitola vilayet. The Exarchate Metropolitan in Ohrid attempted to personally visit villages to distribute the funds but was prevented from doing so by the Ottoman valia in Ohrid.<sup>185</sup> The Greek Metropolitan of Prespa-Ohrid (Antim) headed a commission to distribute Greek aid, and the Greek Consul of Bitola personally delivered a large sum of cash to Krushevo. He was quickly followed by the Romanian Vice consul of Bitola who delivered 10,000 dinars.<sup>186</sup> According to a 1903 Serb Consular report, the distribution of Greek aid was focused upon gathering the greatest amount of signatures and village seals and that 'in effect they were paying for seals and signatures'.<sup>187</sup> Serbian aid was distributed in Krushevo through the Serbian school in the town; a Serb priest and the school principal, Alexandar Grdanovich, headed the committee overseeing the distribution.<sup>188</sup> Serb aid was handed out on 20 October 1903 to 32 male recipients who received a total of 4750 grosh.<sup>189</sup> The bulk of the money was distributed between nine individuals (3230 grosh), the remaining 23 received less than 100 grosh each (total of 1520 grosh). According to the Serb consular report dated 10 November 1903, which outlines distribution of the aid, the recipients were required to sign their names in order to receive their share of the aid. In a town that did not contain a single Serb inhabitant, all 23 recipients are recorded as possessing Serb surnames. In effect, aid was not intended as humanitarian assistance, but designed to pay for the creation of Serbian nationals.

A common response received from interviewees in the Bitola region, regarding the distribution of aid through the Patriarchate and Exarchate churches, indicated that financial assistance was not considered as being of a humanitarian nature. Instead, the money was deliberately used to 'buy people', in order to obtain

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<sup>185</sup> From an Austrian consular report in Bitola, dated 12 February 1905. D, Zografski, editor, op. cit. pp. 18-19.

<sup>186</sup> K. Bitoski (1968), op. cit. p.187.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid, p. 187.

<sup>188</sup> From a Serbian consular report in Bitola, dated 10 November 1903 (PP Number 853-4902). L. Lape, *Izveštaj od 1903 godina - na Srpskite konzuli, mitropoliti i uchilishni inspektori vo Makedonija* [Report of 1903 - of Serbian consuls, metropolitans and school inspectors in Macedonia], Skopje, 1954, pp. 342-344.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, pp. 342-344.

adherents for the respective propaganda's.<sup>190</sup> The single instance of a respondent believing that aid was genuinely of a humanitarian nature was Nikola Giorgievski, who stated that his one-legged father Naumche obtained a wooden leg through the Exarchate church.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Hristo Dimitrovski interview, op. cit., Atanas Kotevski interview, op. cit., Konstantin Nicha interview, op. cit., Ilija Najdovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>191</sup> Nikola Giorgiovski interview, op. cit.

Table 4.5: Recipients of Serb Aid in Krushevo, 1903

Recorded Serbianised surname	Actual name
Matejy Boshko Petrovich	Actual surname is Boshku (Vlah). Petrovich is not a modification of the surname, but an addition. The Boshku family were traders in Krushevo and the descendants of Matejy now live in Skopje.
Kosti Bazhdavelovich	Actual surname is Bazhdavela (Vlah). Descendants live in Skopje.
Giorgi Badzhovich	Actual surname is Bazhdavela (Vlah).
Sterji Stavrich	Stavrich. Descendants in Skopje, surname Stavrich remains.
Peri Andzhelkovich	Actual surname is Angelkovski (Macedonian). Descendants in Krushevo.
Fiji Neveni Karafilevichki	Actual surname is Fidzhu (Vlah). Karafilevichki was a new addition. Descendants remain in Krushevo.
Nikoli Nane	Surname recorded in Serb document in its original form “Nane” (Vlah). No modification to surname or addition. The men of the Nane family are traditionally butchers. Descendants remain in Krushevo.
Paraskevi Kachandonovich	Actual surname is Kachandonu (Vlah).
Boshky Mickovich	Actual surname is Mickovski (Macedonian). Descendants remain in Krushevo.
Velijanu Janichijevich	Actual surname is Janakievski (Macedonian). Descendants remain in Krushevo.

Source and notes: Serbian Consular Report in Bitola, dated 10 November 1903 (PP Number 853-4902) from L. Lape, editor, *Izvestaj od 1903 Godina na Srpskite Konsuli, Mitroploiti i Uchilnishni Inspektori vo Makedonija*, Skopje, 1954, pp. 342-344.

Note: actual surnames derived from local knowledge in Krushevo during March 2000.

Financial incentive was a popular method used in the cities to attract adherents to the respective churches. Although armed bands were restricted from entering large urban centres, violence and intimidation continued to be practised by the rival parties through other means. Hired thugs and assassins were employed by the ‘Greek Committee’ in Bitola to convince individuals to renounce the Exarchate and join the Patriarchate. The tradesman Nikola Dimitrovski received a visit from a

hired thug (an Albanian) at his workplace and was threatened with death if he did not renounce the Exarchate and become a member of the Patriarchate church community.<sup>192</sup>

Illustration 4.3: The central Bulgarian Exarchate building in Bitola



In the countryside, it was not exclusively armed bands who terrorised villages to support respective church organisations. The notorious Patriarchate Bishop of Kostur, Karavangelis, was known to force notable villagers (such as village headmen) to call themselves ‘Greek’ or he would otherwise denounce them to the Ottomans. Brailsford remarked that many villages were won over in this manner. The Bishop was also known to travel on a tour of Exarchate villages, ‘with an immense escort of Turkish troops’ converting villages by force. The Patriarchate Bishops of Lerin and Seres also employed Turkish troops as ‘escorts’ in travels through their respective

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<sup>192</sup> Hristo Dimitrovski interview, op. cit. Hristo Dimitrovski stated that the hired thug spared his father’s life because at the time of the visit his children were present in his store.

regions in order to increase the number of Patriarchist villages. In one instance the Bishop of Seres arrested a Bulgarian priest and kept him prisoner until he renounced allegiance to the Exarchate.<sup>193</sup>

In northern Macedonia the Serbs largely relied upon attracting adherents through bribery, targeting prominent and influential people in villages, and paying them between 5 and 10 Turkish lira.<sup>194</sup> It was common practice to target important people in a village community. In the Lerin region, village headmen were bribed to influence villagers to transfer village church jurisdiction.<sup>195</sup> The Patriarchate also actively played on the superstitious nature of the Macedonian people, arguing that the Exarchate was formed by a Muslim power, that baptisms and marriages conducted there were not really valid, and that the dead buried by the Exarchate church turned into vampires. Eliot considered that arguments of this nature had an effect upon the population, particularly among the women, and partly accounted for the number of people and villages remaining with the Patriarchate.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 211. The terror of the infamous Karavangelis left deep impressions on the local Macedonian population in the Kostur region. Elderly Macedonians in Australia from the Kostur region recall his notorious reputation and the hardships to which he subjected innocent Macedonians. It was common knowledge that he had a close relationship with the Ottoman Turks, in fact Macedonians often speak of them as 'partners'. A widely-published photograph in Macedonian (and Bulgarian) historical publications shows the Greek Bishop Karavangelis gracing a Turkish military review. In the photograph Karavangelis stands beside the Ottoman civil governor of the Kostur district and an Ottoman military commander. See C. Anastasoff, op. cit. p. 290. Knight noted the strategic role of Greek religious figures in the violent activities of armed bands in 1909. 'The Greek Bishops and clergy worked with fanatical activity; not only did they forbid their co-religionists to give employment to Bulgarians, but they were largely responsible for the atrocities committed by the Greek bands, and went so far as to draw up proscription lists of Bulgarian schismatics who had to be assassinated.' E.F. Knight, op. cit. p. 102. Note: Knight speaks of 'Bulgarians' in Macedonia. This thesis treats the category 'Bulgarian' in Macedonia to be 'Macedonian'.

<sup>194</sup> K. Pandev and Z. Noneva editors, *Borbite vo Makedonia i Odrinsko 1878-1912 Spomeni* [Battles in Macedonia and Adrianople 1878-1912 Memoirs], Sofia, 1981, p. 430. Data regarding Serbs bribing influential villagers are drawn from the memoirs of Slaveyko Arsov. Professor L. Miletich typically recorded memoirs of Macedonian revolutionary figures in the first decade of the twentieth century. Subsequent reprints of memoirs in both Bulgaria and Macedonia are often drawn from Miletich's interviews.

<sup>195</sup> Kocho Duakis (born 1934 in Petoraci, Lerin region), interview conducted 20 January 2001 in Melbourne. Kocho Duakis was aware of this practice as he had heard stories from a 94-year-old friend from the Lerin village of Peshoshnica (the 94-year-old passed away in approximately 1990).

<sup>196</sup> C. Eliot, op. cit. pp. 319-320. The effects of Patriarchate arguments against Macedonian adherence to the Exarchate based on vampire superstitions should not be underestimated. Stories of people becoming vampires has existed in Macedonian folklore since the earliest times and persisted into the twentieth century. Regarding Macedonian vampire superstitions, see E. Tosheva-Giorgieva, *Veruvanjata vo vampiri vo Makedonija* [The Belief in Vampires in Macedonia], Bitola, 1981, pp. 565-579.

## 4.7 ‘Exarchists’ and ‘Patriarchists’

ADHERENCE TO THE Exarchate and Patriarchate churches respectively was generally viewed as akin to an association with opposing religious/political parties. It was not uncommon for interviewees to state ‘it was similar as what we have today where some support VMRO-DPMNE and others SDS’.<sup>197</sup> Generally there were no serious animosities or conflicts between villagers. The village community continued to function as a single entity, and physical confrontations were rare. Tensions were directed against specific individuals whose actions disrupted harmony in the village and attracted unwanted attention from armed bands or the authorities. Such an individual could be a village headman, the priest, a teacher, influential villager, spy or informer.<sup>198</sup> In other instances, pressures exerted by an armed band could incite tensions or disputes between villagers.

Collective celebrations such as the village saint’s day continued to be celebrated by all villagers, regardless of political leanings. There was no modification of customs and traditions corresponding to Exarchate or Patriarchate jurisdiction. In every instance in all sample villages, respondents stated that customs remained unchanged. It was of no consequence what party the people belonged to: ‘everyone spoke Macedonian at home and in the village, customs and traditions remained

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<sup>197</sup> Since Macedonian independence from Yugoslavia, the two main Macedonian political rivals have been VMRO-DPMNE (Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity) and SDS (Social Democratic Union). Generally entire families are aligned with one or the other political party and those with VMRO-DPMNE are labelled *vmrovtsi*, whilst those with SDS (former communists) as *komunisti*, (‘Communists’). These terms are used frequently in everyday language. Rivalries between opposing supporters are often intense, and during the first several years of the 1990s, the labels - *vmrovtsi* and *komunisti* - of individuals, their families and community organisations was also commonplace in Macedonian communities in Australia. The writer visited Macedonia during the second multi-party elections in Macedonia (1994) and saw at first hand the passion with which Macedonians embraced their politics.

<sup>198</sup> Cvetan Jovanovski interview, op. cit., Kosta Markovski interview, op. cit., Stojan Spasevski interview, op. cit., Mihailo Kleshtev (born 1934 in Gorno Aglarci, Bitola region), interview conducted 1 November 1999 in Melbourne. Todor Veljanovski (born 1930 in Dolno Aglarci, Bitola region), interview conducted on 2 April 2000 in Bitola.

unchanged and were identical in all families'.<sup>199</sup> There was no separation into two groups in villages, for instance, the traditional *Badnik* (Christmas eve) bonfire at the height of the Exarchate and Patriarchate rivalry continued to be jointly celebrated in villages. As the bulk of villages were small to medium settlements, they only possessed one village square. Furthermore in each village there was a network of family ties (traced through male kin). According to Kosta Markovski from the village of Suvodol, 'our village was too small for us to divide ourselves into separate groups'.<sup>200</sup> Although a small village may have an upper *maalo* and lower *maalo*, a large village may have several *maali*, more than one village square, multiple village taps and two or more churches. In large villages such as Nered (Lerin region), containing approximately 500 homes (there were four churches) and two *badnik* fires, the fires were not a reflection of a segregated religious community, but rather of people living at different ends of the village.<sup>201</sup>

There was regular intermarriage between adherents of the Patriarchate church and those of the Exarchate church. All respondents stated that this was the case. In most instances, marriage between people from opposing parties was not hindered by the political situation, and, if there was resistance to a marriage, there was a threat that the potential bride may elope (*begalka*). For a daughter to leave her parents in such a manner brought shame upon them. Parents therefore generally disregarded political/religious differences and gave priority to living in harmony with the future in-laws (*svatovi*).<sup>202</sup> In the case of an impending marriage being organised by a middle-man (*stroinik*), sometimes the partner was sought from the same religious/political group, however, priority was typically given to the social standing of the potential in-

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<sup>199</sup> Aca Kotevska (born 1911 in Suvodol, Bitola region), interview 10 March 2000 in Novaci. Similar remarks were made by Luba Stankovska (interview, op. cit.), who stated, 'there were no cultural changes, the way of life, customs and traditions all remained the same'.

<sup>200</sup> Kosta Markovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>201</sup> Velika Spirova interview, op. cit. The four churches in Nered were Sveti Atanas, Sveti Troica, Sveti Nikola and Sveti Luka.

<sup>202</sup> Trajanka Talevska interview, op. cit., Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit., Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit.

laws.<sup>203</sup> Generally marriages were common between Patriarchists and Exarchists because the people ‘continued to function as one society... it was not so serious as to divide us into separate groups of people.’<sup>204</sup> According to Atanas Kotevski from Vrajnevci, weddings regularly took place between members of the Exarchate and Patriarchate, and during village weddings ‘musicians only played Macedonian songs and party politics did not have any relevance when it came to collective celebrations’.<sup>205</sup> Due to the tradition of men taking brides from neighbouring villages, and the family ties formed because of this, generally there was no real conflict between neighbouring villages that adhered to rival churches.<sup>206</sup> Similarly in Bitola, marriages between Macedonian Patriarchists and Exarchists were the norm.<sup>207</sup>

Generally relations between neighbouring villages were congenial. Where villages were from opposing religious parties, they continued to maintain normal relations. For example, the village of Gorno Aglarci (both upper and lower) was exclusively Exarchate, however, they enjoyed normal neighbourly relations with the surrounding villages, including Suvodol and Paralovo which both contained Patriarchists. Aglarci villagers attended the village religious day celebrations in both these villages; this was a long-held tradition. Equally, villagers from both Suvodol and Paralovo also attended the village celebrations in Aglarci. There was no animosity resulting from opposing religious adherence.<sup>208</sup> Alternatively in Graeshnica, according to Stojan Spasevski, there was a sense of division between the opposing members of the Patriarchate and Exarchate churches, but it did not create serious arguments or animosities between them, nor with any of the neighbouring Macedonian Christian villages.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid; and, Todor Veljanovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>204</sup> Todor Veljanovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>205</sup> Atanas Kotevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>206</sup> Cvetan Jovanovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>207</sup> Hristo ‘Caki’ Dimitrovski interview, op. cit. Similarly in the Vlah village of Gopesh, inter-marriage between Patriarchist and pro-Romanian Vlachs was the norm. Customs and traditions between the two parties were indistinguishable from one another. Simo ‘Hemtu’ Simonovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>208</sup> Todor Veljanovski interview, op. cit., Mihailo Kleshtev interview, op. cit.

<sup>209</sup> Stojan Spasevski interview, op. cit.

In northern Macedonian villages under Serb Patriarchate jurisdiction, the average villager maintained normal relations with the neighbouring Exarchate village. Petar Dimitrievitch, the Serbian School Director in the Kumanovo region, reported in 1903 that the only noticeable division and animosity was between the upper class and the Exarchate and Patriarchate protagonists.<sup>210</sup> In the Lerin village of Krpeshina, there was some tension in the village between Patriarchists and Exarchists, but it was never as serious as to create physical confrontations between each other. Opposition was expressed mostly through derogatory name calling such as *Grk* ('Greek') and *Bugarin* ('Bulgarian').<sup>211</sup> Todor Veljanovski stated that his grandfather (mother's father) refused to visit his wife's relatives who were Patriarchate adherents in the nearby village of Dobromiri (majority Exarchate adherents, minority Patriarchate) because of a political disagreement between them. He did not, however, prevent his wife and children from visiting.<sup>212</sup> In Vrajevci the majority Exarchist adherents lived well with the minority Patriarchists. 'All village religious holy days were celebrated together, people worked and socialised together on a daily basis, occasionally arguments would occur but people continued to live together as they always had.'<sup>213</sup>

Interviewees were generally unaware of foreign surnames in the village corresponding to Christian, Bulgarian Exarchate or Greek Patriarchate church adherence. Although there is evidence indicating that foreign names were officially registered in Patriarchate or Exarchate church records, in everyday language Macedonian equivalents were exclusively used. In the mixed Patriarchist-Exarchist village of Suvodol, Aca Kotevska (from the Najdovci family) was known to all simply

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<sup>210</sup> From a diplomatic report compiled by Milosav Kurtovitch, Serb General Consul in Skopje to Cimi Lozanich, Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, dated 20 February 1903. L. Lape, editor (1954), op. cit. p. 82.

<sup>211</sup> Velika Spirova interview, op. cit.

<sup>212</sup> Todor Veljanovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>213</sup> Atanas Vasilevski interview, op. cit. The notion of the general Macedonian Exarchist and Patriarchist population being at war and murdering one another is erroneous. When killings did occur these were invariably connected to the activities of the armed bands and are generally recorded as occurring from 1903 onwards (ie during the Ilinden Uprising and in the turbulent and chaotic years following, particularly 1903-1907). It was not uncommon for bands to force individual villagers to act as guides when travelling through unfamiliar terrain. These attacks often resulted in the loss of life and property and the distraught villagers invariably directed their revenge upon the guide, who often had no choice in the matter. Mihailo Kleshtev interview, op.cit.

as 'Aca' (a traditional Macedonian name), but was in fact christened with the Greek name Altmına. She pointed out that very few people outside her immediate family were aware of this, as the name 'Altmına' was never used in public. Her family was with the Patriarchate church and she was named Altmına because her 'godfather chose it and that he was a Patriarchist also'.<sup>214</sup> At her christening there was also a Macedonian male infant baptised with the Greek name Cleomenis. Similarly, no one in the village knew him by that name; he was known to all as Kitse (a traditional Macedonian name).<sup>215</sup> Aca added, 'although our family was the central Patriarchist family in the village, we continued to be known as Najdovci. This never changed.' Nor was she aware of others in the village having Greek or any other foreign names, including the older people.<sup>216</sup> In the Patriarchist controlled village of Graeshnica, the village priest (a villager, Petre, from the Popovci family) kept a list of recommended Greek Christian names to be used for naming newborn children.<sup>217</sup> Although officially people were given Greek names, in everyday communication people only used traditional Macedonian names. Surnames remained in their original Macedonian form; there was no attempt made to change these to reflect a Greek character.<sup>218</sup>

Typically Macedonian surnames are derived from a father's name or even a nickname (*prekar*), which becomes a family symbol.<sup>219</sup> Traditionally Macedonians were identified by their Christian name and as the son of a particular individual, for example 'Bogdan, son of Petre'. Ottoman records officially recorded Macedonians by this system as evidenced by fifteenth century tax records,<sup>220</sup> seventeenth century

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<sup>214</sup> Aca Kotevska interview, op. cit.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Ilija Najdovski (Aca Kotevska's brother) similarly stated that 'none of the older people in the village had Greek names'. Ilija's father was the Greek teacher in the village, and his grandfather (Marko Alaibegot) was also aligned with the Patriarchate. The grandfather, Marko, organised the construction of the church bell and village tap, on both were written '*Marko Alaibegot ja izgradil so Crkveni pari*' ('Marko Alaibegot built this with church funds') in Macedonian. Ilija Najdovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>217</sup> Stojan Spasevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> For a comprehensive study of Macedonian onomastics, and in particular Macedonian surnames see T. Stamatovski, *Makedonska Onomastika* [Macedonian Onomastics], Skopje, 1990, pp. 163-192.

<sup>220</sup> An Ottoman census conducted in the Bitola nahia in 1468 reveals that names in the village of Suvodol were typically Macedonian and recorded as - Rajko son of Branislav, Todor son of Nene, Radosh son of Yandre,

Ottoman administrative, legal and commercial documents,<sup>221</sup> and early nineteenth century tax documents.<sup>222</sup> Although the introduction of ‘official’ surnames in Macedonian culture commenced from the nineteenth century and was largely influenced by European customs and institutions,<sup>223</sup> Ottoman state documents in the form of property titles continued to record Macedonian names according to traditional systems. As such the purchasers of *chiflik* land in the village of Gorno Aglarci are recorded as ‘Anasto son of Petre’, ‘Tole son of Riste’, ‘Milan and Giorgi sons of Micho’.<sup>224</sup>

Bulgarian Exarchate birth and wedding certificates obtained from the Archive of Macedonia reveal names recorded as typically Macedonian, such as Nikola Petrev from Bareshani and Neda Ilieva from Mogila.<sup>225</sup> It is likely that because there was no substantial difference between Macedonian and Bulgarian names, the Bulgarian Exarchate may not have pressured Macedonians to modify their names.<sup>226</sup> Macedonian surnames during the period of late Ottoman rule generally end with the letters ‘ev’/‘ov’ or ‘ski’ (male) and ‘eva’/‘ova’ or ‘ska’ (female). Serbian writers of the period replace the ‘ov’ with ‘itch’ and Greeks writers use ‘os’ or ‘as’. There are a

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Dono son of Mirko, etc. Female names included Dobra, Zuja, Kalina, Ivana, Stana and Mara. Women were only included in census and tax data if they were widows with children. M. Sokolski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV vek* [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census Records of the XV century], Vol II, Skopje, 1973. pp. 86, 235-237. See also M. Sokolski and A. Stojanovski, editors. *Turski Dokumenti - Opshiren Popisen Defter No 4 (1467-1468)*, [Turkish Documents - Detailed Census Record No 4, 1467-1468], Skopje, 1971.

<sup>221</sup> M. Sokolski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti za Istorijata na Makedonskiot narod* [Turkish Documents on the History of the Macedonian People], Series I: 1607-1699, Vol III from January 1636 to the end of 1639, Skopje, 1969.

<sup>222</sup> Whilst maintaining a religious monopoly in Macedonia, the Constantinople Patriarchate does not appear to have systematically forced Greek names upon the Macedonian population in the Bitola region during the mid nineteenth century. This is evidenced through Ottoman tax records for the period 1840/41 and 1841/42, where the overwhelming majority of names are typically Macedonian. D. Gorgiev, editor, *Turski Dokumenti za Istorijata na Makedonija - Popisi od XIX vek* [Turkish Documents on the History of Macedonia - Censuses from the XIX century], Book II, Skopje, 1997, pp. 13-115.

<sup>223</sup> T. Stamatovski, op. cit. p. 164.

<sup>224</sup> Original Ottoman land titles (all are dated 21 July 1906) in the possession of the author – Volume 52, Document 20, Number 91; Volume 52, Document 29, Number 100; Volume 52, Document 31, Number 102; Volume 52, Document 34, Number 105; and, Volume 52, Document 38, Number 109.

<sup>225</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate documents derived from the Archive of Macedonia – 01.0491.0007.0162 / 0687-0691 (five baptismal documents from 1900); 01.0491.0007.0163 / 0712-0713 (two baptismal documents 1901 and 1909); 01.0491.0007.0164 / 0714-0718 (five wedding certificates from 1904) and 01.0491.0007.0165 / 0734-0738 (five wedding certificates 1905).

<sup>226</sup> This may have also been dependant upon the individual priest and the religious/political hold over the villagers. Comparisons with different regions of Macedonia, particularly border areas would be desirable.

number of factors making it difficult to determine how widespread the practice of Christening infants with foreign names may have been.

As evidenced by the data presented on Table 4.6, the parents and grandparents of all interviewees born before 1940 had distinctly Macedonian names. Graves in village cemeteries had no text on the headstones, and as the priest was often either from the same village or from a neighbouring one, pressuring villagers to adopt foreign names for their newborn children may not have been a popular act. Furthermore, in every instance in Exarchate and Patriarchate villages, the priest and teacher were known by their Macedonian names only.

In the Macedonian Islamicised villages of the Dolna Reka region, interviewees revealed that after conversion from Christianity to Islam villagers were required to adopt Muslim names and gave their children such names. Although amongst themselves they continued to use their traditional Macedonian Christian names, even though these were no longer their official names. 'A Macedonian Muslim may have been Ismail before the Turks. At home and in the village, he remained Ilija'.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Ismail Bojda (born 1953 in Brod, Kosovo-Serbia), interview conducted in Skopje on 7 March 2000; Abdula Odzheski (born 1945 in Zhirovica, Reka region), interview conducted on 25 March 2000 in Zhirovica; and, Redzho Muslioski (born 1946 in Dolno Kosovrasti, Reka region), interview conducted 27 March 2000 in Dolno Kosovrasti.

Table 4.6: Christian Names of Parents and Grandparents of Macedonian Male Interviewees Born in the Bitola Region (Prior to 1940)

Name	Year of birth	Place of birth	Father	Mother	Grand-father	Grand-mother
Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski	1893	Bitola	Nikola	Elizabeta	Dimitrija	Tema
Vasil Petrov	1911	Tepavci	Giorgi	Ristana	Petre	Rumena
Vasko Altiparmak	1912	Dolenci	Ilija	Ilinka	Veljan	Trena
Stefan Trajchevski	1913	Dolno Orehovo	Mitre	Stojna	Trajko	?
Petko Atanasovski	1913	Makovo	Kote	Jana	Atanas	Visha
Ilija Najdovski	1920	Suvodol	Riste	Dosta	Marko	?
Stojche Petkovski	1920	Makovo	Dimitrija	Mara	Petko	Ristana
Vlado Jankulovski	1921	Novaci	Jovan	Naumka	Jankula	Mitra
Mihailo Todorovski	1921	Dolno Orehovo	Vidan	Kalina	Todor	Mitra
Stojan Spasevski	1922	Graeshnica	Petre	Sofka	Spas	?
Atanas Kotevski	1923	Vrajnevc	Giorgi	?	Stojche	?
Nikola Giorgioski	1927	Gorno Aglarci	Naumche	Blaguna	Giorgia	Visha
Atanas Vasilevski	1928	Vrajnevc	Mio	Velika	Tale	Dosta
Zivko Dimovski	1929	Gorno Aglarci	Bogoja	Sultana	Mitko	Cveta
Kosta Markovski	1930	Suvodol	Tole	Ristana	Anasto	Blaguna
Trajan Micevski	1930	Novaci	Angele	Dosta	Riste	Lenka
Todor Veljanovski	1930	Dolno Aglarci	Pavle	Velika	Giorgia	?
Mihailo Kleshtev	1934	Gorno Aglarci	Petre	Koprina	Naumche	Mara
Vane Tancevski	1935	Lopatica	Bosilko	Maria	Angele	Angelina
Stojan Vasilevski	1937	Kukurech-ani	Riste	Spasa	Vasil	Kita

Notes: The following interviewees are not included in Table 4.6 due to a lack of data collected by the writer, Cvetan Jovanovski (born 1914 in Novaci) from the Bozovci family; Giorgi Dimovski-Colev (born 1929 in Bitola); and, Trajan Popovski (born 1939 in Lazhec) from the Popovci family.

In single church-mixed Patriarchist and Exarchist villages, all continued to use the one church and cemetery. Village cemeteries contained no divisions or separate areas for Exarchate or Patriarchate graves. Similarly, in the Vlah village of Gopesh, the single church was shared between the Patriarchist and Romanian parties, and both used the sole cemetery with graves dispersed throughout its grounds without separate areas used.<sup>228</sup> Furthermore, if the village church swapped jurisdiction, there was no modification to the church or cemetery.<sup>229</sup> Regardless of which Balkan Orthodox church organisation held jurisdiction, church services and village religious rituals remained unchanged. The only notable difference may have been the language of the church service. In villages that contained a single church it was inconceivable that a separate cemetery be established, as traditionally a village cemetery is located within the church grounds. Where a village contained two churches, only then were separate cemeteries established, such as in the villages of Vrajnevcı and Krpeshina.<sup>230</sup> It was common in the Bitola region that the establishment of a second village church was invariably an Exarchate church and beside it a cemetery established.

It is interesting to draw a comparison to a Patriarchate village faced with the establishment of a second non-Orthodox church. In Koleshino village (Strumica region), a Macedonian Protestant church was established in 1890. The already established Patriarchate church forbade the Protestant villagers continued use of the existing cemetery, and 'did not accept them as Christians because they changed their religion'.<sup>231</sup> Subsequently a new cemetery for Protestants was established beside the original one and later, after the end of Ottoman rule when the Orthodox cemetery

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<sup>228</sup> Simo Simonovski interview, op. cit. In Gopesh graves were either in Greek or Romanian script.

<sup>229</sup> Old graves in village cemeteries bore no legible script upon them and generally did not have a headstone. A stone plate lay on top of the grave and often had a Christian cross carved into it.

<sup>230</sup> Vrajnevcı was considered to be an Exarchist village, as the overwhelming majority attended the Exarchist church. There was an upper and lower section of the village, the Patriarchist church Saint Todor was above the village, and the Exarchist church Saint Dimitija below. Both priests conducted services in the Macedonian language. Atanas Vasilevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>231</sup> Jovan Izev interview, op. cit.

was full, ‘they commenced burying people in the Protestant cemetery - we became one again’.<sup>232</sup>

In the nineteenth century Bitola contained two main Christian cemeteries. On the north-eastern fringe of the town, and associated with the Patriarchist Saint Dimitrija church in central Bitola, stood the cemetery known as Bukovo cemetery (*Bukovski grobishta*). The other cemetery was situated on the southern fringe beside the Exarchist Saint Nedela church. A physical examination of the two cemeteries revealed that the nineteenth and early twentieth century graves in the Sveta Nedela cemetery exclusively bore Cyrillic script and the graves of Bitola region revolutionaries were found here. In the Bukovo cemetery the majority of pre-1912 graves bore Greek script, however a sizable portion of graves contained Cyrillic script and were generally found scattered around the cemetery, with a larger grouping situated in a specific area. An interesting example highlighting the political/religious influences of the period was a specific family burial site with inscriptions in multiple languages upon the headstone. The first two names appear in Cyrillic, the following three in Greek, and the remaining two in Macedonian. There were numerous examples of family graves in the Bukovo cemetery originally bearing Greek script, and later in Macedonian exposing distinct Vlah names, confirming that the majority of ‘Greek graves’ were in fact Vlah.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century Vlachs were considered to be amongst the wealthiest inhabitants of Bitola. This was apparent at the Bukovo and Vlah cemeteries by the construction of elaborate graves and tombstones. From 1913 to the beginning of the Second World War, all graves contain exclusively Serbian script (during this period Macedonia was recognised only as Southern Serbia by the Serbo-Yugoslav regime).

Photo 4.1: Arched entry of the Bukovo cemetery in Bitola



A third Bitola cemetery was located below the Bukovo cemetery and the property was purchased in 1903 by the Vlah association with financial help from the Romanian government.<sup>234</sup> The establishment of a separate Vlah cemetery in Bitola was directly related to the struggle for emancipation from Greek Patriarchate influence<sup>235</sup> and graves in the cemetery exclusively contain Vlah/Romanian script.

The intensity of the conflict between the Greek Patriarchate and the Vlah party was expressed through Vlah folk music. The following example is a traditional unrecorded and largely unknown Vlah song from the Ottoman period.<sup>236</sup>

<sup>234</sup> Konstantin Nicha interview, op. cit.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> From the private collection of Hristo Hristoski-Mular (Krushevo, Macedonia), Director of the Ilinden Festival in Krushevo. The song was originally collected by Tayka Hrisik, a resident of Krushevo and compiler of old folk songs.

Sh-ira noapte, sh-avea lunaOne moonlit night

I

Sh-ira noapte, sh-avea luna  
 sh-nji-avdzai cantic di-Armana  
 sh-nji-avdzai cantic di-Armana  
 iu-sh-plandzea pi-aljei curuna

One moonlit night  
 I heard the voice of a Vlah woman  
 weeping on her wedding crown

II

Sh-plandzea corba, shi zghilea  
 Sh perlji di-n-cap sh-lji-arupea  
 Sh perlji di-n-cap sh-lji arupea  
 Sh-a-ficiorlui ma lji-dzatsea

The poor woman cried and screamed  
 and tore the hair from her head  
 she spoke to her young son

III

Gione, cara s-banedz, s-nji creshci  
 Bunj parintsa s-nu-agarsheshci  
 Sh-la Grets fara uminatate  
 Ti una dao s-la pateshci

“Son if you grow up  
 do not forget your (good) parents  
 and to the Greeks without mercy  
 pay them back twice”

IV

Dado, cara s-banedz, s-nji crescu,  
 bunj parintsa nu-agashescu  
 sh-la Grets fara uminatate  
 ti una dzatse va la paltescu

“Mother, if I grow up  
 I will not forget my good parents  
 and to the Greeks without mercy  
 I will pay them back ten times”

**Self-preservation**

DETERMING THE INFLUENCE villages came under is not always clearly evident. A village classified as Patriarchist by one writer might be referred to as Exarchist by another. Villages did change allegiance between the parties in order to preserve their own security and prevent attracting the attention of foreign bands and their violence. A deliberate strategy existed in villages whereby some villagers presented themselves to armed bands as their supporters in order to maintain peace in the village. In Makovo, Stojche Petkovski pointed out that:

The village was predominantly with the Exarchate, however there were some who were with the Patriarchate. In one family, two brothers were on opposing sides, not because of the politics, but due to a deliberate strategy of self-preservation. If a

Greek *cheta* came into the village and threatened the Exarchist brother, the Patriarchist brother would stand up in his defence.<sup>237</sup>

The village of Suvodol was split between Exarchists and Patriarchists. The village headman was with the Patriarchist party and he placed the interests of the villagers first. He was careful to prevent party politics from creating divisions amongst the people. As a result there were no serious tensions in the village.<sup>238</sup> Kosta Markovski from Suvodol stated that people from both parties in the village lived peacefully:

They all knew they were the same people, they looked after one another - the village kmet (Marko from the Najdovci family) protected the village. If the Turkish authorities came through and inquired whether any bands had been seen, he replied no, and if a Greek band had come through he would deny it to the Bulgarian band, and equally deny the appearance of a Bulgarian band to the Greeks.<sup>239</sup>

In the mixed Macedonian Turkish village of Dolno Orehovo, Macedonians adhered to both the Exarchate and Patriarchate parties. To ensure harmony and security for all, 'if a Bulgarian band arrived, we replied there are no Greeks, if the Greeks arrived, we replied there are no Bulgarians'.<sup>240</sup> In this manner, Stefan Trajchevski added, 'we protected our village'.<sup>241</sup>

A story passed down linked to self-preservation from the violence of armed bands has a setting sometime at the beginning of the twentieth century on the fringes of the Mariovo district, in the village of Grunishta. Frequented by both Greek and Bulgarian bands, the story revolves around a Greek band entering the village and confronting an elderly male in his barn as he attended to his sheep. The following exchange takes place:<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Stojche Petkovski interview, op. cit. Stojche Petkovski stated that the methods employed by the *cheta* in winning people over to their position involved burning one's house, barn, or sheep enclosure. Stojche recalls these details from stories related to him by his father.

<sup>238</sup> Ilija Najdovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>239</sup> Kosta Markovski interview, op. cit. The village *kmet* (headman) was known to all as Marko 'Alaibeg' ('Alaibeg', a Turkish word signifying the status of the village *kmet*, to be similar to that of a Turkish *beg*).

<sup>240</sup> Stefan Trajchevski interview, op. cit.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> Stojche Petkovski interview, op. cit.

Greek band:

*“Dali si Bugarin”?* - “Are you a Bulgarian”? (Bulgarian – *“Bugarin”*)

Male villager:

*“So bukaneto voda si piam”* - “I drink water from the vase” (Vase – *“bukaneto”*)

Greek band:

*“Togash Grk si”?* - “Then you're Greek?” (Greek – *“Grk”*)

Male villager:

*“Ama grd sum, star sum”* - “Yes, I'm ugly, I'm an old man.” (Ugly – *“grd”*)

Greek band:

*“Ovoj ne razbira od politika,  
ne znai od koja partija e,  
aj da begame”.* - “He has no understanding of politics,  
and doesn't know what party he belongs  
to, let us leave”.

The above story was related as a humorous example of self-preservation, but this tactic was not always effective. The village of Kochishta attempted to remain aside from the conflict between the Exarchate and Patriarchate churches, but its impartiality was no defense against the violent actions of the armed bands. The village was totally destroyed by a Greek band in 1907.<sup>243</sup> Strategies of self-preservation were intended to protect the interests of villages, even though they may have presented a particular outward appearance of religious jurisdiction or ‘nationality’ to interested observers. It may be assumed that maintaining harmony and most importantly a sense of security, were important village priorities.

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<sup>243</sup> Stojan Vasilevski interview, op. cit.

