

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF THE WALLACHIAN SETTLEMENT IN THESSALONIKI IN THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES*

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ABSTRACT. The aim of the article is to present, on the basis of source materials and historiographical findings, the regularities associated with the evolution of the Wallachian settlement in Thessaloniki in the 19th and 20th centuries. In this case, a rapid process of assimilation of the newcomers into the local Greek-speaking Orthodox community is noticeable. It took place in the context of coexistence between individual Wallachian families and the Greek population in cultural and economic terms. At the root of integration of Wallachians with the Greeks were the religious community (subordination to the Patriarchate of Constantinople, common churches and liturgy in Greek), the lack of an adequately established Wallachian language tradition, and the impossibility of implementing their traditions (identified with a pastoral-transhumant economy) in urban socio-economic realities. As a result, the settlers in Thessaloniki became Hellenized in a linguistic and national sense, but they kept also some cultural distinctions, defined in terms of kinship or places of origin. This situation could not be altered by cultural activities of Romania, which at the turn of the 20th century aimed at establishing national and linguistic ties with individual Wallachian communities.

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The Wallachian migrations, which spread throughout the European part of Ottoman Turkey, resulted from varied political, ethnic and military turmoils. The prosperity of the traditional Wallachian settlements, mostly operating on the western edges of the state (Moskopole region, Grevena, Aspropotamos, Grammos), collapsed following the aspirations of local Muslim administrators, who abolished the separate administrative and legal status of individual communities, imposed draconian taxes on them or resorted to looting. By the end of the 18th century, the Christian population, including the Wallachians, were fleeing the armed attacks of the Islamized Albanians, and in the following decades sought refuge from the bloody rule of the self-proclaimed ruler of Epirus Ali Pasha (1785–1822) and from the repression inflicted by Ottoman troops. The civil unrest was also fueled by the intensely developing Balkan national movements of the 19th century. The Wallachian population, subsisting on agricultural activities as well as those associated with the urban economy in general, flocked towards the largest administrative and military centers that were able to provide them with security.

Thessaloniki was a traditional center of power, a fortress and an undisputed commercial center in the European part of Ottoman Turkey. Situated at the crossroads of routes leading from the Adriatic to the Black Sea and from the Danube to the Aegean Sea, it grew, in the second half of the 19th century, to become a transit port of international importance. The city's economic situation, however, was not always favorable. In the first half of the 19th century, it experienced a decline as a result of the socio-political unrest already mentioned. In 1834, the captain of the frigate United States, which anchored in the local harbor, described it as an impoverished place with "little promise" and run by corrupt dignitaries. Food prices were high and the population was starving.² Provisioning problems, low purchasing power of the population and insecurity on transportation routes (land and sea), hampered the city's economic development.³ In the mid-19th century, only industrial silk production, which relied on local supplies of raw material, gained some importance. The intensive development of Thessaloniki occurred only in the following decades and corresponded with the reform of the Ottoman system of governance, the city's better connectivity with its hinterland and the activity of European capital, supported by the various

¹ Cf. A. Koukoudis, *Vlachs: metropolis and diaspora*, Thessaloniki 2003; J. Paszkiewicz, *Regres osadnictwa woloskiego w Pindosie w dobie przemian społeczno-politycznych w Turcji osmańskiej w XVIII i XIX wieku*, "Balcanica Posnaniensia. Acta et studia" 2021, vol. 28, no. 2, p. 207–229.

² J. Field, America and the Mediterranean world, 1776–1882, Princeton 1969, p. 187.

³ It is estimated that in the 1820s the population was around 20,000, a decrease of nearly 65% compared to the beginning of the century. By the 1840s, the city's population was around 60,000, and by the 1870s it was nearly 80,000. Rapid population growth occurred at the turn of the century. In 1880, the population of Thessaloniki exceeded 100,000, and eight years later it was over 120,000. In 1905 it was estimated that 150,000 people lived in the city, and before the outbreak of the First Balkan War it was more than 160,000; B. Gounaris, *Salonica*, "Review" 1993, vol. 16, no. 4, p. 500–501.

powers.⁴ Between 1871 and 1874, Thessaloniki gained a railroad line to Mitrovica via Skopje (tur. *Üsküp*), from where a direct connection to Serbian Niš was established in 1888. Between 1891 and 1894, tracks were laid to Monastir, the main city of western Macedonia, and between 1893 and 1896 a connection to Istanbul was established.⁵

In the second half of the 19th century, the city grew rapidly, attracting many migrants, mostly from the European part of Turkey. The growing importance of Thessaloniki as a distribution center encouraged the wealthiest and most prosperous merchants from the hinterland to settle there. A key element of the city's economy, however, were the entrepreneurs of Jewish origin, who in this respect outstripped Muslims and mostly Greek-speaking Christians. ⁶ Jewish families earned their money on financial services and trade (grain, tobacco, cotton, oil), and by the mid-19th century the merchant houses they owned (Allatini, Fernandez, Misrachi, Modiano, Tiano) had developed into small processing and trading empires, with branches throughout Turkey and Western Europe. The Greek-speaking population earned money mostly on retail trade, but individual families had well-established contacts with other Ottoman ports, German lands or Russia. Certainly, the economic role of Greeks in the city was hampered, in the first half of the 19th century, by the bloody repression of the Ottoman authorities for supporting Greek national liberation slogans. On the other hand, a large part of the immigrants settling in the city, whose numbers had been increasing steadily from decade to decade, were ethnically or economically related to the Greek population.

