

An Introduction to Pontic Greek History: part II



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Preface

This booklet is the second part to Topalidis (2019a) *An Introduction to Pontic Greek History* written for those who are not interested in reading detailed work on Pontic history. Each chapter is devoted to a specific aspect of our history and when read with the above stated document the reader will acquire a basic knowledge of Pontic history. Within this document, words within [] within a reference are my words. All references are included at the end of the booklet.

I wish to thank Michael Bennett and Russell McCaskie for their comments to this work. My many articles on Pontic history and culture can be found at the PontosWorld website at: www.pontosworld.com/index.php/history/sam-topalidis

In this booklet, chapter 1, 'Discovering Your Pontic Family History' aims to help Pontic Greeks discover their family roots. It discusses human DNA tests that could be purchased for genealogical purposes and points out some of their short-comings.

Chapter 2, 'American Protestant Missions' describes this missionary movement from the 1830s to the 1920s in Pontos. These missionaries worked to benefit local people through education and medical care in order to spread their form of Christian faith.

Chapter 3, 'The Family History of Maria Spyridopoulou' which was co-written with Maria's grand-daughter, Angela Triandafillou, tells the story of a Protestant Pontic Greek from Ordu. Stories on Protestant Pontic Greeks are not

common and so this story is a valuable addition to our Pontic history.

Chapter 4 ‘A History of Ordu (Kotyora)’ covers the period from around 5th century BC to the exchange of populations in the early 1920s. It also touches on Ordu today.

Chapter 5, ‘A History of Bafra’ describes Bafra’s historical roots from around 5000 BC till the early 1920s when Christians were forced out of Anatolia.

Chapter 6, ‘Pontic Greek Dance’ briefly covers some recent history of Pontic dance.

Chapter 7, ‘Byzantine Churches in Trabzon’ covers the 37 known Byzantine churches in Trabzon of which only nine have ‘survived’ in some form today.

The final chapter, ‘Pontic Greeks Moving to the Soviet Union Then Greece’ summarises the movement of Pontic (and other Anatolian) Greeks to the Russian empire from the 18th century to the early 20th century and then their movement from there to Greece.

After reading this booklet it will become evident that Pontic Greeks were indeed great survivors—*temon, teseteron, temeteron*.

1. Discovering Your Pontic Family History

Introduction

We all need to feel that we belong somewhere. The purpose of this chapter is to help Pontic Greeks discover their family history (Note 1.1).

Orthodox Greeks in Pontos were forced to leave Turkiye in the early 1920s.¹ With the lack of official records on Pontic Greeks in Turkiye, this provides a problem for Pontic Greeks in recording their family history. To try to fill some of the gap in their family history, some may consider paying for human DNA tests for genealogical purposes.

The number of our ancestors can double with each generation. This leads to an incredibly large number of ancestors. However, our genetic tree is not equivalent to our genealogical tree—not every one of our ancestors has contributed to our genome (Kenneally 2014:218).

The Origins of Greeks from Pontos

Following the general cataclysm in the eastern Mediterranean around 1200 BC [which ended the Mycenaean civilisation], many Greeks moved to Anatolia (Cartledge 2011). The Greek colony of Miletos on the west coast of Anatolia became a prominent city.

From the second half of the 7th century BC, Lydia, its eastern neighbour, expanded taking territory from Miletos. Miletos then began sending out colonisers into the Black Sea and was predominantly responsible for establishing

¹ Pontic Greeks were also living in the former Soviet Union.

colonies in Pontos. Miletos founded the Greek colony of Sinope in Pontos in the 7th century BC. Sinope founded Trabzon, Kotyora (Ordu) and Kerasous (Giresun). Amisos was founded around 564 BC (Tsetsckhladze 2007). The native Anatolians probably formed part of the population in these Greek colonies. Today, Pontic Greeks 'may' be descendants of:

- Greek colonists in Pontos
- indigenous Anatolians
- other Greeks who had moved from the 19th century to Pontos
- local non-Christians or others who migrated to Pontos and absorbed Christian Greek culture.

Undertaking Pontic Greek Family History

Here are some steps to follow in order to undertake research in your Pontic family history:

1. Interview elderly relatives about their family history and record it. Produce a family tree. Identify inconsistencies and organise another meeting. Bring along old family photographs and heirlooms and ask for details about them.
2. Study birth, baptism, marriage, death certificates, citizenship, immigration, ship passenger, census records, old passports and letters. Some information on these documents may be incorrect. Check the National Archives of Australia at: www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/search-people/researching-your-family
The register of refugees in Greece is at: www.pontosnews.gr/498045/istoria/vres-tous-prosfyges-syngeneis-sou/

Essential reading can be accessed at:

- <https://apps.ncl.ac.uk/GreekFamilyHistory/Page/About>
- <http://arxeiomnimon.gak.gr/index.html>

Write a research log of all your searches.