## Position of IMRO

THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO) was the attainment of political autonomy of Macedonia. The organisation viewed the religious activities of the Balkan States as propagandistic political interference and reacted to it in a defined manner. According to Article Two of the constitution of the IMRO, 'the Organisation struggles for the removal of chauvanistic propaganda and national disputes, which split and exhaust the population in its struggle against the common enemy'.<sup>244</sup> The position of IMRO was aimed at preventing further intensification of the religious rivalry in Macedonia and discouraged the Macedonian people from crossing from one church allegiance to another.

Slaveyko Arsov, an IMRO revolutionary leader, advocated the official IMRO position in respect to religious conflict in villages. Active in countryside villages and arranging public meetings, most often conducted in the village church, he encouraged the inhabitants to put aside any disagreements amongst themselves be they personal, political or of a religious nature. Reinforcing the aims of the organisation, Arsov made known that the primary aim of the *cheti* is not to make villagers Exarchists or Bulgarians, but to liberate them from the Ottomans. Whilst agitating in the Patriarchist village of German in the Mala Prespa region, the villagers asked Arsov whether they should transfer to the Exarchate or remain with the Patriarchate. Arsov replied, 'we are not interested in that, and that they may remain as they are, only that they cooperate with our work'.<sup>245</sup> Arsov believed this strategy brought positive

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<sup>244</sup> M. Pandevski (1974), op. cit. p. 84. A translation of the IMRO statute in modern standard Macedonian reads: 'Organizacijata se bori za odstranuvanje na shovenistichkite propagandi i nacionalnite jazbhi, koi go razedinuvaat i obecciluvaat Makedonskoto i Odrinskoto naselenie vo negovata borba protiv zaednichkiot neprijatel'.

<sup>245</sup> 'Vo German me prashaa dali da odat pod Egsarhijata ili da ostanat i natamu pod Patriakot? Im odgovorivme deka nas toa ne ne interesira i deka mozhat da si ostanat toa shto si bile. Dovolno e da bidat dobri za deloto'. Slaveyko Arsov Memoirs from I. Katardzhijev, editor, *Spomeni - S. Arsov, P. Klashev, L. Dzherov, G.P. Hristov, A. Andreev, G. Papanchev, L. Dimitrov*, Skopje, 1997, p. 95. Slavetko Arsov's memoirs were originally published in the series *Materijali za Istorijata na Makedonskoto Osloboditelno Dvizhenje* under the title of *Vostanichkoto Dvizhenje vo Jugozapadna Makedonija (Do 1904 God.)*, P. Glushkov, Sofia, 1925.

results. Harmony was restored in villages that were divided by religious propaganda, and thereafter a favourable political climate was created for the organisation to operate.

Similarly, Nikola Petrov Rusinski was an IMRO leader active in the Bitola/Mariovo region in the winter of 1902/1903. As an activist he conducted meetings in numerous villages under Patriarchate and Exarchate jurisdiction and successfully joined entire villages into the organisational fold. Oaths of allegiance were taken, memberships administered and village committees appointed.<sup>246</sup> Similar accounts are given in the memoirs of Mihail Gerdzhikov, Boris Sarafov, Yane Sandanski, Pando Klashev and others throughout various regions of Macedonia of both Patriarchist and Exarchist villages, supplying freedom fighters and supporting the organisation and its struggle for political emancipation.<sup>247</sup>

The organisation actively engaged in bringing villages over to the IMRO regardless of church affiliation, and exploited the dissatisfaction of the Macedonian Christian population. A substantial portion of its fighting ranks consisted of men from Patriarchist villages<sup>248</sup> and recruits were drawn from all sectors of the Macedonian population. Subjected to various influences, there were active men from

<sup>246</sup> D. Pachemska-Petreska and V. Kushevski, editors, *Nikola Petrov Rusinski - Spomeni* [Nikola Petrov Rusinski - Memoirs], Skopje, 1997, pp. 241-277.

<sup>247</sup> See I. Katardzhiev, editor, *Spomeni - I.H. Nikolov, D. Grujev, B. Sarafov, J. Sandanski, M. Gerdzhikov, Dr H. Tatarchev*, Skopje, 1995, and K. Pandev and Z. Noneva, op. cit.

<sup>248</sup> Memoirs of numerous revolutionary figures attest to the fact that Macedonian Exarchist and Macedonian Patriarchist villages united as one during the Ilinden Rebellion. It is interesting to note that Greek historians have made claim to the Ilinden Rebellion as a Greek rebellion of liberation in Macedonia, counting Macedonian Patriarchist villages as Greek. On the other hand Bulgarian historians routinely claim the insurrection as Bulgarian, counting the IMRO leaders as Exarchate schoolteachers and the Macedonian Exarchate population as Bulgarian. The American, Albert Sonnichsen, spent a period of six months in Macedonia as a member of an IMRO *cheta*, active in the regions between Ber to Ohrid. Sonnichsen details how a leader of a VMRO unit, from a Patriarchate village, whom had been educated in Athens and was a fluent Greek speaker, utilised his Greek language skills to entrap and kill the Greek priest from the village of Pisoderi. Sonnichsen described the priest as 'below a Bishop in rank, but higher in atrocities committed'). A. Sonnichsen, *Isповед na eden Makedonski chetnik* [Confessions of a Macedonian bandit], Skopje, 1997, pp. 208-210. Originally published in New York, 1909. Dr Ivan Alyov, of the Patriarchist party, was a prominent individual from the town of Gumendje. He had gained his medical training in Athens and provided the local revolutionary committee in Gumedje with medical supplies and attended to the medical needs of the *cheta*. Described as a Macedonian patriot, he was particularly respected for his stand against the antagonism brought by the religious rivalry between the Exarchate and Patriarchate. M. Pandevski, (1974), op. cit. p. 113.

Exarchate, Patriarchist, Serb Patriarchist, Uniate and Protestant villages.<sup>249</sup> From the non-Macedonian population, Vlahs were the most numerous participants in the IMRO.<sup>250</sup>

Prominent members of the organisation routinely travelled throughout Macedonia visiting both Exarchate and Patriarchate villages and speaking to the inhabitants about the political future of Macedonia.<sup>251</sup> The organisation opposed the interference of the Balkan States and the manner in which Macedonia had become a battlefield for competition of the people. The IMRO sought to maintain and protect the integrity of Macedonia. Towards the final stages of Ottoman rule, certain elements in the organisation favoured continued Ottoman domination in preference to dismemberment of the country.<sup>252</sup>

Despite the enormous pressures put on people to subscribe to one particular identity or another, there is a surprising level of uniformity on what it meant to live and work in Macedonia.

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<sup>249</sup> See M. Pandevski, *Makedonskoto Osloboditelno Delo Vo XIX i XX Vek* [The Macedonian Liberation Action in the XIX and XX century], Vol III, Skopje, 1987. In the Strumica region the district treasurer for IMRO was Alafred Izev (Koleshino village). Alafred Izev was a son of Mane Izev. According to John Izev the famous revolutionary leader Jane Sandanski was training to become a Protestant church pastor before his death in 1915. John Izev interview, op. cit.

<sup>250</sup> There was also a small number of ethnic Greeks in the ranks of the IMRO. A prominent individual was Ivan 'Grubeto' (Ivan 'the Greek'). Born in 1880 in the Eastern Macedonian town of Melnik, he was recruited into the IMRO by the famous Goce Delchev. During the Ilinden Rebellion he led a *cheta* in the Drama region. Faithful to the principles of the IMRO to the end, he was killed in battle with the Ottoman regular army in 1905.

<sup>251</sup> Nikola Petrov Rusinski details his visit to the village of Polog (Bitola region) in 1902 and the topic upon which he spoke at the evening gathering was 'the laws by which nations are governed'. D. Pachemska-Petreska and V. Kushevski, op. cit. p. 258.

<sup>252</sup> Jane Sandanski, the famous leader in the Seres region of Macedonia, was an outspoken advocate of this view in the final years leading to the Balkan Wars.

# Chapter Five: Schooling and Ruling

## 5.1 Foreign educational institutions in Macedonia, 1870–1912

ALONGSIDE THE STRUGGLE to establish and expand their own religious jurisdiction in Macedonia, as described in the preceding chapter, the external Balkan States attempted to reinforce and support their respective positions through the establishment of educational institutions. Vast sums were spent by the governments of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia to finance campaigns aimed at attracting children from the Macedonian Christian population to their respective Greek, Bulgarian and Serb schools. Religious jurisdiction was utilised in support of ethnographic and statistical data. The Balkan States recognised that through the establishment of schools in Macedonia, they could strategically use the number and location of ‘their’ schools as evidence to demonstrate to Europe that their particular population was inhabiting Macedonia, or specific regions of the land, in accordance to their territorial aspirations. Statistics could also be incorporated into the production of ethnographic maps; and, ultimately through the process of foreign education the Balkan States hoped to create ‘Greeks’, ‘Bulgarians’ and ‘Serbs’ of Macedonian schoolchildren.

Foreign education in Macedonia at the turn of the nineteenth century was a dangerous and divisive element. The Balkan States intended for education to be used for the advancement of their political aims in Macedonia. As such, education was used as a primary tool in the struggle for Macedonia, according to the historian E. Kofos, ‘the interested countries, as a first step towards supporting their influence over the region, concentrated in fomenting among the inhabitants of Macedonia the national consciousness of their choice’.<sup>1</sup> The school curriculum was not solely intended to provide an education. Instead, the purpose of the schools was far more

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<sup>1</sup> E. Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Thessaloniki, 1964, p. 22.

sinister, the historian D.M. Perry claiming that they were often 'hotbeds of national agendas'.<sup>2</sup>

Macedonian children found themselves the central object of the educational campaign as a result of belonging to the dominant majority group, but were not the exclusive target for assimilation by the foreign school systems. Vlah association to the Patriarchate Church, and the implications of a potential loss of Vlah support to the Greek cause in Macedonia, caused the Patriarchate to specifically focus upon attracting Vlah children to Greek schools. Each of the Balkan protagonists sought to open the greatest number of schools and attract the highest number of students; and it was of no real significance from what ethnic group they originated, although necessarily derived from the Christian population.

Educational activities sponsored by the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian governments had divisive consequences for the unity of the Macedonian people, with every attempt made to replace one domination with another and to instil a new sense of identity upon Macedonians. Macedonia was transformed into an arena where rival parties battled for the minds of generations of children.

## **Greek Patriarchate schools**

IN THE PERIOD between the abolition of the Macedonian Archbishopric of Ohrid and the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate, the Greek Patriarchate enjoyed unhindered religious domination in Macedonia, and the establishment of the first foreign schools occurs during this period. According to the historian A. Trajanovski Greek Patriarchate schools were established predominantly in urban centres, with few founded in the countryside villages.<sup>3</sup> Following the establishment of the Bulgarian

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<sup>2</sup> D.M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movements 1893-1903*, Duke University Press, 1988, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> A. Trajanovski, *Crkovno-Uchilishnite Opshtini vo Makedonia* [The Parish Educational Councils in Macedonia], Skopje 1988, p. 62.

Exarchate (1870) and the Congress of Berlin (1878), Greek educational activities significantly increased in Macedonia. Greek Consulates in Macedonia played a central role in the educational campaign and were instrumental in founding ‘a large number of different educational institutions and organisations whose underlying purpose was the efficient propagation of the Greek language, Greek literacy and consciousness’.<sup>4</sup> The historian, H. Poulton, stated that organisations were formed for the purpose of advancing Greek interests in Macedonia, and they cooperated with the Greek Foreign Ministry, the Patriarchate and the Greek State school system.<sup>5</sup> Among the larger of these organisations was the Athens-based Association for the Propagation of Greek Letters (1874), Committee for the Reinforcement of the Greek Church and Education (1886), Epicurus Council of the Macedonians (1903), and the Melas Infantile Chamber (1904). Based in Constantinople, there were other Greek organisations of a similar nature: Greek Philological Association (1861), Macedonian Phil-Educational Brotherhood (1871), Hellenic Literary Association (1874), and Educational and Philanthropic Brotherhood or Love Each Other (1880).

Greece recognised that along with the formation of the Bulgarian Exarchate and its expansion into Macedonia, the establishment of Bulgarian schools was clearly on the agenda. As a reaction, Greek educational activity took on a sense of urgency and sought to maximise the opportunity to expand its own educational system. The Russian Consul in Solun reported in 1873 that the

Greeks take advantage of this weakness on the part of the Bulgarians to set up societies for the dissemination of the Greek alphabet and letters in Macedonia; they train young Greeks to occupy the posts of teachers; open new schools, give aid in the form of money and books to the existing Greek schools ... The Seres society is under the secret chairmanship of the Metropolitan there, whereas that in Salonika – under the secret chairmanship of the Greek Consul; the two of them have contacts with the society in Athens, from where they receive money and books; what is more,

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<sup>4</sup> M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski, G. Todorovski, editors, *A History of the Macedonian People*, Skopje, 1979, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> H. Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* London, 1995, p. 59.

they have patrons in Constantinople, Vienna and Odessa from among the Greeks living there.<sup>6</sup>

Over the next 20 years, Bulgarian education rapidly spread throughout Macedonia. To counteract the Bulgarian advance, the *Ethnike Hetairia* (National Society) organisation was founded in Athens in 1894. The historian L.S. Stavrianos points out that its central supporters were drawn from officers of the Greek army and wealthy Greeks. During the early years following its formation, it subsidised Greek schools in Macedonia,<sup>7</sup> and according to the contemporary commentator, I. Ivanich, funding was also drawn from the Greek government and the Syligos.<sup>8</sup>

Assessing the number of Greek schools in Macedonia during the period 1877-1904 is relatively difficult due to the conflicting and inconsistent nature of available figures. The compiler of statistical data, D.M. Brancoff, contended that according to the Greek Minister M. Delyannis, in 1877 there were 256 Greek schools with 10,968 pupils.<sup>9</sup> The Greek Syligos for the same year claimed 638 schools with 32,885 pupils<sup>10</sup>, while, the commentator, G. Chassiotis in his book *Public Instruction among the Greeks* (1881), stated that in 1878 the number of Greek schools in Macedonia was 421

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<sup>6</sup> Russian diplomatic report dated 8 June 1873 from the State Historical Archive of the Leningrad District, V. Bozhinov and L. Panayotov, editors, *Macedonia: Documents and Material*, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, 1978, p. 298.

<sup>7</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 1966, pp. 520-521. The Greek historical figure Ion Dragoumis understood the beneficial role of schools to Greek aspirations. Through education students were enabled to 'sense that they belonged to an entity greater than the kingdom. In an age of irredentist nationalism, Dragoumis was its most conscious and vivid exponent in Greece. He preferred the worlds of Byzantium and the Ottoman Empire to classical Greece because they were more relevant to his nationalist visions. Dragoumis was convinced that Greece possessed enough schools but of the wrong kind. The gymnasia seemed to him to be a little more than factories for producing civil servants. The kingdom did not need any more schools but the Greeks outside its frontiers did. He conjured up a romantic vision of a one-room schoolhouse with a single teacher spreading nationalist ideas among the Greeks of Asia Minor and Macedonia'. The historian, G. Augustinos, *Consciousness and History: Nationalist Critics of Greek Society 1897-1914*, Colombia University Press, 1977, pp. 111-112.

<sup>8</sup> I. Ivanich, *Makedonia i Makedoncite* [Macedonia and the Macedonians], Vol II, Belgrade, 1908, p. 394. A Greek organisation, the Syligos outwardly professed to be literary and scientific organisations, intended to advance education amongst Greeks. The Syligos was supported financially by wealthy Greeks, but the organisation was in fact politically motivated and sought as its primary aim to support Patriarchate attempts to expand throughout the Orthodox Balkans and assimilate the non Greek Orthodox Christian populations under Ottoman rule.

<sup>9</sup> D.M. Brancoff, *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne* [The Christian Population of Macedonia], Paris, 1905, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

with 20,682 pupils.<sup>11</sup> The commentator, V. Colocotronis presented figures based on official Greek data for the Solun and Bitola vilayets of 1,011 schools (with 1,463 teachers) and 59,640 pupils for 1902.<sup>12</sup> According to the 1953 *Greek Encyclopedia* there were 973 schools (with 3,335 teachers) and 55,633 pupils in the Solun and Bitola vilayets in 1904 and a further 402 schools in the Skopje Vilayet with 22,367 pupils—a total of 78,000 pupils in 1,375 schools.<sup>13</sup>

Skopje Vilayet figures for Greek Patriarchate schools are unusual, as few contemporary Greek commentators make claim to the vilayet. V. Colocotronis failed to mention figures for the Skopje vilayet and the contemporary commentator, A.T. Spiliotopoulos, stated that Greeks made no claim to the Skopje vilayet where they had only 5 schools and 327 pupils.<sup>14</sup> The highest claim to Patriarchate schools was from the historian C. Nicolaides. In the 1895 school year he claimed 83,810 Greek school students (not including the Skopje vilayet).<sup>15</sup> Official Greek statistics for 1896 published in the *Glas Makedonski* newspaper in 1897, conflict with those advocated by C. Nicolaides. According to the newspaper, in the Bitola and Solun vilayets there were 907 Patriarchate schools (with 1,245 teachers) and 53,693 students (30,000 less than claimed by C. Nicolaides).<sup>16</sup> It is interesting to compare official Greek government educational statistics for the year 1908 as cited by the Serb commentator I. Ivanic. According to Ivanic, in the Bitola and Solun vilayets the Greek government claimed a total of 998 Patriarchate schools with 1463 teachers.<sup>17</sup> A comparison with

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> V. Colocotronis, *La Macedoine et l'hellenisme, etude historique*, Paris, 1919, p. 614 as cited by L. Mojsov, *The Macedonian Historical Themes*, Belgrade, 1979, p. 70.

<sup>13</sup> *Neoterion enciklopedikon lexicikon – Illin*, Vol XII, Athens, 1953, p. 821, as cited in L. Mojsov, *ibid*, p. 70.

<sup>14</sup> A.T. Spiliotopoulos, *La Macedoine et l'Hellenisme*, 1904, as cited by D. Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897-1913*, Thessaloniki, 1966, p. 20.

<sup>15</sup> C. Nicolaides, *Macedonien*, Berlin, 1899, pp. 141-142.

In contrast, D.M. Brancoff, citing Greek sources, claims that in the early 1900s there were 613 Greek schools (with 951 teachers) and 32,476 pupils. D.M. Brancoff, *op. cit.* p. 69.

<sup>16</sup> *Glas Makedonski*, 5 January 1897, Year IV, Number 9, p. 1. According to the article the total budget for the Patriarchate school system in 1896 was 706,524 Francs in the Bitola vilayet and 451,317 Francs in the Solun Vilayet.

<sup>17</sup> I. Ivanic (1908), *op. cit.* pp. 394-396.

Greek data for 1904 represents a reduction of approximately 400 Greek schools in Macedonia.

Table 5.1: Number of Patriarchate Schools and Student Enrolment in Macedonia  
According to Greek Sources, 1877–1904

	(1)Delyannis (2) Syllogos	Chassiotis	Nicolaides	Colocotronis	Greek Ency.
Year	1877	1878	1895	1902	1904
Schools	(1) 256 (2) 638	421	1,433	1,011	1,375
Pupils	(1) 10,968 (2) 32,885	20,682	83,810	59,640	78,000

## Bulgarian Exarchate schools

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 and its jurisdiction in north-eastern Macedonia (Veles Eparchy) facilitated the implanting of Bulgarian schools alongside churches. Later with the formation of the Bulgarian State in 1878, and the Congress of Berlin, Bulgarian educational propaganda further broadened in Macedonia as the Exarchate and the Bulgarian government conducted a joint effort in realising this plan. The contemporary commentator R. Von Mach explained that obstacles designed to thwart the expansion of the Exarchate school system came from the Patriarchate-influenced Ottomans and dated back to the Russian-Turkish war, when all Exarchate schools were placed under the supervision of the Greek Bishops (this remained the case until 1881). Supervision of the schools was later withdrawn from the Greek Bishops and transferred to a Turkish Commission (this was seen as a victory by the Bulgarian Exarchate), whilst Patriarchate schools remained independent of any outside supervision. It was not until 1891 that

Exarchate schools were declared independent of the Turkish commissioners and the Exarchate took control of its own educational affairs.<sup>18</sup>

According to the historian T.R. Georgevitch financial support was granted to the Exarchate from within the Bulgarian state budget, with the Exarchate creating a special department for this purpose – the ‘Skolsko Popechiteljstvo’ (School Department).<sup>19</sup> The Bulgarian government played a leading role in spreading educational propaganda throughout Macedonia. Stoilov, the President of the Bulgarian government, advanced an explicit Bulgarian program in Macedonia in 1882. It was based on instilling in Macedonians the feeling and consciousness that they were Bulgarian and that further, ‘the Principality is the most natural and active guardian of Macedonia’.<sup>20</sup> In pursuit of this objective the Bulgarian government aimed at developing Bulgarian schooling on as wide a scale as possible. In support of this goal a sum of 100,000 levs was expended in 1881; by 1885 the figure had increased to 574,874 levs and was continuing to increase annually.<sup>21</sup> According to Bulgarian Exarchate data, there was a systematic increase in the number of schools and student enrolment in Macedonia across the years 1886 to 1902.

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<sup>18</sup> R. Von Mach, *The Bulgarian Exarchate: Its History and the Extent of its Authority in Turkey*, London, 1907, pp. 24–25.

<sup>19</sup> T.R. Georgevitch, *Macedonia*, London, 1918, p. 152.

<sup>20</sup> M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski, G. Todorovski, editors, op. cit. p. 138.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 138.

The Polish commentator, Włodzimierz Trampczyński, *Albania i Macedonia*, Warsaw, 1903, stated that the national assembly in Sofia set aside 400,000 levs annually (catered for through the national budget) for the opening of Bulgarian schools in Macedonia. The ethnologist, J. Pshchulkovska-Simitchieva, *Naselenieto i uchilishtata vo Bitola i Bitolsko kon krajot na XIX i pochetokot na XX vek* [The population and schools in Bitola and the Bitola region at the end of the XIX and beginning of the XX centuries], Bitola, 1981, p. 674.

Table 5.2: Number of Exarchate Schools and Student Enrolment in Macedonia  
According to Bulgarian Sources, 1886–1912

School Year	Solun Vilayet			Bitola Vilayet			Skopje Vilayet			Total Students
	Schools	Teachers	Pupils	S	T	P	S	T	P	
1886-1887		200	6,689	120	179	6,917	96	137	4,709	18,306
1891-1892	137	290	8,226	174	271	7,821	105	173	5,023	21,070
1894	199		12,158	188		10,473	105		5,429	28,060
1896-1897	221	428	14,252	234	361	14,210	184	292	9,455	37,917
1899-1900	278	486	14,838	273	421	15,161	190	314	9,974	39,973
1901-1902	318	563	17,169	288	436	17,127	211	360	10,816	45,112
1911-1912	360									63,763

Source and notes: Official Bulgarian Exarchate statistics as published by D.M. Brancoff, *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne* [The Christian population of Macedonia], Paris, 1905, p. 69, except for 1894 Exarchate school data, obtained from R. Von Mach, *Makedonskoto Prashanje* [The Macedonian Question], Skopje, 1990, pp. 139-141, (original title *Macedonische Frage*, Vienna, 1895). According to 1911-12 Exarchate data there were 1,143 schools operating in Macedonia with 1,776 schoolteachers, G.P. Genov, *Neiskiot Dogovor i Blgaria* [The Treaty of Neuilly and Bulgaria], Sofia, 1935, pp. 143-145, as cited in L. Mojssov, op. cit. p.75.

Statistics by Bulgarian commentators were generally consistent with official Exarchate statistics. In Table 5.2, the 1894 figures derived from R. Von Mach's 1895 publication (citing Exarchate statistics), closely correspond with Bulgarian sources such as G.P. Genov who claimed 30,314 pupils and 557 schools (808 teachers) for the 1894-95 school year (a difference of 47 schools and 2,254 students).<sup>22</sup> An unusual but significant discrepancy between two sources citing Exarchate School Inspector Reports involves the non-Bulgarian source (A.T. Spilitiopoulos) surprisingly claiming a far higher figure than official Bulgarian statistics. Citing official Exarchate records

<sup>22</sup> G.P. Genov's statistical educational data was broken down into the following, 126 schools (197 teachers) and 6,394 pupils in the Skopje vilayet, 238 schools (350 teachers) and 12,963 pupils in the Solun vilayet, and 193 schools (261 teachers) and 10,957 pupils in the Bitola vilayet. G.P. Genov, *Neiskata Dogovor i Blgaria* [The Neuilly Treaty and Bulgaria], Sofia, 1935, pp. 143-145, as cited in L. Mojssov, op. cit. p. 75.

for the 1896-1897 school year, he claimed 843 Bulgarian schools with 64,432 students.<sup>23</sup> The International Carnegie Commission also claimed 843 Exarchate schools, but with 46,432 pupils<sup>24</sup>, whereas for the same school year the Exarchate claimed 37,917 pupils.<sup>25</sup> Data obtained by A.T. Spilitiopoulos for 1896-1897 were much higher than Exarchate figures, however, for 1902 it was significantly lower than Exarchate figures - claiming 592 Bulgarian schools with about 30,000 pupils, whereas the Exarchate claimed 859 schools with 45,112 pupils.<sup>26</sup> Citing Exarchate statistics, a Macedonian source claims in the Exarchate educational sphere in the school year 1899-1900 there were 1,053 elementary and grade schools in Macedonia attended by a total of 39,454 children,<sup>27</sup> corresponding with Exarchate data published by D.M. Brancoff. Immediately before the Balkan Wars, official Bulgarian Exarchate statistics for the 1911-1912 school year claimed 1,143 schools (1,776 teachers) and 63,763 pupils.<sup>28</sup>

## Serbian schools

UNDER THE SERBIAN regency a 'cultural committee' was formed in Belgrade in 1868 whose chief aim was the opening of Serbian schools in Old Serbia and Macedonia. Armed with textbooks, Serb schoolteachers were active in Macedonia and, with the financial support of the Serbian government, commenced opening schools in the northwestern regions. According to the contemporary commentator, S.

<sup>23</sup> D. Dakin, op. cit. p. 20.

<sup>24</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, Washington, 1914, p. 27. The figure of 46,432 pupils includes 14,713 children in Exarchate kindergartens.

<sup>25</sup> In contrast, the lowest figures are drawn from the newspaper *Glas Makedonski* [Macedonian Voice], 5 January 1897, Year IV, Number 9, p. 1, citing Exarchate school records and claiming 445 schools, 671 teachers and 24,113 students (these figures only apply to the Bitola and Solun Vilayets).

<sup>26</sup> Cited in D. Dakin, op. cit. pp. 19-20.

<sup>27</sup> M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski, G. Todorovski, editors, op. cit. p. 138.

<sup>28</sup> Statistics by G.P. Genov, as cited in L. Mojsov, op. cit. p. 75.

The highest figures for Bulgarian schools in Macedonia are from the historian, Christ Anastasoff, who claims that there were 1,373 schools (with 2,266 teachers) and 78,854 students (he claims these figures only apply to the parts of Macedonia which fell under Greek and Serbian rule after the Balkan Wars). From C. Anastasoff's address before the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual MPO Convention (September 1, 1940), MPO (Macedonian Political Organisation), *An American Symposium on the Macedonian Problem*, MPO, 1941, p. 48.

Gopchevich, up to 1873 the Serb educational campaign in Macedonia saw 77 schools established.<sup>29</sup> Initial Serb progress was later hindered during the Serb-Turkish War (1876-78) when the Ottoman authorities closed all Serb schools in Macedonia. They were not permitted to reopen until 1885.<sup>30</sup>

Even allowing for Serb designs suffering a setback, Serb educational activity was not of the same magnitude as Bulgarian and Greek efforts. It was only after the Congress of Berlin, when Serbia was forced to look southwards for an outlet to the sea, that Serbian activity intensified. Declaring the inhabitants of Macedonia to be Serbians, Serbia pursued a 'Greater Serbia' policy in Macedonia. However a Serbian educational system in Macedonia without its own church was in an inferior position in relation to the Greeks and Bulgarians with their Exarchate and Patriarchate churches. Serbia relied on its friendly relations with the Greek Patriarchate for the spread of its schools, however the Patriarchate appears to have been unwilling to accommodate the Serbs in strategic areas, particularly in central and southern Macedonia.<sup>31</sup>

The historians D. Djordjevic and S. Fischer-Galati stated that in 1886 the Serbs created, on Bulgarian and Greek prototypes, the Society of Saint Sava

<sup>29</sup> S. Gopchevich, *Stara Srbija i Makedonija* [Old Serbia and Macedonia], Belgrade, 1890, pp. 313-315.

<sup>30</sup> G.M. Terry, *The Origins and Development of the Macedonian Revolutionary Movement with Particular reference to the Tayna Makedonsko-Odrinska Revolutsonerna Organizatsiya from its Conception in 1893 to the Ilinden Uprising of 1903*, Unpublished MA thesis, University of Nottingham, 1974, p. 61.

<sup>31</sup> In Bitola, the Greek Patriarchate church permitted a Serbian language service on only one day of the year (the celebration of Saint Sava) for the students of the Serb school. Serbian teachers in Bitola appealed to the Greek Metropolitan Joakim to permit a regular Serbian language service, however the Metropolitan rejected all their requests. K. Bitoski, *Dejnosta na Pelagonskata Mitropolija 1878-1912* [The activities of the Pelagonija Archiepiscopate Diocese 1878-1912], Skopje, 1968, p. 256. The establishment and continued operation of Serb schools were in some instances linked to lobbying of local Ottoman functionaries. For instance, a Serb school was established in Bogomila in 1895 as a direct result of the actions of the regional Kaimakam. In 1897 a Serb school was established in Prilep and in commemoration of the event the Serb priest Alleksa Kochovitch conducted a service to bless the school and prayed that the Ottoman Sultan have a long and healthy life. The commentator, M.V. Vesselinovitch, *Statistika, Srpski shkola y Turskoj (y Staroj Srbiji i Makedoniji) za 1895-96 shkolsky godiny* [Serb school statistics in Turkey (Old Serbia and Macedonia) in the 1895-96 school year], Belgrade, 1897, pp. 9 and 31.

Association whose purpose was to open schools in designated areas of Macedonia.<sup>32</sup> It was similar to Greek and Bulgarian organisations – the historian, M.B. Petrovich, stated that ‘it was supposedly a private organisation but actually a front for the Serbian government’.<sup>33</sup> Over the next two years Serbian Consulates were opened in Solun and Skopje (1887) and in Bitola (1888). In March of 1887 the Serbian Ministry of Education formed a special section for ‘Serbian churches and schools outside of Serbia’. This section was soon transferred to the Foreign Ministry and given the designation ‘PP’ (*poverljivo prosvetno* literally meaning ‘confidential cultural’) but normally referred as ‘the propaganda’.<sup>34</sup> Thereafter from 1890 onwards the sole responsibility for the opening of Serbian schools in Macedonia was handed to the Foreign Ministry in Belgrade and the consulates in Macedonia; ‘in this way the opening of schools was greatly facilitated’.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> D. Djordjevic, and S. Fischer-Galati, *The Balkan Revolutionary Tradition*, Colombia University Press, 1981, p. 177. T.R. Georgievitch describes the Society as an association founded ‘with the object of helping to preserve and educate the Serbian people in Turkish territory’. Op. cit. p. 175.

<sup>33</sup> Petrovich M.B. *A History of Modern Serbia 1804-1918*, Vol II, 1976, p. 496. Petrovich claimed that ‘four fifths of the society’s budget for its school and seminary came from the governments budget’ (p. 498). H.N. Brailsford, a journalist and relief worker in Macedonia, stated ‘the Serbian movement is a purely official agitation, guided and financed in Belgrade’. H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and their Future*, London, 1906, p. 105. Brailsford spent five months in Macedonia during the winter of 1903-1904. Together with his wife, they worked on behalf of the British Relief Fund after the Ilinden Uprising. Brailsford's well-known and often quoted work, treats the Macedonians as belonging to the Bulgarian nationality.

<sup>34</sup> M.B. Petrovitch, op. cit. p. 496.

<sup>35</sup> T.R. Georgevitch, op. cit. p. 175.

Serb Consuls played a central role in the opening of schools in Macedonia. Numerous Serb diplomatic reports attest to this fact. In an official report by Kosta Hristich, the Serb Consul in Solun, to the Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs (dated 26 May 1889, report number 48), it is stated, ‘whatever amount of schools we open will be a forward step’ but that ‘material and financial assistance is required, which unfortunately at the moment is not sufficient’. K. Dzhambozovski, editor, *Gradja za Istoriju Makedonskog Naroda (iz Arhiva Srbije)* [Material on the History of the Macedonian people (from the Serbian Archive)], Vol IV, Book III, (1888-1889), Belgrade, 1987, p. 438. Furthermore, a Consular report by Stojan Novakovic (dated 20 April 1888, report number 80) outlines a proposal for the printing and distribution of Serbian school books in Macedonia in order to guarantee a supply of material and preventing Serbian schools in European Turkey ‘from being without our books for even a day’. Ibid, p. 126.

T.R. Georgievitch claimed that Serb schools were popular and ‘this number (*of schools*) was still insufficient, and the people urgently demanded more’. He designated the principal townships where schools were opened. In the Veles region – Veles town, Bashino Selo, Belovishte, Bogomila; Ohrid region – Borovac, Venchani, Leshani; Skopje region – Banajni, Porech, Chucher, Kuchevishite; Kitchevo region – Kitchevo town, Organci, Prechista; Tetovo region – Tetovo town, Organci, Leshak; and the towns of Gostivar, Debar, Egri Palanka, Zletovo, Klissura, Kratovo, Krushevo and Kumanovo. T.R. Georgevitch, op. cit. p. 177. M.V. Vesselinovitch similarly claimed ‘*y vilayetima Bitolskom i Solunskom narod je neprestano trazbio i molio da my se dopuste srpske shkole*’ (‘in the Bitola and Solun Vilayets the people are impatiently awaiting and pleading for the establishment of Serbian schools’). M.V. Vesselinovitch, op. cit. p. 5.

The historian T.R. Georgevitch presented detailed figures for Serbian schools in Macedonia. In 1891, he claimed, there were 117 Serbian schools (with 140 teachers) opened in the vilayets of Bitola, Skopje and Solun. In 1896 Georgevitch claimed 159 schools (with 240 teachers), and, in 1901, 226 elementary schools, four boys' high schools, one theological college, and three high schools for girls.<sup>36</sup> The Carnegie International Commission presented official Serbian statistics for the 1895-1896 school year, enumerating 157 schools with 6,831 pupils, but pointing out that 80 schools, comprising 3,958 pupils, were situated in Serbia proper and not Macedonia.<sup>37</sup> Data from the Carnegie International Commission corresponds to figures provided by M.V. Vesselinovitch in his examination of Serbian schools in Macedonia during the 1895-96 school year.

According to contemporary commentator I. Ivanich during the 1901-1902 school year there were 42 Serbian schools in 35 places in the Bitola vilayet, 28 schools in 15 places in the Solun vilayet, 98 schools in 83 places of the Skopje eparchy and 14 schools in 12 places in the Veles district.<sup>38</sup> In total, according to Ivanich, there were 182 Serbian schools in Macedonia during the 1901/02 school year; for the same period Georgievitch counted as many as 226 schools. Both Georgievitch and Ivanich agree that there were 300 Serb schools in European Turkey at about the turn of the century, however Ivanich specifies that 185 elementary schools were outside Macedonia and located in Kosovo. Subsequently there were 118 Serbian schools in Macedonia, a figure which generally corresponds to estimates from non-Serb sources.

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<sup>36</sup> T.R. Georgevitch, op. cit. p. 175. Georgievitch went on to state that by 1900 there were 300 Serbian schools in European Turkey.

<sup>37</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, op. cit. p. 27.

<sup>38</sup> The figures for the Bitola vilayet include one incomplete secondary school for boys, and another for girls – both were located in Bitola. In the Solun vilayet, two public schools, one complete secondary school and one higher girls school in Solun, and in the Skopje vilayet a boys teacher training school in Skopje, two civilian schools and one incomplete secondary school. I. Ivanich outlined that he did not personally compile these figures – instead they were compiled by Velemir Joksic – a Serb teacher in Macedonia at the turn of the century. I. Ivanic, *Makedonija i Makedonci* [Macedonia and Macedonians], Vol I, Belgrade, 1906, pp. 310-311.

Serbian influence reached its peak in Macedonia in the mid-1890s, later losing ground to the Bulgarian Exarchate.<sup>39</sup>

Table 5.3: Number of Serb Schools in Macedonia According to Serb Sources, 1876–1901

	<b>Gopcevic</b>	<b>Georgievitch</b>	<b>Veselinovich</b>	<b>Ivanich (1) Gegv'itch (2)</b>
<b>Year</b>	1876	1891	1895-1896	1900-1901
<b>Schools</b>	77	117	76	182 (1) 226 (2)

## Romanian schools

ROMANIAN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY commenced in 1865 when Joan Radulescu and Dimitrie Bolintineanu founded Romanian schools amongst Vlah communities in Macedonia. Supported by the ‘Macedonian Romanian Organisation for Intellectual Culture’ based in Bucharest, it was led by public figures in the political life of Romania and aimed at disseminating Romanian national propaganda. Their case was based on the Vlah language, which they considered to be akin to Romanian. According to the historian, I. Arginteanu, the Bucharest-based organisation was ‘instrumental in the growth of schools and education in Macedonia’.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, with the support of the Romanian church, the first teacher training college opened in Bucharest in 1865. The first students were twelve Vlachs from Epirus and in 1867 another group of Vlachs were recruited from Macedonia, Epirus and Thessaly.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> H. Poulton, op. cit. p. 64. Poulton states that ‘Serbian influence reached its peak about 1896 and had waned by the turn of the century’.