THE NATURE OF WALLACHIAN SETTLEMENT IN AND AROUND THE CITY IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Thessaloniki was an important, but not exclusive, destination on the map of Wallachian migration — it is believed that in the 19th century Wallachian settlers were in fact present in the majority of the cities of European Turkey as merchants, artisans and entrepreneurs. Many settled in satellite centers to Thessaloniki, from central Macedonia

⁴ In the late 1860s, the authorities proceeded to demolish parts of the fortification walls in order to improve sanitation and make spatial changes. The fortifications on the side of the Thermaic Gulf and to the east were removed. Freed spaces were allocated for port and industrial infrastructure, railroads, public buildings and private residences; A. Yerolympos, *Urban transformations in the Balkans* (1820–1920). Aspects of Balkan town planning and the remarking of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki 1996, p. 62–64.

⁵ Ibidem, p. 504–505.

 $^{^6}$ The Jewish population was also the most numerous in the city, although with regard to the 19th century it is difficult to find more precise data on this subject. What is known, however, is that at the beginning of the 20th century the number was declining (from nearly 90,000 to 60,000 in 1900–1912). During the same period, however, the number of Muslims (migrating from the Balkans) increased, from about 30,000 to 45,000, together with the surge of the population of Christians, Greek-speaking in majority (from 30,000 to 39,000); K. Μοσκώφ, Θεσσαλονίκη — τομή της μεταπρατικής πόλης, vol. 1, Αθήνα 1978, p. 76.

to the Chalcidian Peninsula. In addition, Wallachian shepherds, who supplied the local market with meat, dairy products and wool, played a significant role in the city's 19th-century economy. As the British traveler O.W.M. Leake (1806) reported at the beginning of the 19th century, woolen goods from villages in the Olympus massif, where many Wallachians lived, were a regular feature of the city's markets. The presence of manufacturers from this region was noticeable at the Thessalonican Vardariou market, adjacent to the city's fortified walls, while the Kapani bazaar flourished with trade in lamb, which came from flocks belonging to families making a living from the transhumant or agricultural and domestic stock economy. It is known that intimate trade relations were maintained with Thessaloniki by shepherds originating from the village of Livadi, who came near the city with their sheep during the autumn and winter seasons. The habitats they occupied, located southeast of the fortress (the hills of Chortiatis, Kalamaria) developed over time into permanent agricultural settlements.⁷ Of course, other pastoralist communities, either Wallachian or Arvanite Wallachian, from the area of Grammos, Vermio or Paiko, also appeared in the vicinity of Thessaloniki.8

There is a lack of source information on the number of Wallachian residents of Thessaloniki in the first half of the 19th century. Their presence was not recorded in the memoirs by the British traveler Henry Holland, who stayed in the city in late 1812 and early 1813. His account shows only that nearly two thousand "Greek" families lived there, mostly making a living from trade, but a sizable portion of them were the newcomers fleeing the expansive and bloody activity of the Albanian feudal Ali Pasha. Thus, in 1813, the city recorded the appearance of some 1,500 armed Christian Armatoles, who had come from the slopes of Mount Olympus and from the western part of Macedonia. Among them there were both Greeks and Wallachians, who originally functioned within the same militarized territorial communities. The newcomers found refuge in the estates of Ali Pasha's rivals, with the administrator of Serres Ismail and his son Giousuf, who was the governor of Thessaloniki. Some of the fugitives reinforced the defense troops stationed in the two fortresses, while others were directed to the nearby Chalcidian Peninsula. Initially, as in the city, they were expected to defend the area against robber bands and Ali Pasha's troops, but gradually they took up economic activities, becoming farmers or craftsmen. They transformed themselves into permanent settlers, melding with the local Greek population. 10 The

⁷ Wool brokers, Wallachian families mostly from the Kalarites settlement (Epirus), used the port of Thessaloniki to ship products to Egypt or Venice; Ε. Γκούμας, Λιβάδι (γεωγραφική, ιστορική, λαογραφική επισκόπησις), Λιβάδι 1973, p. 145–146.

⁸ Α. Κουκούδης, Η Θεσσαλονίκη και οι Βλάχοι, Θεσσαλονίκη 2000, p. 78.

⁹ H. Holland, Ταξίδι στη Μακεδονία και Θεσσαλία 1812–1813, Αθήνα 1989, p. 193–194.