3. Study Pontic history. The author's work is at: www.pontosworld.com/index.php/history/sam-topalidis
4. Visit where your ancestors once lived. Valuable information in Greece may be found at the:
 - Epitropi Pontiakon Meleton in Athens (www0.epm.gr/epm.gr/).
 - Kentrou Mikrasiatikon Spoudon in Athens (<http://en.kms.org.gr/>).
 - Pontic Greek community associations.
 - Benaki Museum in Athens which holds Pontic costumes, musical instruments and Pontic church silverware.
5. Consider if taking human DNA tests for genealogical purposes is worthwhile. They may not be value for money. There are three main genealogical tests. The cheapest version of each of these tests is not recommended. Some of these DNA testing companies include: 23andMe, FamilyTreeDNA, Living DNA and MyHeritage DNA. Study their privacy statements.

DNA Tests for Genealogical Purposes²

In addition to comparing results with others within the same DNA testing company, DNA results can also be uploaded to sites to determine if there are close matches with people from other testing companies. Check their privacy statements.

Y-chromosome DNA Test

The Y-chromosome is passed down from father to son to son. [This is only one slice of your DNA.] Females will need to have a male relative like a brother to take the test. Determining whether two people share ancestors is based on probabilities, speculating about whether their test results are similar enough to be significant. This test will probably also identify the Y-chromosome DNA haplogroup. A haplogroup ‘suggests’ your deep ancestral origins (Farmer 2017:17, 19).

A Y-chromosome DNA marks the path from your direct paternal ancestors in Africa to their locations in historic times. A branch on the tree indicates where paternal ancestors are present today and about their ‘likely’ migration paths (<https://learn.familytreedna.com/dna-basics/ydna/>).

Rutherford (2016:164, 166) states no scientific test exists that will reveal where the DNA that would be inherited was precisely located in the past. Much of the DNA from all these ancestors is not present [in an individual], so a single geographical location is meaningless. The calculation averages a

² With the study of human genetics there are no differences among human populations that are large enough to support the concept of ‘biological race’ (Reich 2018:250).

location based on where an individual shares 'some' bits of DNA in the present day.

Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA)

This test is used to trace a direct maternal line (mother's, mother etc.). Mothers pass their mtDNA to their children, but only daughters pass mtDNA on to the next generation. Females and males can have this test. Again, this is only one slice of a person's ancestors.

This test may also report the mitochondrial DNA haplogroup which estimates the origins and migratory paths of an individual's own maternal ancestors (Farmer 2017). See above on the problems with migratory paths.

Autosomal DNA Test

This test is designed to find relatives on any ancestral lines within the last five generations. The test uses autosomal DNA, which is the mixture of DNA received from both parents (about 50% from the mother and about 50% from the father). Both men and women can complete this test. If an individual is trying to confirm a relationship with someone who is a third cousin or closer, this test is recommended. The test may also provide a [so-called] breakdown of an individual's ethnic makeup (<https://learn.familytreedna.com/dna-basics/autosomal/>).

Note that the conclusions about ethnic origins are based on the particular reference sample sets in their database (Farmer 2017).

DNA is very good at determining close family relations such as siblings or parents. For deeper

family roots, these tests do not really reveal where one's ancestors originate. It simply reveals where an individual's DNA may be found today. To say an individual is 30% German etc. has very little scientific meaning. DNA will tell you little about your culture, history and identity (Rutherford 2018).

Any study that attempts to reconstruct past population movements from present-day populations is limited (Reich 2018:xv-xvi). Peoples' origins from genetic ancestry companies that can be drawn for an individual are much less specific than is generally thought and the procedures do tend to exaggerate the degree of genetic difference between nationalities and ethnic groups (Slack 2023:80).

Note 1.1

Some Pontic Turks had some Pontic Greek ancestors who converted to Islam. Ethnicity can be generally defined as a sense of belonging to a group, based on shared ideas of group history, language, experience and culture (Chatty 2010).

2. American Protestant Missions

Introduction

This chapter describes the American Protestant missionary movement³ from the 1830s to the 1920s in Pontos, the NE corner of Anatolia adjacent to the Black Sea coast (Fig 2.1). These missionaries, assisted by financial contributions, worked to benefit local people, through education and medical care to spread their form of Christian faith (McGrew 2015:xv).

Tanzimat Reforms

The Tanzimat period of legislation and reform occurred in 1839–1871 in the Ottoman empire. In 1844, the death penalty for renouncing Islam was abolished (Zürcher 2017). Later in 1856, a new reform charter proclaimed the principle of freedom

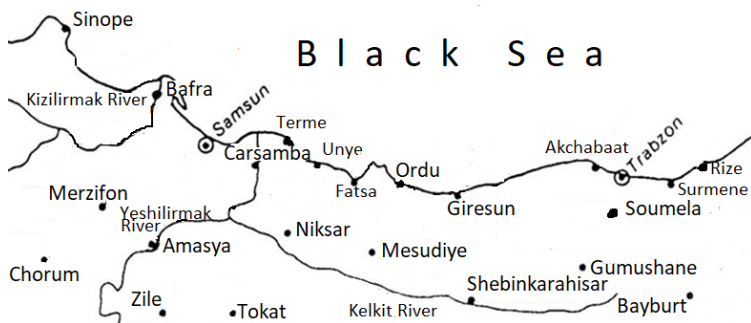


Fig 2.1: NE Anatolia (scale: 290 km from Samsun to Trabzon).