<sup>40</sup> I. Arginteanu, *Istorijsa na Armn Makedoncite (Vlasite)* [A History of the Macedonian Vlachs], 1988, p. 189. Originally published in Romanian as *Istoria Romanilor Macedoneni*, Bucharest, 1904. I. Arginteanu claims that in the first few years’ existence of the ‘Macedonian Romanian Organisation for Intellectual Culture’ over 60,000 books were distributed to Romanian schools in Macedonia (p.190).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 187. Subjects taught at the teacher training college included – languages (Latin, French and Romance), history, mathematics, geography, art and music.

The energetic Apostol Margarit was to lead the Romanian struggle in Macedonia from 1868, directing it against Greek influence upon Vlachs. A born propagandist, an active and able organiser, he worked towards opening Romanian schools and churches in European Turkey. From 1868 to 1878 he taught in Romanian schools, and for the next 20 years he was head of Romanian propaganda activities and inspector of all schools.<sup>42</sup> The Romanian government put aside special subsidies for the assistance of Vlach schools in European Turkey, financially supported Margarit and other Romanian activists. According to the Romanian historian, Arginteanu, in 1899 there was a total of 34 Romanian schools in Macedonia.<sup>43</sup> According to official Romanian government data during the 1904-1905 school year, this figure had grown to a total of 72 Romanian schools in Macedonia, with 94 male teachers and 53 female teachers (147 schoolteachers in all) financed by the government at a cost of 265,361 (Serbian) dinars.<sup>44</sup> Greek government statistics for 1904 indicate the existence of 49 Romanian schools, 145 schoolteachers and 2002 students, whilst Bulgarian government statistics for 1907 indicate 38 schools with 117 schoolteachers and 2070 students.<sup>45</sup> In 1905, D.M. Brancoff claimed 43 schools (9 secondary and 34 primary schools with 125 teachers) and 2,207 students.<sup>46</sup> The historian, Stavrianos, claimed that in 1912 Vlach schools 'reputedly' numbered over 30, with an enrolment of approximately 2,000 Vlach students.<sup>47</sup>

The educational struggle in Macedonia was fundamentally waged between Bulgaria and Greece. Serbia was the third player and the Romanian educational campaign is considered to have followed on as the fourth. Romanian educational

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<sup>42</sup> I. Ivanic (1908), op. cit. p. 408.

<sup>43</sup> I. Arginteanu, op. cit. p. 189.

<sup>44</sup> I. Ivanic (1908), op. cit. p. 418.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, pp. 419-420.

<sup>46</sup> D.M. Brancoff, op. cit. pp. 146-247.

<sup>47</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, *Balkan Federation (A History of the Movement Toward Balkan Unity in Modern Times)*, 1964, p. 139. It is interesting to note during the Balkan Wars the 'Macedonian – Romanian Society for Intellectual Culture' proposed a solution to the 'Macedonian problem' by advocating an autonomous Macedonia. After the First World War a delegation was sent to the Versailles Peace Conference restating the call for an autonomous Macedonia, with an independent Vlach canton in the Pindus region. H. Poulton, op. cit. p. 62. Note: the Pindus Mountains are located at the meeting of the borders between Macedonia, Greece and Albania. The mountains are a traditional home to the Vlachs.

institutions, although specifically directed at Vlachs, may have even surpassed the number of Serb schools, according to a confidential 1896 Serb diplomatic report by the Emissary in Constantinople, Doctor Vladan Djordjevic. The report states,

Even the third national propaganda campaign which is being conducted in Macedonia is not Serbian, but incredibly Romanian! - though there are under 200,000 Kutzo-Vlachs in Macedonia, the propaganda machine of this mere handful of people which used to speak a distorted Romanian and could only read and write Greek, separated from the Kingdom of Romania by entire compact nations and their national states, has far greater success to boast of already on the national and even the political plane, than we have.<sup>48</sup>

Romanian education did not enjoy the successes of the Greek and Bulgarian schools, as they only sought to open schools for members of the Vlah community. The Romanian government never seriously maintained any territorial ambitions in Macedonia. Its policy was generally aimed at creating leverage with the Bulgarians, (as Romania entertained her own designs on Bulgarian territory in the Dobrudja region). Romanian efforts to establish schools in Macedonia were primarily directed towards the Vlah population and there is no evidence suggesting that they actively competed for non-Vlah children.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Report Number 268 - Dated September 22, 1896. The report was for the Serbian Minister for Foreign Affairs. V. Djordjevic, *Srbije i Turska 1894-1897* [Serbia and Turkey 1894-1897], Belgrade, 1928, p. 57. Similar comments were made in a diplomatic report by Kosta Hristich, Serb General Consul in Solun, in a letter dated 26 May 1889 – '*Mi se ne samo s nyima, no chak ni sa Vlashkim shkolama ne mozemo porediti*'. K. Dzhabazovski, editor, op. cit. p. 437.

<sup>49</sup> Romanian educational activities, although maintaining a political agenda, were unlike Bulgarian, Serb and Greek schools, as they were not aimed at attracting non-Vlah students. Vlah education focused upon Vlachs only, and aimed at emancipating them from Greek influence. Romanian propaganda clashed directly with the Greek cause in Macedonia. Earlier, 'Greek schools influenced Vlachs to be pro Greek, but with the formation of Romanian schools the Vlachs became pro-Romanian'. Konstatin Nicha (born 1919 in Bitola), interview conducted in Bitola on 30 March 2000. Konstantin Nicha is an active member of the Vlah community in Bitola and is a well-known retired medical doctor. Ivanich also considered that Vlah schools were primarily involved with attracting Vlah children. I. Ivanich (1908), op. cit. p. 422. As the Greek position had most to lose with the spread of Vlah education, they ardently opposed the opening of Vlah schools. The first Vlah school opened in Macedonia, was in the village of Trnovo in the Bitola district by the Bucharest educated Dimitrie Atanasecu in 1864. The Greek Archbishop Benedict in Bitola opposed the establishment of the school, and instructed the Patriarchate village priest to visit every home in the village whose children attended the school and threatened the parents with excommunication from the church if they did not withdraw their children. The Greek Church succeeded in closing down the school by driving Atanasecu out of the village. Atanasecu travelled to Constantinople and there obtained approval from the Ottoman authorities to reopen the school. In 1867 another Vlah school was opened in the village of Gopesh, the Greek Archbishop Meletie similarly attempted to close the school by declaring the teacher (Dimitrie Cosmescu) as 'a rebel and dangerous agitator'. I. Arginteanu, op. cit. pp. 186-187.

## Catholic and Protestant schools

EARLY CATHOLIC ACTIVITY in Macedonia became evident following the Crimean War (1856), and emerged during the subsequent period when Macedonians intensified their struggle against the domination of the Constantinople Patriarchate. In 1879 a detailed plan for the development of Catholic activity was drawn up by the emissaries Paolo Purlang and Giovanni Battista Botca (who visited Macedonia in the same year) and was founded on 'respect for the vernacular language and local customs'.<sup>50</sup> As such, Catholic education did not serve as an instrument of assimilation, as it did not intend to change the ethnic identity of Macedonian students. The historian S. Dimevski argues that the establishment of missionary centres in Bitola and Solun was aimed at supporting the founding of Catholic education institutions in Macedonia. With financial aid from France and Italy, Catholic missionaries opened schools in Solun and Bitola where teaching was conducted in the French and Italian languages. In the 1890s, French Lazarists operated the secondary school 'L'ecole des Lazaristes', which had a total of 140 students. Other schools in Solun included 'L'ecole de Monsieur Bertrame', 'La societee operaria' and 'L'ecole des coeurs de Calamaris'.<sup>51</sup> In the late 1890s Italian Catholics operated the 'Scuola Nazionale Italijana', also in Solun. Instruction was in Italian and it was upgraded as a commercial/trade school with subjects including mathematics, trade, correspondence, administration and geometrics.<sup>52</sup>

Catholic schools were also founded in Macedonian countryside villages where Catholicism had been adopted, particularly in the central southern regions of Kukush, Doiran and Enidzhe Vardar.<sup>53</sup> However in the large urban centers such as Bitola and Solun, the ethnic make-up of the students, was diverse, particularly in Solun,

<sup>50</sup> M. Apostolski, D. Zografski, A. Stoyanovski, G. Todorovski, editors, op. cit. p. 139.

<sup>51</sup> S. Dimevski. *Makedonskata Borba za Crkovna i Nacionalna Samostojnost vo XIX vek* [The Macedonian Struggle for Ecclesiastical and National Independence in the XIX century], Skopje, 1988, pp. 243-244.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 244.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 246. In the Gevgelija region in 1890 there were 771 adherent Catholic households in 12 villages with 10 operational Catholic schools (p. 246).

Macedonia's principal trade and commercial centre. Student enrolment data reinforces the cosmopolitan nature of the city, highlighting the strong presence of Jews (Table 5.4). The appearance of students from Western European countries can be attributed to diplomatic staff, representatives of foreign banks and businesses.<sup>54</sup>

Table 5.4: Student Statistics by Nationality for the Catholic Boys (Christian Brothers) and Girls School (*Francusko uobilishte na milosrdni sestri*) in Solun, 1891

Students by Nationality	Boys School	Girls School
Albanian		1
Austrian	40	6
Belgium	2	
'Bulgarian'	32	21
English	5	4
French	19	11
German	2	5
Greek	23	20
Jewish	52	72
Polish		2
Romanian		1
<b>Total Students</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>143</b>

Source: Dimevski, S. *Istorija na Makedonskata Pravoslavna Crkva* [A History of the Macedonian Orthodox Church], Skopje, 1989, p 754.

Unlike the Solun Catholic boys and girls schools, the Bitola Catholic school was embraced by the Turks of Bitola, who enrolled their children because of its French language instruction.<sup>55</sup> Overall, Catholic education in Macedonia was not widespread. Schools were sustained in the major centres, but enrolments declined at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>56</sup> Of the rural schools established in villages where

<sup>54</sup> According to official Ottoman data there were 1,265 foreign citizens (682 male and 583 female) residing in the Solun vilayet in 1899 compared to 56 foreign citizens in the Bitola vilayet (33 male and 23 female). The historian, K. Karpas, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, p. 161.

<sup>55</sup> J. Pshchulkovska-Simitchieva, *Naselenieto i uobilishtata vo Bitola i Bitolsko kon krajot na XIX i pocetokot na XX vek*, op. cit. p. 671.

<sup>56</sup> According to S. Dimevski, the Catholic primary school in Bitola during the early 1890s contained an enrolment of 80 students, 62 were Macedonians of the Orthodox Christian religion and 18 were Catholics. S. Dimevski, 1988, op. cit. p. 258. The ethnographer, V. Kanchov, claims that by the turn of the century there remained only one local Catholic family in Bitola comprising of three members and that school enrolments

Catholicism was adopted, most were later replaced by Bulgarian schools as the early successes of the Catholics were lost to the Bulgarian Exarchate.<sup>57</sup> The Serb, Ivanich, claims that in 1897 there were 22 Catholic schools in Macedonia, with 45 schoolteachers and 811 students.<sup>58</sup>

Protestant schools were established in Macedonian Protestant villages primarily in the Strumica, Gevgelija and Kukush regions, as well as in the towns of Razlog and Bansko, and in the major centres of Bitola and Solun. The Protestant girls and boys school was opened in Bitola in 1896, with two classes functioning and an enrolment of 14 children.<sup>59</sup> A girls high school also operated in Bitola and was attended by 34 students. Although 29 students were from Bitola, there were only 8 Protestant homes in the town according to I. Ivanich<sup>60</sup>, whilst V. Kanchov claims a total of 34 Protestants in Bitola (native inhabitants).<sup>61</sup> As with the Solun Catholic school in Table 5.4, it appears that the Protestant school in Bitola also drew students from various backgrounds and from the families of consular staff and other foreigners involved in business and trade. The remaining five students comprised one Vlah from Krushevo, two Albanians from Korcha<sup>62</sup> and two Serbs from Prishtina (Kosovo). According to a 1913 Serb military report the language of instruction at the school was a combination of English and 'Bulgarian'.<sup>63</sup> Whether the language in the Bitola school was actually Bulgarian or Macedonian is difficult to confirm, however the language of instruction at Protestant schools in the Strumica region villages was Macedonian according to the Macedonian Protestant interviewee, Jovan Izev.<sup>64</sup> The

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were minimal. V. Kanchov, *Bitola, Prespa i Ohridsko* [Bitola, Prespa and the Ohrid region], Sofia, 1970 (1891), p. 382.

<sup>57</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 73.

<sup>58</sup> I. Ivanich (1908), op. cit. p. 304.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 308.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 308.

<sup>61</sup> V. Kanchov (1891), p. 382.

<sup>62</sup> Korcha is also known in Macedonian as Gorica.

<sup>63</sup> From a Serb military report dated 20 August 1913 (Number 6260), G. Todorovski, editor, *Srpski Izvori za Istorijata na Makedonskiot Narod 1912-1914* [Serbian Sources on the History of the Macedonian People 1912-1914], Skopje, 1979, p. 221.

<sup>64</sup> Jovan (John) Izev (born 1943 in Koleshino village, Strumica region), interview conducted on 4 June 2002 in Melbourne.

number of Protestant schools in Macedonia around 1900 is unclear; there is no specific data available, although commentators of the period generally consider Protestantism to follow on after Catholicism in popularity or conversions in Macedonia. D.M. Brancoff, the compiler of statistical data, provided combined educational data for Catholic and Protestant schools and cited a figure of 26 schools with 56 schoolteachers and 775 students.<sup>65</sup>

## 5.2 Teachers, students and language

TRADITIONALLY CHURCHES AND monasteries were centres of learning and culture in Macedonia. Throughout Ottoman rule and the period of monopolised religious jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarchate (and Greek education), in various forms Macedonian schools continued to function and provide instruction in the 'people's language' (*narodna jazik*). Basic literacy was taught by priests and monks, and as teachers their tutoring was religiously orientated. Classes were commonly held in churches and monasteries, located away from the main roads and sometimes in remote locations, distanced from Turkish or Greek influence. They were known as *kelijni* schools.<sup>66</sup> During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries *kelijni* schools spread into villages and urban towns.<sup>67</sup>

During the course of the nineteenth century the religious-based *kelijni* schools undertook a gradual transition into secular institutions, administered through the establishment of independent Macedonian church-educational councils. The

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<sup>65</sup> D.M. Brancoff, op. cit. pp. 246-247.

<sup>66</sup> A. Trajanovski, op. cit. pp. 108-109. Prominent monasteries operating as cultural-educational centres included Sveti Arangel Gavril Lesnovski, Sveti Prohor Pchinski, Sveti Joakim Osogovski, Sveti Jovan Bigorski, Sveti Jovan Veterski, Sveta Bogorodica-Treskavec, Poloshkiot Manastir (Tikvesh region), Slepchenskiot Manastir, Sveta Prechista-Kitchevska, Sveti Atanas Leshochki, Sveti Naum (Ohrid lake) and others. Ibid, p. 109.

<sup>67</sup> However the establishment of modern Greek Patriarchate schools were generally more attractive to urban Hellenised Vlachs and to the Macedonian middle class.

democratic nature of the councils was threatened by the Patriarchate, and later also by the Exarchate, as both institutions sought to place these councils under their own control. In the 1860s a number of church educational councils were to break off relations with the Patriarchate and to employ Macedonian schoolteachers who had previously been educated in Greek schools and had worked in the Patriarchate school system as teachers. The leaders of the mid-nineteenth century Macedonian renaissance were Patriarchate-educated intellectuals such as Grigor Prlichev, Dimitar Miladinov and amongst others Kuzman Shapkarev who were to lead the struggle against the Greek Patriarchate church. Every effort was made by the Greek bishops to persecute the teachers and to close down the schools. For instance, the Prilep schoolteacher Jordan Hadzhi Konstantinov-Dzhinot was slandered before the Ottoman authorities as ‘a rebel’ by the Greek Bishop of Bitola before being imprisoned and exiled, and the school was subsequently closed (1860).<sup>68</sup> In 1862, two schoolteachers and prominent Macedonian cultural figures, the brothers Dimitar and Konstantin Miladinov, were denounced to the Ottomans by the Patriarchate Bishop as ‘Russian agents’. Both were imprisoned and would later die in a Constantinople prison. The Greek Patriarchate fervently opposed any threat to its domination and was handed a religious and educational monopoly in Macedonia by the Ottomans.

The earliest foreign schoolteachers were, therefore, Greek teachers who arrived along with Patriarchate jurisdiction after the Macedonian Ohrid Archbishopric was abolished. Greek Patriarchate schools were predominantly established in the cities and large villages, whilst the outlying areas were largely

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<sup>68</sup> The craftsmen of Prilep appealed to the Grand Vizier for the release of their teacher. The following is an extract from the letter. ‘...the indescribable bitterness and sorrow that has befallen our town. Immersed in sorrow and infinite grief, both the children and the adults bemoan the misfortune that has struck us, that is, the closure of the school and the imprisonment of the teacher without any lawful reason...Envy, malice and evil have succeeded this time in overcoming justice, that is, our religious shepherd who is not one of our people and the language of whom we do not know, and unfortunately, we stress this again, who instead of supporting our school and leading us along the right track, has become the main cause for the desolation of our school and the grief of the people in general...’ H. Andonov-Poljanski, *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, Vol I, Skopje, 1985, pp. 210-211.

ignored.<sup>69</sup> When Patriarchate domination was challenged in Macedonia with the formation of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870, and followed by the Congress of Berlin in 1878, it became clear that the process of establishing schools and attracting students was developing into a contest. With the systematic entry of the Bulgarian Exarchate and the Serbian school systems in Macedonia, they would replicate the process of attracting Macedonian students and train them to become schoolteachers within their respective school systems.<sup>70</sup> Consequently village schoolteachers were overwhelmingly Macedonians, usually from the same region and sometimes from the village itself. According to Bulgarian Exarchate documents from 1898-1899, Marko Cvetkov from Bitola was the appointed teacher in Dolno Charliya,<sup>71</sup> Todor Stojanov from Radobor was appointed the teacher in Dobrushevo,<sup>72</sup> and C. Nikolov from Dobrushevo was appointed the teacher in Ribarci.<sup>73</sup> Interviewees recalled that in the villages, Exarchate teachers were exclusively Macedonians, the only exception being the Exarchate teacher in Krpeshina (Lerin region), who was Bulgarian.<sup>74</sup> It was a similar situation in Patriarchate schools in the Bitola region. In every instance the teacher was a local Macedonian, apart from a Greek teacher who worked in the Paralovo monastery complex.<sup>75</sup> In Serb schools in northwestern Macedonia there likewise was a predominance of Macedonian teachers employed by the Serbian education system. From an 1888 Serb Consular report regarding schoolteachers in Macedonia, eight of nine teachers were from Macedonia.<sup>76</sup> The single non-Macedonian teacher, Spira Radivojevich from Prizren, was a schoolteacher in Tetovo.

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<sup>69</sup> A. Trajanovski, op. cit. p. 43.

<sup>70</sup> The monastery situated above Paralovo in the Bitola region was utilised as a central Greek school in the region, training locals to become teachers. Ilija Najdovski's father received his education there from 'a real Greek, he was the real propaganda, after they made my father a Greek teacher, they sent him back into his own village'. Ilija Najdovski (born 1920 in Suvodol, Bitola region), interview conducted 28 March 2000 in Novaci.

<sup>71</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0001.0204/0681-0681, dated 14 September 1899.

<sup>72</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0001.0233/0719-0719, dated 14 October 1899.

<sup>73</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0001.0235/0721-0721, dated 14 October 1899.

<sup>74</sup> Velika Spirova (born 1911 in Krpeshina, Lerin region), interview conducted on 19 January 2002.

<sup>75</sup> Ilija Najdovski interview, op. cit. The teacher for Gorno and Dolno Aglarci was from the neighbouring village of Dedebalci, the teacher in Makovo village was from the nearby Mariovo district village of Chanishte, and the teachers in Lazhec, Novaci and Suvodol were native to the respective villages. Data obtained from interviews conducted. Furthermore, the Patriarchate schoolteacher in Lavci was from Lerin. D. Konstantinov, M. Konstantinov, and K. Cingarovski, *Letopis na Bitolsko Lavci* [Chronicles of Lavci, Bitola region], Bitola, 1966, p. 30.

<sup>76</sup> K. Dzhambazovski, editor, op. cit. pp. 316-321.

Otherwise the Blace (Tetovo) teacher was from Raosoka (Debar), the Kumanovo teacher from Veles, and the teachers from Tetovo, Belovishte (Tetovo), Galitchnik, Vratnice (Tetovo), Kumanovo and Borovec (Ohrid) were all native inhabitants of their respective villages.<sup>77</sup>

By the turn of the century Serb teachers were sent to Macedonia from Kosovo and found themselves unwelcome in Macedonian towns and villages where they replaced existing local Macedonian schoolteachers. Unfamiliar with the Macedonian language, customs and local mentality Serb educational progress was hampered and antagonism developed with the native local teachers due to being denied employment.<sup>78</sup> These factors may have also influenced Macedonian teachers transferring to the Exarchate school system, as was the case with Vasilije Ikonovitch from the village of Lazaropole.<sup>79</sup>

Data drawn from interviews indicate that village teachers conducted classes in the Macedonian language. One interviewee, Petko Atanasovski, from Makovo village (Bitola region) stated, 'how could we learn another language, especially Greek, if the teacher could not speak to us in Macedonian to explain what was going on?'<sup>80</sup> In the Bitola region villages, teachers were all Macedonians. Everyday communication between the teachers and the villagers was in Macedonian, regardless of whether they were Greek or Bulgarian teachers. According to Ilija Najdovski from Suvodol, both his father and grandfather were Greek schoolteachers in the village. He stated that their day-to-day relations with other villagers was conducted in 'our language' and that in 'family life the only language used was our Macedonian language; Greek was not spoken at home'.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, the schoolteachers' command of the official

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, pp. 316-321.

<sup>78</sup> B. Svetozarevich, *Srpskata i Bugarskata Crkovna-Uchilishna Propaganda vo Tetovo i Tetovsko 1860-1903* [Serbian and Bulgarian Religious and Educational Propaganda in Tetovo and the Tetovo region 1860-1903], Skopje, 1996, pp. 64-65.

<sup>79</sup> K. Dzhambazovski, editor, op. cit. pp. 316-317.

<sup>80</sup> Petko Atanasovski (born 1913 in Makovo, Bitola region), interview conducted on 14 March 2000 in Makovo.

<sup>81</sup> Ilija Najdovski (born 1920 in Suvodol, Bitola region), interview conducted on 28 March 2000 in Novaci.

language of the educational institution in which they were employed is questionable and this was recognised by Greek and Serb school inspectors in Macedonia at the end of the nineteenth century. Yoani Merkuli, a Greek school inspector working in the Bitola region in 1885, reported that in the Patriarchate elementary schools many teachers ‘could barely read, let alone speak the Greek language’.<sup>82</sup> Even the Serb General Consul in Skopje, Manojlovich, claimed in 1889 that most teachers in Serb schools ‘did not understand the Serb language, and used the Macedonian language instead’.<sup>83</sup> Consequently inferior instruction of foreign languages resulted in pupils being poorly equipped in their knowledge of the Greek, Bulgarian or Serb languages.

In the Bitola region, an interviewee, Aca Kotevska, born in 1911, stated that the Greek language was considered foreign, but promoted as ‘a cultured language’.<sup>84</sup> The Patriarchate school in Lavci attempted to instil a ‘Greek spirit’ into the Macedonian children and was characterised by advocating a negative view of all non-Greek peoples.<sup>85</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century in the village of Suvodol there were ‘approximately ten people in the village who knew some Greek; even though more than ten people had attended the Greek school in the village, they could not all speak the language’.<sup>86</sup> The father of the interviewee, Kosta Markovski, was a student of the Greek school in Suvodol; ‘although he knew some Greek, he was not fluent—his everyday language was Macedonian’.<sup>87</sup> In the village of Gorno Aglarci, Naumche Giorgiovski attended the Greek school (before it was replaced with a Bulgarian one), but was never fluent in the language. ‘It was too difficult for him, no one in the village was literate in Greek, even though the school had existed for many

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<sup>82</sup> K. Bitoski, op. cit. pp. 100-101. As cited from Bitoski, *‘odvaj možhat da chitat, a kamo li da zboruvaat na Grčki jazik’*.

<sup>83</sup> B. Svetozarevich, op. cit. p. 64. Furthermore, in 1900 the Serb Metropolitan of Skopje, Firmilijan, requested that the schoolteacher Teodosia Krstich be sent to Belgrade to learn the Serb language. Ibid, p. 64.

<sup>84</sup> Aca Kotevska (born 1911 in Suvodol, Bitola region), interview conducted 10 March 2000 in Novaci. Aca is from the Najdovci family.

<sup>85</sup> D. Konstantinov, M. Konstantinov, and K. Cingarovski, op. cit. p. 30. Schoolteachers in the Lavci Patriarchist school were Riste from Lerin and later Tashko (a Vlah who was the son of Priest Mihailaki) from the nearby village of Nizhopole.

<sup>86</sup> Ilija Najdovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>87</sup> Kosta Markovski (born 1930 in Suvodol, Bitola region), interview conducted 23 March 2000 in Bitola.

years.’<sup>88</sup> The interviewee, Trajan Popovski, stated that several men in Lazhec could speak ‘broken Greek’,<sup>89</sup> whilst the interviewee, Atanas Kotevski from Vrajnevc, stated that ‘those who had some grasp of the language, continued to speak to one another in our own language’.<sup>90</sup> It was similar in villages where Bulgarian schools operated. Teachers instructed in Macedonian and respondents were unable to recall older people from the village, who had attended Bulgarian school, being fluent in Bulgarian: an interviewee, Ljuba Stankovska, explained, that they utilised the Bulgarian alphabet in order to write in their own language.<sup>91</sup>

While village schoolteachers were Macedonians, more often the city and particularly the Exarchate higher schools ‘were staffed with teachers sent from Bulgaria on an explicitly nationalist mission’.<sup>92</sup> At the elementary level, Exarchate schools were often considered Macedonian rather than Bulgarian. One interviewee, Hristo ‘Caki’ Dimitrovski, was born in 1893 in Bitola and clearly recalled his youth under the Ottoman Turks to 1912.<sup>93</sup> Hristo Dimitrovski attended Exarchate elementary school as well as four years of high school in Bitola. He explained that his teacher at high school ‘was one of ours, she didn’t teach us Bulgarian, we learnt Macedonian...However, there were other teachers who were politically orientated towards Bulgaria’.<sup>94</sup> An Exarchate school or class could be considered Macedonian or Bulgarian, ‘depending on the political attitude of the schoolteacher’.<sup>95</sup>

Opposition to Bulgarian language instruction, particularly in Macedonian urban centres such as Solun, Skopje, Bitola and elsewhere, was the catalyst for the

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<sup>88</sup> Nikola Giorgiovski (born 1927 in Gorno Aglarci, Bitola region), interview conducted on 17 March 2000 in Gorno Aglarci. Nikola Giorgiovski stated that his father ‘never learnt more than a dozen words in Greek, but could count in the Greek language’.

<sup>89</sup> Trajan Popovski (born 1939 in Lazhec, Bitola region), interview conducted on 14 March 2000 in Lazhec.

<sup>90</sup> Atanas Kotevski (born 1923 in Vrajnevc, Bitola region), interview conducted on 12 March 2000 in Bitola.

<sup>91</sup> Ljuba Stankovska (born 1923 in Gorno Aglarci, Bitola region), interview conducted on 15 March 2000 in Dedebalci. Ljuba Stankovska’s uncle, Torne, attended Bulgarian school in Aglarci and was able to write, but could not speak Bulgarian.

<sup>92</sup> L. Mojsov, *The Macedonian Historical Themes*, op. cit. p. 75.

<sup>93</sup> Hristo ‘Caki’ Dimitrovski (born 1893 in Bitola) interview conducted 21 March 2002 in Bitola.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

first Macedonian student rebellions in the 1880s. In 1888 fourteen pupils were expelled from the Solun Exarchate high school 'because they objected to being taught in the Bulgarian language and not in their native tongue'.<sup>96</sup> The famous Macedonian revolutionary figure and Exarchate school teacher Gjorche Petrov stated that in the early 1890s there was an open 'separatist' struggle amongst Macedonian teachers in the Exarchate school system, and that he himself spent more time in the class room speaking of the injustices of Ottoman rule instead of the official Exarchate program.<sup>97</sup>

According to the historian A. Trajanovski, the language of teachers and students was brought up at the Exarchate Prilep Teachers Council meeting of 3 December 1894. The Bulgarian schoolteacher G.P. Rachev commented that 'students do not possess basic Bulgarian language skills', and that they 'speak their own language amongst themselves, and use it in their communications with their teachers'. Rachev requested that 'the Bulgarian language be used by every teacher during every subject'.<sup>98</sup> Similar problems persisted in the Serb and Greek school systems. The Serb school inspector Sima Popovich, visiting schools in the Tetovo region in 1894, reported that pupils poorly understood the Serb language.<sup>99</sup> The Greek Patriarchate school system similarly failed to achieve its aim of introducing the Greek language to Macedonian children in the Bitola region villages, according to a 1901 Greek Patriarchate letter by the Bitola Metropolitan Ambrosios.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> G.M. Terry, op. cit. p.62.

<sup>97</sup> G. Petrov, *Spomeni na Gjorche Petrov* [Memoirs of Gjorche Petrov], Book I, Skopje, 1950, pp. 13 and 34. In the memoirs of Simjan Simidzhiev (born 1875 in Velmevci, Ohrid region), he explains that he was a student in the Exarchate high school system and for three years a pupil of Gjorche Petrov (geography teacher). Petrov used the Exarchate school to propagate Macedonian revolutionary views, and not Bulgarian ideas. Amongst Gjorche Petrov's students were Lazar Pop Trajkov, Pande Klashev and Giorgi Sugarev, they were all to become legendary *voivodi* of the IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation). Simjan Simidzhiev memoirs, T. Gorgiev, *Po Tragite na Minatoto* [Tracing the Past], Skopje, 1967, p. 38.

<sup>98</sup> A. Trajanovski, *Bugarskata Exarhija i Makedonskoto Nacionalno-Osloboditelno Dvizhejne 1893-1908* [The Bulgarian Exarchate and the Macedonian National Liberation Movement 1893-1908], Skopje, 1982, p. 72.

<sup>99</sup> B. Svetozarevich, op. cit. p. 64. In 1900 the high-ranking educational functionary, Nikola Petrovich, conducted his own inspection of Serb schools in Macedonia and concluded that teachers' methods of instruction were inadequate. Ibid, p. 64.

<sup>100</sup> Cited from K. Bitoski, op. cit. p. 103. It is interesting to draw upon the autobiographical notes of the prominent Macedonian activist in Australia, Stojan Srbinov (1920-1990), regarding Greek education in his

The average age of Exarchate teachers in the Bitola region was 25 years. Riste Najdovski, the Greek elementary school teacher (first to fourth grade) in the village of Suvodol, was 20 years-of-age when he took up his position in 1885.<sup>101</sup> A Bulgarian Exarchate school administrative document provides a further insight into the age of schoolteachers in the Bitola region. Within a staff complement of 19 teachers, one was below 20 years-of-age, eleven between 21 - 30 years, six between 31 - 40 years and one over 40.<sup>102</sup> Schoolteachers in the Bitola region were predominantly male and there was a significant contrast between male/female schoolteacher ratios in urban Bitola compared to countryside villages. In Bitola there was a notable presence of female teachers. One of the largest Bulgarian schools in the region was the Central School in Bitola, employing seventeen teachers during the 1909–1910 school year. Only five teachers were males, and the remaining twelve teachers female. Male teachers were predominantly in their early thirties, whilst females ranged between 18 and 26 years-of-age. Earnings varied according to gender, with annual wages for male teachers ranging from 26 to 36 Turkish lira and female teachers between 15 and 22 Turkish lira. Only two teachers were married – both males, aged 32 and 31 respectively; the remaining fifteen teachers were all unmarried.<sup>103</sup>

Schools in urban centres were often located in modern buildings specifically utilised for educational purposes.<sup>104</sup> Village schooling was generally conducted in a

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native village of Buf, Lerin region. During the period between the division of Macedonia and the Second World War there were many instances where the children of Greek teachers sent to Buf acquired Macedonian language skills. In the period preceding the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) a particular Greek schoolteacher arrived from Crete to teach Macedonian children the Greek language. After a period of time spent in the village, the schoolteacher was transferred to another school in Lerin. Prior to leaving the village, the schoolteacher was noted as stating 'we arrived here to teach you the Greek language, yet you first managed to teach our children your village language' (*'Neka da go spomeneme i toa deka nie doidovme tuka da ve uchime Grchki jazik, a vie uspearte nashite deca pobrgu da gi nauchite na vashiot selski jazik'*). Stojan Srbinov autobiographical notes, Melbourne, 1983.

<sup>101</sup> Ilija Najdovski interview, op. cit. Riste Najdovski was Ilija Najdovski's father.

<sup>102</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0007.0151/0660-0661, dated 1 January 1911.

<sup>103</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0007.0006/0018-0035, dated 17 May 1909.

<sup>104</sup> J. Pshchulkovska-Simitchieva, *Naselenieto i uchilishtata vo Bitola i Bitolsko kon krajot na XIX i XX vek*, op. cit. p. 672. According to the Polish commentator, Trampczynski, who visited Bitola at the beginning of the twentieth century the most impressive buildings in Bitola belonged to the American Protestant mission. Ibid, p. 672.

church outer building, known as a *trem*, as was the case in the sample villages.<sup>105</sup> In Lazhec (Macedonian-Turkish village) the Patriarchate school operated from a private home,<sup>106</sup> whilst in other instances large villages were known to have relatively modern school buildings. The village of Visheni in the Kostur district contained 1,280 inhabitants. An Exarchate school functioned in the village, and, according to D.M. Brancoff, in 1905 there were 101 students enrolled.<sup>107</sup> A new school had been built just before 1900. A modern construction, it contained a basement, three large rooms on the ground floor and four on the upper storey. The building contained a museum room with various objects and pictures written in Macedonian Cyrillic. It was render whitewashed on the interior and exterior and had a large verandah and balcony. The school was situated approximately ten metres from the village church.

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The school year in Bitola spanned from 1 September to 27 June.<sup>109</sup> In the villages the school year extended over a shorter period, neither a uniform start nor end date, but generally commencing from mid to late November and ending anytime between early and late May. In Bitola, the school year extended over a period of ten months, whereas in the villages it was approximately six months.<sup>110</sup> The shorter school year was certainly linked to the agricultural life of the villagers.

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<sup>105</sup> A *trem* is a simple structure located inside the church grounds and primarily used for religious rituals commonly associated with holy days and funerals.

<sup>106</sup> Trajan Popovski interview, op. cit. The nineteenth century Serb commentator M.V. Vesselinovitch also mentions instances of Serb schools operating in Macedonian villages from private homes, typically the teachers home.

<sup>107</sup> D.M. Brancoff, op. cit. pp. 182-183.

<sup>108</sup> M. Prstnarov, *The History of the village Visheni (The English translation)*, no date or place of publication, p. 10. Prstnarov notes that prior to the construction of the new school building there existed an older school building beside the church. The old school building had become neglected and dilapidated and 'looks rather like an old, unused stable. Nomad tradesmen such as gypsies and *kalaidzite* (copper utensil anodizers) stayed in this building' (p.10).

<sup>109</sup> The only exception was the two schools in Gorno Bair and Dolno Bair whose school year ended two weeks earlier on 13 June.

<sup>110</sup> Compiled from Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0001.0155/0513-0520, dated 1 January 1899.