A figure who was involved in the defense of Thessaloniki against Ali Pasha was Ioannis Farmakis, a native of the Wallachian settlement in Pindos, Vlasti. Together with another Wallachian, Dimitrios Ypatro of Metsovo, he organized the structures of a clandestine Greek national organization in the city, the Society of Friends (*Filiki Etaireia*), and was in contact with the Greek Wallachian Armatolos settled

fact that the process of assimilation of the Wallachians with the Greeks living around Thessaloniki was gradual and harmonious is evidenced by the socio-economic characteristics of one of the more important settlements there, Asvestohori. According to the accounts dating back to the early 20th century, although there was a division between the Greek and Wallachian parts of the village, its inhabitants spoke the Greek language without exception and formed a coherent system of economic ties. Among the descendants of Wallachian immigrants, however, traditions related to the place of origin of individual families were nurtured.¹¹

Wallachians also do not appear in the Ottoman census of Thessaloniki, dating from 1835. It shows that the city was populated by 12,750 people (males). Jews accounted for the largest proportion, 44.55% of the population, followed by Muslims (33.76%) and Christians, mostly Orthodox (21.69%). The Christian community consisted of 1,277 men, with a sizable proportion of those who arrived in the city in the 1820s. According to some Greek scholars, these "new" settlers may have accounted for as much as 35% of the total Christian community at the time. The Wallachian population, coming from the areas characterized by ethnic mixing and often comprising of Greek speakers, was not culturally, linguistically or economically distinct in this group. Despite the lack of authoritative information on the Wallachians in 19th--century Thessaloniki, however, their presence is confirmed by historians. Wallachian origins are attributed to migrants who, at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, came from the areas identified with traditional Wallachian settlement, that is, from Olympus (Livadi), Epirus (Janina, Metsovo, Zagorje, Siatista, Eratyra, Seli) and Thessaly (Trikala, Larissa, Elassona). In this group Wallachian re-emigrants are included, for example from the Moskopole region (alb. *Voskopojë*), who, before settling in Thessaloniki, resided for a time in other nearby locations, such as the Paiko region (Naoussa, Veria) or Macedonia (e.g. Serres and Katerini). 12

It is believed that the most economically dynamic community, which identified with the Wallachians and operated in the city at the beginning of the 19th century, consisted of the newcomers from the Livadi region (the Olympus massif) who were engaged in trade and crafts. ¹³ They easily found their way in the realities of the city and had well-established business contacts — they usually acted as middlemen in the sale of woolen goods imported from the Olympus region. Some were employed as defenders of the local fortress. This population quickly integrated into the local Greek-Orthodox community, especially since they were religiously and socially connected (intermingled) with it even before their arrival in the city. Visible participation in the socio-economic life of Thessaloniki at that time, though difficult to de-

on the Chalcidian Peninsula; Δ.Ι. Σερεμέτης, *Ο φιλικός Κωνσταντίνος Π. Τάττης (1787–1864*), "Μακεδονικά" 1983, vol. 23, p. 69.

¹¹ A. Κουκούδης, Η Θεσσαλονίκη και οι Βλάχοι, p. 66.

 $^{^{12}\,}$ Ι.Κ. Βασδραβέλλης, Οι Μακεδόνες εις τους υπέρ της ανεξαρτησίας αγώνας 1796–1832, Θεσσαλονίκη 2017, p. 149.

¹³ Α. Κουκούδης, Οι Ολύμπιοι Βλάχοι και τα Βλαχομογλενά, Θεσσαλονίκη 2001, p. 243–245.

scribe on the basis of sources, was also enjoyed by individuals and families from the Moskopole area. This milieu was dispersed and integrated into Greek culture, religiosity and language. Its representatives were usually related to Greeks, and the youth were educated by Greek-speaking teachers. For example, the Tatti family, influential in Thessaloniki and active in the economic and national life of the Greek Orthodox community, is identified with the Moskopole region. Its members are believed to have appeared in the city in the second half of the 18th century. One of the most prominent members of the family, Konstantinos Tattis (1787–1864), came from the village of Vithkouki (Moskopole area). He earned money by trading tobacco from Albanian and Macedonian lands. He escaped the repression of Ali Pasha, and as an activist of the Greek Society of Friends (Filiki Etaireia) was persecuted and imprisoned by the Ottoman authorities. He finally settled in Thessaloniki in 1832. He purchased a number of properties and stores in the inner city, and brought relatives from Vithkouki and Magarevo.¹⁴

At the beginning of the 19th century, among the ethnically diverse population migrating to Thessaloniki, Wallachians fleeing the unrest-stricken regions of Metsovo and Aspropotamos appeared, while the turn of the 20th century saw the migration of people from the western part of Macedonian lands devastated by bloody battles with ethnic overtones. The displaced people from Kleisoura, Krushevo and Veles, and after 1913 from the Monastir (Greek Pelagonia) area, came to the then intensely developing Thessaloniki. According to historians, the Wallachian population was most numerous in the Thesallonican district of Agios Athanasios — in addition to newcomers from Livadi, many migrants from Krushevo and Monastir lived there. It is estimated that about half of all Wallachians residing in the city at the time lived there. The rest were scattered throughout Thessaloniki (Agios Nikolaos, Agios Ypatios, Mitropoleos, Monis Lagou) and mixed with Greeks.¹⁵

The city forced the settlers to have a high degree of occupational flexibility, so it was a rule that many newcomers did different work there than in their hometowns. They were employed to do simple jobs at the port and on the railroad, but there were also people who, despite the lack of adequate funds, were able to develop service busi-

¹⁴ Some researchers assume that K. Tattis was of Arvanite rather than Wallachian descent, as most of the inhabitants of his native village were Arvanites. Nevertheless, his family's itinerary overlapped with the route taken by the Wallachians of Moskopole, who were looking for new places to live; cf. K. Βακαλόπουλος, Χριστιανικές συνοικίες, συντεχνίες και επαγγέλματα της Θεσσαλονίκης στα μέσα του 19ου αιώνα, "Μακεδονικά" 1978, vol. 18, p. 113–115. A scientifically researched example of a Wallachian family hailing from the Moskopole area that found its way into the economic reality of mid-19th century Thessaloniki was the Valaoura family, which was active in trade and finance. In addition, Wallachian roots are attributed to the Kavatzoglou, Goutas, Poulios and Tsitsis families; see: Δ.Ι. Σερεμέτης, Δ. Καυτατζόγλου (1748–1819), Κωνσταντίνος Τάττης (1787–1864), (Ο "Μέγας Άρχων" και ο "Φιλικός"), "Μακεδονικά" 1998, vol. 31, p. 213–238.