Education in village schools was at an elementary level, with the main subjects being language, literacy, mathematics and religious studies. According to a Serb Diplomatic report of 1888, core subject areas in the Serb school system in Macedonia were language (Serb), grammar, mathematics and church history. Official schoolbooks included a Serb alphabet reader, a Slavic alphabet reader, a numeracy text and a Slavic language reader.<sup>111</sup> It is interesting to note that the Serb-introduced 'Slavic' alphabet readers were based upon the Macedonian language, with a generous sprinkling of Serbian words incorporated into the texts. Trampczynski noted in 1903 that Bulgarian readers in elementary schools were divided into two sections on each page - one in Macedonian and the other in standard literary Bulgarian.<sup>112</sup>

In the Bitola countryside there was only one instance of two opposing schools operating simultaneously in a Macedonian village – in the large upper zone village of Brusnik (with over a thousand inhabitants). Generally villages were small to medium settlements with one church, and in the sample villages examined there were no instances of two opposing school systems operating simultaneously. In Bitola town there were Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian and other schools and there is evidence of competition for students. Attracting students could involve unconventional methods, according to Hristo Dimitrovski. He recalled that as a young man in Bitola at the beginning of the twentieth century, 'school teachers were a menace to be avoided' and were capable of violently recruiting new students by 'beating them in the streets, in order to force them to attend their respective school'.<sup>113</sup> Commencing his education at the Bulgarian Exarchate school in Bitola, as a consequence of threats and violence Hristo Dimitrovski was to also attend Greek and Vlah education for

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<sup>111</sup> Serb Diplomatic report, number 58/II, dated 15 August 1888, Constantinople, K. Dzhambazovski, editor, *Gradja za Istoriju Makedonskog Naroda (iz Arhiva Srbije)*, op. cit. pp. 165-166. According to the historian, I. Arginteanu, subjects in Vlah schools were Latin, Romanian, French, history, mathematics, geography, drawing and music. Op. cit. p. 187. A Bulgarian Exarchate document from 1909 outlines that 15 copies of the book *'Zemjotresi vo Bugaria'* ('Earthquakes in Bulgaria') were ordered and were to be distributed amongst Exarchate schools. Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0007.0108/0417-0426, dated 11 November 1909.

<sup>112</sup> J. Pshchulkovska-Simitchieva, op. cit. p. 676.

<sup>113</sup> Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski interview, op. cit. Hristo Dimitrovski recalled an incident when a schoolteacher beat a boy and threw him into the Dragor River in order to force him to attend Greek school.

short periods.<sup>114</sup> In Bitola it was not entirely unusual for individual students to have attended more than one school system, even though their family might have been supporters of a specific party. 'Within the space of a couple of years they could have studied at them all, Greek, Serb, Bulgarian and Vlah'<sup>115</sup> and may not have necessarily returned to the school with which they originally commenced.

Official Bulgarian school documents contain a category for students who did not complete the school year – '*Chuzhda propaganda*' ('foreign propaganda'). The Central Exarchate School in Bitola recorded 6 students (five male and one female), failing to complete their education due to '*chuzhda propaganda*'.<sup>116</sup> Exarchate enrolment records indicate significant student drop-out rates. Drop-out rates may also be associated with competition with family needs to work in family businesses (tradesmen and traders) or, in the case of village schools, working on the fields. Significant drop-out rates occurred in the Serbian school system in the Debar eparchy in North Western Macedonia. At the beginning of the 1901-1902 school year a total of 509 students were enrolled in 18 village schools, including Kitchevo town (26 students). By the end of the school year less than half the students remained (238) to sit their final exams, a reduction of 54 per cent.<sup>117</sup>

Parents might also have been reluctant to withdraw their children from a particular school, even though they may have preferred to do so. For instance, the British Consul general in Bitola, Charles Blunt, explained in 1896 that the Greek Archbishop of Bitola issued a pastoral order threatening families with excommunication if they sent their children to the local Bulgarian schools.<sup>118</sup> The

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<sup>114</sup> Hristo recalled that whilst attending the Greek school, photographs were taken of his class after students were made to wear traditional Greek costumes.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0007.0006/0018-0035, dated 17 May 1909.

<sup>117</sup> Report number 109, by Debar-Veles Metropolitan Polikarp, dated 23 February 1903, from L. Lape, editor, *Izveshtaj od 1903 - na Srpskite Konzuli, Mitropoliti i Uchilishni Inspektori vo Makedonia* [Report of 1903 - Serb Consuls, Metropolitans and School Inspectors in Macedonia, Skopje, 1954, pp. 101-102.

<sup>118</sup> British Foreign Office 294/22, letter number 35, dated 27 September 1896, by General Consul Blunt in Bitola (obtained from the Archive of Macedonia).

Greek Patriarchate was similarly opposed to Vlah schools. When a Romanian school opened in the village of Trnovo (Bitola region), the Greek Archbishop in Bitola instructed the village Patriarchate priest to visit every family in the village whose children attended the school and threaten them with excommunication from the church if they did not withdraw their children.<sup>119</sup>

One interviewee, Kosta Markovski, reported that his grandfather, Anasto Markovski (from Suvodol), sent his son Tole (born 1900) to the Patriarchate school in the village even though he was not a supporter of the Patriarchate party. He believed that it was the only opportunity for his son to have a better life, that he might possibly become ‘a teacher or a priest’.<sup>120</sup> In other instances teachers presented education favourably, encouraging parents to send their children to their school, ‘that they may be literate, so when the war comes, they will not have to fight’.<sup>121</sup> A common perception amongst interviewees was that the Patriarchate exerted greater influence with the Ottomans compared to the Exarchate, and operated with the greatest financial resources enabling it to attract families to its churches and schools. Vasil Petrov was aware that the Patriarchate ‘targeted poor families in Mariovo and through the payment of money and food attracted their children to Greek schooling’.<sup>122</sup> Methods were not dissimilar in Vlah villages, according to the interviewee, Konstantin Nicha. ‘Vlahs were bought to be pro-Greek and to send their children to Greek schools. The Greeks had lots of money and influence’.<sup>123</sup> The establishment of Serb propaganda in areas as far south as Resen was attributed to a range of incentives offered to families. The historian, R.J. Crampton, claims that Serb support ‘was usually obtained only after considerable expenditure of cash; children,

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<sup>119</sup> I. Arginteanu, op. cit. p. 186. The Vlah school in the village of Gopesh was also targeted by the Greek Archbishop, who declared the teacher, Dimitrie Cosmescu, as ‘a rebel and dangerous agitator’. Ibid, p. 187.

<sup>120</sup> Kosta Markovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>121</sup> Statement from a Bulgarian schoolteacher in Gorno Aglarci. Recalled by the interviewee, Nikola Giorgiovski, op. cit. Nikola Giorgiovski’s father attended the Exarchate school in the village.

<sup>122</sup> Vasil Petrov (born 1911 in Bitola), interview conducted on 1 April 2000 in Bitola. Regarding the Patriarchate targeting poor families in Mariovo, see the historian, D. Grdanov, *Bitola i Heraclea niz bronikata na vekovite* [Bitola and Heraclea through the Chronicles of the Ages], Bitola, 1969, p. 28.

<sup>123</sup> Konstantin Nicha interview, op. cit.

for example, were encouraged to attend Serb schools by the free provision of food, books and even clothes'.<sup>124</sup> The interviewee Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski summed up the competition for students and church adherents: '*se so podkupvajne na narod*' ('everything is possible when buying the people').<sup>125</sup> Atanas Kotevski made a similar statement: '*od maka se prodavaja lujgeto*' ('the people sold themselves due to hardship').<sup>126</sup>

Out in the countryside, only a small percentage of villagers sent their children to school. According to Exarchate educational records (Bitola region) during the 1898-1899 school year 11 students were enrolled at the Gorno Aglarci school, 13 students at Logovardi and 15 at Ribarci (these were small – to medium – sized villages).<sup>127</sup> Larger or centrally located villages typically had a greater number of students in the schools: in Brusnik there were 25 students, in Dedebalci 39, and in Buf (Lerin region) 71 students.<sup>128</sup> Schools were at times shared between villages (and this could apply to the church as well), such as with Gorno Aglarci and Dolno Aglarci, whilst central villages attracted students from wider areas. For instance, there were no educational facilities in the Exarchate village of Petoraci (Lerin region) for Petre Duakov to send his son Nase. The nearest Exarchate school was located in the nearby village of P'pzhani, and Nase, along with a small group of children from Petoraci, attended the P'pzhani school.<sup>129</sup> Male children overwhelmingly made up the

<sup>124</sup> R.J. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878-1914*, New York, 1983, p. 291.

<sup>125</sup> Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>126</sup> Atanas Kotevski interview, op. cit..

<sup>127</sup> Catholic schools in the Kukush region contained similar student numbers, of the eight schools (in eight villages) there was no more than eight students in any one school - in Bogdanci there were 8 pupils, in Dolni Todorak 6, in Lelovo 6, in Mihailovo 5, in Morarci 5, in Novoselani 5, in Palyurci 8 and in Stojakovo 8. In Kukush town there were two Catholic schools with 165 students. S. Dimevski, *Makedonskata Borba za Crkovna i Nacionalna Samostojnost vo XIX vek*, op. cit. p. 246.

<sup>128</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0001.0156/0521-0547, dated 28 October 1899.

Both Gorno and Dolno Aglarci had a combined total of approximately 350 people, Logovardi approximately 450, Ribarci approximately 180, Dedebalci approximately 250, Brusnik approximately 1000, and Buf (Lerin region) approximately 1500. Buf has been renamed Akrita by the Greek authorities.

<sup>129</sup> Kocho Duakis (born 1934 Petoraci village, Lerin region), interview conducted 20 January 2001 in Melbourne. Since Greek rule in Southern Macedonia P'pzhani village has been renamed Pappayanni(s).

student population in village schools; in the Bitola region female students made up only 1.4 per cent of the total student population in Exarchate schools.<sup>130</sup>

Table 5.5: Location of Village Patriarchate and Exarchate Schools and Student Enrolment in the Bitola Region in 1905 According to D.M Brancoff (Bulgarian)

Village	Size of village	Zone	Macedonian Students		Vlah Students	
			Exh Schools	Pat Schools	Pat Schools	Vlah Schools
Bareshani	Medium	Upper	22			
Bistrica	Medium	Upper	15			
Boukovo	V. Large	Upper		40		
Brusnik	Large	Upper	45	27		
Budimirci	Medium	Mariovo	21			
Crnobuki	Medium	Pelagonia	11			
Dedebalci	Medium	Pelagonia	39			
Dihovo	Large	Upper		22		
Dobrushevo	Med-Large	Pelagonia	12			
Dolna Charliya	Medium	Pelagonia	17			
Dragosh	V-Large	Pelagonia		18		
Gavato	V-Large	Upper	92			
Gopesh	V-Large	Upper			80	180
Gorno Aglarci	Sm-Medium	Pelagonia	11			
Gradeschnica	Medium	Upper		45		
Karamani	Medium	Pelagonia	17			
Krstoar	Medium	Upper	28			
Kukuretchani	Large	Pelagonia	21			
Lavci	Large	Upper		25		
Lazhec	Medium	Pelagonia		10		
Lera	Medium	Upper	42			
Logovardi	Med-Large	Pelagonia	17			
Magarevo	V-Large	Upper			305	50
Malovishte	V-Large	Upper			160	136
Meglenci	Small	Pelagonia	7			
Mogila	Large	Pelagonia	21			
Nizhopole	V-Large	Upper			125	50

<sup>130</sup> Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0001.0156/0521-0547, dated 28 October 1899.

Oblakovo	Med-Large	Upper	32			
Oreohovo	Med	Upper		26		
Poeshevo	Med	Pelagonia	17			
Radobor	Med	Pelagonia	16			
Ribarci	Med	Pelagonia	16			
Srpici	Large	Upper	213			
Staravina	Large	Mariovo		10		
Strezhevo	Sm-Med	Upper	135			
Svinishta	Sm-Med	Upper	30			
Trnovo	V-Large	Upper			230	15
Velushina	Large	Upper		20		
Zovic	Medium	Mariovo		15		
<b>Total</b>			<b>897</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>431</b>

Source and notes: Brancoff, D.M. *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne* [The Christian Population of Macedonia], Paris, 1905. Trnovo, Magarevo and Gopesh were exclusively Vlah villages. Macedonians constituted approximately 20 percent of the inhabitants of Nizhopole and were a smaller minority in Malovishte. Lazhec was a mixed Macedonian-Turkish village and Lera mixed Macedonian-Albanian. The Exarchate school in Brusnik was established in 1899 (Bulgarian Exarchate, document 01.0491.0001.0296/0930-0930, dated 01 April 1899).

According to D.M. Brancoff's data, there were a total of 45 schools in 39 Bitola region villages in 1905. Schools were most widely established in the upper village district, with over half of all schools found there (27 schools). There were 17 schools located in Macedonian villages (one village was a shared Macedonian - Albanian village) in this district, with ten under Exarchate administration and seven under the Patriarchate. In the five Vlah inhabited villages (three exclusively Vlah, two shared with Macedonians) there were two schools for every village - a total of 10 schools, with half belonging to the Patriarchate and half to the Vlah (Romanian) school system, reflecting the rivalry between the Greek and Vlah parties. Along the Pelagonia plain there was a total of 15 schools - 13 Exarchate compared to 2 Patriarchate schools. The Mariovo district had the least amount of schools, a total of three - two Patriarchate and one Exarchate.

Schools were least likely to function in mixed Christian-Muslim villages. There were only two such instances in 39 villages, these being Lera and Lazhec. In 22 exclusively Macedonian upper villages there were 15 schools, and one in a mixed Macedonian-Albanian village. Several factors may explain the high rate of schools in the upper village zone. The most obvious feature distinguishing the upper villages from the Pelagonia plain and Bitola Mariovo district is the absence of *chiflika* estates. A high rate of *pechalba* and exposure to the outside world may have made these villages more receptive to the establishment of educational institutions. Alternatively, as Greece and Bulgaria both lay claim to Bitola, control of the upper villages may have been related to strategic military considerations.

The ethnographer V. Kanchov claimed a total of 29 schools in the Bitola region in 1891, 16 fewer than enumerated by Brancoff in 1905. Eleven of the twenty-nine schools had disappeared altogether in 1905: Patriarchate schools functioning in 1891 in the villages of Rotino, Oleveni, Brusnik, Dobromiri, Novaci and Optichari did not appear on Brancoff's 1905 data. Similarly, Exarchate schools in the villages of Capari, Noshpal, Vashareyca, Loznani and Ramna did not appear on the 1905 data. The Patriarchate school in Dolno Charliya in 1891 was to come under Exarchate control in 1905.<sup>131</sup> School data for 1908 by the Serbian contemporary commentator, I. Ivanich, citing official Greek government educational data, claimed 70 Patriarchate schools in the Bitola region villages with 131 teachers.<sup>132</sup> This represents a significant increase in Patriarchate schools and must be viewed with caution. According to a 1901 Patriarchate document by the Bitola Greek Metropolitan Ambrosios, as cited by the historian K. Bitoski, numerous Patriarchate schools in the villages were schools in name only. The Metropolitan described such schools as *'pretvoreni vo uchilishta dupki bez svetlost i bez osnovni elementi da se vikaat uchilishta'* ('holes transformed into schools without light and the basic elements to call them schools').<sup>133</sup>

<sup>131</sup> V. Kanchov, *Bitola, Prespa i Obridsko*, op. cit. pp. 389-394.

<sup>132</sup> I. Ivanich (1908), op. cit. p. 395.

<sup>133</sup> K. Bitoski, op. cit. pp. 101-102.

The Patriarchate might have been more interested in ‘counting schools’ as belonging to their jurisdiction rather than any real or effective educational institutions. The situation was similar with Patriarchate schoolteachers in the region. Although there were approximately 34 schoolteachers on the Patriarchate payroll in the Bitola countryside villages in 1901,<sup>134</sup> some had never taught a single pupil or stepped into a classroom. The Macedonian Dimitar Hristou (the son-in-law of one of the wealthiest villagers) from Velushina was on the Patriarchate payroll for ten years (twelve Turkish lira per annum) yet had never worked in that time. Similarly the Macedonian Vasil Traianou, the nephew of a leading villager (Jovan) from Dragosh, was a teacher without any pupils (he received ten Turkish lira per annum for his role).<sup>135</sup> Children as young as thirteen years-of-age were appointed as teachers. Metropolitan Ambrosios described them as, *‘deca koi ne znat da si go podpishat svoeto ime, a povejke od niv ne znaat nitu eden Grčki zbor’* (‘children who do not know how to sign their own name, and most of them do not know a single Greek word’).<sup>136</sup> Dozens of unqualified, but well-connected individuals (connected to village headmen, priests and influential villagers) managed to draw an income from the Patriarchate as ‘teachers’ and appear to have been used in the promotion of statistical educational data.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid, pp. 105-107.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, pp. 102-103.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, p. 102.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, p. 101. Based on the fact that Macedonian children in the Bitola Patriarchate villages could not speak Greek. In 1901 Metropolitan Ambrosios set in place a wide-ranging program aiming at restructuring the Patriarchate school system in the Bitola region and planned that within five years each village would have a dozen children who could understand Greek. Ibid, p. 103.





Table 5.6: Male and Female Student Enrolment at Exarchate schools in Bitola, 1909–1910

SCHOOL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Gorni Bair	21	11	32
Arnaut Male	17	15	32
Gorni Eni Male	146	157	303
Dolni Bair	147	103	250
Mechkar Male	31	17	48
Kyrt Deres	19	19	38
Bela Cheshma	82	54	136
Dolno Eni Male	28	25	53
Central Bitola	542	349	891
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>1033</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>1783</b>

Source: V. Kanchov, *Bitola, Prespa i Ohridsko* [Bitola, Prespa and the Ohrid region], Sofia, 1971 (1891), pp. 389-394.

Table 5.7: Age of Students in the Central Bitola Bulgarian School from Pre-School Class to the Fourth Grade During the 1909-1910 School Year

Age	Pre school		Class I		Class II		Class III		Class IV		Totals	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Under 5</b>	25	20									<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>6</b>	20	15									<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>7</b>	30	25	2								<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>8</b>	7	8	42	34							<b>49</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>9</b>		1	16	14	12	21					<b>28</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>10</b>			18	7	38	38	20	16	3	1	<b>79</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>11</b>			6	3	44	34	42	13	10	21	<b>102</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>12</b>			2	1	21	12	44	18	30	20	<b>97</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>13</b>			4		8	2	14	12	39	10	<b>85</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>14</b>			1		5				13	3	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>15</b>					4		1				<b>5</b>	
<b>Over 15</b>									1		<b>1</b>	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>349</b>

Source: Bulgarian Exarchate, Central Bitola Bulgarian School, Document number 01.0491.0007.0006/0018-0019, dated 17 May 1909.

Student enrolment records for the Bitola Bulgarian primary school (*‘Osnovno Uchilishte’*) for the 1909-1910 school year specify there were a total of 47 students in the first and second grades. Sixteen students were male (aged between twelve and fourteen years) and thirty-one were female students (aged between eleven and eighteen). Females consisted of 70 per cent of all students at the school. In contrast to village schools where female students were almost non-existent, in Bitola female students accounted for 42 per cent of all students in nine Bulgarian schools ranging from pre-school to the fourth grade during the 1909-1910 school year.<sup>138</sup> Exarchate educational records also provide an insight into the socio-economic status of students’ families.<sup>139</sup> From a total of 47 students, the overwhelming majority of 35 fathers were engaged in trades, followed by 5 agricultural workers, 3 labourers, 2 traders and 1 teacher or priest and professional (doctor, lawyer, etc.) respectively.

Table 5.8: Growth of Student Enrolment at the Nine Exarchate Schools in Bitola, 1886–1910

School Year	Male Students	Female Students	Total
1886-1887	464	118	582
1888-1889	400	140	540
1889-1890	472	230	701
1898-1899	616	519	1135
1909-1910	1033	750	1783

Source and notes: Data for the school years 1886/87, 1888/89 and 1889/90 are from Kanchov, V. *Bitolsko, Prespa i Obridsko*, Sofia, 1970 (1891), p. 385. Statistics for the school year 1898-1899 compiled from Document Number 01.0491.0001.0155 / 0520 dated 1 January 1899 (Bulgarian Pelagonia Exarchate - Bitola) and statistics for the school year 1909-1910 compiled from Document Number 01.0491.0007.0006 / 0018-0035 dated 17 May 1909 (Bulgarian Pelagonia Exarchate - Bitola). Regarding the number of total students for the 1889/1890 school year male and female student figures equate to a total of 701 students, Kanchov counts 762 students using the same figures.

<sup>138</sup> Statistical data compiled from official school reports from the Bulgarian Exarchate education system in Macedonia. Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0007.0006/0018-0035, dated 17 May 1909.

<sup>139</sup> *Osnovno uchilishte* vo Bitola (Primary school in Bitola) – Bulgarian Exarchate document number 01.0491.0007.0006/0016-0017, dated 17 May 1909.

In the 1888-1889 school year there was a total of 35 schools in Bitola operated by seven different groups. Ten schools were operated by the Greek Patriarchate, nine by the Bulgarian Exarchate, three by the Romanian government, two by the Turkish authorities, four by the Jewish community, one by the Protestant mission and one by the Catholic mission. Of the 35 schools, three were high schools, two were operated by the Greek Patriarchate (one boys and one girls school) and one Romanian boys high school.<sup>140</sup> During the Second Balkan War when the Serb army entered Bitola, the Regional Commander of the Serbian High Command (D. Alimpich) compiled a report on the Bitola region, including educational institutions in Bitola. Substantial growth of educational institutions is evident; three high schools expanding to fourteen, including four teacher training colleges, (in period of 24 years from 1888-1912).<sup>141</sup>

Table 5.9: High Schools and Teacher Training Colleges in Bitola according to D. Alimpich (Serb), 1913

School	Turkish	Greek	Bulgarian	Serb	Romanian
Male High School	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Female High School	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Teacher training school	Yes				
Male teacher training		Yes	Yes		
Female teacher training		Yes	Yes		

Sources and notes: Report dated 20 August 1913, Regional Commander D. Alimpich. G. Todorovski, editor, *Srpski Izvori za Istorijata na Makedonskiot Narod 1912-1914* [Serbian Sources on the History of the Macedonian People 1912-1914], Skopje, 1979, p. 221. Note - the Greek female teacher-training school and female high school were combined as the one school.

It was not unusual for students to change school systems at the completion of primary school in the rural sector. Secondary schooling was only available in urban centres, and unlike the villages there was a range of choices available. Solun was a

<sup>140</sup> V. Kanchov, 1970 (1891), op. cit. pp. 382-383.

<sup>141</sup> Report dated 20 August 1913, by Regional Commander D. Alimpich. G. Todorovski, editor, *Srpski Izvori za Istorijata na Makedonskiot Narod 1912-1914* [Serbian Sources on the History of the Macedonian People 1912-1914], Skopje, 1979, p. 21.

popular destination for secondary education, particularly in the Exarchate high school. Ultimately those who pursued further education at the tertiary level found themselves in Belgrade and Sofia. Belgrade became popular due to an attractive scholarship program offered, though according to the historian M. Dogo many were to become disillusioned and moved to Sofia to continue their education.<sup>142</sup> In Sofia, Macedonian student groups continued engaging in 'separatist' activities as they had done so in Belgrade. In particular a group of Macedonian patriots centred around the publication *Loza* were to be singled out for attention by the authorities. Others found their way to Petrograd in Russia, often after having spent periods in both Belgrade and Sofia.

There is no evidence to indicate that in the Bitola region the official language of the school impacted upon the language of the home or village. In the villages it was only a small portion of men (those who attended foreign schooling) who possessed a rudimentary knowledge of the Greek, Bulgarian or Serb languages. The spoken form of foreign languages taught through Exarchate and Patriarchate schooling appears to have had no impact upon the life of the villagers. However foreign alphabets were used in place of Macedonian with the literate few. Velika Spirova from Krpeshina (Exarchate school in the village - Lerin region) recalled that the few educated individuals from the older generation 'spoke in Macedonian, but wrote in Bulgarian'.<sup>143</sup> Nikola Dimitrovski attended a Patriarchate school in Bitola in the 1870s to the sixth grade. Although he 'couldn't read and write in Macedonian, he did so using the Greek alphabet'.<sup>144</sup> A school operated in Varjnevci village for approximately one year during 1902 - 1903. There the schoolteacher Anasto Dzheviro

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<sup>142</sup> M. Dogo, *Jazikot i Nacionalnosta vo Makedonija, Dozhivuvanjata i razmisluvanjata na nevooruzhenite proroci 1902-1903*, Skopje, 1990, p. 218. Original title, *Lingua e nazionalita in macedonia vicende e pensieri di profetoi disarmati 1902-1903*, Milano, 1985.

<sup>143</sup> Velika Spirova interview, op. cit.

<sup>144</sup> Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski interview, op. cit. Hristo stated that his father Nikola attended the Patriarchate school at the time 'because there was no other alternative'. When Hristo was a child, his father sent him to the Exarchate school in Bitola.

at first taught the children the Greek alphabet, and later the Bulgarian alphabet; however, written words were Macedonian.<sup>145</sup>

The most widely-spoken foreign language was not inculcated through foreign school systems, but by the rulers: the Ottoman Turks. Men learnt to speak Turkish as a result of dealing with Turks, as their workers, as inmates in prisons, and when conscripted as Turkish soldiers. It was generally considered to be a 'more useful language'. In Makovo there were approximately half a dozen men who could speak Turkish. Some had worked for Turks, whilst others, such as the uncle of interviewee Stojche Petkovski, became familiar with the language after having spent nine years as a Turkish soldier.<sup>146</sup> Kitan Shindevci from Gorno Aglarci also spent nine years as a Turkish soldier and was a fluent Turkish speaker.<sup>147</sup> The village headman (*kmet*) of Armenoro (Lerin region), known as Delo Shuperliyata, was also a fluent Turkish speaker.<sup>148</sup> Interviewee Trajan Micevski stated that a couple of men in Novaci knew some Greek words as a result of Patriarchate schooling but there were 'more in the village who knew Turkish'.<sup>149</sup> Vasil Tilev from the Gorna Dzhumaya region recalled hearing from his grandfather Giorgi that, apart from Macedonian, a number of men in the village Kradzhejevo spoke basic Turkish. His grandfather was one of them.<sup>150</sup> In mixed Macedonian - Turkish villages it was not uncommon for Macedonian men to have some familiarity with the Turkish language as a result of living side by side with Turks over an extended period of time. In Petoraci (mixed Turkish Macedonian village with an Exarchate church) Kocho Duakis stated that Turkish was the only

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<sup>145</sup> *Letopisna Kniga na Osnovnoto Chetiri Godishno Uchilishte 'Kiril i Metodi' - Selo Vrajevci* [Chronicles of the Four Year Primary School 'Kiril and Methody' - Vrajevci village]. An unofficial record book, it was commenced in the 1950s and handed down to subsequent schoolteachers in the village. The quoted material was written in 1957 by the schoolteacher, Todor Veljanovski, who gathered data regarding the village school and other general information from elderly folk in the village in 1957. Similarly as with the Macedonian experience, as a result of a preponderance of Greek Patriarchate educational institutions, since the early nineteenth century, Vlachs had often used the Greek alphabet to write in the Vlach language. I. Arginteanu, op. cit. p. 172.

<sup>146</sup> Stojche Petkovski (born 1920 in Makovo, Bitola region), interview conducted 18 March 2000 in Makovo.

<sup>147</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>148</sup> Andon Foudoulis (born 1919 in Armenoro, Lerin region), interview conducted 2 November 1999 in Melbourne.

<sup>149</sup> Trajan Micevski (born 1930 in Novaci, Bitola region), interview conducted 22 March 2000 in Novaci.

<sup>150</sup> Vasil Tilev (born 1950 in Balgarchevo, Blagoevgrad region), interview conducted 20 January 2002 in Melbourne.

foreign language that certain people in the village knew.<sup>151</sup> Similarly in the mixed Macedonian Turkish village of Lazhec (Patriarchate church and school) 'there were some older men who knew a handful of Greek words and could perhaps count to 5 or 10, but more knew 'Turkish', according to the interviewee Trajan Popovski.<sup>152</sup> Overwhelmingly in the sample villages, the highest levels of fluency in a foreign language, was Turkish. Knowledge of foreign languages was predominantly restricted to male members of the village.

Patriarchist schools operated in all five Bitola-region Vlah villages alongside Romanian schools. According to Bulgarian data there was a total of 900 Vlah students in Patriarchist schools compared to 431 Vlah students in Romanian schools in the villages of Nizhopole, Magarevo, Trnovo, Malovishte and Gopesh. As in Macedonian villages, Vlahs maintained their mother tongue, irrespective of foreign schools operating in their villages. In everyday communication in the village as well as in the language of the home, Vlah continued to be the spoken form, according to the Vlah interviewees, Konstantin Nicha and Simo 'Hemtu' Simonovski.<sup>153</sup> 'Even in the most pro-Greek Patriarchist Vlah families it was usually only the male head of the household who could speak Greek, and this was usually the case with wealthy Vlahs. Greek was the commercial language of trade, and people looked after their financial interests'.<sup>154</sup>

Commentators generally claim that the depth of political division in Macedonian society at the end of the nineteenth century pitted brother against brother and saw fathers send each of their sons to a rival school. H.N. Brailsford gives an example of a father who sent each of his three sons to rival schools.<sup>155</sup> The contemporary commentator E. Bouchie de Belle claims a villager sent his four sons

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<sup>151</sup> Kocho Duakis interview, op. cit.

<sup>152</sup> Trajan Popovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>153</sup> Konstantin Nicha interview, op. cit. and Simo 'Hemtu' Simonovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>154</sup> Konstantin Nicha interview, op. cit.

<sup>155</sup> H.N. Brailsford, op. cit. p. 102.

to four different schools,<sup>156</sup> and the historian R.W. Seton-Watson makes a similar observation.<sup>157</sup> That children from the one family attended opposing schools within an urban environment is supported by the ethnographic data gathered in this work, although to attend different schools in the one village was unlikely to occur because there was rarely more than one school operating within a single village. Sending ones children to opposing schools was not a natural process, according to all interviewees, families were not divided by foreign propaganda: instead, an entire *soi* (extended family) aligned with a particular party. The historian R.W. Seton-Watson considered that as a consequence of attending rival schools it was not ‘uncommon to find three brothers in a single family professing three different nationalities’.<sup>158</sup> To contend that a father’s three sons would become ‘Greek’, ‘Bulgarian’ and ‘Serb’ as a result of attending these respective schools is to underestimate the ingenuity of people living in difficult circumstances.

Using such examples to portray Macedonian society as divided at its most basic level owes more to political considerations and prejudice, and is a misconception that fails to recognise alternative methods of self-preservation. As outlined in Chapter Four, in villages in the Mariovo district it was not uncommon for two members of the one family to claim allegiance to the Exarchate or Patriarchate in order to protect one’s family and village from the violence of the armed bands. Similarly, in urban centres, self-preservation techniques emerged as a result of the hostile political environment in which people lived.

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<sup>156</sup> E. Bouchie de Belle, *Makedonija i Makedoncite* [Macedonia and the Macedonians], Skopje, 1992, p. 61. Original title, *La Macedoine et les Macedoniens*, Paris, 1922.

<sup>157</sup> R.W. Seton-Watson, *The Rise of Nationality in the Balkans*, London, 1917, pp. 129-130.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 129-130.

### 5.3 Statistical summary

ONE UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCE of this fierce rivalry for the minds of young Macedonians was a relatively well-schooled population. The total number of students claimed by the Patriarchate, Exarchate and Serb school system rivals in Macedonia totals 150,195. This works out at an average of 58 students per Patriarchate school, 56 per Exarchate school and 37 per Serb school. Once we add the Catholic, Protestant, Vlah and Turkish data the total number of students in Macedonia was 193,156, enrolled in 3,752 schools, at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>159</sup> (Jewish educational statistics have been omitted due to the lack of available data.) Within a total population of approximately 2.2 million people student enrolment represented 8.7 students per 100 people.

According to official Ottoman data regarding literacy rates in the 36 administrative districts of the Ottoman State in 1894-1895, the percentage of illiteracy in the Bitola vilayet was 40 per cent (ranked 12<sup>th</sup> of the 36 districts). In the Solun Vilayet 39 per cent of the population were illiterate (ranked 17<sup>th</sup>) and the figure for the Skopje vilayet was 32 per cent (ranked 25<sup>th</sup>).<sup>160</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century it was remarked that, 'if the number of schools functioning in this region at the end of the century had been an indication of cultural progress, then surely Macedonia must have been a region of enlightenment and scholarship without parallel in Eastern Europe.'<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> It is interesting to compare these figures with official Turkish statistics for 1894-1895 that claim a total of 1,195 schools in the three vilayets, compared to the above total of 3,752 schools. Coincidentally the number of students is remarkably close, 190,340 - a difference of approximately 3,000 students. The historian, K. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830-1914*, the University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, p. 219.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p. 221.

<sup>161</sup> The geographer, H.R. Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics*, Liverpool University Press, 1951, p. 118. A lecturer in geography at the University of Liverpool, Wilkinson's important work details an impressive collection of conflicting ethnographic maps of Macedonia.

The oral testimony does not triangulate well with the published data. Respondents were asked, 'Were your parents, grandparents or anyone else in the village literate?' The overwhelming response to this question pointed to the vast majority of villagers being illiterate. Considering that Bitola was one of the most highly contested regions in Macedonia, it would appear that either educational figures were inflated by the rival parties to support partisan claims or that the quality of teaching in rural Macedonia was extremely poor.

It is interesting to compare the figure of 8.7 students per 100 inhabitants in Macedonia with Eastern and Western European nations at approximately the same period. Only Bulgaria had a higher number of students (in proportion to population) of the east European/Balkan States. Noteworthy also is that Macedonian figures were greater than those of Serbia, Greece and Romania - even though the three respective states had thrown off Ottoman rule decades earlier.

Naturally we should not confuse 'schooling' with 'education'. We have seen that the length of the school year was compromised by the economic needs of Macedonian families, and we have also noted the relative lack of experience within the teaching workforce. Nonetheless, the Macedonian school figures gave that society something of a comparative advantage among its peers.

Table 5.10: Total Number of Schools and Students Claimed by Respective Educational Systems in Macedonia at the End of the Nineteenth Century

Education System	Number of schools	Number of students
Exarchate	1,143	63,763
Patriarchate	1,443	83,810
Serb	226	8,432
Vlah	43	2,207
Catholic/Protestant	26	775
Jewish	?	?
Turkish	939	34,169
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>3,820</b>	<b>193,156</b>

Source and notes: Bulgarian Exarchate statistics are drawn from G.P. Genov, *Neiski ot Dogovor i Blgaria* [The Treaty of Neuilly and Bulgaria], Sofia, 1935, pp. 143-145, as cited in L. Mojsov, *The Macedonian Historical Themes*, Belgrade, 1979, p.75. Greek Patriarchate statistics are drawn from C. Nicolaides, *Macedonien*, Berlin, 1899, pp. 141-142. Serb education statistics rarely provide data regarding the number of students, but rather the number of schools and teachers in European Turkey. The writer has utilised the following method: As the highest available figures for each of the Balkan States is being used - 226 schools being from T.R. Georgievitch, *Macedonia*, London, 1918. The number of students were calculated through an examination of M.V. Vesselinovitch's data in *Statistika Srpski Shkola y Turskoj (y Staroj Srbiji i Makedonija) za 1895-96 shkolsky godiny*, Belgrade, 1897, (one of the few Serbs who provide student numbers). For the school year 1895-96, Vesselinovitch claimed 77 schools with 2873 students - a total of 37.31 students per school. The writer has multiplied 226 schools by 37.31 students to come to the figure of 8432. Vlah education data is drawn from D.M. Brancoff, *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne* [The Christian Population of Macedonia], Paris, 1905, pp. 146-247. Data regarding Catholic and Protestant schools and students numbers has been derived from D.M. Brancoff, *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne*, Paris, 1905, (p. 247). Turkish school data is from a diplomatic report by the Serb General Consul (Kosta Hristich) in Solun dated 26 May 1889 from K. Dzhambazovski, editor, *Gradzhda za Istoriju Makedonskog Naroda (od Arhivot na Srbije)* [Material on the History of the Macedonian people (from the Serbian archive)], Vol IV, (1888-1889), Book III, Belgrade, 1987, p. 441.

Table 5.11: Students Per 100 Inhabitants in European States, circa 1900

Country	Population (millions)	Students	Students per 100 inhabitants
Saxe/Saxony (1900)	4.2	792,186	18.8
Prussia (1901)	34.5	5,681,593	16.4
Norway (1898)	2.2	332,373	15.1
Sweden (1901)	5.1	747,020	14.6
Holland (1900)	5.1	739,810	14.5
England (1900)	32.5	4,731,911	14.5
France (1900-1901)	38.5	5,550,284	14.3
Switzerland (1900)	3.3	471,713	14.3
Austria (1901)	26.1	3,692,350	14.1
Scotland (1900)	4.5	626,911	13.9
Hungary (1901)	19.3	2,577,050	13.3
Denmark (1898)	2.5	307,633	12.3
Belgium (1900)	6.7	793,915	11.8
Ireland (1900)	4.5	478,224	10.6
Spain (1901)	18.6	1,961,694	10.5
Bulgaria (1899)	3.7	345,887	9.3
<b>Macedonia (1912)</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>193,156</b>	<b>8.7</b>
Italy (1889)	32.5	2,682,590	8.2
Romania (1900-1901)	5.9	351,913	5.9
Serbia (1899)	2.5	100,961	4.0
Finland (1902)	2.5	99,931	3.9
Greece (1900-1901)	2.4	89,823	3.7
Russia (1898)	126.3	4,193,594	3.3

Source and notes: Brancoff, D.M. *La Macedoine et sa population chretienne*, Paris, 1905, p 75 (except for the inclusion of data for Macedonia which has been compiled from statistics as per Table 5.10).