¹⁵ G. Weigand, Die sprache des Olympo-Valachen, Leipzig 1888, p. 12; Α. Κουκούδης, Η Θεσσα-λονίκη και οι Βλάχοι, p. 72.

nesses as feldsmen, bakers, shopkeepers or restaurateurs. 16 On the other hand, there are also known examples of entire families originating from Epirus or Macedonia who successfully relocated their economic activities to Thessaloniki and adapted themselves to the new social and economic realities. Usually, however, they did this gradually and "systemically", relying on the contacts developed by the previously sent representatives. Initially, these envoys acted as trade agents of a peculiar kind, whose task was to develop and establish family interests in the new land. It was of utmost importance that their operations were governed by the principle of selecting associates from among people with origins in the home regions, loyal to each other and often related. If a particular enterprise prospered, it attracted more people who decided to leave their home settlements permanently. In the new "habitat" they received the support they needed. The final stage in this process was the arrival and settlement in the new place of those at the top of the family and economic hierarchy. Individual "family businesses" were relocated due to the inability to develop them in the old locations. A fundamental role in these activities was played by kinship ties and traditions related to a common place of origin.

An interesting example of this "migrated" economic activity, based on family-territorial ties, was the fate of Wallachian-Greek merchants and artisans originating from Kleisoura (on the Macedonian-Epirian border, who were forced to leave their homeland in the late 19th century due to the scourge of robbery and repression by the authorities. For many, Thessaloniki became a central location for relocated trade and transportation activities, which, by the way, went beyond the European part of Turkey — individual companies had expatriate offices in Serbia, Austria, Russia (Odessa) and Germany (Dresden). The newcomers from Kleisoura also excelled in crafts, especially jewelry. They created a thriving environment in Thessaloniki, which attracted new settlers — in 1908 the representatives of the twin colony from Istanbul even decided to leave the Turkish capital and settle on the Thermaic Gulf. Tobacco

¹⁶ A spectacular example of successful adaptation to the economic realities of Thessaloniki was the fate of Mihail Tositsa (1789–1856), a native of Metsovo, who established a fur workshop that was well-known throughout 19th-century Turkey. He arrived in Thessaloniki at the age of 10, in 1797. Employed initially as an apprentice at a local fur workshop, he gradually grew into the economic reality of the city, gained contacts and set aside money for his own business. He also became associated with the Society of Friends. He brought three brothers, Nikolaos, Konstantinos and Theodoros, to Thessaloniki. They helped him expand his business and ensured the smooth, long-distance distribution of his products. The family business grew quickly, its agenda was launched in Egypt, which made Theodoros Totsitsa relocate there. The family business won the trust of the local ruler Muhammad Ali, which prompted M. Totsitsa himself to move to Egypt. He eventually settled in Athens in the 1850s, gaining recognition for his business and charitable activities; see I. Χατζηφώτης, Οι Μετσοβίτες στην Αλεξάνδρεια, in Πρακτικά Α΄ συνεδρίου μετσοβίτικων σπουδών, Αθήνα 1993, p. 87–96.

¹⁷ Α.Ι. Τζιώγος, Συνοπτική ιστορία της Κλεισούρας Δυτικής Μακεδονίας και το ιστορικόν αυτής μνημείον της χριστιανοσύνης της Ιεράς Μονής Παναγίας — Γενννήσεως της Θεοτόκου, Θεσσαλονίκη 1961, p. 42, 45–49. Among those associated with Kleisoura who lived in Thessaloniki in the second half of the 19th century, Simos Simottas and his son are mentioned, who became rich from the textile trade. Georgios Tornivoukas, on the other hand, made his money trading tobacco from Macedonia. He was

and textile traders, controlled by families from Epirus' Nymfeio (Sossidi, Liatsi, Misiou, Nikou, Kiki, Oikonomou, Tornivouka), ¹⁸ also developed their businesses on an established family and economic basis. They focused on the regional market (Serres, Janitsa, Drama, Kavala, Ksanthi), but also maintained contacts with contractors from Istanbul or Egypt. At the turn of the 20th century, artisan and trading companies originating from Krushevo (Mihailveis, Kovtsintaris), Veles (Tsikardekos) and Monastir (Papazoglou) also installed themselves in Thessaloniki. ¹⁹

INTEGRATION INTO THE GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY

Little is known about educated individuals or professionals living in Thessaloniki who could be clearly identified as Wallachians. Those who advanced in the city's social, intellectual and economic circles were always identified with Greeks. They were often bilingual and related to Greek families — thence, they participated in Greek cultural environment. The education of young people from aspiring Wallachian families was exclusively in Greek, mixed marriages were the order of the day. As the French traveler E. Picot (1875) reported, the Wallachians in Thessaloniki were "very Hellenized", while G. Weigand (1889) believed that members of the city's Greekspeaking community largely had Wallachian roots, but this did not affect their views or conduct.²⁰ Indeed, historian A. Koukoudis' analysis of a census of recognized and influential people living in Thessaloniki, commissioned by the Greek Metropolitan of Thessaloniki in 1913, shows that up to ¼ of the representatives of the local Christian community may have had Wallachian roots. The purpose of the census was to provide the Greek authorities with data on the composition of the local socio-political elite in the Muslim-majority city, which was annexed to Greece in 1912–1913. The administration was keen to recognize who among the influential residents might have supported its activities. The search for possible connections of individuals with

the son of Konstantinos Tornivoukas — the owner of an exclusive hotel called *Olympion Palace* (later *Mediterranian Palace*), standing on the city's representative waterfront.

¹⁸ One of the most influential in the city was the Mpoutari family, originally from Nymfaio (near Florina), which was involved in financial activities and real estate brokerage. Tobacco warehouses owned by the Sossidi family were also located in Thessaloniki, from which shipments were sent to Istanbul, Cairo, Germany and Scandinavia. The company had branches in Kavala, Ksanthi and Drama; A.N. Hãciu, *AROMÂNII: comert, industrie, arte, expansiune, civilizație focșani*, Focșani 1936, p. 217, 232.

The most operative immigrants from Krushevo fueled the hospitality industry, jewelry services and tailoring. The descendants of immigrants from Macedonian Veles, on the other hand, earned money on, among other things, trading in grain and opium from Albanian and Macedonian lands. They operated on their own account, or on behalf of companies owned by the Jewish Allatini family; ibidem, p. 249.

²⁰ In addition to the Wallachians, the Greek community was also supplied by many local Jews and Bulgarians who were influenced by the Greek language; G. Weigand, *Die Aromunen. Ethnographisch-philologisch-historische Untersuchungen über das Volk der sogenannten Makedo-Romanen oder Zinzaren*, Leipzig 1895, vol. 1, p. 221; M.É. Picot, *Les Roumains de la Macédoine*, Paris 1875, p. 39.

Wallachian roots was based on the analysis of names and data in the places of origin. The census analysis shows that Wallachians may have been represented in variety of prestigious professions, such as the professions of civil servants, teachers, doctors and merchants. However, it is impossible to identify the individuals or families openly manifesting their attachment to Wallachian culture or using Wallachian speech on a daily basis. 22

According to A. Koukoudis, at the turn of the 20th century, at least seven of the nineteen families significant to the Greek-speaking Orthodox community in the city had Wallachian roots.²³ Among the best-known people associated with the cultural life of Thessaloniki in the second half of the 19th century is a philologist and geographer Margaritis Dimitsas (1830–1903). Born in Ohrid, he studied classical philology in Athens (1856-1859) and Berlin (1859-1861), and received his doctorate in Leipzig. From 1865 to 1869, he served as a director of a Greek-language elementary school and then a grammar school. The institution under his leadership was considered one of the best Greek-language schools in the whole Ottoman Macedonia at the time, M. Dimitsas maintained contacts with families whose traditions went back to the Moskopole area, and who resided in Thessaloniki, as well as in Germany. He published nearly 20 scientific and journalistic texts in the field of geography and history. In his publications he emphasized the legitimacy of Greek territorial claims to Macedonia and Thrace.²⁴ From the village of Krania (Olympus region) came the family of the founder and publisher of the city's first Greek-language newspaper, Sophocles Garpolas (1833–1911). The "Ermis" periodical had been published from 1875, on average twice a week. S. Garpolas was a Greek citizen, and settled in the city in 1850. In 1881 his newspaper, considered the most popular newspaper title among the Greeks of Thessaloniki, changed its name to "Faros tis Makedonias", and in 1889 to "Faros tis Thessalonikis". The publishing and press activities were continued by S. Garpolas' sons, Nikos and Alekos, owners of the magazines "Syntagma" (1908) and "Makedonia" (1911-1912), where his politically and nationally engaged texts were published by, among others, Konstantinos Vellidis, who came from the Grevena area. After the closure of "Makedonia" by the Ottoman authorities, K. Vellidis was socially and journalistically active, working with the local Greek consulate and pro-Greek circles in Macedonia. He called for confronting Ottoman repression of Greeks from Macedonia and Epirus, as well as fighting the influence of the Bulgarian exar-

²¹ Α. Κουκούδης, Η Θεσσαλονίκη και οι Βλάγοι, p. 91.

²² A study of the Ottoman census of 1906–1907, conducted by Turkish historian K. Karpat, shows that the number of Wallachian residents of Thessaloniki reached nearly 16,500 and a half thousand (about 2.8% of the city's population). This was almost 80% of the entire Wallachian population of the Saloniki wilayet; K. Karpat, *Ottoman population*, 1830–1914: demographics and social characteristics, Madison 1985, p. 166–169.

²³ Α. Κουκούδης, Η Θεσσαλονίκη και οι Βλάχοι, p. 87–88.