## Chapter Six: Complex Identities

THE MACEDONIAN EXPERIENCE of the late nineteenth century was not merely Christian and European. To this point we have assumed populations that were relatively homogenous in their ethnic, occupational and religious character. However, nineteenth century Macedonians were rather more diverse than these categories would suggest. A significant minority of the population (perhaps 10-15 per cent) were Turkish Muslims or Macedonian Muslims. The slow process of an evolving Macedonian identity was made the more complicated by these alternative realities.

### **6.1 Contrast between typical Macedonian Muslim village (Reka district) and typical Macedonian Christian village (Bitola region)**

#### **Churches and mosques**

CHURCHES WERE FOUND throughout the Dolna Reka Christian villages. Some were hundreds of years old, such as the church in Gari built in the thirteenth century. Churches generally remained standing in mixed Macedonian Christian - Macedonian Muslim villages. However, in the case of Rostusha, the fifteenth century church Sveti Bogorojca was transformed into a mosque after the partial Islamicisation of the village. In exclusively Macedonian Muslim villages there were few churches standing in 1912. Usually they were left unattended and slowly deteriorated (this could take place over a period of hundreds of years) whilst the fate of others remains unknown.

In religiously mixed villages, particularly when the Muslim element was dominant, a mosque was generally constructed in the village. It is not clear whether mosques were built by the village inhabitants or organised by Ottoman officials or *begs* from nearby urban centres (Debar, Gostivar, Tetovo). In the nearby Dolna

Zhupa district village of Golem Papradnik, a mosque was constructed between the upper and lower quarters of the village at the instigation of three Macedonian Muslim brothers, Adzho, Mimidin and Ayredin Adzhi, in 1839/40.<sup>1</sup> The oldest mosque in the district was in the neighbouring village of Balanci and was the only village in the district settled with Albanian Muslim colonists (they arrived at the beginning of the nineteenth century, from the Pshkopija district in Albania).<sup>2</sup>

It is generally accepted that Macedonian Muslim villages that no longer had churches standing at the end of Ottoman rule, did indeed, during earlier Ottoman rule, possess a Christian Orthodox church. Although there is no trace of a church in Zhirovnica at the end of the twentieth century (one of the sample Muslim villages), it is common knowledge that there once existed one, and that it was destroyed after the Islamicisation of the village. The former village schoolteacher, Abdula Odzheski, stated that 'today no one is certain who destroyed it, however it is considered doubtful that the villagers would have destroyed it voluntarily; they feared doing such a thing'.<sup>3</sup> Evidence of the existence of a church in the village was confirmed in the early twentieth century when an elderly Macedonian Muslim villager uncovered a church bell whilst ploughing his field. Securing the bell to his donkey, he took it to the church in the distant village of Velebrdo 'to be safely kept where it belongs'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> U. Tairovski, *Slovenskata makro i mikro toponomija vo Dolna Debarska Zhupa* [Slavic macro and micro toponyms in Dolna Debarska Zhupa], Skopje, 1987, pp. 282-283. Up until the construction of the mosque in Golem Papradnik, the villagers used the mosque in the neighbouring village of Balanci. The Balanci mosque was the oldest one in the district. Returning from Balanci, having attended for the Muslim religious day of Dzhuma, the Adzhi brothers agreed to donate a parcel of agricultural land situated between the two *maali* for the construction of a mosque. Along their journey home they each carried a large stone and placed them on the intended mosque site and decided that the name Adzho Adzhi would be written on the mosque. The three brothers built the mosque and after the first celebration of Dzhuma in the mosque, whilst exiting Adzho Adzhi collapsed and died beside the doorway. He was to be buried at that very spot beside the doorway and to this day villagers give their respect to him with prayers beside his grave. The name of Adzho Adzhi was written on the wall of the mosque and stands there to this day.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 285. The seven villages of Dolna Zhupa were overwhelmingly Macedonian Muslim. Approximately 20 per cent were Macedonian Christian. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the ethnographer, V. Kanchov counted Balanci as the only village in Dolna Zhupa with Albanian inhabitants.

<sup>3</sup> Abdula Odzheski (born 1945 in Zhirovnica, Dolna Reka district), interview conducted 25 March 2000 in Zhirovnica. Abdula Odzheski was the village schoolteacher from 1965 to 1999, he has received numerous awards for his teaching service and is a prominent member of the village community. At the beginning of the twenty first-century, Zhirovnica has a population of approximately 3,500 people.

<sup>4</sup> The Velebrdo church keeper related this story to the writer on 25 March 2000.

The previous existence of Christian churches in Dolna Reka Macedonian Muslim villages is evident from religious icons (some dated 1891) handed to the Velebrdo church by villagers during the construction of the church in the 1930s.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, a religious icon in the village church in Gorenci (Dolna Debarska Zhupa) testifies to the previous existence of a church in the Macedonian Muslim village of Balanci (Dolna Debarska Zhupa).<sup>6</sup> There are instances following Islamicisation where Macedonian Muslims continued using Christian cemeteries to bury their dead. The ethnographer, J. Hadzhivasilevich stated in 1924 that for an extended period both Christians and Muslims from Rostusha used the same cemetery.<sup>7</sup> In 1979, the ethnographer, N. Limanoski identified three Muslim graves in the Rostusha cemetery with both Muslim and Christian characteristics, notably an opening on the eastern side of the graves for the lighting of candles, as is typical of Orthodox grave sites.<sup>8</sup>

Macedonian Christian villages in the Bitola region commonly contained at least one church that was serviced by a priest on a part-time basis. A single priest looked after the religious needs of up to half a dozen local villages and attended each village on a rotational basis to perform mass, conduct christenings and wedding ceremonies, and visit particular villages on their respective saint's day. Dolna Reka *oji* (Muslim clerics), unlike Orthodox priests, did not rotate around a group of villages but were instead attached to a single mosque. Ethnically, *oji* were Macedonians as well as Turks. There are instances of Macedonian Muslim families producing a line of *oji*,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. (Velebrdo church keeper). These icons were placed in the church and have adorned its interior walls since construction. They came from surrounding villages in the district. The church in Velebrdo was constructed during the period of Serb rule in Macedonia and it is interesting to note that during this period the local authorities constructed several new village taps in the shape of Christian crosses. Macedonian Muslims in Velebrdo claim that prior to the construction of the village church in the 1930s there had been no other church in the village. Before Islamicisation, the Rostusha church serviced the needs of both villages. The two villages were closely situated to one another and were almost joined as one, but as a result of a landslide problem (due to water flowing down the mountain) that has existed over many years the two villages became separated. The inhabitants of Velebrdo traditionally used the cemetery situated beside the church in Rostusha.

<sup>6</sup> U. Tairovski, op. cit. p. 286.

<sup>7</sup> J. Hadzhivasilevich, *Muslimani Nashe Krvi u Juzhnoj Srbiji* [Muslims of our blood in Southern Serbia], Belgrade, 1924, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> N. Limanoski, *Izlamizacijata i etnickite promeni vo Makedonija* [Islamicisation and ethnic changes in Macedonia], Skopje, 1993, p. 164. An eminent ethnographer of the Macedonian Muslim population, N. Limanoski's publication *Izlamizacijata i etnickite promeni vo Makedonija* can be considered to be the principal work in the field of Islamicisation of Macedonians.

as was a tradition with some Christian families that produced generations of Orthodox priests.<sup>9</sup>

As Macedonian Exarchate and Patriarchate priests did not attempt to modify the cultural characteristics of Macedonian Orthodox villagers in the Bitola region, Macedonian *oji* also displayed tolerance towards the age-old Christian-based customs and cultural practices of Macedonian Muslims in Dolna Reka. Macedonian Muslim women in Dolna Reka did not cover themselves as is the Islamic tradition. In the village of Yanche their dress was identical to Macedonian Christian women and it was an Albanian *oja* from Gorna Reka who attempted to modify this practice to conform with Islamic culture.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the nineteenth century, the most important religious figures with the Exarchate and Patriarchate in Bitola were typically Bulgarians and Greeks respectively. Similarly, in Dolna Reka, according to the ethnographic notes compiled by a villager from Galitchnik, Shtiljan Trajanov Chaparoski (1870–1934) regarding the Debar region at the end of the nineteenth century, the most influential and distinguished Muslim in the district was the Turkish *oja* based in the village of Trebishte, Azhi-Iljas.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, it was Turkish and Albanian *oji* who were most likely to display intolerance towards Macedonian customs – a Macedonian *oja* was unlikely to be intolerant towards Macedonian customs.<sup>12</sup> In the

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<sup>9</sup> Limanoski explains that according to traditional stories, Islamicisation of Christian settlements first commenced with the Islamicisation of the village-priest as a method designed to accelerate and assist the acceptance of Islam amongst the entire Christian inhabitants of the village. In the village of Restelica (Gora region), the conversion to Islam of the village-priest (from the Pandilovci family) hastened the religious conversion of the villagers. Following Islamicisation, the former priest continued on as the village *oja*, and subsequent generations maintained the tradition of being the village *oja* until the second half of the twentieth century. Following Islamicisation, the family name 'Pandilovci' was changed to 'Chaushevci'. (Limanoski obtained this information from interviews conducted in Restelica during 1984 with Yonus Kala, Dzindo Hikmet and Zevdan Chuvta). Ibid, p. 46.

<sup>10</sup> According to interview conducted by N. Limanoski with Boris Dichovski (born 1894 in the village of Yanche). Ibid, p. 292.

<sup>11</sup> S.T. Chaparoski, *Mesnost(ite) od Debarskoto okruzhie* [Places in the Debar region], document from the Macedonian Academy of Sciences (MANU) archive, Catalogue Number NR54, p.8. Chaparoski refers to the *oja* as being '*najperv chovek*' (literally, 'the first man'). S.T. Chaparoski commenced compiling data at the end of the 1880s. The final entries were made in 1900.

<sup>12</sup> Abdula Odzheski interview, op. cit. Asan Asani (born 1911 in Velebrdo, Dolna Reka district), interview conducted 25 March 2000 in Velebrdo. Asan Asani is from the 'Asanagovci' family (Asan's father's grandfather was named Asan) and he was able to trace his male ancestors back four generations to his grandfather's grandfather, Kara Mustafa. Between 1890 to 1912 the *oja* in Dolno Kosovrasti was a native Macedonian from

mosques, Macedonian *oji* commonly conducted religious services in Macedonian, and the few educated and religiously trained *oji* such as *Mula Muso* in Rostusha conducted services in 'Arabic, then Turkish, and finally in Macedonian so we could understand'.<sup>13</sup>

## Schools

EXARCHATE AND PATRIARCHATE schools in Macedonian Christian villages were most often situated beside the church. Similarly, Turkish schools in Macedonian Muslim villages were located beside the mosque in an adjoining building no larger than a typical classroom. It is not clear how many schools existed in Mala Reka or the rate of attendance, however, it is believed that students were exclusively male and instruction in the schools was provided by the *oja*. The curriculum consisted of two core subjects, numeracy and literacy in the Turkish language.<sup>14</sup> Although Turkish schools were present in the Dolna Reka district, there is no evidence that the Turkish language was successfully introduced into the village community as the language used in public or the home. The population had little contact with ethnic Turks in the district, and in the mosques Turkish *oji* conducted religious services and prayers in Arabic.<sup>15</sup> Turkish schools poorly equipped a limited number of men with an

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the village. When fronting funeral processions he burned incense in a *kandilo* whilst walking to the cemetery. In 1912 Mula Hasan (from Dolno Kosovrasti) was appointed the new *oja* in the village (having received religious training in Turkey and the Middle East). He condemned the use of incense and the carrying of the *kandilo* by the *oja* as a *kaurska rabota* ('a Christian matter'). Mula Hasan was successful in introducing some Muslim religious traits in ceremonies such as funerals, but was unable to eradicate the customs and traditions that the Macedonian Muslims had guarded and performed for centuries. The anthropologist, D. Gulioski, *Pogrbenite obichaj kaj Makedonskite Muslimani vo selata Gorno i Dolno Kosovrasti* [Burial customs of Macedonian Muslims in the villages of Gorno and Dolno Kosovrasti], Skopje, 1987, p. 396.

<sup>13</sup> *Toj prvo ke zbroeshe na Arapski, pa na Turski i na kraj na Makedonski jazik za da razberime.* According to Fazlo Feyzuli (born 1890 Rostusha), interview conducted by N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 292. Macedonian Muslim interviewees agreed that Macedonian *oji* during the Turkish era commonly conducted religious services in Macedonian, and believed that Macedonia *oji* were also familiar with the Turkish language.

<sup>14</sup> Asan Asani interview, op. cit., Redzho Muslioski (born 1946 in the village of Gorno Kosovrasti, Dolna Reka district), interview conducted 27 March 2000 in Dolno Kosovrasti. Redzho Muslioski's family is originally from Gorno Kosovrasti and moved to Dolno Kosovrasti in 1967. He is from the 'Musliovci' family and his grandfather's grandfather was named Musliya.

<sup>15</sup> During the nineteenth century Macedonian *oji* appear to have been on a similar educational level with typical Macedonian village priests. It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that Macedonian *oji* obtained training abroad, in Istanbul or the Middle East.

elementary knowledge of Turkish, though according to Asan Asani, born in the village of Velebrdo towards the end of Ottoman rule, ‘the language of the home and between members of the village community remained Macedonian’.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, as women were excluded from attending school and rarely left the village, they had no access to develop new language skills and later as mothers they raised their children upon their native language<sup>17</sup>, as was the case in Christian villages which were under Exarchate and Patriarchate influence.

Turkish schools in Macedonian Muslim villages in the region had limited success in introducing the Turkish language to the people. According to Redzho Muslioski from Dolno Kosovrasti, ‘the old folk spoke very little Turkish, they only learnt some basic words through Turkish education’.<sup>18</sup> Men who served as conscripted soldiers in the Ottoman Turkish army acquired greater familiarity with everyday Turkish, as already noted.<sup>19</sup> Those who never left the village did not acquire any significant Turkish language skills, however those who left the district as *pechalbari*, spending extended periods working away from their homes, were likely to have some level of fluency in the Turkish language.<sup>20</sup> Asan Asani stated, ‘the old people knew Turkish because they were *pechalbari*’.<sup>21</sup> This *pechalba* experience deserves particular attention.

## ***Pechalba***

ACCORDING TO THE inhabitants of Dolna Reka and the surrounding districts, the tradition of *pechalba* was born in their region. The inhospitable mountainous terrain meant that significant agricultural production was impossible, and as a

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<sup>16</sup> Asan Asani interview, op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Redzho Muslioski interview, op. cit. Redzho Muslioski stated that this was the case in his village and believed it was similar throughout the district.

<sup>19</sup> Asan Asani’s uncle (mother’s brother) learnt Turkish as a result of being conscripted into the Ottoman army. Asan Asani interview, op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> Redzho Muslioski interview, op. cit.

<sup>21</sup> Asan Asani interview, op. cit.

consequence men were compelled to leave their homes for extended periods in search of work. *Pechalba* became a necessary and normal part of life in the region.<sup>22</sup> As *pechalbari*, men from the district were predominantly engaged in building and construction trades. Popular destinations within Macedonia included Seres, Drama and Kavala, and their skills were to take them into the distant corners of the Ottoman Empire, as far as Egypt. Constantinople was a popular destination and served as a central port in which men could find work and transportation to any popular work destination. Dolna Reka Macedonian Muslim builders also worked in Anatolia (upper and lower Anatolia – Turkey), Konya (Turkey) as well as Dures and Drech in Albania. Although building and construction was the dominant trade, there were other men who engaged in alternative occupations, such as Mustafa Asani who operated a cake shop (*slatkar*) in Drama for many years.<sup>23</sup>

The most striking contrast between *pechalbari* from the Dolna Reka region and the Bitola region relates to their destinations. Macedonian Muslim *pechalbari*, unlike the Macedonian Christians from the Bitola region, did not travel to the neighbouring liberated Christian lands, particularly Bulgaria, Serbia and Romania, which were popular destinations with Christians from Bitola. Macedonians of both religious persuasions from Dolna Reka engaged in *pechalba* and shared similar destinations in Southern Macedonia. Although building and construction was popular with Macedonian Christians from Dolna Reka, other prominent areas of occupation included confectioners, dairying and inn-keeping. Macedonian Christian *pechalbari* from Reka travelled to Southern Macedonia, Thessaly, Athens, Belgrade, Bucharest, Bulgaria and Constantinople.<sup>24</sup> Typically throughout the entire Reka district, *pechalba* was equally popular and necessary for Macedonian Christians as it was for Macedonian Muslims. The historian G. Todorovski estimates over 90 per cent of the

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<sup>22</sup> *Pechalba* continues to be a widespread tradition in the Reka district at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

<sup>23</sup> Asan Asani interview, op. cit. Asan Asani recalled hearing from his father that the dominant ethnic group in the towns of Drama and Kavala were Turks.

<sup>24</sup> D. Silyanovski, editor, *Makedonia kako prirodna i ekonomska celina* [Macedonia as a natural and economic unit], Sofia, 1945, p. 211.

Mala Reka adult male population sought work abroad. In Galitchnik over 800 men left the village annually, and it was not unusual for adult men to be accompanied by their sons, introduced to *pechalba* at 12 years-of-age or earlier.<sup>25</sup>

In contrast to the Bitola region, where returning *pechalbari* routinely purchased *chiflik* land and built new and larger homes, in Dolna Reka returning Macedonian Muslims constructed new homes but did not purchase agricultural land due to its limited supply. Parcels of land were small and often inaccessible. Even modern farm machinery such as tractors and harvesters could not penetrate parcels of land along the mountainsides. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that in many Dolna Reka villages, such as Zhirovnica, Velebrdo and Dolno Kosovrasti, there are no examples of traditional architecture remaining at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Residential homes have come to reflect the architecture of popular *pechalba* destinations in Western Europe (Germany, Switzerland, Austria, etc). Traditionally homes in the district during the Ottoman era were constructed of stone with slate roofs. The contemporary commentator, S. Gopchevich noted in 1890 that homes in the Reka district village of Galitchnik were large, and well built of stone.<sup>26</sup> At the beginning of the twenty-first century in the Bitola region there remain numerous examples of mud brick homes in the plain, and homes built of stone and slate in the upper areas and Mariovo, in contrast to the Dolna Reka district.

## Layout and features

IN GENERAL, THE layout of a Macedonian Muslim village in Dolna Reka at the end of the nineteenth century was not unlike a typical upper village in the Bitola

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<sup>25</sup> G. Todorovski, *Malorekanskiot predel* [The Mala Reka region], Skopje, 1970, p. 68. Kipro Kipro (1879-1963) from Lazaropole, took his eight-year-old son with him on *pechalba* to Bitola in 1919. Earlier, Kipro operated a tailoring business in Solun, a trade he had learnt from his uncle, and he also spoke Turkish fluently. Popular destinations within Macedonia for men from Lazaropole were Solun, Seres, Drama, and Kavala. Beyond Macedonia, Belgrade and Sofia were common destinations, others travelled to Sarajevo and some went as far as Alexandria in Egypt. Morpha Temelkovska (born 1950 Bitola), notes of interview, Skopje 3 March 2000. Note: Kipro Kipro is Morpha's grandfather and the eight-year-old son her father.

<sup>26</sup> Spiridon Gopchevich, *Stara Srbija i Makedonija* [Old Serbia and Macedonia], Belgrade, 1890, p. 201.

region. Characterised by narrow winding paths, many were constructed with cobblestones, others as dirt roads linking a concentrated layout of homes and limited agricultural land. Homes commonly were situated at the front of the property, with the exterior wall often forming the boundary along the path or road. The property would contain three or four buildings inside, thus creating a square or private courtyard. These would generally consist of the original family home, a new one built by one of the sons, a barn for housing animals and possibly another barn like construction for various supplies. In other instances there might have been two, three or even four homes creating a courtyard, as was the case with the Beshirovci family residence in Velebrdo.<sup>27</sup> Similar courtyards existed in both Macedonian Christian and Muslim villages respectively, and may have served as private areas where the women could move freely without attracting attention. The most obvious contrast between Macedonian Muslim homes and Macedonian Christian homes was the existence of high fences at the front of the home, and sometimes all around the property boundary. Although far more common in Albanian and Turkish Muslim homes and villages, it also existed to a lesser degree in Macedonian Muslim villages. Macedonian Christians believed that high fences were constructed primarily for the purpose of concealing women from gazing eyes.

As a rule, nineteenth-century religiously mixed Macedonian Christian and Macedonian Muslim village communities were not physically segregated from one another. Generally they did not live in separate Muslim or Christian *maali* and this was the norm throughout the Reka district and the wider regions of northwestern Macedonia.<sup>28</sup> The ethnographer J. Hadzhivasilevich's observations are comparable throughout the entire Debar region in shared Macedonian Christian-Macedonian Muslim villages, it was customary for the two religious groups to live together,

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<sup>27</sup> Asani Rejep (born 1915 in Velebrdo, Dolna Reka district), interview conducted 25 March 2000 in Velebrdo.

<sup>28</sup> Ismail Bojda (born 1953 in Brod, Gora region of Kosovo), interview conducted 7 March 2000 in Skopje. Ismail Bojda is currently the president of the Association of Islamicised Macedonians of Macedonia. Asani Rejep interview, op. cit. Abdula Odzheski interview, op. cit.

integrated as one community without any outward signs of division.<sup>29</sup> In ethnically and religiously mixed Macedonian Christian-Turkish Muslim villages, one of four sample villages were physically segregated.<sup>30</sup> According to interviews conducted with Ismail Bojda from the village of Brod in Kosovo and with Jovche Petrovski from the village of Chelopek in the Tetovo region, mixed Macedonian Christian-Albanian Muslim villages were most likely to have physically segregated communities.<sup>31</sup> For instance, in the village of Chelopek (Tetovo region) a main roadway, as well as smaller roads and pathways in the village, formed the separation point between the two groups. Where there was no distinctive barrier between the two groups, they continued to be separated by an 'invisible barrier'.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, in the neighbouring mixed Macedonian Christian-Albanian Muslim villages of Miletino and Teanovo, physical segregation was the norm. In Miletino and Teanovo, as in Chelopek, Macedonians were situated upon the higher ground in the village whilst the Albanian population was located in the lower end of the respective villages.<sup>33</sup> As such the principal factor behind physical segregation does not appear to have been religious, but ethnic.

The eleven inhabited Dolna Reka district villages were situated between 625 to 1,110 metres above sea level and had a combined total of 809 hectares of agricultural land. Only two villages – Zhirovnica and Trebishte – had more than one hundred hectares of agricultural land (195 and 120 respectively). Total grazing pastures amounted to 3,116 hectares. The Bitola upper villages situated along Mount Pelister and the Baba ranges were renowned at the end of the nineteenth century and early

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<sup>29</sup> J. Hadzhivasilevich, op. cit. p. 22. There were only three instances of physical segregation between the two groups throughout the entire region. J. Hadzhivasilevich outlined the case of Rostusha, where the two communities lived physically segregated from one another. They were isolated from one another to such a degree that there was no communication 'between men, women or children in the village as though they did not know or disliked each other'. (*Ni ljudi, ni zhene, ni deca nikako i ne govorejedni c drugima. Kao da se i ne poznaju ili kao da imaju tesbku pizmu*). Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>30</sup> See section titled 'Mixed Macedonian Christian and Turkish Muslim village' in this chapter.

<sup>31</sup> Jovche Petrovski (born 1939 in Chelopek, Tetovo region), interview conducted 27 March 2002 Melbourne. Ismail Bojda interview, op. cit.

<sup>32</sup> Jovche Petrovski interview, op. cit. Jovche Petrovski advised that in approximately 1912, Chelopek was made up of approximately 230 homes – 80 Macedonian and 150 Albanian.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

twentieth for sending scores of their young men abroad in search of work. Bitola upper villages also presented far greater opportunities to extract a livelihood working the land. Situated between 650 and 1,100 metres above sea level, the eleven highest Macedonian populated villages contained a total of 6,312 hectares of agricultural land and 4,701 hectares of grazing pastures, significantly greater than that available to the villagers in the Dolna Reka valley. In order to further emphasise the limited agricultural land available in Dolna Reka, a sample of eleven randomly chosen Macedonian populated Bitola Pelagonia Plain villages shows that they had a combined total of 11,721 hectares of agricultural land,<sup>34</sup> whilst another eleven villages from the Mariovo district had 6,916 hectares of agricultural land.<sup>35</sup>

Turkish towers are commonly found in villages located along the plains where the bulk of the land was under the ownership of Turkish feudal landlords, as was the case along the Bitola Pelagonia plain where towers were a common sight. The difficult terrain of the mountainous Dolna Reka district and limited agricultural land averted the imposition of a feudal landlord and his symbol of oppression, the tower.<sup>36</sup> In comparison, the Bitola region upper villages were not situated in such difficult landscape and contained considerable more agricultural land. Approximately half the upper villages were free of *chifli* estates.

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<sup>34</sup> M. Panov, *Enciklopedia na selata vo Republika Makedonija* [Encyclopedia of villages in the Republic of Macedonia], Skopje, 1998. The eleven Dolna Reka villages refer to Zhirovnica, Vidushe, Trebishte, Bitushe, Rostusha, Velebrdo, Adzhievci, Prisojnica, Skudrinje, Gorno Kosovrasti and Dolno Kosovrasti. Boletin is omitted as it became an uninhabited village in the second half of the twentieth century and therefore there is insufficient data available. The eleven Bitola Upper region villages refer to Bistrica, Brusnik, Bukovo, Orehovo, Lavci, Rotino, Capari, Srpci, Gavato, Metimir and Oblakovo. Eleven randomly chosen Bitola Pelagonia plain villages refer to Dobrusevo, Trn, Karamani, Novaci, Logovardi, Mogila, Porodin, Ribarci, Dedebalci, Poeshevo and Novo Zmirnevo.

<sup>35</sup> The eleven villages are - Budimirci, Gradeshnica, Grumazi, Grunishta, Iveni, Makovo, Orle, Polog, Rapeshe, Skochivir and Staravina.

<sup>36</sup> There were no instances of interviewees from Dolna Reka being aware of the existence of Turkish towers in the district.

Table 6.1: Contrasting Physical Characteristics Between Dolna Reka and Bitola districts

District - 11 villages each	Metres Above Sea Level	Agricultural Land in Hectares	Grazing Land in Hectares	Approx. population
Dolna Reka	625 - 1110	809	3,116	6,000
Upper villages Bitola	650 - 1100	6,312	4,701	7,920
Pelagonia Plain	550 - 700	10,909	478	3,960
Mariovo district	600 - 1090	6,916	16,643	3,985

Source: M. Panov, *Enciklopedia na selata vo Republika Makedonija* [Encyclopedia of the villages in the Republic of Macedonia], Skopje, 1998; and, V. Kanchov, *Makedonia Etnografija i Statistika* [Macedonia ethnography and statistics], Sofia, 1900.

Regardless of whether village lands did or did not include *chiflik* land, it was the norm for land parcels to be known by specific names. The naming systems of land parcels (and other topographical village locations) in Islamicised Dolna Reka villages in general remained Macedonian in origin. In the village of Zhirovnica the following names existed in the agricultural fields: *Bela Voda*, *Bel Kamen*, *Bunarcheno*, *Govedarnica*, *Golem Dol*, *Dupka*, *Gjurchina*, *Ezercheno*, *Yablina*, *Laykovche* and *Mechkarnik*.<sup>37</sup> Other names existed, and are evidence of the Christian heritage of the village. For example, there were areas known as *Krstec* (Cross) and *Manastir* (Monastery), and the common name used for the Zhirovnica cemetery was *Popovci*, whereas the name for cemetery in the Macedonian language is *grobishta* and the name *Popovci* typically refers to a family of priests.<sup>38</sup> Toponyms of a distinctive Christian character exist in many exclusively Macedonian Muslim villages throughout the Republic of Macedonia a century later. The village square in Preglovo (Kitchevo) is known as *Crkolnik*, the area around the mosque in Prisojnica (Dolna Reka) is known

<sup>37</sup> Abdula Odzheski interview, op. cit.

<sup>38</sup> 'Popovci' is the name normally used by a *soi* (extended family) which has a history of priests. *Pop* is the term for priest in Macedonian. In the village it is believed that a village church was once located beside the cemetery.

as *Na Crkov/Crkov*, *Kalugerec* in Mal Papradnik (Dolna Debarska Zhupa), *Crkov* in Golem Papradnik (Dolna Debarska Zhupa), *Crkevishte* in Broshtica (Dolna Debarska Zhupa), *Crkevishte* in Dolno Kolichani (Skopje), *Bogorojca* in Urvitch (Tikvesh), and *Crkevishte* in Timjanik (Tikvesh).<sup>39</sup> Similar to typical Macedonian Christian villages retaining their distinctive Macedonian origin village names, Macedonian Muslim villages reflect Macedonian origin names rather than Turkish or Muslim names. However, village *maali* (quarters) in Macedonian Muslim villages have adopted Muslim names similar to that that occurred in large urban centres such as Bitola. In Zhirovnica at the beginning of the twenty-first century, there are five *maali* – *Gorno malo* and *Dolno malo* (Upper Quarter and Lower Quarter – common in Macedonian Christian villages), *Mechkar malo* (Macedonian in origin), and the distinctly Muslim named quarters of *Beshir malo* and *Osman malo*.<sup>40</sup>

Perhaps one of the most interesting differences between a Macedonian Muslim village and a Macedonian Christian village can be attributed to the strategy of self-preservation often encountered in Christian villages but also evident in the single case of Islamicisation in the village of Leunovo (Mavrovo region). As a consequence of continued attacks on the village by Albanian bandits (working in collaboration with *pashi* from Tetovo and *begs* from Debar), in 1850 Angel Kaloshevski converted to Islam and adopted the name Amet. Thereafter as a Muslim he managed to safeguard the village from further tyranny by Albanian bandits. The remaining Christian villagers, rather than harbour antagonistic feelings towards the Ametovci family for converting to Islam, were grateful and maintained great respect for them. The Ametovci family was known to maintain the Orthodox Christian tradition of the *domashna slava* (family saint's day) after Islamicisation and also maintained family links with Christian relatives in the village.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> U. Tairovski, op. cit. pp. 279-287; and, N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 328.

<sup>40</sup> Abdula Odzheski interview, op. cit.

<sup>41</sup> N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. pp. 104-105.

## 6.2 Celebrations and rituals

STRIKING SIMILARITIES EXISTED in the rituals and celebrations of the Macedonian Muslim villages of Dolna Reka and the Christian villages of the Bitola region. Generally, religious differences at the end of the nineteenth century did not significantly impact upon age-old customs and traditions which no doubt contain elements of a pre-Christian character. The rituals we celebrate represent our culture, customs and religion. The anthropologist, C. Geertz, confirms this: celebrations are ‘the ordered system of meaning, of expressive symbols, and values in terms of which individuals define their world, express their feelings, and make their judgments’.<sup>42</sup>

Wedding rituals are amongst the most complex, as every phase during a traditional three-day Macedonian wedding had a corresponding ritual associated with it. Only certain elements of a wedding are being examined and compared for the purposes of this project. Funeral rituals as practised in Gorno and Dolno Kosovrasti are examined, as well as collective village celebrations, celebrated as seasonal festivities in Muslim villages but with a Christian overtone in Orthodox villages.

### Weddings

THE TERM FOR engagement is known as *zbor* (literally meaning ‘word’ – ‘to give word’). Typically the period between an engagement and wedding in the Bitola region, as well as in Dolna Reka during Ottoman rule, could last twelve months or more. In the Bitola region it principally catered for the preparation of elaborate gifts whilst in Dolna Reka it was due to the high rate of *pechalba* in the region, allowing ample time for the village men to return from abroad for the wedding festivities. Traditionally men had returned home from *pechalba* by *Krstovden* (September 27 - an Orthodox Christian holy day, ‘The Exaltation of the Precious and Life Giving Cross’)

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<sup>42</sup> C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, 1973, pp. 144-145.

as Macedonian Muslim weddings were commonly conducted two weeks before and two weeks after *Krstovden*.<sup>43</sup> The timing of weddings around *Krstovden* also coincided with the agricultural life of the villages, as by this date the bulk of the work in preparation for winter was complete. Similarly, in the Bitola region, the wedding period coincided with the agricultural cycles and weddings were commonly held during the autumn months from September to November.<sup>44</sup>

A similar pattern is evident in respect to systems of marriage in both the Dolna Reka and Bitola region villages. Typically a young man took his bride from a neighbouring village in the district.<sup>45</sup> There were certain exceptions where specific villages practiced endogamy, but these appear to be periodic episodes (with greater frequency later in the twentieth century) rather than long-term customs.<sup>46</sup> However, it is interesting to note that in the Gora region (Kosovo - Serbia, where there existed a compact group of eighteen exclusively Macedonian Muslim villages) it was rare for one to marry outside the village. In instances where this occurred, 'people considered such individuals to have something wrong with them, for it was a matter of great

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<sup>43</sup> D. Gulioski, *Svadenite običaj vo selata Dolno i Gorno Kosovraši, nekogash i sega* [Wedding customs in the villages Dolno and Gorno Kosovraši, in the past and the present], Skopje, 1984, p. 262. *Dve nedeli pred i dve nedeli po Krstovden e najubavo vreme za svadba* ('Two weeks before and two weeks after Krstovden is the ideal time for a wedding') was a common saying in Dolno and Gorno Kosovraši.

<sup>44</sup> Dragica Kleshteva (born 1934 in the village of Vrajevci, Bitola region), interview conducted in Melbourne on 1 November 1999. Dragica Kleshteva married into Gorno Aglarci village in the Bitola region when she was 22 years-of-age. In 1961 she moved to the suburb of Gini Male in Bitola with her young family. At the end of 1964, her husband, Mihailo, arrived in Australia, and Dragica followed with their two young children in 1965.

<sup>45</sup> Macedonian Muslims interviewed from the Reka district stated that it was normal practice for marriage partners to be drawn from the district. A similar comment is made by J. Hadzhivasilevich. He also gives an example of Adzhievci village, whose men typically took brides from the neighbouring village of Prisojnica. Op. cit. p. 22. According to ethnographic data compiled by S.T. Chaparoski at the end of the nineteenth century, Christians that 'live in the villages of Mala Reka do not take brides nor give brides to other villages outside of Mala Reka'. It is worth noting that the author does not distinguish between the two districts and treats both Dolna and Mala Reka as one. Chaparoski does not exclusively relate the giving and taking of brides as a regional issue, but instead connects it to the type of traditional costumes worn by the women (Christian female costumes were specific and unique to the district). The only exception where brides were given or taken outside the district occurred with the village of Elovec in the Kitchevo district, because the women there also wore identical costumes (this was the case due to migrations away from the region due to Albanian terror. Colonies were established in towns as far as Krushevo, Bitola and Veles regions). S.T. Chaparoski, op. cit. pp. 29-30.

<sup>46</sup> In both regions there are certain villages at the beginning of the twenty-first century that are considered to be 'out of bounds' for young men as it is common knowledge that girls in such villages marry within the village. Marrying within the village has become more common within the Dolna Reka region and this was described as being 'a recent development'.

pride to marry within the village, in order to preserve it'.<sup>47</sup> Macedonians of both religious persuasions clearly did not look towards other ethnic or religious groups for possible marriage partners. A Macedonian Muslim rarely married a Muslim Turk or Albanian, and a Macedonian Christian equally sought a marriage partner in someone of the same ethnicity and religion. Marriages in both communities generally occurred for people aged in their late teens or very early twenties, and arranged marriages were common.<sup>48</sup> An adult male representing a family in search of a bride was known as a *stroinik* and negotiations for a potential bride were conducted within a strict set of rules and rituals.<sup>49</sup>

Wedding celebrations in both the Christian Bitola region and the Muslim Macedonian communities of Dolna Reka were characterised by a three-day-long celebration that adhered to an elaborate order of rituals. There existed rituals and corresponding songs for every immediate family member of the groom and bride, as well as the best man and godparents. Within the intricate nature of a traditional Macedonian wedding, certain ritual elements can be isolated.

Both Christian and Muslim Macedonian weddings traditionally commenced on a Thursday (whereas the Muslim tradition called for it to commence on a Friday).

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<sup>47</sup> Ismail Bojda interview, op. cit. In support of Bojda's statement it is interesting to note that he married within the village (Brod). Both his parents are born in the village, and both sets of grandparents are also from the village.

<sup>48</sup> Since the later stages of the twentieth century, in the Bitola region Christian Macedonians marry far later than was once the norm. Arranged marriages are a thing of the past and the trend has become for people to marry later in life. There are also economic considerations related to people marrying later. Due to high rates of unemployment amongst the youth, many are unable to secure a basic income with which to support a family. In the Dolna Reka region the situation is different. Macedonian Muslim marriages continue to occur for people in the late teens to early twenties, and this appears to be influenced by economic factors rather than religious considerations. Young people continue to maintain the tradition of *pechalba* in the region, largely working in European Union countries (the most popular destination in the last ten years has become Italy). Furthermore, unlike the Bitola region, where many villages have been slowly diminishing with the inhabitants either moving to the city or leaving altogether to countries such as Australia, Canada, USA, Germany and Sweden, this process did not occur to the same extent in Dolna Reka villages that are considered large (2000 plus inhabitants) by Macedonian standards. It is interesting to mention the system of marriage in the village of Skudrinje in Dolna Reka. In recent years villagers have been reluctant to marry their children outside the village and children as young as fourteen and fifteen are becoming married.

<sup>49</sup> M. Hadzhi-Pecheva, *Običaji okolu skopuvajne brak vo Prilepsko-Bitolsko pole* [Engagement customs on the Prilep-Bitola plain], Bitola, 1981, p. 582.

In Dolna Reka and Bitola, women from the groom's side gathered to clean the wheat to be consumed in the coming days. A red flag with an apple placed on top of the pole was prepared to be ceremoniously carried during the celebrations.<sup>50</sup> The red flag in the Bitola region was adorned with a Christian cross, whereas in Dolna Reka there is no available data to confirm whether there was a symbol of any kind on the flag. Numerous similar customs and rituals common to peasant culture revolved around a bride's purity, the fertility of the bride and a desire for male children. Traditional greetings to the groom's father and individual family members (this also applied to the bride's family) were identical with Christian and Muslim Macedonians, and specific ritual wedding songs were alike in Dolna Reka Macedonian Muslim and Christian wedding celebrations.<sup>51</sup>

A common ritual performed in both regions involved a symbolical shaving of the groom by the godfather (*kumot*) prior to the groom's wedding party leaving for the bride's home. Traditionally this ritual act occurred before the entry to the home and two young girls held open a towel which was to be used to wipe the groom's face and which the wedding guests used to throw gifts of money into.<sup>52</sup> In the Bitola region the ritual was identical except the towel was held open by a brother and sister.<sup>53</sup> Women and girls sung a customary song during the shaving of the groom.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 585; and, D. Gulioski, 1984, op. cit. pp. 262-263.

<sup>51</sup> D. Gulioski, 1984, op. cit. p. 260. J. Hadzhivasilevich considered that wedding customs in the Debar region were identical between the Christian and Islamicised community at the end of the nineteenth century. op. cit. p. 44.

<sup>52</sup> D. Gulioski, 1984, op. cit. p. 271.

<sup>53</sup> M. Hadzhi-Pecheva, op. cit. p. 586.

<sup>54</sup> The ritual act of shaving the groom continues with widespread popularity amongst Macedonians in Australia. Interestingly a number of ritual elements associated with wedding customs persist in Australia, whilst some of these same customs no longer play a part in wedding rituals in Macedonia (particularly in urban centres).

Dolna Reka shaving of the groom wedding ritual song (Dolno and Gorno Kosovrasti):<sup>55</sup>

*Sedni zetje, sedi zetje  
Na srebreno stolche.  
Nechit zetje, nechit zetje  
Berber da go briche.  
Dur ne zemat, dur ne zemat  
Izni od babayi*

Sit groom, sit groom  
On a silver stool  
The groom doesn't want, the groom  
doesn't want  
A barber to shave him.  
Until they get, until they get  
Permission from mother-in-law.

Bitola region shaving of the groom wedding ritual song (Podmol village - Pelagonia plain):<sup>56</sup>

*Koj e berber zeto da zabrichi  
Berber mi e negov chesen nunko  
Stani, stani, chesen nunko  
Da zabrichish tvoe krshteniche.  
Chesen nunkomi mi go zabrikuva  
Starosvato mi go dobrikuva*

Who's the barber to shave the groom  
The barber is his honourable godfather  
Stand up, stand up, honourable  
godfather  
To shave your baptised child.  
The honourable godfather begins  
shaving him  
The second witness finished shaving him.

<sup>55</sup> D. Gulioski, 1984, p. 271.

<sup>56</sup> M. Hadzhi-Pecheva, op. cit. p. 586. Note, Hadzhi-Pecheva considers Podmol a Bitola region village. According to the boundaries of the Bitola region used in this study Podmol village is situated immediately over the administrative boundary in the Prilep region.

Photo 6.1: A new bride's mother-in-law leading a female procession to the Radika River for the 'Gathering of Water' ritual (*leyanye na voda*). Dolno Kosovrasti, 27 March 2000.



*Leyanye na voda* ('gathering water') was performed on the last day of a wedding celebration. It was exclusive to women and the ritual continues at the beginning of the twenty-first century in the village of Dolno Kosovrasti much as it was a century earlier.<sup>57</sup> Celebrations commence with a family gathering at the groom's home and traditional dancing to the tunes of a band. Later, a large procession of women, led first by a young male child and followed by the mother-in-law, the groom's sisters, first cousins and the bride (all women of the village may attend) walk down through the village to the crystal clear waters of the Radika river. The bride is required to fill various drinking vases (*bardina* and *stomni*) with water and pour it so that her mother-in-law may wash her hands, as well as other close relatives (in order of importance). The ritual is symbolic of the respect the new bride will show to her mother-in-law

<sup>57</sup> During field research in Macedonia, the writer recorded and photographed the wedding ritual of '*leyanye na voda*' in Dolno Kosovrasti on 27 March 2000.

and the women of the family that she is entering. Similarly, in the Bitola region on the last day of the wedding festivities, the bride was led to the village water supply, be it a river, village tap or central well and comparably gathered water and poured it so that her mother-in-law may wash her hands.<sup>58</sup> Whilst approaching the village water supply, the bride carried a silver coin in her mouth and basil leaves in one hand. Once the drinking vases were filled, both the coin and basil were dropped into the water.<sup>59</sup> The mother-in-law may instead wait for the bride at home, and once the washing of hands was performed the bride walked into the home, whilst the mother-in-law followed pouring the same water behind her so that 'her housework may flow like water'.<sup>60</sup>

Photo 6.2: The bride pouring water from the Radika River so her mother-in law may wash her hands (*Leyanye na voda* ritual). Dolno Kosovrasti, 27 March 2000



<sup>58</sup> Dragica Kleshteva interview, op. cit.

<sup>59</sup> M. Hadzhi-Pecheva, op. cit. p. 594.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 594.

## Funerals

NUMEROUS ELEMENTS OF funeral rituals reflected pre-Islamic customs in Dolna Reka villages and were on the whole similar to burial traditions in the Bitola region. Unlike Albanian and Turkish Muslims who prior to burial took the deceased to a neighbouring home of a relative, Macedonian Muslims kept the individual in his own home. In the case of an elderly person often clothes and accessories had been pre-prepared, anticipating the eventual day.<sup>61</sup> The body was laid out and positioned in an easterly direction (towards Mecca). Immediate family members, close relatives and friends visit to pay their respects. Female family members mourn the departed and express their grief through the wailing of messages to the deceased. The following is a typical example of the type of wailing message (for a deceased unmarried brother or sister) in the Dolna Reka district:<sup>62</sup>

<i>Mili (brate, sestro)</i>	<i>Of-Of</i>	Dear (brother, sister)
<i>Te ženime, te tazime</i>	" "	We wed you, we moan you
<i>Ni ostavi cheisite</i>	" "	You left us the dowry
<i>Cheisite izgorite</i>	" "	A burnt dowry

<sup>61</sup> D. Gulioski, 1987, op. cit. p. 394.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 395. A prominent scholar of Macedonian folk literature, T. Sazdov considers that 'laments show the existence of early rituals connected with the occasion of death, rituals inspired by primitive folk beliefs and conceptions. Burial rituals reveal traces of ancestor worship and a belief in life after death... The songs which were sung during burial ceremonies are highly lyrical. Lacking a fixed form and content, they depended upon the improvisation of the singer, a professional mourner who had the ability to adapt the details to the situation, to create a poetic work of art on the basis of his or her acquaintance with the departed, his character, his life and his family. The talented singer of laments, often paid for such services, would fashion a song giving a concise characterisation of the deceased, stressing his positive features and the more memorable events of his life. Laments are, thus truly lyrical, elegiac outpourings, expressing the infinite grief and pain caused by the loss of a near one. Vuk Karadzich asserts that good mourners (usually women) 'could cause a stone to weep'. Such laments are characterised by their extreme emotional tension. Grief is let loose in the repetition of endless passages, often lacking stanza structure and almost never rhyming. There is frequent use of exclamations and questions, as in the following typical excerpt:

<i>Lele, maro, lele kerko,</i>	Oh Maria, oh my daughter
<i>Shch' ova chudo shcho mi stori?</i>	What is this you have done unto me?
<i>Me napravi da te redam,</i>	You have caused me to bemoan you,
<i>Denya noshya da te kukam,</i>	Day and night to wail above you,
<i>Kako crna kukavica</i>	like a cuckoo, black and mournful

In modern time, of course, laments have lost their ritual nature and are used solely as an outlet for the mourner's grief. T. Sazdov, *Macedonian Folk Literature*, Skopje, 1987, pp. 37-38.

<i>Drugarite se dotebe</i>	" "	Your friends are beside you
<i>Te plachijet, te zhalijet</i>	" "	They cry for you, they mourn for you
<i>Kaj ke gniyet tvojata snaga</i>	" "	Where will your body rot
<i>Ke zhalime, ke plachime</i>	" "	We will mourn, we will cry
<i>Ne pejme, ne igrane</i>	" "	We won't sing, won't dance
<i>Ne pocerna, ne izgore</i>	" "	We are blackened, we are burnt

According to the anthropologist D. Gulioski, Christian heritage is expressed directly in the wailing through the statement '*ne pocerna, ne izgore*' ('we are blackened, we are burnt').<sup>63</sup> Black is a symbolic colour worn at Christian funerals, whereas Albanian or Turkish Muslim women wear white scarves as a sign of mourning. In the Dolna Reka region Macedonian Muslim women wore black, as did their Christian counterparts. Unlike other Muslim groups in Macedonia, but significantly similar to all Macedonian Orthodox Christians, the men of Dolna Reka did not shave for a period of six weeks as a sign of mourning a close relative.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, before the burial, the body was washed according to Muslim tradition and then smoked with incense in conformity to the rites of the Christian Orthodox Church.<sup>65</sup>

Rituals at the completion of a Macedonian Muslim funeral service in Dolna Reka were identical with Orthodox traditions. A handful of earth was thrown into the grave, commencing with the immediate family members and later by the others in attendance. This act represented '*izrac na lesna zemja i pokoj na dushata*' ('relief of burden and spirit at peace').<sup>66</sup> Following the burial food was consumed (including boiled wheat) at the grave sight '*za dusha*' ('for their soul'), aimed at sending off the deceased into the other world with food. Food was also ceremoniously eaten at the grave sight after six days, six weeks, six months, one year and three years.<sup>67</sup> When

<sup>63</sup> D. Gulioski, 1987, op. cit. p. 395.

<sup>64</sup> Abdula Odzheski interview, op. cit. Redzho Muslioski interview, op. cit. Both interviewees recalled men wearing beards as a sign of mourning for a period of six weeks and were aware that earlier it was common to do so. Abdula Odzheski stated that women no longer wear black scarves to funerals and during periods of mourning. Instead, the scarves are generally dark blue.

<sup>65</sup> D. Gulioski, 1987, op. cit. p. 396.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 398.

<sup>67</sup> Abdula Odzheski interview, op. cit. D. Gulioski, 1987, op. cit. p. 398. During the course of the twentieth century the ceremonial act of eating food at the cemetery ceased, but continued to be performed at home in Dolna Reka Macedonian Muslim villages.

leaving the cemetery, each individual returned directly to their own home. To not do so would be to invite death into the home of the family visited. Whilst travelling home, the first opportunity was taken to wash one's hands under running water, to rinse the '*loshotijata*' off ('to wash the evil/sins').<sup>68</sup>

Several characteristics of burial ceremonies in the Dolna Reka region were not only identical to those in the Bitola region but interestingly continue to be observed in many Macedonian homes (from the Bitola region) in Melbourne at the beginning of the twenty-first century.<sup>69</sup> For instance, on the day of the funeral it is forbidden for members of the immediate family to clean or work in the home, in particular to sweep the floor (for fear that someone else in the home may be 'swept' away). Those who have attended the deceased person's home to pay their respects are not escorted out of the home for fear that no misfortune follows them.<sup>70</sup>

Stretching over centuries after Islamicisation, the extent to which Christian traditions and customs continued to persist in funeral rituals is evident by the following illustration from the Macedonian Muslim village of Debreshte in the Prilep region. An elderly male villager kept a small locked trunk in his home without revealing the nature of its contents to his family. In his eighties and anticipating that his time on this earth was limited, he summoned his grandchildren to his home to notify them that when he departed they were to open the trunk. There they would find two items, one to be equally divided between themselves, and the other for himself. Eventually the fateful day arrived and the grandchildren carried out his instructions as agreed. Their grandfather had left them gold in the form of Turkish

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<sup>68</sup> D. Gulioski, 1987, op. cit. p. 398. This ritual act continues to be common at Macedonian funerals in Melbourne (Australia) at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

<sup>69</sup> A significant portion of the Macedonian population in Melbourne (Australia) originates from the Bitola region.

<sup>70</sup> D. Gulioski, 1987, op. cit. pp. 398-399.

*liras* (coins) and a Christian crucifix for himself. The old man was buried together with his cross. This event occurred sometime during the late 1970s.<sup>71</sup>

## Holy Days

CELEBRATED RITUALS, CUSTOMS and traditions, although corresponding with particular Orthodox Christian Holy Days, were not directly linked to Christianity publicly. Nor was the relevance of the customs (to their new religion) questioned by the people themselves, as there was no perceived conflict between the rituals and their Muslim religion. Instead, these traits were viewed as being an integral part of their identity. Identical rituals were performed by their parents, and their parents before them, and constituted a natural expression of self, family, village and a proud association with their district. The links to their Christian ancestry, and even to the earlier pre-Christian era, are numerous and take many forms.

Orthodox New Year is known as *Vasilica* and is celebrated on the fourteenth of January each year. It is a significant celebration for all Orthodox Christians and comparably so in Macedonian Muslim villages of Dolna Reka. Young children in Zhirovnica celebrated *Vasilica* in an identical manner to children in Macedonian Christian villages in the Bitola region. Gathered in large groups, children in Zhirovnica would walk around the village whilst beating sticks and cans together singing '*Vasil den dobar den, kade da si doma da si*' ('Vasil day, good day, where ever you may be, home you should be'). From door to door they were greeted by the man of the house. The children greeted him with the words '*Domaikine airliya neka ti bide denot*' ('man of the house, may you have good luck today'). He would thank the children and give them items such as flour, beans, plums or a token amount of money. After visiting all the homes in the village the food was taken to a specific home where it

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<sup>71</sup> Ismail Bojda interview, op. cit. Ismail Bojda was informed of this event through a friend from the village of Debreshte.

was used to cook a feast for the children. Whatever remained was equally distributed between the children to take home.<sup>72</sup>

Macedonian Muslims did not directly celebrate Easter, but partook in the custom of boiling and colouring eggs on Easter Thursday. In religiously mixed Macedonian villages, eggs were exchanged between Christians and Muslims. Whereas Christians discarded the shells and consumed the eggs, Muslims retained the shells from red eggs for *Gyurgovden* celebrations (May 6). Young children were bathed by their mothers with the red shells placed in the bath water in order that the children may have good health (*‘za zdravje na deteto, da e belo i crveno’*).<sup>73</sup>

*Gyurgovden* may be considered one of the most significant (non-Muslim) celebrations in the Dolna Reka region and traditionally (in Zhirovica) it is the day when *pechalbari* are obliged to return home.<sup>74</sup> Macedonian Muslims commonly assert that *‘Kade da si da si za gyurgovden doma da si’* (‘where ever you are, on Gyurgovden home you should be’).<sup>75</sup> Celebrations commence a day earlier and this day is known as *zapatki*, when the village girls (young boys may also be present) walked through the village fields, pasture lands and forests to gather herbal plants.<sup>76</sup> Whilst engaged in the collection of herbs, certain *Gyurgovden* songs were sung,<sup>77</sup> amongst which the following is well known throughout many Macedonian Muslim villages in Dolna Reka and beyond.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Abdula Odzheski interview, op. cit. This *Vasilica* custom was maintained in Zhirovica until the 1960s.

<sup>73</sup> In Zhirovica a herb (*ugoyachka*) was also placed in the bath together with the red shells from the boiled Easter eggs. The herb was also seen as giving good health (*‘da bide zdravo, da ugoya, da bide debelo’*). Abdula Odzheski interview, ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Returning home from *pechalba* for *Gyurgovden* celebrations was not exclusive to Macedonian Muslims in the Dolna Reka region, but also applied to the Macedonian Muslim villages in the Gora region (Kosovo - Serbia) who also had a strong tradition of *pechalba*. Ismail Bojda interview, op. cit.

<sup>75</sup> Asani Rejep interview, op. cit.

<sup>76</sup> Aysha Muslioska (born 1945 in Velebrdo, Reka district), notes of interview, Dolno Kosovrasti on 27 March 2000.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> N. Limanoski, *Izlamizacijata i etnickite promeni vo Makedonija*, [Islamicisation and ethnic changes in Macedonia], Skopje, 1993, p. 332.

*O Gyurgovden more Gyurgovden*  
*A koj ti reche da doesh*  
*Mene mi reche Veligden*  
*so shuma i gora zelena*  
*so buchibutin po mene*  
*So gorocveyke po mene*

O Gyurgov day, Gyurgov day  
 Who told you to arrive  
 Easter told me  
 with green woods and forest  
 with a loud churn behind me  
 with youthflower behind me

Collected herbs were woven into wreaths and decorated with flowers. Young women placed these upon their head and upon returning home the wreaths were placed on the *butim* (yoghurt making instrument). A metal coin was also attached to the wreath so the cow may continue to produce milk. Gathered herbs were also mixed in with sheep and cow feed in order that the animals maintain good health. It was also common practice on *Gyurgovden* for villagers to touch a cornelian cherry or red dogwood tree as it was considered strong and healthy, and that those who touched such trees would take on these characteristics. Young girls dressed in colourful traditional costumes would swing themselves on the trees that were thought to have ‘magical powers’<sup>79</sup> and sing traditional *Gyurgovden* songs (women-only songs).<sup>80</sup> Village men engaged in their own activities such as various competitions of strength, including the throwing of large rocks and tug of war in Velebrdo,<sup>81</sup> whereas in Mogorche the men were known to compete in a horse race.<sup>82</sup> In the early hours of the morning on *Gyurgovden*, men and women gathered hellebore plants (considered as a symbol of strength and health) from the nearby hills and obtained as many plants as there were members of their household. In some villages (for instance Velebrdo and Zhirovnica) they distinguished between male and female varieties of the species and gathered them according to male and female members of the family.<sup>83</sup> A large celebration was also conducted in the village square with musicians typically using the drum. On *Gyurgovden* men gathered on one side of the square to conduct village

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p. 336.

<sup>80</sup> Aysha Muslioska, record of interview. Asani Rejep interview, op. cit.

<sup>81</sup> Asani Rejep interview, op. cit.

<sup>82</sup> N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 334.

<sup>83</sup> A. Odzheski, *Nekoi verski praznici i obichaj kaj Izlamiranite Makedonci od Dolnorekanskiot region na Zapadna Makedonija* [Religious celebrations and customs practised by the Islamicised Macedonians in the Dolna Reka region of Western Macedonia], Skopje, 1987, p. 321; A. Odzheski, *Zhirovica vo prostorot i vo vremeto* [Zhirovica a place and a time], Skopje, 2000, pp. 76-77; N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 334.

elections, as done in Macedonian Christian villages, to appoint a *kmet* (village headman), *goidar* (grazer of cattle), *polyak* (watchman of the village fields), *vodar* (person who waters the village fields) and *ofchar* (grazer of sheep).<sup>84</sup>

## Other celebrations

THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY a dozen dates over the course of twelve months where village celebrations and rituals took place which had no religious connection to the Muslim religion and were instead related to Orthodox Christianity. Other village celebrations were seasonal celebrations with pagan roots. The burning of incense does not occur in the rituals of a Muslim *oja*, but plays a large part in the rituals of an Orthodox priest. Although *Letnik*, *Nevrus* and *Eremija* were seasonal celebrations, Macedonian Muslim women ritually burned incense on these days. For example, on *Letnik* (1 March), incense was used in the ritual act to smoke the animal enclosures in order that they not be attacked by snakes or other animals, that they be healthy and produce in abundance. Similarly, *Nevrus* (25 March), is considered the day when bugs and insects appear in the fields, women smoked the fields with incense on that day to

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<sup>84</sup> Asani Rejep interview, op. cit. Abdula Odzheski interview, op. cit. Redzho Muslioski interview, op. cit. *Gyurgorden* celebrations were also held in Macedonian Muslim communities in other regions such as Strushki Drimkol and Kitchovo. Macedonian Muslims were known to attend the *Sveti Giorgi* (St George) monastery in the village Vozarci (Tikvesh region) to wash themselves with the natural spring water. *Gyurgorden* was celebrated at the monastery with a large festival. It was common for Macedonian Muslims to attend the festival dressed in their best clothes. J. Hadzhivasilevich, op. cit. p. 42. The widespread significance given to *Gyurgorden* amongst Macedonia's ethnic and religious minority groups is particularly interesting. Along the hillside between the Dedebalci and Armatoush village fields (Bitola region), there is a particular spot renowned in the district as being *vakaŕsko* (religious ground). There are two large rectangular rocks in an upside down V position and known as *dupen kamen* (there is also a natural spring beside it). On *Gyurgorden* it has been a tradition for Macedonians from the surrounding villages, as well as Turks from the villages of Budakovo and Kanatlarci, to visit *dupen kamen* seeking 'good health' (*'za ŕdranje'*). People crawl through the opening between the rocks and it is believed that those who manage it without difficulty are the 'the good ones' whilst those who experience difficulty 'are not so good'. People suffering illness also go there on *Gyurgorden*. Ljuba Stankovska (born 1923 in Gorno Aglarci, Bitola region), interview conducted 15 March 2000 in Dedebalci village, Bitola region. Ljuba Stankovska married into Dedebalci village, which is a neighbouring village to the one she was born in. Justref Metovski (an Albanian born in 1908 in Resen, Prespa region) and interviewed in Bitola on 23 March 2000, stated that *Gyurgorden* was celebrated by his family for generations (*'od dedo prededo'*). *Gyurgorden* was celebrated with the slaughter of a lamb and all the neighbours were invited. Justref Metovski also recalled that sick Muslim children were taken to the Sveti Naum monastery in Ohrid, both during the Ottoman era and afterwards. Justref Metovski stated, 'Sveti Naum was respected as a holy place, even by Muslims'. In addition in Bitola, *Gyurgorden* is marked by a grand celebration by the Gypsy Muslim community.

encourage an abundant harvest. *Eremiya* (13 May), was a ritual celebration aimed at bringing good health to the farm animals and was signified by groups of young men visiting all the village animal enclosures and making loud noise with bells, pots and sticks, aimed at driving away snakes and insects.<sup>85</sup> Young men also sang a particular song reserved only for *Eremiya*.<sup>86</sup>

*Begaj begaj poganio*  
*Evetiya Eremiya*  
*co cvetoga Tanasiya*  
*ke ti motat cherevata*  
*so zbelezno motovilo*

Run run you filth  
 Here's Eremiya  
 with Saint Tanasiya  
 they will twist your guts  
 with a steel windlass

*Varvara* was the village saint's day in Zhirovnica before the village was completely Islamicised. Even after Islamicisation, *Varvara* (7 December) continued to be revered by the villagers. In the nineteenth century people in the village would not perform any work whatsoever on that day, as was the custom in any Orthodox Christian village celebrating its saint's day.<sup>87</sup> Often Macedonian Muslim women secretly kept Christian religious icons in their homes and their veneration for the nearby eleventh century Monastery of Saint John Bigorski situated on Bistra Mountain was expressed through secret visits to the monastery.<sup>88</sup> Macedonian Muslim villagers in the district maintained contact with the monastery through visits and donations. Women, in small groups, on any given day presented gifts to the monastery for the purpose of receiving good health (*'za zdравje'*). Often visits were conducted first thing in the morning or very late at night in an effort to avoid being noticed by Christian villagers from the district. Macedonian Muslims were known to visit the monastery in larger numbers late on the 10<sup>th</sup> September each year, the evening before the celebration of Saint Jovan Bigorski on the Orthodox calendar. The monastery contains a famous icon of Saint Jovan Bigorski which attracts particular attention from all visitors, including Macedonian Muslims who are known

<sup>85</sup> Redzho Muslioski interview, op. cit.

<sup>86</sup> N. Limanoski, 1993, op. cit. p. 337.

<sup>87</sup> Interview conducted 28 March 2000 in Dolna Reka region. Interviewee spoke on condition of anonymity.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

to proclaim, *‘žhiv e ikonata, žhiv e svetetsot’* (‘the icon is alive, the saint is alive’).<sup>89</sup> Erected upon a frame with an open space beneath it, Macedonian Christians and Muslims alike would crawl underneath in order to receive good health (*‘ža ždrawye’*) from the saint. Macedonian Muslim women also brought sick family members to the icon – young children or married women who were unable to have children. The casket of Saint Moshtiye, with bone fragments of Saint John the Baptist and small pieces of timber from the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, was also given great respect by Macedonian Muslims, and others seeking ‘good health’ would also crawl beneath it. Although Macedonian Muslims did not cease paying their respects to the monastery and Saint Jovan, they did, however, refrain from crossing themselves, as is the Orthodox Christian custom when entering any church or monastery.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> The icon has acquired a legendary status in the region. According to tradition it was found in the natural springs at the site where the monastery stands today, and the monastery was built upon the site in the year 1020. Local legend has it that the icon was once transferred to a church in Kitchevo, but it mysteriously vanished overnight and re-appeared the next day back in the Saint Jovan Bigorski monastery. Stories abound regarding instances during past wars when attempts were made to steal the icon, but it could never be found, and would miraculously re-appear the following day.

<sup>90</sup> Anonymous interview, op. cit. It is interesting to note that Macedonian Muslims from Dolna Reka have continued to display respect for the monastery of Saint Jovan Bigorski a century later. An elderly male from the district was personally responsible for connecting electrical power to the monastery in 1995, including the erection of power poles up the mountain, and he bore the financial cost of the operation. After the Second World War the Yugoslav-Macedonian Communist authorities unfortunately did not view Macedonian Muslims as a part of the Macedonian nation. State policies encouraged Macedonian Muslims to declare themselves as constituting a part of other ethnic groups, mostly Turkish but also Albanian. Consequently there was an exodus of Macedonians to Turkey between the years 1954 to 1962. The interviewee, Abdula Odzheski, stated that not a single Macedonian Muslim village was left untouched in Dolna Reka. ‘Families were torn apart’. The village of Boletin was left completely uninhabited as a result of migration to Turkey. The first to migrate was the prominent villager Beadin Shiyakoski with his sons Shukriya and Faik. Beadin was a wealthy man whose properties were confiscated after the war as a result of the nationalisation program. He was also interned at Cheshme (Shtip region) for daring to protest against the government action. After his release he sold his home to Osman Selami (an Albanian) from Vrbyane and moved to Kodjayle-Izmir (Turkey). Beadin’s action was seen by the community as a sign that they could not trust the government and this left the people feeling insecure. Furthermore it brought about a negative reaction against Christians, at the same time, Turkey began to be promoted as their genuine homeland. A. Odzheski, 2000, op. cit. pp. 35-36. Tens of thousands of Macedonians were to migrate over the course of a decade to various Turkish cities such as Istanbul, Izmir, Adana, Izmit and Karshiaka, establishing concentrations in particular areas of these cities. However settlement in Turkey was not what they expected according to the interviewee, Ismail Bojda. ‘Many of our people found themselves not accepted as Turks, but as foreigners’. Ismail Bojda explained that Turkey sought to assimilate Macedonian Muslims and many were forced to change their names to reflect typical Turkish names. Ismail Bojda’s uncle, Maslar, had his name changed to Demir Ali Kemal. His wife, Dafka, had her name changed to Beshkardashle. Contact between relatives and friends continued after the move to Turkey. People visited one another during the holiday periods and for celebrations such as weddings. In Zhirovica, particular customs such as the colouring of eggs on Easter Thursday ceased after the exodus to Turkey. Relatives visiting from Turkey ‘discredited such practices with comments that they were a *kaurska rabota* (‘a Christian thing’ - *kaurska* - a derogatory label signifying Christians from the Ottoman period) - even though such customs were always considered to be *our customs*’. Abdula Odzheski interview, op. cit. Negative attitudes conveyed by some

Table 6.2: Religious/Ritual Calendar in Dolna Reka Macedonian Muslim Villages, circa 1900

	<b>Non-Muslim Celebrations</b>	<b>Muslim celebrations</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>January</b>	Vasilica Tanasovden	Ramazán Fiter Bayram	
<b>February</b>			
<b>March</b>	Letnik Nevrus	Kurban Bayram	
<b>April</b>	Blagovec		
<b>May</b>	Gurgovden Ermija		<i>pechalbari</i> return Weddings
<b>June</b>		Mevlud	
<b>July</b>			
<b>August</b>	Petrovden		
<b>September</b>	Krstovden		<i>pechalbari</i> return Weddings
<b>October</b>			
<b>November</b>	Mitrovden	Ramazán	<i>pechalbari</i> leave
<b>December</b>	Varvara	Ramazán	

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Macedonians in Turkey have impacted upon age-old customs and traditions, but have not wiped them out. In fact, at the beginning of the twenty-first century Macedonian Muslims in Turkey have maintained elements of their native customs, traditions and rituals.

### 6.3 Macedonian Christian-Turkish Muslim village

THE LOT OF the Turkish villager was not dissimilar to the Macedonian villager. Both worked the *begs' chiflik* estates, were economically exploited,<sup>91</sup> and sought to maximise their own grain supplies for home use by hiding what they could from the tax-man and *beg*.<sup>92</sup> Living conditions for both Macedonians and Turks were generally difficult, and economically 'the Turks were undermined and exploited just as we (*Macedonians*) were'.<sup>93</sup> Personal relationships with Turks pointed to a common respect displayed during respective religious holy days. For instance, at Easter Macedonians gave Turks coloured eggs, and on Islamic holy days such as *Bayram*, Turks presented Macedonians with sweets such as *baklava* and *kadayif*.<sup>94</sup> The exchange of traditional dishes on religious days appears to have been a widespread practice throughout Macedonia generally.

On the surface, relations between the two groups appear to reflect a harmonious co-existence, but in fact the relationship between the two communities was coloured by implicit recognition of the social order. Turks were an integral part of the Sultan's empire, and the cultural and religious differences between the two groups were further obstacles preventing the bonding of them as a single community.

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<sup>91</sup> Trajan Popovski (born 1939 in Lazhec, Bitola region), interview conducted 14 March 2000 in Lazhec. Trajan Popovski is from the Popovci family. Mihailo Todorovski (born 1921 in Dolno Orehovo, Bitola region), interview conducted 30 March 2000 in Makovo. Mihailo Todorovski moved to the nearby Mariovo village of Makovo in 1948. Vasil Slaveski (born in 1954 in Dolno Orehovo, Bitola region), interview conducted on 31 March 2000 Dolno Orehovo. Vasil Slavevski lives with his family in Bitola, however, due to his strong connection with his village, he has renovated his parents' home in Dolno Orehovo and spends time there when on holidays. Vasil Stojanovski (born 1915, in the village of Rakovo, Lerin region), interview conducted on 19 June 2001 in Geelong. Born in the village of Rakovo, Lerin region, Vasil Stojanovski's family arrived in Lazhec in 1915, together with nine other families from Rakovo. During the course of the First World War (and up until the 1920s) there was an influx of new Macedonian Christian settlers to Lazhec from the Struga region, the villages of Veleshta and Zavoj from the Ohrid region, and from the Lerin region - Buf (12 families), Sveta Petka and Negochani.

<sup>92</sup> Kocho Duakis (born 1934 in Petoraci, Lerin region), interview conducted on 20 January 2001 in Melbourne. Kocho Duakis is from the Duakovci family, and although he was able to trace his roots back in the village four generations, he explained that the Duakovci family are descended from the Bitola region, near the village of Bach. Mihailo Todorovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>93</sup> Vasil Slaveski interview, op. cit. Vasil recalled this statement from his grandfather Petre Slavevski.

<sup>94</sup> This was a common response by interviewees from mixed Macedonian Christian and Turkish Muslim villages.

According to Mihailo Todorovski, from Dolno Orehovo (Bitola region), ‘beneath the surface we (*Macedonians*) were conscious that the Turks were of a higher status compared to us’.<sup>95</sup> Kocho Duakis from Petoraci (Lerin region), recalled that ‘generally the two groups lived well but the Turks enjoyed more rights’.<sup>96</sup> Whereas Vasko Altiparmak from the mixed Macedonian - Turkish village of Dolenci (Bitola region) recalled hearing from his parents and other elderly people from the village that, ‘the Turks were hard to live with’.<sup>97</sup> Vasil Stojanovski from the village of Lazhec (Bitola region) stated, ‘the Turk was of a higher class than us, regardless whether he was rich or poor. They exerted an authority over all Christians in the village. The state was theirs, the land belonged to them and the Sultan was theirs. The Christian would walk by a Turk with his head bowed’.<sup>98</sup> A common issue raised (by respondents) was the attitude of some Turkish men towards Macedonian Christian women. This was a point of tension for Macedonians and particularly resented by the men. ‘It was of no concern for a Turk to give attention to a Christian woman, but it was totally unacceptable for one of our men to behave in such a manner.’<sup>99</sup>

Typically the Macedonian woman’s role extended beyond home duties, particularly in the warmer months when her labour contribution was significant, working alongside the men in the fields. In contrast, Turkish women did not work with their men in the fields, and generally did not venture out in public. Turkish women were rarely visible outside their homes, emerging either in the presence of a husband or together with an elderly mother-in-law or mother. The role of the Turkish woman was restricted to maintaining her home duties. She was not permitted

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<sup>95</sup> Mihailo Todorovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>96</sup> Kocho Duakis interview, op. cit.

<sup>97</sup> Vasko Altiparmak (born 1912 in Bitola), interview conducted on 30 March 2000 in Bitola. Although born and raised in Bitola, Vasko Altiparmak is descended from the mixed Macedonian-Turkish village of Dolenci in the Bitola region. The surname Altiparmak is not a traditional Macedonian name, but is based on a nickname given to his grandfather Veljan, who was born with six fingers on each hand. The Turkish word for six is *alti* and the word for finger is *parmak*. Vasko Altiparmak is the retired former director of the Yugoslav National Bank in Bitola.

<sup>98</sup> Vasil Stojanovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>99</sup> Tale Naumovski (born 1929 in Optichari, Bitola region). Notes of interview, Novaci village (Bitola region) on 28 March 2000.

to visit her Christian neighbours least she may come into contact with men. Turkish women visited one another during the day when the men were out working, and only whilst accompanied by a mother-in-law.<sup>100</sup> A building beside the mosque was utilised as a meeting place for Turkish women on certain days, and even their husbands were prohibited from entering (*Lazheci*). Similarly, when Muslim families visited one another, women and men did not share the same room. They sat in separate rooms as Turkish women were not permitted to socialise with the men.

Inter-ethnic communication in shared Macedonian Turkish villages appears to have been conducted predominantly in the Macedonian language. Turkish men appear to have been able to speak Macedonian adequately, whilst Macedonian men appear to have had a basic understanding of Turkish. It is not surprising that each had some understanding of the other's language as it was not uncommon for the children (particularly males) of both groups to play together. Later as adults, even though Macedonian and Turkish men generally socialised within their own ethnic groups, some socialisation between them nevertheless continued. Communication in the Macedonian language (between men) was the norm in Lazhec, Dolno Orehovo, Petoraci (Lerin region) and Tearce (Tetovo region).<sup>101</sup> Due to the isolated lifestyle of Turkish women and limited contact with Macedonians, they were unlikely to be familiar with the Macedonian language.<sup>102</sup> Although Macedonian women enjoyed a greater public presence compared to Turkish women, they too were generally not presented with the opportunity to acquire new language skills, particularly in a village environment.

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<sup>100</sup> The interviewee, Jelena Jovanovska, stated that in her native village of Tearce (Tetovo region), 'Turkish men were very strict about hiding their women and would wait until dark before visiting their relatives in the village'. Jelena Jovanovska (born 1924 Tearce, Tetovo region), interview conducted on 15 February 2002 in Melbourne.

<sup>101</sup> Vasil Stojanovski interview, op. cit. Kocho Duakis interview, op. cit. Jelena Jovanovska interview, op. cit. and Stefan Trajchevski (born 1913, Dolno Orehovo, Bitola region), interview conducted 1 April 2000 in Dolno Orehovo. Stefan Trajchevski is from the Tanevci family, one of the oldest families in the village. In exclusively Turkish villages Turks were not likely to be familiar with the Macedonian language.

<sup>102</sup> Jelena Jovanovska recalled that as a young girl in Tearce, elderly Turkish women could not speak Macedonian, although she was aware that elderly male Turks could. Jelena Jovanovska interview, op. cit.