²⁴ Π.Μ. Νιγδέλης, Από την ιστορία της έρευνας της αρχαίας Μακεδονίας: συμπληρωματικά στοιχεία για τη ζωή και το έργο των Μ. Δήμιτσα και Σ. Μερτζίδη, "Μακεδονικα" 2005, vol. 34, no. 1, p. 229–241.

chate and the proponents of Bulgarian national interests. His father's journalistic and publishing activities were continued in the following decades of the 20th century by Ioannis Vellidis (1909–1978).²⁵

IMPACT OF ROMANIAN EDUCATION AND NATIONAL PROPAGANDA

The issue of the integration of the Thessalonican Wallachians into the Greek Orthodox community took on particular political significance at the turn of the 20th century, when there were attempts by Romania to undermine it. The emissaries funded by the authorities and Romanian cultural and educational associations came to the city, working on behalf of the Macedo-Romanians, as the Wallachian population was often referred to in Romania. The activities of these circles concerned all the Romanianspeaking (Aromanian) communities living in the European part of Ottoman Turkey. Efforts were made to establish and develop contacts with the leaders of the respective communities, to start common schools (mostly Romanian-speaking) and to work for the introduction of the Romanian language into the Orthodox church liturgy.²⁶ With the idea of creating an environment that would foster Romanian beginnings in Thessaloniki, a high school with a commercial focus was launched there in 1899. Its originator was the then Romanian Minister of Education Take Ionescu (1858– 1922), sympathetic to the Macedonian-Romanian movement (he emphasized his family ties to the Aromanians, as his wife came from Macedonian lands). The launch of a Romanian-language specialized school in the central economic center of the European part of Turkey meant that Romania intended to establish a foothold for its influence among the population it considered ethnically related to the Romanians, just as Greece and Bulgaria did for the Greek and Slavic populations. Initially, the idea of establishing a school encountered the resistance from the local authorities, but they

²⁵ Γ. Μπασλή, Προσωπικότητες από την Κρανιά του Ολύμπου που έδρασαν ή γεννήθηκαν τον 19ο αιώνα. Άνθιμος Ολύμπιος επίσκοπος Ναυπάκτου, Γεώργιος Βακαλούλης, οι Γκαρμπολάδες..., "Θεσσαλικό Ημερολόγιο" 2013, no. 64, p. 367–384. The involvement of many Wallachians from Macedonia and Thessaloniki in the support for Greek national interests was recorded in the early 20th century by, among others, British traveler George Frederick Abbott, A tale of a tour in Macedonia, London 1903, p. 79.

²⁶ Διπλωματικό και Ιστορικό Αρχείο (Αρχείο του Υπουργείου Εξωτερικών, ΑΥΕ), ΑΑΚ/ΚΑ (Μακεδονικα), 1906 (materials on the activities of Romanian schools in Macedonia and Thrace). The establishment of Romanian-language schools in Turkey was the goal of the Macedonian-Romanian Committee, supported by the authorities in Bucharest. The idea was to prepare the Romanian-speaking population from Macedonian lands for national and political unification with the "motherland". At the beginning of the 20th century, there were about a hundred Romanian Orthodox churches and 106 schools in Macedonian lands and Epirus, with more than 4,000 students and 300 teachers. The education was taught at the elementary level, and most classes were conducted in Romanian; G. Weigand, Die Aromunen, vol. 2, p. 306–308; L. Divani, Wallachians of Greece and the Italo-Romanian propaganda, "Thetis. mannheimer Beiträge zur klassischen archäologie und Geschichte Griechenlands" 1996, vol. 3, p. 204.

got eventually convinced with the participation of German diplomats from Istanbul.²⁷ In the first four years there were 78 students in the institution, and in the period 1903–1910 their number fluctuated between 49 and 80. The number of teachers increased from 9 to 12 in the same period. The vast majority of the student audience came from the outside of Thessaloniki, from different parts of Ottoman Macedonia, and usually received assistance in the form of scholarship. A Romanian-language elementary school was also launched in 1900, with an initial enrollment of more than 60 children. Between 1903 and 1904, however, their number dropped to about 20.²⁸ The commercial school operated intermittently until 1946.

In addition to educational activity, plans were developed to organize the Thessalonican Wallachians around the idea of cooperation with Romania. The greatest hopes were pinned on relations with families originating from Epirus, where Romanian national activity developed most rapidly and the largest number of Romanian-language general schools were established.²⁹ According to the then Greek Consul General of Thessaloniki Evgenios Evgeniadis, merchants and artisans of Wallachian descent were encouraged to join an association that would help the graduates of the trade school find jobs and, in the long run, organize credit assistance for individual members of Aromanian communities. This endeavor was headed by a 12-member committee, composed mostly of Wallachians from the Monastir area. The far-reaching goal of the society's activities was to create an independent financial center, not linked to the Ottoman authorities or Greek banking institutions which would provide an economic base for pro-Romanian groups of the population. Informants at the Consulate in Thessaloniki pointed out that due to the activity of Romanian agitators, Greece could lose its influence over the actions and views of some of the Wallachian circles (1904). The consul considered most dangerous the propaganda carried out among the most disadvantaged population, which, in his opinion, could be quite positive about the slogans on education and liturgy in the Romanian language.³⁰ On the other hand, however, he doubted the possibility of creating a stable credit institution, for which there was a lack of adequate capital both from Romania and from local entrepreneurs. According to him, the best way to keep Wallachian merchants or artisans on the Greek side was for the government in Athens to strengthen the financial support for the lending and banking institutions already operating in Thessaloniki and linked to the Greek popu-

²⁷ AYE, AAK/A, 1900, doc. no. 173 (10.05.1900).