Shared Macedonian Turkish villages were in some instances, but not always, two physically separated communities within the one rural settlement. A dividing line between the two groups could take the form of a road, river or creek. If the village contained religious buildings such as a church or mosque, these structures were likely to be located in the vicinity of that part of the village occupied by the corresponding religious group.

At approximately 1900 there appears to have been no physical segregation between Macedonians and Turks in the village of Lazhec in the Bitola region. Turkish homes were scattered amongst Macedonian homes and there was no distinct boundary separating them. Similarly Petoraci in the Lerin region and Tearce in the Tetovo region had no separate ethnic quarters in the village. Each village contained a single village square (*sred selo*), whereas in Dolno Orehovo distinct ethnic quarters existed and the respective communities each had its own village square (but in this case the ‘Turkish’ village square may have been formed by Macedonians moving away from that part of the village). As village squares were primary places of collective socialisation, separate village squares ensured minimum social interaction between the two groups. To the Macedonian the village square (*sred selo* literally meaning ‘middle of the village’) was a popular meeting place over the warmer months. It was the central place to celebrate village religious rituals, weddings and annual gatherings of men to elect the village headman. In Lazhec, Macedonians considered the village square as their domain, and this was respected by the Turkish inhabitants of the village.<sup>103</sup> Unlike Macedonians, Turks did not utilise the village square for community celebrations.<sup>104</sup> During all Macedonian village square celebrations, Turks did not participate in the festivities. They would, however, sit around the fringes of the square and observe.<sup>105</sup> Over summer both Macedonians and Turks gathered in the

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<sup>103</sup> Vasil Stojanovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>104</sup> The absence of Turkish community gatherings and celebrations in the village square appear to be related to the non-public life of Turkish women. Turkish celebrations were confined to private homes with men and women isolated from one another in separate rooms.

<sup>105</sup> Vasil Stojanovski interview, op. cit.

village square, but these were either groups of Macedonians or Turks respectively, with limited socialisation between the two groups.<sup>106</sup> Whereas the Macedonian built his church on the fringes of the village, the Turk built his mosque to one side of the village-square. 'Our people viewed it as an imposition upon our village square.'<sup>107</sup> Mosques were situated on the periphery of the village square in both Lazhec and Dolno Orehovo respectively, and located beside each mosque was the Turkish cemetery.<sup>108</sup> Rarely are there two village squares within the one small village. In Dolno Orehovo the square containing the mosque was discarded by the Macedonians and a new square emerged to be exclusively used by Macedonians. Whether the new square emerged because of the mosque being situated in the original square is unclear, however 'the old square became known as the 'Turkish one''<sup>109</sup> even though the Turks in the village, as in Lazhec, 'do not have village square celebrations'.

Macedonian homes in villages co-habited with Turks were identical in construction and style to those in exclusively Macedonian Christian villages in the region. In mixed villages both Macedonian and Turkish homes were constructed in a similar manner and architecturally there appears to have been no visible difference between them. Properties were generally unfenced with boundaries often marked with stones. In Lazhec, only a handful of Turkish homes were surrounded by high fences.<sup>110</sup> Alternative structures (both in design and style) also existed in mixed

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> In comparison, in Macedonian villages partly Islamicised, such as Lin (on the western bank of the Ohrid lake), where a portion of the village converted to Islam under fanatical pressure from Albanian bandits in the eighteenth century, both Christian and Muslim Macedonians continued to live together as the one brotherly community. According to the stories handed down in the village, the old Orthodox church was divided into two sections and shared by both faiths as a place of worship. Similarly, in the partially Islamicised village of Boroec (in the Strushki Drimkol district), the Macedonian Christians of the village agreed for a mosque to be built within the church grounds, beside the existing church. N. Limanoski, *op. cit.* pp. 105 and 111.

<sup>109</sup> Mihailo Todorovski interview, *op. cit.*

<sup>110</sup> High fences around Turkish homes were a normal feature, apparently to prevent outsiders from viewing their women. The few homes in Lazhec with high fences were limited to those who could afford the construction. Vasil Stojanovski interview, *op. cit.* In the mixed Macedonian-Turkish village of Budakovo, it was forbidden for a Christian to ride a horse through the village, for fear that he may gaze upon Turkish women over high fences. Ljuba Stankovska (born 1923 in Gorno Aglarci, Bitola region), interview conducted 15 March 2000 in Dedebalci. Ljuba Stankovska was aware of this as she had heard the story from her aunt who was a

villages, built by the feudal landowner to accommodate workers and their families. These were unlike typical homes found along the plain or upper regions. In this particular style of housing up to six or more separate families resided under the same roof, separated by an internal dividing wall which did not always reach as high as the roof or ceiling, but could also be as low as 1.5 metres in height.<sup>111</sup> One respondent describes them as ‘barracks’<sup>112</sup>, and the French contemporary commentator Edmond Bouchie de Belle also used this term in an early twentieth century publication.<sup>113</sup> ‘Barrack’ style homes in Petoraci were used to house only Turks in the late nineteenth century,<sup>114</sup> however, the Naumovski family shared such a home together with a Turkish family in Optichari during the 1920s.<sup>115</sup>

In Christian Macedonian villages, typically all homes kept a certain number of animals (the number depended upon whether the village was located in upper mountainous areas or along the plains) that were required to be taken out to pasture, such as cattle and sheep. Normal practice required an individual to be assigned the role of collectively herding the village animals to pasture from spring to autumn (*goidar*). Utilising a single person to herd the village cows or sheep was a matter of practicality, as this allowed the people to work the fields. In the mixed Macedonian Turkish village of Lazhec, both Macedonian and Turkish men gathered to vote on a herder (*goidar*). Similarly they also voted for a keeper of the village fields (*polyak*).<sup>116</sup>

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resident of Budakovo during the Ottoman period. Ljuba was born in Gorno Aglarci but married into the neighbouring village of Dedealci.

<sup>111</sup> Barrack homes were rectangular in shape with several entry points into separate quarters that consisted of no more than a single room. The last remaining ‘barrack home’ in Petoraci (it remained standing until the 1960s) comprised five separate dwellings under the one roof, with individual rooms roughly six by ten metres in size. Each single room/residence was used as a bedroom, living room and kitchen. It was constructed of mud brick and was approximately thirty by ten metres in size. Kocho Duakis interview, op. cit.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> E. Bouchie de Belle, *Makedonija i Makedoncite*, Skopje, 1992, p. 95. Original title, *La Macedoine et les Macedoniens*, Paris, 1922.

<sup>114</sup> Kocho Duakis interview, op. cit. Kocho Duakis stated that he did not believe Turks and Macedonians shared these homes.

<sup>115</sup> Tale Naumovski, notes of interview, op. cit.

<sup>116</sup> Vasil Stojanovski interview, op. cit. *Poljaks* were not always appointed through democratic election, but at times appointed by the *beg*. See Chapter Three.

The appointment of a *goidar* and *polyak* represents one of few instances when both groups voluntarily gathered as a single community.

Farm animals were of tremendous importance to the villager, as working animals, for products such as milk or wool, and as a source of meat. Macedonians and Turks equally valued their animals, but due to religious considerations Turks refrained from consuming pork and subsequently did not keep pigs. On the other hand Macedonians routinely kept pigs to the displeasure of the Turks. 'If a Turk should happen to walk by it was not uncommon that he would display his disapproval by spitting at the pig and cursing it.'<sup>117</sup> Far greater intolerance was demonstrated by the Turks in Budakovo who 'prohibited their Macedonian co-villagers from keeping pigs or cooking pork because they claimed they found the smell offensive'.<sup>118</sup> Extreme opposition to pigs saw a Macedonian in Budakovo village beaten because his pigs offended a Turk. Afterwards it was forbidden to keep pigs in the village: a house-to-house search was conducted to ensure the village was free of the animals.<sup>119</sup> Albanians from Drevenik also reacted vehemently when confronted with pigs from neighbouring villages. 'They did not want to see our pigs and would throw insults to our people because we eat pork. If an Albanian saw a pig drinking water, he would yell that it is polluting the water.'<sup>120</sup> Vane Tancevski recalled that when the old folk spoke of Albanians and Turks, we knew they were a different people, 'but the link between the two was their religion - and they both didn't hesitate to demonstrate their dislike for our pigs'.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. The Macedonian beaten by fanatical Muslims in Budakovo was Ljuba Stankovska's uncle.

<sup>120</sup> Vane Tancevski (born 1935 in Lopatica, Bitola region), interview conducted 6 March 2002 in Melbourne. Vane Tancevski is from the Tancevi family and was able to trace his family back five generations on his father's side.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. It is interesting to note that to the end of Ottoman rule in 1912, the Ottoman Turkish administration in Bitola did not allow the sale of pork in the Bitola marketplace. Christian butchers were forbidden to sell pork. Bitolas Christian inhabitants could only purchase pork at the bridge near the village of Gorno Orizari, a distance of approximately 3 kilometres from the centre of Bitola. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Turks authorised the sale of pork in the vicinity of the Sveta Nedela cemetery. Later it was transferred outside the confines of the Sveta Bogoroyca church in Bitola. M. Konstantinov, *Zanaeti i Esnafî vo Bitolsko* [Trades and Guilds in Bitola and in the Bitola region], Bitola, 1966, pp. 25-26.

In Lazhec, Dolno Orehovo and Petoraci, Turks did not use alternative names for village fields or the village itself. Parcels of village fields owned respectively by Macedonians and Turks, as well as parcels within the *chiflik* estates, were overwhelmingly known by their traditional Macedonian names to both groups of people. Distinctively Macedonian in origin, parcels of land in Lazhec included *Crvenica*, *Dolno Crvenica*, *Begovi Livadi*, *Ograege*, *Dragosbnica*, *Pesok* and *Kumanica*. The Turks did not have a parallel topographical naming system in the village, but modified some existing names such as *Bunarche* to *Lato Bunarche*.<sup>122</sup> In Dolno Orehovo both Mihailo Todorovski and Vasil Slavevski stated that Macedonians inhabited the village before the Turks arrived. Trajan Popovski from the village of Lazhec believed the village was originally exclusively Turkish Muslim and Macedonians settled there to work on the *chifliks* during the 1820s or 1830s.<sup>123</sup> Fifteenth century Turkish tax records confirm that the village of Lazhec existed in the year 1468 and was made up of 80 Christian families and one Muslim family.<sup>124</sup> From the village of Petoraci (Pelagonia plain - Lerin region) Kocho Duakis claimed Petoraci was a recently constructed village, no more than a couple of hundred years old, and that

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<sup>122</sup> Vasil Stojanovski interview, op. cit. On the other hand exclusively Turkish villages in the Bitola kaza generally did have distinctly Turkish village names such as the unidentifiable villages of Kara Han, Akkacheli and Umerler (unable to establish whether these villages were in the Bitola region or surrounding regions). Other exclusively Turkish villages were known to their inhabitants by Turkish names, however, use of a Macedonian equivalent was maintained by the general population. For instance, the village of Kenali was known to Macedonians as Kremenica and the village of Medzhitli (Turkish) was known as Medzhitlija (Macedonian). Turkish equivalents to Macedonian town names have been identified in other regions of Macedonia and include larger urban centres. Two obvious cases that appear on various maps from the era are the urban centres of Skopje and Tetovo. Officially the Ottoman administration referred to Skopje as Uskub and Tetovo as Kalkandelen. According to V. Kanchov, the Muslim element in both cities was overwhelmingly Turkish, with very small Albanian minorities present in either town. V. Kanchov, *Makedonija etnografija i statistika* [Macedonia ethnography and statistics], Sofia, 1970 (1900), pp. 505-510. There is evidence of at least one exclusively Macedonian village in the Bitola region (Gorno Aglarci) having a corresponding Turkish name (Lahklar). Interestingly, Macedonian inhabitants interviewed for the purposes of this research project from the village had no knowledge of the existence of a corresponding Turkish name. Furthermore, names of agricultural land parcels in Gorno Aglarci appear in their identical form on the Turkish land titles. Ottoman land titles – Volume 52, document 20, number 91, dated 21 July 1906; Volume 52, document 29, number 100, dated 21 July 1906; Volume 52, document 31, number 102, dated 21 July 1906; Volume 52, document 34, number 105, dated 21 July 1906; and, Volume 52, document 38, number 109, dated 21 July 1906.

<sup>123</sup> Trajan Popovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>124</sup> From 'Bitolska nahia, opshirni popisni defteri broj 993 i 988 od 1468 godina' [Bitola nahia, detailed census registers, numbers 993 i 988 from 1468] M. Sokoloski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV veka* [Turkish documents - Detailed census registers from the XV century], Vol II, Skopje, 1973, p. 156.

Macedonians had not inhabited it for a lengthy period.<sup>125</sup> However, in the year 1481, Turkish documents record the village of Petoraci as being an exclusively Christian village with 74 families.<sup>126</sup> It is possible such villages may have taken on different ethnic appearances at various intervals. For instance, following the arrival of the Turks, there may have been an exodus of Christian inhabitants (there is evidence of Christians leaving their villages after Muslim colonisation), only to see Christians re-enter the village at a later date either voluntarily or involuntarily as workers on *chiflik* land.<sup>127</sup>

Table 6.3: Perceptions of Village Make-up in Mixed Macedonian-Turkish Villages, circa 1900

Name and year of birth:	Lazhec - Number of homes		D. Orehovo - Number of homes		Petoraci - Number of homes		Optichari - Number of homes		Dolenci - Number of homes	
	M	T	M	T	M	T	M	T	M	T
Altiparmak, V. b. 1912									15	30
Trajcevski, S. b. 1913			30	20						
Stojanovski, V. b. 1915	125	45								
Todorovski, M. b. 1921			15	15						
Naumovski, T. b. 1929							25	6		
Duakis, K. b. 1934					23	10				
Popovski, T. b. 1939	110	60								
Slavevski, V. b. 1954			35	35						

<sup>125</sup> Kocho Duakis interview, op. cit.

<sup>126</sup> From 'Lerin nahia, opshiren popisen defter broj 16 od 1481 godina' [Lerin nahia, detailed census register number 16 from 1481], M. Sokoloski, editor, *Turski Dokumenti - Opshirni Popisni Defteri od XV veka* [Turkish documents - Detailed census registers from the XV century], Vol II, Skopje, 1973, pp. 316-317.

<sup>127</sup> See chapter three regarding voluntary and involuntary settling of Christians in *chiflik* villages.

In exclusively Christian villages, there was limited contact between villagers and the Turkish feudal landowner (*begot*). *Begoi* generally resided in Bitola, and occasionally traveled into the countryside villages. In Novaci the *beg* would 'sometimes visit during tax time, or when the harvest was being gathered, staying in his *kula* (tower). Villagers were instructed to prepare and deliver meals to him'.<sup>128</sup> Similarly, in Gorno Aglarci, 'the *beg* used the *kula* as a place to rest when visiting the village. From there he would summon the villagers to cook and deliver food to him'.<sup>129</sup> *Chiflik* villages did not compulsorily have only one landowner; in some there were two or even three *begoi* owning separate parcels of village land. Three *begoi* owned the village fields in Lazhec, and all were full time residents in the village.<sup>130</sup> Although rare for a *beg* to live in a village, Lazhec was no ordinary village. On the Pelagonia plain, it was blessed with an abundance of natural spring water utilised for personal home use as well as for irrigation of the fields.<sup>131</sup> *Alush aga* was the most powerful of the three *begoi*, renowned in the district, extremely wealthy, and influential. The bulk of the *chiflik* land in Lazhec belonged to Alush and his land holdings extended into the villages of Sveta Petka, Negochani, Mogilica (Turkish village), Zhabeni, Kanino, Velushina, Graeshnica and Dragosh. Furthermore, in Istanbul, he owned nine commercial properties and according to villagers he was responsible for the construction of the officers' building in Bitola.<sup>132</sup>

A number of Macedonian and Turkish villagers in Lazhec owned their own parcels of land, separate from the large *chiflik* estates. These private lots were usually

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<sup>128</sup> Trajan Micevski (born 1930, in Novaci, Bitola region), interview conducted in Novaci on 22 March 2000. Trajan Micevski is from the Masnikashovci family, one of the oldest families in Novaci village.

<sup>129</sup> Ljuba Stankovska interview, op. cit.

<sup>130</sup> In the nineteenth century there were at least two Turkish towers (*kuli*) in Lazhec village. Lazhec is the only remaining village in the Bitola region where a tower can be seen standing at the end of the twentieth century.

<sup>131</sup> It is not clear whether the *begs* lived in their village homes on a full-time basis, although this appears to have been the case. Typically in villages, during the period under investigation, water supply in villages came from village wells, however the *begs* in the village each had a water supply in their homes - a tap of constant running water. Trajan Popovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>132</sup> Vasil Stojanovski interview, op. cit. Vasil Stojanovski stated that Alush *beg* reputedly owned 4000 *pogoni* of land. Ashim *Aga* was another village *beg*, the name of the third *beg* is unknown. Alush *Aga* had two sons Beshir and Daut. The older son Beshir married a Turkish woman from Prilep and Daut took a Turkish wife from Bitola. The married sons also lived in the village, in their father's large home which contained twenty-two rooms and had running water inside. The house was situated on five *pogoni* of land with a high fence around it.

small, ranging between one to three acres and were vital to the owners as they provided an added source of sustenance and offered greater economic security. It was rare for Macedonian Christian villagers to sell their land. Normal practice was to go abroad on *pechalba* for the purpose of buying more land upon their return. The unhindered and despotic rule of a *beg* meant that he could virtually do as he pleased with 'his village'. In Lazhec a number of Christian villagers were compelled to dispose of their precious land against their wishes, and sell to Alush, who would predetermine the sale price. The manner in which forced sales occurred involved Alush's bodyguard visiting the landowning villager and presenting him with a note written by Alush outlining the sale price. 'There was nothing that one could do but sell the land. Alush was Czar, God, everything.'<sup>133</sup>

For the religious needs of the Turkish population of Lazhec, a mosque was established in the central part of the village on the southern side of the village-square. Its date of construction is unknown, however it stood in the village before the church was constructed in the nineteenth century. During the first half of the nineteenth century the Christians of Lazhec used the church of Sveti Spas in the neighbouring village of Graeshnica for religious ceremonies. In order to construct a church of their own, approval was first required from one or more of the village *begoi*.<sup>134</sup> Permission to construct a church was granted, on condition that the church be located a considerable distance outside the village (often village churches are on the fringes of villages). The *beg* even donated a parcel of land for the church. The Christian villagers would have 'preferred it to be closer to the village but had no option but to accept the offer'.<sup>135</sup> Establishing a church in Lazhec was a long and arduous process.

Construction commenced on the village church on three occasions, but each time the *beg* ordered its demolition. The church was successfully constructed in 1861

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<sup>133</sup> Vasil Stojanovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>134</sup> It is not clear whether approval was required from all three *begoi*, or from Alush *beg* only.

<sup>135</sup> Vasil Stojanovski interview, op. cit.

only after the villagers sought assistance from the Russian Consul in Bitola. He brought the matter to the attention of higher diplomatic authorities in Solun, and the matter then went to Constantinople and gained approval.<sup>136</sup>

As Orthodox Christians, Macedonians strictly observed the numerous saints' days with reverence. It was strictly forbidden to work on such days, just like every Sunday. The superstitious nature of Macedonian peasant culture created many myths about the repercussions of working on religious holy days; to do so was seen as 'upsetting the saints' or 'upsetting God'. One could expect some type of punishment to occur, which could take the form of an accident or bringing bad luck to one's family.<sup>137</sup> One particular Easter Sunday,<sup>138</sup> around the end of the nineteenth century in the village of Lazhec, 'after mass the *beg* summoned all the Macedonians in the village and forced them to work on the fields. The villagers deeply resented this act which was simply aimed at insulting and undermining us as Christians'.<sup>139</sup> By all accounts Macedonian Christians were exploited and undermined, but it was a rare occurrence for a *beg* to collectively treat Christian villagers with such contempt on an important religious holy day.

Sometime between 1908 and 1912, an incident occurred in Lazhec which demonstrated that Alush *beg* was capable of even-handed rule and could on occasion support the village Christians in their legitimate grievances.

An Albanian from Kishava, whilst walking through the village and carrying his rifle, took aim at a bird perched on the cross above the village church. His bullet hit the cross. The Macedonian villagers notified Alush and he sent his courier to find the

<sup>136</sup> Trajan Popovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>137</sup> In many respects this continues even at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Numerous stories abound of examples where individuals or people have experienced some misfortune connected to 'upsetting the saints'. Whilst conducting field research in Macedonia during 2000, a particular village religious day in eastern Macedonia fell on a weekday, however the villagers decided to celebrate the event on the weekend so as not to interfere with their work. During the church service on the weekend, the church was struck by lightning and two people were killed. The event was widely reported in the media and the fatalities were attributed to the 'angry saints', because the congregation did not celebrate the religious day on the actual day it fell on and chose to work instead. It is not uncommon in Australia for Macedonians to not work on certain religious days.

<sup>138</sup> Easter being one of the holiest of all religious days on the Christian calendar, Macedonian Orthodox Christians strictly fasted for a period of six weeks leading to Easter.

<sup>139</sup> Sime Mishevski (born 1943 Lazhec, Bitola region), notes of interview, 8 September 2000, Melbourne.

Albanian responsible. The *beg's* courier brought the Albanian to Alush from Kishava, having dragged him with a rope tied around his waist.<sup>140</sup>

There were other instances when the Macedonians respected some of Alush *beg's* decisions. 'Sometimes he stood up for the Christians, and was spoken of highly when he did so.'<sup>141</sup>

Although not permanent residents in most villages, sometimes *begoi* remained in 'their' villages over extended periods, especially during the summer months, and this enabled the *beg* to develop personal relationships with individual Christian villagers. Friendships ensued and these were advantageous in certain circumstances. In Petoraci, Giorgi Duakov was to befriend the village *beg* and as a result of their relationship he was to escape what should have been inevitable incarceration. At the beginning of the twentieth century the *beg's* representative (known as *kea* or *keata*) attended the property of Giorgi Duakov to collect the annual tax. The *kea* went to the property during the threshing of wheat and,

the two men began arguing about the amount of tax to be paid. The argument became heated and in a moment of anger Giorgi fatally stabbed the Turk with a pitchfork. Giorgi's sons immediately went to Lerin in search of the *beg* and explained what had occurred, the *beg* advised the sons to send heir father to Bitola and not to return until he sent word. After a period of time living in Bitola Giorgi was advised that it was safe to return to the village, the matter passed without any further consequences.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Stojan Spasevski (born 1922 Graeshnica, Bitola region), interview conducted in Melbourne 30 March 1999 and 18 February 2002. Graeshnica is a neighbouring village, Stojan remembers hearing the story from his father (1876 - 1968).

<sup>141</sup> Vasil Stojanovski interview, op. cit.

<sup>142</sup> After the division of Macedonia, Petoraci fell under Greek rule and Giorgi was known to say '*kaj e Turbinot da ne vadi od zatvor sega*' ('where is the Turk to release us from prison now'). Kocho Duakis interview, op. cit.

## 6.4 Commonalities

PART OF OUR post-colonial understanding of nineteenth century Macedonia is the recognition that the Muslim experience, although a minority expression, was historically relevant to the process by which people were beginning to see themselves as 'Macedonian'. Just as the Islamic influence was apparent in Spain and in other parts of the Balkans, so too the Islamic presence in Macedonia cannot be ignored. In this post-colonial reading, Islam did not solely inhabit the world to the east of the Bosphoros.

Following on from Turkish colonisation, Islamicisation was a process that expanded over centuries, whereas the rivalry between the Balkan States for Christian Macedonians took place over a far shorter time frame – during the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. These contestations sought to mould Macedonians into new entities, although despite the intensity of the contest, widespread cultural commonalities continued to endure between Macedonians of the Christian and Muslim religions at the end of the nineteenth century. Not only did Macedonian Muslims culturally remain largely indistinguishable from their Macedonian Christian neighbours, as shown in this chapter customs and traditions practised by Macedonian Muslims in the Reka districts remained surprisingly comparable to those celebrated by Macedonian Christians in the distant Bitola region.

Commonalities between Christian and Muslim communities extended beyond those of the one ethnic group but also included Macedonian Christians and Turkish Muslims. Although Turks inhabited Macedonia as a foreign colonising population, a common lifestyle was evident in that the average village Turks were also landless peasants working the *chiflik* estates of a village *beg*.

Social interaction in shared Christian – Muslim villages should also be considered from the viewpoint of physical segregation. The significance of physical segregation between particular groups should not be understated. It has been shown that Macedonian Christians routinely did not live in physically segregated communities when sharing a village with Macedonian Muslims, and physical segregation was not typical in villages shared with Turks – however, segregation was likely in shared villages with Muslim Albanians.

It has been demonstrated that Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians were non-existent minorities in the Bitola region villages, and on a wider scale the presence of these people in the Macedonian countryside is questionable (except for a minority Greek population living in the extreme south of Macedonia). Subsequently, social interaction in the Macedonian countryside between Macedonians and Greek, Serb and Bulgarian populations respectively was clearly negligible.

A number of commentators have taken the view that the rivalry of the Balkan States over Macedonia played a role in the emergence of a distinct Macedonian identity. Perhaps too much emphasis has been placed on the activities of the Balkan States at the expense of the development of Macedonian identity in nineteenth century Ottoman Macedonia through the diverse experiences and interactions with Islamic influences.

## Conclusion

THE ONSET OF Ottoman rule in Macedonia brought with it a process of colonisation of Turks and Turkic peoples from Asia Minor and Islamicisation of a part of the Christian population. This modified the ethnic and religious make up of Macedonia and was to have far-reaching consequences that are still felt in Macedonia at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Settled along important trade routes, colonists established new settlements as well as moving into existing Macedonian Christian settlements. A process of Islamicisation – a gradual process that continued with various intensities throughout Ottoman rule – of a part of the Christian population followed.

Early Ottoman Turkish documents detail the arrival of colonists from the fifteenth century in the Reka districts of the Debar region. Ottoman documents reveal important demographic information for the region and provide an insight into the nature of early colonisation and Islamicisation. For instance, by utilising Ottoman documents the writer has been able to identify patterns of colonisation and Islamicisation in the Reka districts – these include topographical locations of colonised villages, the settlement of subsequent colonists, villages where Islamicisation occurred and population increases and decreases of specific villages. Ottoman documents have proved to be an invaluable source providing an understanding of early colonisation and Islamicisation as well as an awareness of the origins of the Turkish and Albanian populations in Macedonian territory.

Affected by Islamicisation (not colonisation), the Mala and Dolna Reka districts (the Debar region) at approximately 1900 reveal patterns of Islamicisation according to topographical considerations and along the main road through the Dolna Reka valley. There are distinguishing characteristics within different districts in the Debar region; some were affected only by Islamicisation, others by Islamicisation

and colonisation, and yet others were Albanianised. Contemporary Serb and Bulgarian commentators form the basis of this data, as well as an important document compiled by a local villager (S.T. Chaparoski) from Dolna Reka at the end of the nineteenth century.

From the end of the eighteenth century, Albanian Muslim colonists, more hostile and violent than the Ottoman Turks, commenced moving into Macedonia and over the coming centuries, to the end of Ottoman rule, were notorious persecutors of the Christian population. Although a limited number of historians have acknowledged that Albanian persecution of Christians resulted in Christians emigrating from western Macedonia, the Albanian role in the Islamicisation of the Macedonian Christian population has been largely unnoticed by historians.

Islamicisation can be viewed as a strategy aimed at securing Ottoman rule. At the end of the nineteenth century, when the Empire was in a process of decay, and the Ottomans were attempting to prolong their rule in the land, they claimed that the Muslim element constituted the majority element in Macedonia. The numerical importance of Islamicised Macedonians saw them incorporated into the overall Turkish/Muslim population figures.

Contemporary and modern accounts of the political rivalry of late nineteenth-century Ottoman Macedonia fail to examine the position of the Macedonian Muslim population. Ottoman Macedonia is too often viewed only from a Christian perspective - in relation to the struggle of the Balkan States for the adherence of the Macedonian Christian population. In contrast, the present work has considered Macedonians of the Muslim religion in terms of perceptions of their own identity. Furthermore, Macedonian Muslim perceptions of Macedonian Christians are of vital importance to the overall aims of this thesis. Evidence obtained indicates that Macedonian Christians were viewed as the same people, but of a different religion,

and not as ‘Bulgarians’, ‘Greeks’ or ‘Serbs’. Macedonian Muslims of the sample Reka district had no concept or understanding of the terms ‘Patriarchists’ and ‘Exarchists’ as labels for Macedonian Christians.

A tradition of loose labels used to designate categories of people in the Ottoman Empire saw expressions of Macedonian national identity poorly grasped by nineteenth century commentators. Of significance is a popular term of identification used in everyday language by Macedonians of the Christian and Muslim religions: the terms *nash* or *nashi* (literally meaning ‘ours’ or ‘one of ours’) were widely used to express belonging to the Macedonian group and denoted separateness from other groups.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, each of the Balkan States maintained territorial pretensions over Macedonia. They published ethnographic maps and statistical data in support of their claims. Criteria differed to suit predetermined outcomes and, due to opposing interests, contradictions abounded between interested parties. The advocating of inflated figures for respective ethnic groups had become a widespread trend and, if each were separately defined and their numbers totalled, ‘Turkey would be a country with the densest population in Europe; and yet it is true and well known that this is far from the case’.<sup>1</sup> Claims, counter claims, ethnographic maps, statistical surveys and academic commentators from Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria engaged in a purely political rather than scientific discussion.<sup>2</sup> Together with the associated interests of their patrons, the European Powers, Macedonia was transformed into a territory of dispute in anticipation of ‘who will fill the vacuum left by the Ottoman Turks when they leave’? At the end of

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<sup>1</sup> F. Kanitz, *Dunaiska Bolgaria i Balkanski poliostrv. Istoriski, Geograficheska i Ztnograficheska puterije 1860-1875*, as cited in V. Bozhinov and L. Panayotov, editors, *Macedonia Documents and Material*, Sofia, 1978, p. 331.

<sup>2</sup> E. Pears, *Turkey and its People*, London, 1911, p. 229. The object of the studies on Macedonia by those from the Balkan States has not been to discover the truth but rather to support the position of their respective national positions. Pears recognised that Macedonia had been, and will continue to be, the battlefield of writers and ‘may become at no distant date the battle field of contesting states’. pp. 228-229.

the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Macedonia was to become one of the most contested states of modern times.

As a reaction to the web of confusion created by conflicting data, it was proposed at the International Orientalist Congress in Rome in 1899 that an international inquiry be conducted into the ethnography of the Balkans. It was planned that an ethnographic map be produced on a scale of one in a million. Unfortunately the proposal was not adopted. The European Powers were probably not interested in an accurate ethnographic inquiry being undertaken. They certainly did not favour liberation for Macedonia, nor did they insist upon Ottoman implementation of Article 23 of the Congress of Berlin that was designed to grant reforms in the country.

Favourable conditions undertaking a national census could only occur following the creation of an autonomous Macedonia, according to the editors of the *Avtonomna Makedonija* journal in 1905.<sup>3</sup> The notion of 'freedom first, then a census' was promoted and the editors condemned ethnographic statistics on Macedonia compiled in an environment of Balkan rivalry 'as hypocritical and false' and that they had no significance to 'the cause of liberation'.<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding the conflicting ethnographic data, general conclusions can be drawn regarding the true ethnic make up of Macedonia. Firstly there is no dispute that Turks, Vlahs, Jews, Greeks, Albanians and a small number of Gypsies inhabited

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<sup>3</sup> *Avtonomna Makedonija*, 12 October 1905, Year 1, Number 1, p. 1. The journal was published in Belgrade by the Macedonian Club and serviced the Macedonian emigrant community. The editors of the journal were Grigorie Tashkovich from Voden and Giorgi Gerdzhikovich from Gevgelija. The newspaper *Makedonski Pregled* (1905, Number 1, p. 10) similarly commented that a national census could only be conducted in a fair manner upon the liberation of Macedonia. '*Vo sekoj sluchaj, zavershuva statijata, točna statistika na naselenieto vo Makedonija tesbko mozhi da se sostavi, a rano e i da se misli za nea, pred zemjata da ja dobia onaa sloboda koja edinstveno e vo sostojba da go garantira slobodnoto nacionalno samoopredeluvanje na oddelenite individui i da gi ostrani site pritisoci koi doagaat odozgora poradi drzjavni i drugi motivi.*' As cited in M. Pandevski, *Nacionalnoto Prashanje vo Makedonskoto Osloboditelno Dvizhenje 1893-1903*, Skopje, 1974, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> *Avtonomna Makedonija*, op. cit., p. 1. After several issues the Serbian authorities banned further publication of the journal.

Macedonia. There is a general consensus on this matter. The central point of contention was the ethnic identity of the dominant element to which the bulk of non-Balkan commentators agree constituted over 50 percent of the total population. Non-Balkan European ethnographers and commentators generally perceived the dominant group as constituting the Bulgarian 'nationality' in the second half of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. This data generally corresponded to early twentieth century Bulgarian data as expressed by the ethnographers V. Kanchov, D.M Brancoff and I. Ivanoff, whereas European views of Greek and Serb estimates of their own people in Macedonia are essentially opposed. Subsequently Bulgarian estimates of 'their population' were largely accepted by the rest of Europe, that is, the statistical data were accepted as accurate as well as the ethnic designation of the dominant group. The fact that V. Kanchov and D.M Brancoff were the only Balkan commentators to publish their data on a village-by-village basis no doubt gave their figures added credibility. Although Bulgarian figures are accepted as being largely accurate, a wide range of evidence indicates that the ethnic designation applied ('Bulgarian') was not.

Attributing Greek, Serb or Bulgarian nationality to Macedonians was projected towards an eventual territorial division of Macedonia. Greece and Serbia developed a common understanding over their respective claims to Macedonia and were at odds with Bulgarian aspirations. Bulgarian concessions were to eventuate in the secret treaties and conventions signed with Serbia and Greece prior to the Balkan Wars in 1912–13. William Gladstone's famous statement 'Macedonia for the Macedonians' was of no consequence to the Balkan States, as according to their views there was no such thing as a Macedonian and the bloody foray into Macedonia was justifiable because they were 'liberating their own people'. For over thirty years the Balkan States advocated their positions on Macedonia in the European arena through population statistics and ethnographic maps. The Ottoman Turks engaged the rivals against one another skilfully, and manufactured their own population data aimed at

prolonging Ottoman survival in Europe.<sup>5</sup> Strategic Macedonia was destined to become a battle-ground of young nationalist states.

Europe disregarded the natural rights of the Macedonians – potentially an independent Macedonia with a Christian government would have seen the majority of Turks return to Asia Minor. Similarly before Bulgarian and Serb independence, ‘both those countries contained a numerous Turkish population, which has slowly but steadily decreased since they were separated from Turkey’.<sup>6</sup> With the return of Macedonian emigrants from the Balkan States, particularly Bulgaria (where some claim there were as many as 500,000 Macedonians), Macedonia’s population may have appeared more homogenous than her Balkan neighbours.

Unlike other works, this thesis provides detailed ethnographic, topographical and land status data on a village-by-village basis for the Bitola region. The in-depth analysis of the Bitola region villages, and the differing economic and social environment of villages grouped according to topographical zones has seen this thesis treat the region as three separate zones (the Bitola Pelagonia plain, the upper villages and the Mariovo zone), rather than the one unit which typically occurs in the writings of contemporary commentators and historians. Each of the three zones had distinct political, ethnic, religious, and economic characteristics. Although this thesis is primarily focused on Macedonian village life, Bitola, the urban and Ottoman administrative centre of the region and *vilayet*, has been examined in order to provide

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<sup>5</sup> The Turks created the antagonistic rivalry in Macedonia, and through it made both Churches reliant upon the Porte for concessions and advancement of their respective causes. As mediator and supreme authority, the Ottoman Turks maintained their rule over Macedonia whilst plunging the land and people into chaos from 1870 to 1912. Macedonian unity was the direct casualty of competing Greek, Serb and Bulgarian nationalism and the Sultan's hold on Macedonia was strengthened and prolonged by the aspirations of the Balkan States. The contemporary commentator, C. Eliot, stated that the Sultans hold on Macedonia was maintained by ‘the dissensions between the Exarchate and Patriarchate Church’. Regarding Russian pressure on the Porte to establish the Exarchate, Eliot is of the opinion that apart from external pressure the Turks had their own reasons to grant the formation of the Exarchate. It was ‘a practical exemplification of the maxim *divide et impera*’. C. Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*, London, 1965 (1900), p. 259.

<sup>6</sup> L. Villari, *Races, Religions and Propaganda's*, New York, 1905, p. 132. See also J. McCarthy, *Death and Exile: the Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*, Princeton, New Jersey, 1995.

a balanced view of the region, highlighting the vastly contrasting environment in which foreign interests operated within.