²⁸ AYE, AAK/A2, 1903 (Image of Romanian schools in the Thessaloniki area); I. Solcanu, *Gimnazii*, scoli normale si licee in limba romana infiintate si subventionate de guvernele de la Bucuresti pentru aromanii din Grecia: (1880–1900), "Annals of the Academy of Romanian Scientists. Series on History and Archaeology" 2019, vol. 11, no. 1, p. 47–50.

²⁹ Ε. Νικολαΐδου-Τζίτζη, Η Ρουμανική Προπαγάνδα στο Βιλαέτι Ιωαννίνων και στα Βλαχόφωνα Χωριά της Πίνδου, Αθήνα 1995, p. 213–224.

³⁰ AYE, 1904, AAK/K (Μακεδονικα); doc. 113 (06.03.1904).

lation.³¹ Indeed, fears that an alternative network of credit links could be established in Thessaloniki to serve Romanian national slogans were exaggerated. The Romanian authorities were unwilling to finance the venture from the state budget and the interest from local businessmen was reticent. As a result, in 1904 the circle supporting the activities of the trade school did not exceed 40 people, most of whom were paid from Bucharest. The activities of this circle, moreover, were fiercely protested against by people of Wallachian descent who openly sympathized with Greece. In their statements, Romanian propaganda was equated with the agitation led by Bulgaria aimed at undermining the position of the pro-Greek Constantinopolitan Patriarchate.³²

The Greek-Romanian rivalry in Thessaloniki took its most drastic course on December 4, 1905, when Lazaros Douma/Dumas (originally from Pisoderi), an inspector of Romanian schools in the Saloniki vilayet, was shot dead in one of the restaurants. The killer, Tasos (Athanassios) Vogas, (originally from Monastir), was a member of a militia formed to combat Bulgarian and Romanian influence in Macedonia. It should be added that in a group of several dozen conspirators, subsidized by the Greek consulate, at least 17 people were of Wallachian origin.³³

There were also proclamations in Thessaloniki targeting Romanian and Bulgarian actions, and taking the interests of Greece in defense. A large resonance accompanied the announcement, on March 15, 1907, of the contents of a letter to the Patriarch of Constantinople, signed by 526 residents of the city, who claimed Wallachian ancestry. Their purpose was to express the opposition to the idea formulated by Romanian sympathizers that the Orthodox liturgy should also be celebrated in Romanian. The

³¹ Among the important financial institutions operating in Thessaloniki based on capital from Greek investors are the Bank of Thessaloniki (1888), the Bank of Mytilene (*Banque de Metilene*; 1899) and the Bank of Anatolia (*Banque d' Orient*; 1906), financed by the National Bank of Greece; V.N. Geyikdagi, Foreign investment in the Ottoman Empire: international trade and relations 1854–1914, London 2011, p. 103; Ε. Χεκίμογλου, Τράπεζες και Θεσσαλονίκη 1900–1936, Θεσσαλονίκη 1987, p. 64.

³² On May 22, 1905, the Wallachian communities of Ottoman Turkey were granted by the Sultan the right to operate an Orthodox church and develop their own education within a separate religious province called *Ullah millet* (Wallachian millet). Abdülhamid II's decision, supported by the superpowers, especially Austria-Hungary, was seen in Bucharest as a great opportunity for Romanian national propaganda among the Aromanians. In Romania, they were referred to as a Romanian minority, while the Greek side recognized them as Greeks. In 1906, due to conflicting national interests in Macedonia, Greece and Romania even suspended diplomatic relations for a time; R.V. Bossy, *Un succes diplomatic românesc*: "Iradeaua" din 1905, "Noul Album Macedo-Român" 1959, vol. 1, p. 167–169.

³³ The activities of the Greek Consulate General in Thessaloniki (from the early 1890s) went beyond the strictly diplomatic ones. Civilians and military officers responsible for activating Christians sympathetic to Greece were delegated to its membership. They established contacts and advised who should be supported financially. These activities gained momentum in 1904–1906, when Lambros Koromilas headed the consulate. He attached great importance to the need to promote the interests of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate in its rivalry with the Bulgarian exarchate. In his view, Romania favored the activities of Bulgarian agents; AYE, 1904, AAK/K, 01.11.1904. When in 1906 L. Koromilas, under pressure from the Ottoman authorities, was dismissed from his post, he was entrusted in Athens with the position of inspector general of all Greek consulates in Macedonia (a position he held until the end of 1907); B. Ααούρδα, Τό Ελληνικόν Γενικόν Προξενεΐον Θεσσαλονίκης, 1903–1908, Θεσσαλονίκη 1961, p. 11–13.

signers of the letter described themselves as "guardians of the tradition of the fathers", identified with the heritage of Greek Orthodoxy, and stressed the need to maintain the dominance of the Greek language in Orthodox churches and schools wherever Wallachian communities lived. They considered the Romanian language as artificial to the Wallachians. Among those who signed the message there were scholars, merchants and "workers in all arts and crafts". In order to lend credibility to the message, each signature was supplemented with information about the person's profession. In addition, a roster of thirty residents of Thessaloniki who were described as Romanian sympathizers was included. Most of them were affiliated with Romanian schools.³⁴

The rhetoric of the struggle to maintain the monopoly position of the Greek language in the liturgy addressed to Wallachian communities was also present in the initiatives undertaken with a view to integrating the various communities. In the first decade of the twentieth century, more or less permanent forums were established in the city to nurture the memory of places of origin, consolidate family-clan ties and, at the same time, carry out activities aimed at promoting Greek national and religious identity. Such was the case with the brotherhood for people from the Kleisoura area, founded in 1907, which was a continuation of the twin society previously active among immigrants in Istanbul.³⁵ Within its framework, it was active in emphasizing their Greek-Wallachian roots while providing financial and organizational support for Greek national propaganda in the western part of Ottoman Macedonia. In late September 1908, a group of Wallachians hailing from the Olympus region formed an association in Thessaloniki called "Olympus". They considered themselves to be Greeks with Wallachian roots ($B\lambda\alpha\chi\delta\varphi\omega\nu$ ou $E\lambda\lambda\eta\nu\varepsilon\zeta$), and stressed their attachment to Greek culture and language. In their policy document, they proclaimed the need to ensure the monopoly of Greek speech in all aspects of social, cultural and economic life. They stressed that the goal of the Romanian emissaries, operating in the European part of Turkey, was the popularization of Romanian national ideology and, in the long run, the Romanianization of Wallachian communities there. The association's founders were recruited from among well-educated people who were aware of their origins. They were the advocates for integrating the Wallachians into the Greek element, and believed that the characterization of Wallachian communities should refer only to their cultural and historical distinctiveness, not to their ethno-linguistic distinctiveness. They also rejected the demand, put forward by the Romanian side, that Wallachian dialects be identified with the literary Romanian language. They feared that the efforts to systematize or unify Wallachian speech, undertaken in the spirit of creating an Aromanian linguistic canon of a certain kind, would weaken Greece's political position vis-à-vis the general Romance-speaking population living in the Ottoman area. One of the greatest critics of Romanian interference with Wallachian linguistic traditions was the co-founder of the "Olympus" association, linguist and educator

³⁴ "Εκκλησιαστική Αλήθεια" 1907, vol. 27, p. 329–330.

³⁵ Α.Ι. Τζιώγος, Συνοπτική Ιστορία της Κλεισούρας, p. 119–121.

Konstantinos Nicolaides. He was a native of Livadi and had an excellent command of the local dialect. On the basis of linguistic research conducted in the Olympus region and in Thessaly, he created an etymological dictionary of the "Kutsowallachian language", published in Athens in 1909.³⁶ The purpose of this publication was to demonstrate the Wallachian linguistic peculiarity, which, according to the researcher, resulted from the genealogical distinctiveness of the Wallachians, as well as their centuries-old cultural connectivity with the Greek element. The monopolistic position of the Greek language and national culture among the descendants of the Romance-speaking population settled in the city was consolidated with the Greek takeover of the city, in 1913. After World War II, the Wallachians melted into a diverse community of Greek refugees who came from various regions of Turkey, Soviet Russia and the Balkan states. In this context, the term Wallachian was treated as an integral part of the Greek ethnic element, culturally and historically heterogeneous, but united through language and religion.³⁷

The modern history of the Wallachian population is an example of long-term, mostly peaceful assimilation into the religious and linguistic communities that dominated parts of Southeastern Europe. The case of Thessaloniki was no different. In the realities of urban settlement, the Wallachians quickly lost their linguistic and cultural distinctiveness, and in many cases their assimilation with the Greeks had already begun in their home settlement centers. This was a natural and fruitful process due to the existence of many common socioeconomic relations, religious unity and the attraction of Greek culture and education. As a result, Wallachians living in towns with a significant share of Greek-speaking Orthodox believers grew into these communities, becoming part of them. References to Wallachian places of origin, customs and economic peculiarities are included in the general description of Greek national identity. Wallachian traditions, having their origin in the pastoral (transhumant) economy, did not work well on urban soil and faded away. It was no different with linguistic customs, which, cultivated in the private sphere, were obliterated by generational changes and under the pressure of the Greek language, widely spoken and taught in Thessaloniki.

³⁶ Κ. Νικολαΐδης, Ετυμολογικόν λεξικόν της Κουτσοβλαχικής γλώσσης, Αθήνα 1909.

³⁷ It is known that of Wallachian origin (from Vlaholivado in the Olympus area) was one of the interwar mayors of Thessaloniki (1922–1926), Petros Syndikas. In the decades that followed, circles affiliated with particular villages from below Olympus or Epirus formed small but quite resilient societies that sought to cultivate traditions and develop folklore from their home sites. In this way, for example, families coming from Kokkinoplou, Livadi, Skra, Nymfaio, Pisoderi, Samarina, Grammousta, Argos Orestiko, Aetomilitsa, Fourka were integrated; A. Hâciu, op. cit., p. 251–252; https://vlahoi.net/weblinks/53-politistikoi-sillogoi-vlahon [accessed: 18.4.2023].

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