As detailed in previous chapters, Bitola was far more ethnically and religiously mixed in comparison to the rural villages, and was the seat of both the Exarchate and Patriarchate church and educational organisations, as well as nine foreign consulates, including the Greek, Bulgarian and Serb consulates. Importantly, it was one of the most contested regions in Macedonia during the late nineteenth century. There are a multitude of indirect and secondary considerations to be taken into account in order to gain a clear understanding of the period of late Ottoman rule and the environment under which rival forces engaged one another aiming for the adherence of the Macedonian Christian population. This thesis explored the make up of Bitola from several perspectives. The examination of town quarters (*maali*), gives an insight into ethnic and religious co-existence, as well as highlighting the location of respective churches. As an important commercial centre - chapter three presents an economic view of Bitola. Utilising nineteenth century Ottoman taxation data, the thesis tracks the transition of business and trade away from Turkish domination in the early part of the century, into Christian hands by the end of the century.

Typically, accounts of the political conflict in Macedonia during late Ottoman rule fail to delve deeply into the everyday life of the Macedonians. This thesis differs in that it provides a detailed representation of village life in the Bitola region, and recognises the adaptability of this largely illiterate people.

Constituting the dominant ethnic element in the Bitola region, Macedonians were the principal group subjected to the Ottoman feudal land system, known as *chiflik*. Whereas commentators and historians typically provide a very general description of the *chiflik* land system, this thesis analyses everyday life in a *chiflik* village. Issues probed include the heavy taxation burden, and the characteristics of

feudal landlords (*begs*) and their representatives (*kaaite*) in the villages during certain periods. Even though the *chiflik* land system was widespread throughout Macedonia, and was representative of backward Ottoman rule, it is extremely rare for a contemporary source (or historian) to identify in their accounts of village life that there existed a small percentage of private land ownership (approximately 10 percent of villagers) in *chiflik* villages known as *rayatsko* land. It is evident that contemporary travellers and commentators in late nineteenth century Macedonia did not travel far beyond the security of large urban centres, and when they did so, they were often led by an interested party from one of the competing protagonists.

*Chiflik* villages were often ruled in a totalitarian manner by despotic *begs*, however, ironically the village headman (*emet*) was often appointed by a democratic process. Commentators have typically failed to recognise this form of Macedonian village republicanism. The French commentator, E. Bouchie de Belle is an exception, however his account of Macedonian village life was compiled immediately after Ottoman rule, in 1914.<sup>7</sup>

A common language, culture, belief system and social structure were shared by Macedonians and largely compiled through oral accounts in the Bitola region villages, revealing a rich and unique cultural heritage. Religious rituals and celebrations, many with pre-Christian pagan roots, remained untouched by centuries-long Ottoman rule and the assimilatory intentions of the Exarchate and Patriarchate churches.

Seeking work abroad, known as *pechalba*, was a widespread custom in western Macedonia. Deteriorating political conditions and economic exploitation through a corrupt tax system saw the tradition become a widespread movement at the end of the nineteenth century. Initially men travelled within the Ottoman Empire in search of work, and later to distant overseas destinations such as the United States. The

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<sup>7</sup> E. Bouchie de Belle, *Makedonija i Makedoncite*, Skopje, 1992 (Macedonian translation). Original title *La Macedoine et les Macedoniens*, Paris, 1922.

significance of the process of *pechalba* in late Ottoman Macedonia has been largely disregarded by commentators and historians. Income earned from *pechalba* enabled men to purchase *chiflik* land which was increasingly being sold by departing Turks who anticipated the collapse of Ottoman rule in Macedonia. *Pechalba* is too often narrowly viewed from an economic perspective only. Indeed, it did bring about economic changes to the landscape of western Macedonia, but it also brought about direct and indirect changes in the political landscape. Apart from new skills and experiences, *pechalbari* often returned to Macedonia politicised.

The religious struggle in Macedonia was a purely political contest directed at presenting to Europe further evidence of the supposed ethnic make-up of Macedonia. Religious jurisdiction was linked to territorial aspirations, paving the way for the future dismemberment of the land. The commentator J.F. Fraser assessed the competing nature of the Balkan States as being afflicted with 'land hunger'.<sup>8</sup> The expansion of Balkan churches had no connection to Christian values, as the race for religious dominance over Macedonia was supported by armed government-funded paramilitary bands which aimed at ensuring maximum expansion of religious jurisdiction in line with the territorial ambitions of their respective states.

The successful expansion of the Exarchate from 1870 to 1912, following over one hundred years of unhindered Patriarchate domination, was testament to the non-Greek character of Macedonians and their determined opposition to and rejection of hellenisation. The conquering nature of Exarchate expansion and the desire to voluntarily join the Exarchate cannot simply be viewed as embracing Bulgarianisation, but rather, as one interviewee pointed out, 'there was a natural attraction to the Exarchate due to similarity of language'.<sup>9</sup> In the Bitola region, patterns of religious jurisdiction emerged from this study, indicating that *chiflik* villages along the Bitola Pelagonia plain were overwhelmingly orientated towards the

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<sup>8</sup> J.F. Fraser, *Pictures from the Balkans*, London, 1906, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Trajan Micevski (born 1930 in Novaci, Bitola region), interview conducted 22 March 2000 in Novaci.

Exarchate. The central factor is that a greater sense of security existed on the plain, as villagers were unlikely to be exposed to the terror of armed bands that could not freely move about on the openness of the flat terrain. In contrast, villages in the upper village and Mariovo mountainous areas were subjected to the intimidation and violence of Greek bands and subsequently Patriarchate jurisdiction and often village Patriarchist orientation were more prevalent in these areas.<sup>10</sup> Interviewees recognised that the plain was predominately 'Exarchate' whilst the upper district and Mariovo was more likely to contain 'Patriarchist' villages.<sup>11</sup>

Although this general trend reflected a topographical relationship to religious orientation, it is interesting to note that 'actual village religious jurisdiction' was often at odds with village 'orientation'. Particularly apparent along the Bitola Pelagonia plain, there were numerous villages that had no inclination towards the Patriarchate, but found themselves unable to discard Patriarchate jurisdiction due to a combination of Ottoman policy and what was perceived as 'the powerful and rich Patriarchate church'. Subsequently, data outlining religious jurisdiction must be viewed with some caution. In the case of the Bitola region, according to Bulgarian sources, in 1902 in the Bitola Pelagonia eparchy there were a total of 156 churches with 14 monasteries. In the Bitola kaza of the eparchy, the Exarchate held jurisdiction in 31 churches and 1 monastery, whilst the Patriarchate held jurisdiction over 50 churches and 4 monasteries.<sup>12</sup> Clearly these data refer to actual jurisdiction, and contemporary accounts and historians rely too heavily upon such data. On the other hand if one counted villages according to 'actual orientation' a differing outcome would come as

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<sup>10</sup> Greek bands exerted considerable pressure on villages in western Macedonia. Dakin outlines a list of villages where principal actions were undertaken in the spring of 1906. Twelve villages have been identified as belonging to the Bitola region. Of these four were from the upper village district (Krstoar, Brusnik, Bukovo and Bareshani), four from the Bitola Mariovo district (Polog, Rapes, Chegel, and Iveni) and four from the Pelagonia Plain (Gnilesh, Optichari, Lisolaj and Lopatica). D. Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897-1913*, Thessaloniki, 1966, pp. 256-257.

<sup>11</sup> In the sample village there were no instances of male villagers joining the foreign bands, yet there were those who joined the IMRO.

<sup>12</sup> K. Bitoski, *Dejnosta na Pelagonskata Mitropolija 1878-1912* [English translation, *The Activities of the Pelagonia Archiepiscopal diocese 1878-1912*], Skopje, pp. 109-110. Note: K. Bitoski cites an Exarchate church newspaper *Crkoven Vestnik*, Year II, Number 48, Sofia, 16 March 1902.

no surprise. Bitola was situated approximately 120 kilometres from the Greek border, 200 kilometres to the Bulgarian border and 170 kilometres to the Serbian border; yet was one of the most heavily contested regions and towns in Macedonia. Freedom to choose village religious jurisdiction in the Bitola region was clearly restricted. One can only imagine the pressures exerted on villages by armed bands along the border regions of each respective interested Balkan State.<sup>13</sup>

The Ottomans were renowned for playing the Balkan States and their respective churches in Macedonia against one another in a strategic attempt to prolong their rule. Overall, the Greek Patriarchate enjoyed favour from the Ottoman Turks to a greater degree and there is considerable evidence, documented in contemporary and historical accounts, indicating that obstacles were placed before villages intending to transfer jurisdiction away from the Patriarchate to the Exarchate. Importantly, this thesis explores a fresh viewpoint of the Patriarchate church opposing the loss of adherents – specifically the Macedonian Protestant experience in Koleshino village (Strumica region), as well as similar experiences in the Bitola upper zone Vlah village of Gopesh. Both accounts have been compiled via oral histories.

Interested observers, particularly those from the Balkan States, viewed Patriarchate or Exarchate jurisdiction in a village as implying Greek or Bulgarian nationality to that village. However, priests in Patriarchate and Exarchate churches in the Bitola region villages were invariably local Macedonians. According to oral accounts compiled in the Bitola region, it was unlikely that the priest was a speaker of the Greek or Bulgarian languages, services were most often conducted in Macedonian, he certainly communicated with his co-villagers and the local population in Macedonian and didn't interfere with or attempt to modify the Macedonian

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<sup>13</sup> In relation to the Greek-Macedonian border, numerous British Consul reports speak of Greek bands crossing the frontier into Macedonia. Letter dated October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1896 by Consul General Blunt outlines that Greek bands regularly cross into the Grevena region and that they are 'organised by the revolutionary committee in Larissa to invade Turkish territory in small detachments 40 at a time'. Public Record Office 373 FO 294/22. (Microfilm 326 - in the Macedonian National Archive).

traditional way of life in the region. An incentive to not be seen as overtly propagating the position of Athens, Sofia or Belgrade was the threat of harm from paramilitary bands or even the disruption to village harmony.

It was not unusual for commentators and historians to speak of the rival Balkan church organisations working towards the creation of Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs respectively. However this is done so in general terms without explicitly illustrating the process outside of religious jurisdiction over villages. An important example drawn in this thesis involves the period immediately after the Ilinden Uprising in 1903 when the rival parties provided 'humanitarian aid' to the population. Oral accounts revealed that the people perceived this assistance as a form of bribery, political in nature rather than humanitarian. Assistance was typically handed out through the respective church organisations, seeking to strategically record recipients and their villages as belonging to the Greek, Bulgarian or Serb race respectively. A 1903 Serb consular report outlined a full list of recipients' names in Krushevo – all were recorded as distinctly Serb (ending in 'ich') in a town where there were no Serb inhabitants. Utilising local knowledge in Krushevo, ten recipients of Serbian aid have been identified and were of the Macedonian or Vlah nationality.

The evidence of oral histories is crucial in order to obtain a more comprehensive and balanced view of certain issues such as naming systems. Relying solely on historical literature or archival documents can provide a misleading perception of the identity of individuals based upon the ethnic classification of their name. For instance in the Bitola region village of Suvodol, the interviewee Aca Kotevska, born in 1911, was christened in the Patriarchate church with the Greek name 'Altmina'. However, in everyday language, in her family home and in public, she was exclusively known by her Macedonian name 'Aca'. Similarly, in Macedonian Muslim villages in the Reka district, children were given Muslim names at birth, while at home and within the village Christian equivalents were used. For instance, a

Macedonian Muslim may have been Ismail before Turks and other Muslims, however, at home he remained Ilija.

A large sample of male Orthodox Macedonians, 23 in all, from the Bitola region and born before 1940, were interviewed as a part of this study. In every instance their parents and grandparents, (the majority born during Ottoman rule), had typical Macedonian names.<sup>14</sup> Yet if baptismal records were available for each individual, such documentary evidence would probably reveal these people as belonging to another ethnicity.

The significance of religious jurisdiction in villages was often overstated by contemporary commentators who viewed the presence of a particular church from a one-dimensional political perspective. Religious jurisdiction in late Ottoman Macedonia did not necessarily represent an expression of political allegiance. In contrast, even in villages where there was Greek, Bulgarian or Serb political influences, they usually emanated via a small number of interested individuals. Otherwise, customs, traditions, religious rituals, language and marriage systems remained unchanged, regardless of the religious jurisdiction present in the village.

In the Bitola region, as in Macedonia generally, educational rivalry was principally between Greek Patriarchate and Bulgarian Exarchate schools (and, on a smaller scale, between Greek Patriarchate and Vlah-Romanian schools). The establishment of a particular school was dependent upon corresponding religious jurisdiction existing in a village, and jurisdiction often depended not upon the will of the people, but on other factors such as foreign armed bands and the attitude of the Ottoman authorities. Influence exerted upon the Ottomans by the Patriarchate made both religious and educational emancipation from the church difficult for both

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<sup>14</sup> Twenty-three male Orthodox Macedonians born before 1940 were from the Bitola region. In three instances there is insufficient data collected by the writer in regards to names of parents and grandparents. A further seven interviews were conducted with male Orthodox Macedonians born outside the Bitola region. The names of their parents and grandparents are distinctly Macedonian.

Macedonians and Vlahs alike. As this thesis has shown, in the Bitola region (countryside sample villages) the villagers typically did not identify with the school (and church) in their village, but felt powerless to change the situation. In these circumstances people often felt that any education was better than none and nevertheless hoped their children would have a better existence. Attendance at a particular ethnic school did not necessarily imply loyalty to the state in question.

Ethnographers and academics from the period (and afterwards) incorrectly employ the 'language of the school' (and the number of schools) as a measuring tool alongside church jurisdiction to determine the ethnic composition of the Macedonian population. Balkan commentators in particular subscribed to this view. According to the historian S. Papadopoulos, 'the establishment of the schools and other associations is the foremost evidence to determine the nationality of the inhabitants of the region, because that testifies to their unhindered (national) declaration'.<sup>15</sup> If the principle of ethnic identification according to school enrolment is accepted, then what becomes of those whose children attended Catholic or Protestant schools? And what of those who received their instructions in the French or Italian language? Are they to be considered as being of the French or Italian nationality? Utilising educational data in the form of student enrolment and number of schools in Macedonia to prove the ethnic character of the people is misleading and manipulative. Educational statistics for Macedonia were sometimes for European Turkey and there was a political incentive for all the competing parties to claim higher figures. The motivation behind establishing foreign schools in Macedonia was based upon respective foreign policies and territorial designs. Balkan governments poured substantial finances into education in Macedonia, and the enormity of the undertaking was demonstrated by the fact that Greece 'spent more money in proportion to population on schools in the so-called unredeemed territory than they

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<sup>15</sup> As cited in S. Kiselinovski, *Grekata Kolonizacija vo Egejska Makedonija 1913-1940* [Greek Colonisation in Aegean Macedonia 1913-1940], Skopje, 1981, p. 24.

did in Greece proper'.<sup>16</sup> Athens, Sofia and Belgrade intended that their respective educational institutions would operate as assimilatory instruments, creating Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs of Macedonian children.

It is evident from archival documents and oral histories that schoolteachers in the Bitola region villages were typically local Macedonians. Regardless of whether the school was administered through the Greek Patriarchate or Bulgarian Exarchate (there were no Serb schools in the Bitola region villages) the language of instruction was Macedonian. The effectiveness of the schools to equip children in foreign languages is questionable. Interviewees were unaware of family members or other older folk in their villages being fluent in foreign languages as a result of attending Patriarchate or Exarchate schooling in the village. Interestingly, the second language that people in villages were most familiar with, according to oral histories, did not stem from foreign school systems in Macedonia, but rather, it was Turkish, the language of the ruler.

Greek and Serb sources highlight that their school inspectors in Macedonia at the end of the nineteenth century recognised that their teachers did not understand the Greek and Serb languages respectively. Subsequently, village schools were often perceived as Macedonian, particularly Exarchate schools.

Typically foreign education in Macedonia is examined in the form of statistical data regarding the number of schools and students. In this manner commentators generally view the surface of foreign education in Macedonia. Utilising Bulgarian Exarchate school records, this thesis presents in-depth schoolteacher data – including age, marital status, gender and remuneration – and draws a comparison between village schoolteachers with urban schoolteachers in Bitola. Similar detailed data are provided for students in Bitola Exarchate schools. Of particular significance is the

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<sup>16</sup> L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, Holt, Rinehart and Wilson, 1966, p. 521.

drop out rates of students identified through official Exarchate records (and a published Serb document). Exarchate school documents include a category for students (in Bitola) who fail to complete the school year – the category is recorded as *chuzhda propaganda* ('foreign propaganda') – and indicates that there existed in Bitola open competition, between the rival school systems, for schoolchildren (this was not the case in the villages where it was rare for a village to have more than one school). The interviewee Hristo Dimitrovski (born 1893) was a student in Bitola at the end of the nineteenth century and confirmed that competition existed between the rival school systems for the attraction of students. Initially a student with the Exarchate school system, Hristo advised that coming across a schoolteacher from an opposing school could be a hazardous experience. Teachers were known to physically force children to attend their respective schools – Hristo had attended both Greek and Vlah schooling in this manner and he explained that it was not unusual for this to occur.<sup>17</sup>

A common fallacy expressed by commentators and historians alike, and intended to illustrate the depth of political division in Macedonia to the most basic unit, the family, has proved to be a misconception. It has been widely reported that fathers sent each of their three sons to Greek, Serb and Bulgarian schools respectively and that subsequently the sons professed Greek, Serb and Bulgarian nationality respectively. Contrary to this widely held view, it was rare for a father's sons to attend opposing school systems, particularly in a village environment where it was unusual for a village to have more than one school. The notion that a father's three sons would become Greek, Serb or Bulgarian as a result of attending the respective schools is to underestimate the cleverness of the people living in a hostile political environment. Instead, the 'enrolment of three sons' at opposing schools is another representation of self-preservation strategies, similar to the self-preservation

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<sup>17</sup> Hristo 'Caki' Dimitrovski (born 1893 in Bitola), interview conducted 21 March 2000 in Bitola.

techniques adopted in villages designed to guarantee security from the violence of armed bands.

Maximum student enrolment figures claimed by the various educational institutions in Macedonia at the beginning of the twentieth century, combined, total 8.7 students per 100 inhabitants – a staggering figure considering that the liberated Balkan lands of Greece had 3.7 students per 100 inhabitants, Serbia 4.0, Romania 5.9 and Bulgaria 9.3.

Culturally, customs and traditions maintained by Macedonian Muslims were largely indistinguishable from those celebrated by Macedonian Christians in the Bitola region, regardless of Patriarchist or Exarchist religious jurisdiction. Celebrations and rituals, including weddings, funerals, Holy days and other celebrations are investigated. Comparisons drawn between the two religious groups (Muslim and Christian) revealed that similarities were sustained over centuries of Ottoman rule and that although the Ottomans engaged in religious conversion in the Reka district, they did not engage in linguistic, cultural or ethnic assimilation in the Reka villages. In contrast, historical evidence suggests that assimilation did occur in urban centres.

There were a number of similarities in the two sample areas considered in this thesis that justify emphasis. For instance *oĵi* in the Reka district, particularly local Macedonian *oĵi*, made no attempt to alter or modify the age-old customs practised by Macedonian Muslims, even though a number of these were distinctly Christian in origin. There was a significant level of tolerance displayed by Muslim clerics in the district. Similarly, in the Bitola region villages, priests serving with the Exarchate and Patriarchate churches made no attempt to suppress uniquely Macedonian cultural traits and introduce Bulgarian or Greek culture.

Foreign education in both sample regions failed to produce fluent speakers of new languages. However, the most popular second language after Macedonian was Turkish, and knowledge of the language was typically gained via a variety of methods, often through *pechalba*. Interestingly, the destinations *pechalbari* travelled to was one of the few factors where there was a distinct divergence between Macedonian Christians from the Bitola region and Macedonian Muslims from the Reka district. Popular *pechalba* destinations for Macedonian Christians were the neighbouring liberated Christian lands, whereas Macedonian Muslims generally did not journey beyond the frontiers of the Ottoman Empire.

As this thesis has demonstrated, a distinctive feature of shared Macedonian Muslim and Macedonian Christian villages in the Reka district and wider Debar region was that the two religious groups did not live in segregated parts of the village. In the four sample villages shared by Macedonian Christians and Turkish Muslims, the two peoples lived segregated from one another in only one village.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, shared Macedonian Christian and Albanian Muslim villages saw the two groups typically segregated from one another. Although working with limited samples, drawn from oral histories and local knowledge, it appears that segregation within a village environment was not based upon religious factors, instead the determinant appears to have been based on ethnicity.

There is evidence of Macedonian Muslims developing self-preservation techniques similar to those encountered in the Bitola region where villagers adopted strategies to prevent continued harassment and intimidation by foreign armed bands. Macedonian Muslims continued to use Christian-based first names instead of Muslim names, as outlined in chapter four. Furthermore, the ethnographer N. Limanoski

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<sup>18</sup> Similarly, in the sample Macedonian Christian and Turkish Muslim village of Petoraci in the Lerin region, the two groups were not segregated.

provides examples of tactical self-preservation techniques utilised as a form of protection against continued tyranny from Albanian Muslim bandits.<sup>19</sup>

Whereas Macedonians of the Muslim religion were examined as the religiously converted, Turks living in shared villages with Macedonian Christians were viewed as a foreign colonising element. Although understood by Macedonians as belonging to the empire and that the sultan was 'theirs', there were many common elements of lifestyle shared by Macedonian Christians and Turkish Muslim villagers. Both were often *chiflik* workers, were required to work hard in a primitive manner and were economically exploited.

The examination of mixed Macedonian Christian and Turkish Muslim villages provided a human face to the average Turkish villager; not to do so would have given an unbalanced view of Turks as the colonial power. Turks were not exclusively *begs* (feudal landlords) and Ottoman officials, but lived in villages alongside Macedonians. They played together as children and maintained some understanding of each other's language. Macedonian interviewees believed that the inter-ethnic communication was primarily in the Macedonian language, however Turkish women were publicly isolated and were not presented with developing an understanding of the Macedonian language. Although generally there was little to distinguish Turks from Macedonians living in shared villages, in the social order of things Turks were in the dominant position and their authority was expressed from a religious perspective, such as abhorrence and denial of Macedonians right to keep pigs.

*Begs* typically resided in Bitola, though the sample village of Lazhec was unusual in that three *begs* were full-time residents of the village. Oral accounts of the main village *beg*, Alush, provided a detailed insight into how he was perceived by the

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<sup>19</sup> See N. Limanoski, *Izlamizacijata i etnickite promeni vo Makedonija* [Islamicisation and ethnic changes in Macedonia], Skopje, 1993.

Macedonian Christian inhabitants and reveal that although he favoured the Turkish inhabitants, he was capable of even-handed rule on occasion.

As a contested space, Macedonia in the late nineteenth century reflected the political, religious and paramilitary incursions made upon the local population by the neighbouring nascent states and the disappearing Ottoman State. Territorial claims were concealed behind ethnographic maps and statistical population data. Interested commentators viewed Macedonia in accordance to government policy and presented their studies as academic and scientific, even though clearly political in nature. The European powers maintained their own pretensions and acted as patrons of the small Balkan States. Although churches, schools and paramilitary bands were the primary instruments of the Greek, Bulgarian and Serb states, expansion into Macedonia was ultimately achieved by a full military mobilisation when the combined armies of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia marched into Macedonia in October 1912 and drove out the Ottoman Turks. Disagreements soon arose regarding partition of the land. Bulgaria had suffered three quarters of the casualties during the war and rightly believed that Greece and Serbia intended to share the spoils amongst themselves. She launched a surprise attack upon the Greek and Serbian armies in Macedonia on 29 June 1913, but was herself attacked by Turkey and Romania. The Second Balkan War lasted for six weeks before Bulgaria was defeated. The Treaty of Bucharest (10 August 1913) awarded the bulk of Macedonia to Greece (52 per cent) and Serbia (38 per cent), with Bulgaria compensated by approximately 10 per cent of Macedonian territory. The territorial division of Macedonia and claims upon the Macedonians have continued to be a matter of contention between the Balkan States into modern times. The recognition by the United States in November 2004 of the republic as 'Macedonia', in place of 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (FYROM) and the ensuing diplomatic protests from Greece (The Age, 5 November 2004, p.11) show that contestations over Macedonia remain a live issue into the twenty-first century.

## Interviews conducted

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Table 1: List of Interviewed Male Christian Orthodox Macedonians Born in the Bitola region

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>	<b>Place of Birth</b>	<b>Interviewed</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>
Dimitrovski, Hristo 'Caki'	1893	Bitola	Bitola	21 March 2000
Petrov, Vasil	1911	Bitola	Bitola	1 April 2000
Trajcevski, Stefan	1913	Dolno Orehovo	Dolno Orehovo	1 April 2000
Altiparmak, Vasko	1913	Bitola	Bitola	30 March 2000
Atanasovski, Petko	1913	Makovo	Makovo	14 March 2000
Jovanovski, Cvetan	1914	Novaci	Novaci	10 March 2000
Najdovski, Ilija	1920	Suvodol	Novaci	28 March 2000
Petkovski, Stojche	1920	Makovo	Makovo	18 March 2000
Todorovski, Mihailo	1921	Dolno Orehovo	Dolno Orehovo	30 March 2000
Jankulovski, Vlado	1921	Novaci	Novaci	11 March 2000
Spasevski, Stojan	1922	Graeshnica	Melbourne	18/02/02 and 30/03/99
Kotevski, Atanas	1923	Vrajnevc	Bitola	12 March 2000
Giorgioski, Nikola	1927	Gorno Aglarci	Gorno Aglarci	17 March 2000
Vasilevski, Atanas	1928	Vrajnevc	Bitola	16 March 2000
Dimovski-Colev, Giorgi	1929	Bitola	Bitola	13 March 2000
Dimovski, Zivko	1929	Gorno Aglarci	Gorno Aglarci	17 March 2000
Markovski, Kosta	1930	Suvodol	Bitola	20 March 2000
Micevski, Trajan	1930	Novaci	Novaci	22 March 2000
Veljanovski, Todor	1930	Dolno Aglarci	Bitola	2 April 2000

Kleshtev, Mihailo	1934	Gorno Aglarci	Melbourne	1 November 1999
Tancevski, Vane	1935	Lopatica	Melbourne	6 March 2002
Vasilevski, Stojan	1937	Kukurechani	Melbourne	4 March 2002
Popovski, Trajan	1939	Lazhec	Lazhec	14 March 2000
Ilievski, Slobodan	1943	Bitola	Melbourne	15 January 2002
Josevski, Ilija	1947	Brod	Melbourne	21 January 2002
Slavevski, Vasil	1954	Dolno Orehovo	Dolno Orehovo	31 March 2000

Table 2: List of Interviewed Female Christian Orthodox Macedonians Born in the Bitola region

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Birth</b>	<b>Place of Birth</b>	<b>Place of interview</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>
Cvetkovska, Bosilka	1910	Dedebalci	Dedebalci	2 April 2000
Kotevska, Aca 'Altmina'	1911	Suvodol	Novaci	10 March 2000
Stankovska, Ljuba	1923	G. Aglarci	Dedebalci	15 March 2000
Tanevska, Vera	1924	Bitola	Bitola	24 March 2000
Talevska, Trajanka	1925	Vrajnevc	Novaci	10 March 2000
Tanchevska, Mara	1933	Sekirani	Melbourne	6 March 2002
Kleshteva, Dragica	1934	Vrajnevc	Melbourne	1 November 1999

Table 3: List of Male Muslim Macedonians Interviewed from the Reka and Gora districts

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>	<b>Place of Birth</b>	<b>Place of interview</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>
Asani, Asan	1911	Velebrdo - Dolna Reka district	Velebrdo	25 March 2000
Rejep, Asani	1915	Velebrdo - Dolna Reka district	Velebrdo	25 March 2000
Odzheski, Abdula	1945	Zhirovnica - Dolna Reka district	Zhirovnica	26 March 2000
Muslioski, Redzho	1946	Dolno Kosovrasti - Dolna Reka district	Dolno Kosovrasti	27 March 2000
Bojda, Ismail	1953	Brod - Gora region (Kosovo)	Skopje	7 March 2000

Table 4: Other interviews - Macedonians Born Outside of the Bitola Region and Interviewees of Non-Macedonian Ethnicity

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>	<b>Place of Birth</b>	<b>Ethnicity and religion</b>	<b>Place of interview</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>
Metovski, Justref	1908	Resen – Prespa region	Albanian – Muslim	Bitola	23 March 2000
Spirova, Velika	1911	Krpeshina – Lerin region	Macedonian – Orthodox	Melbourne	19 January 2002
Stojanovski, Vasil	1915	Rakovo – Lerin region	Macedonian – Orthodox	Geelong	19 June 2001
Foudoulis, Andon	1919	Armenoro – Lerin region	Macedonian – Orthodox	Melbourne	2 November 1999
Nicha, Konstantin	1919	Bitola	Vlah – Orthodox	Bitola	30 March 2000
Jovanovska, Jelena	1924	Tearce – Tetovo region	Macedonian – Orthodox	Melbourne	15 February 2002
Eftimov, Kole	1924	Carev Dvor – Resen region	Macedonian – Orthodox	Bitola	20 March 2000
Simonovski, Simo 'Hemtu'	1925	Bitola	Vlah – Orthodox	Bitola	30 March 2000
Duakis, Kocho	1934	Petoraci – Lerin region	Macedonian – Orthodox	Melbourne	20 January 2001
Risteski, Dragutin	1935	Vrboec – Krushevo region	Macedonian – Orthodox	Melbourne	6 October 1999
Petrovski, Jovche	1939	Chelopek – Tetovo region	Macedonian – Orthodox	Melbourne	27 March 2002
Kalcovski, Vancho	1942	Brajchino – Prespa region	Macedonian – Orthodox	Melbourne	2 November 1999
Izev, Jovan	1943	Kolashino – Strumica region	Macedonian – Protestant	Melbourne	4 June 2002
Tilev, Vasil	1952	Balgarchevo – Gorna Dzhumaya region	Macedonian – Orthodox	Melbourne	20 January 2002
Nedelkovski, Bogdan	1960	Blace – Tetovo region	Macedonian – Orthodox	Melbourne	7 October 1999

Table 5: Records of Interview

<b>Name</b>	<b>Year of Birth</b>	<b>Place of Birth</b>	<b>Place of discussion</b>	<b>Date of discussion</b>
Derusevski, Mile	1927	Kuratica – Ohrid	Melbourne – Australia	1 December 2001
Naumovski, Tale	1929	Optichari – Bitola	Novaci – Macedonia	28 March 2000
Dimovska, Zora	1935	Krushevica – Mariovo (Prilep)	Melbourne – Australia	21 January 2000
Micevski, Cane	1938	Novaci – Bitola	Novaci – Macedonia	22 March 2000
Misevski, Sime	1943	Lazhec – Bitola	Melbourne – Australia	8 September 2000
Domazetoski, Goce	1950	Dragozhani – Bitola	Melbourne – Australia	11 June 2002
Muslioska, Aysha	1950	Velebrdo – Dolna Reka	D. Kosovrasti – Macedonia	27 March 2000
Temelkovska, Morpha	1950	Bitola	Skopje – Macedonia	3 March 2000
Toseski, Trajche	1956	Bonche – Prilep	Melbourne – Australia	10 January 2002
Ristevski, Lazor	1963	Dolno Orehovo – Bitola	Dolno Orehovo – Macedonia	31 March 2000
Boiceski, Fr Ruben	1968	Krivogashtani – Demir Hisar	Melbourne – Australia	21 January 2002

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**1898-1899**

**KUTIJA 1**

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Dated: 17 October 1898

A request by the villagers of Meglenci to the Bitola Valia to prevent the Greek Patriarchate from taking jurisdiction in the village.

Document Number: 01.0491.0001.0155 / 0513-0520

Dated: 01 January 1899

Student data in Bitola town and the Bitola region.

Document Number: 01.0491.0001.0296 / 0930-0930

Dated: 01 April 1899

Exarchate school established in Brusnik 1899

Document Number: 01.0491.001.0204 / 0681-0681

Dated: 14 September 1899

Marko Cvetkov from Bitola appointed teacher in Dolno Charliya.

Document Number: 01.0491.0001.0235 / 0721-0721

Dated 14 October 1899

C. Nikolov from Dobrushevo appointed teacher in Ribarci.

Document Number: 01.0491.0001.0233 / 0719-0719

Dated: 14 October 1899

Todor Stojanov from Radobor appointed schoolteacher in Dobrushevo.

Document Number: 01.0491.0001.0156 / 0521-0547

Dated: 28 October 1899

Educational data.

**FUND: 491 - Pelagonska (Exarhiska) Mitropolija - Bitola**

**1900-1912**

**KUTIJA 7**

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0162 / 0687-0691

Dated: 04 October 1900

Five baptismal records (Bitola)

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0164 / 0714-0718

Dated: 06 December 1904

Five wedding certificates (Bitola)

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0165 / 0734-0738

08 December 1905

Five wedding certificates (Bitola)

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0163 / 0712-0713

Dated: 04 March 1909

Two baptismal records (1909 and 1901)

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0006 / 0015-0035

Dated: 17 May 1909

Statistical data for schools in Bitola. Suburbs of Dolni Eni Malo, Bela Cheshma, Kyrtderes, Mechkar Mala, Dolni Bair, Gorni Eni Malo, Arnaut Malo and Gorni Bair.

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0060 / 0183-0186

Dated: 15 October 1909

Letter from Pelagonska Mitropolija to the Exarchate in Constantinople referring to Klabuschishta village as a Bitola village.

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0062 / 0189-0190

Dated: 04 November 1909

List of people murdered by Greek bands in Beshica and Manastir (Mariovo district) in 1907/1908 (to renounce the Exarchate).

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0108 / 0417-0426

Dated: 11 November 1909

15 copies of the book "Zemjotresi vo Bugaria" (Earthquakes in Bulgaria) ordered for distribution to schools.

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0098 / 0352-0352

Dated: 13 February 1910

Villagers in Nevoljani village (Lerin region) forced to contribute towards Ottoman navy (new tax).

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0070 / 0222-0223

Dated: 05 May 1910

Individual from Dragosh village did not have enough money to buy back his life from the Turks.

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0151 /0660-0661

Dated: 01 January 1911

List of 43 schoolteachers, data includes birthplace, age, etc.

Document number 01.0491.0007.0140 / 0643-0647

Dated: 01 January 1911

Villages of Ivanec, Oleveni and Metimir send a joint petition to the Ottoman authorities in Constantinople declaring that they reject the Patriarchate and seek to come under Exarchate jurisdiction.

Document Number: 01.0491.0007.0141 / 0648-0648

Dated: 01 January 1911

Appeal by villagers from Papradishte to recommence services in village church previously closed by Turkish authorities.

### **Archive of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences**

Shtiljan Trajanov Chaparoski

*Mesnost (ite) od Debarskoto okruzhie* [Places in the Debar region]

Catalogue Number NR54

### **Autobiographical notes of Stojan Srbinov**

Stojan Srbinov was born in Buf (Lerin region) in 1920. He migrated to Australia in 1936. A prominent Macedonian activist for many decades, he was an instrumental figure in the establishment of the Macedonian Orthodox Church, Saint George, in Fitzroy, Melbourne, in the late 1950's. The autobiographical notes were written in 1983. Stojan Srbinov passed away in Melbourne, Australia, in 1990.

**Vrajnevcı village (Bitola region) - School teachers record book 1957-1962**

Letopisna kniga na osnovното chetiri godini uchilishte 'Kiril I Metodi',

Selo Vrajnevcı.

56 pages.

First several pages contain information for the Ottoman period - collected by the village schoolteacher, Todor Chorbovski, during the period 1957-59.

**Ottoman Turkish issued land titles - Gorno Aglarci village (Bitola region)**

Volume 52, Document 20, Number 91

Dated 21 July 1906

Volume 52, Document 29, Number 100

Dated 21 July 1906

Volume 52, Document 31, Number 102

Dated 21 July 1906

Volume 52, Document 34, Number 105

Dated 21 July 1906

Volume 52, Document 38, Number 109

Dated 21 July 1906

## **5. Land titles office - Bitola, Macedonia**

Gorno Aglarci, Kat Opshtina Broj 22

Razmera 1:2500

1932

Novaci, Kat Opshtina Broj 23

Razmera 1:2500

1932

Makovo, Kat Opshtina Broj 100

Razmera 1:2500

1932

Lavci, Kat Opshtina Broj 58

Razmera 1:1000

1930

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Letter by Consul General Charles Blunt:

Re: the removal by the Vali of Monastir of a boy from his adoptive Christian family.

Dated: 9 February 1896

FO 294/22

Letter by Consul General Charles Blunt

Re: foreign political propaganda attempting to detach Christians from one Church to another.

Dated: 18 August 1896

FO 294/22

Letter by Consul General Charles Blunt

Re: Greek bands crossing into Macedonia under the leadership of Greek army officers.

Dated: 13 September 1896

FO 294/22

Letter by Consul General Charles Blunt

Re: Patriarchate Archbishop of Bitola ordering children not be sent to Bulgarian Exarchate schools and threatening excommunication.

Dated: 27 September 1896 (Letter number 35)

FO 294/22

Letter by Consul General Charles Blunt:

Re: bands organised in Larissa (Greece) to invade Turkish territory in small detachments 40 at a time.

Dated: 2 October 1896

Public record Office 373 - FO 294/22

Letter by Consul General Charles Blunt

Re: non existent Serbian community in Bitola town.

Dated: 6 April 1897

FO 294/22

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*Makedonija*

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