³ Protestants object to the adoration of saints, the use of images, excessive rites and ceremonies, toleration of alcohol and not respecting the Sabbath (McGrew 2015:17).

of religion and this contributed to the spread of Protestantism (Konstantinou 2020). However, in 1874, the government outlawed the conversion of Muslims to Christianity (Shaw and Shaw 2002).

Protestant Missionaries in Anatolia

In the early 19th century, missionary societies were established in the United States to spread their evangelical mission to the world. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) developed into the most active missionary organisation in Anatolia. These American institutions provided a modern education and prepared students for life after school (Erol (2018:337–338); Avaroğullari and Yildiz (2015:59)).

These missionaries witnessed that Anatolian females were denied a full education and obliged to marry in adolescence. Educating women was seen as an opportunity for shaping the behaviour of mothers (McGrew 2015:63).

In 1819, American missionaries began working in the Ottoman empire. Forces within the local Christian Armenian and Greek communities often involved conflicts and sometimes created the founding of Protestant churches without missionary involvement. The Greek Orthodox church and the Gregorian Armenian church [Armenian Orthodox church], resisted Protestant attempts to convert their congregations. However, the relations between the Christian denominations were not always bitter (McGrew (2015:8, 17, 23–24); Göktürk (2015:214–215, 229)).

Protestant Missionaries in Pontos

Most of the following information was sourced from the monthly newspaper, *The Missionary Herald (TMH)* published by the ABCFM in Boston.

Amasya

In 1836, the population in Amasya (Fig 2.1) comprised up to 4,000 Turkish, 750 Armenian and up to 150 Greek houses (Hamilton 1842). By 1879, there was 160 Protestants and in 1880, they had a house as a school and for services (*TMH*, Mar 1879:103; Feb 1881:62).

Bafra

A Protestant mission was established in 1880. A Protestant Greek preacher arrived in 1895. By 1897, the congregation was mostly Armenian and by the next year they were putting up a building for worship (*TMH*, Oct 1891:403; May 1895:194; Nov 1897:465; Feb 1898:63).

Charshamba

Charshamba is east of Samsun and in 1865 a Protestant mission was established. In 1899, it had a pastor. By 1900, it had a teacher for its school (*TMH*, Oct 1891:403; Nov 1899:481; Apr 1900:157).

Dere Keoy

In 1884, a Protestant mission was established 50 km NW of Merzifon. By 1900, a new Protestant church was erected. In 1910, the congregation of 120 or more met without a formal pastor (The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1900:54); *TMH*, Oct 1891:403; May 1910:220).

Fatsa

In 1886, Fatsa had a Protestant mission. In 1895, they had a preacher. From 1899, a new preacher arrived with his wife and her sister as a teacher. They lost their first church building, due to the persecution by Orthodox Greeks (*TMH*, Oct 1891:403; Oct 1900:404–405).

Geul Keuy

Geul Keuy was about 12 hours by horseback inland from Ordu. In 1901, a preacher arrived under much opposition in a congregation of 200 Protestants (*TMH*, Aug 1901:327–328).

Herek

Herek is a village 60 km NE of Amasya and a Protestant mission was established in 1873. In 1879, the Protestant preacher spent his winters in Herek. In 1899, the place of worship held 200 people (*TMH*, Mar 1879:103; Oct 1891:403; Nov 1899:481).

Kara Hissar (Shebinkarahisar in Fig 2.1)

By 1871, most people were Turks with about 1,000 Armenian families and some Greeks. There was one preacher with up to 30 persecuted Protestants (*TMH*, Jul 1872:216–217).

In 1885, a nearby mine employed some 630 men. The preacher spent one Sunday a month there. In 1910, a Protestant church was secured at Kara Hissar. The preacher and his wife tutored 53 boys and 24 girls in the school (*TMH*, Nov 1885:470; Jul 1911:307).

Merzifon

The Protestant mission commenced in 1851 (*TMH*, Aug 1872). The American Protestant 16 hectare campus was enclosed by a wall just outside the town's walls. It attracted primarily Christian girls and boys (McGrew 2015).

In 1866, there was a Sunday school on the campus and two other mission Sunday schools. In November 1867, the pupils of the Theological School commenced their four months' vacation by preaching and teaching away from Merzifon (*TMH*, May 1866:141; Mar 1868:87). The sending of students from the Theological School allowed preaching at out-stations.

By 1872, the town had about 15,000 inhabitants, mostly Turks, nearly 5,000 Armenians with a few Greeks. In 1874, the Protestant schools on the American campus had 300 pupils, 175 of whom were not Protestants. Much of the friendly feeling at the campus was due to the nursing of the sick and the supply of medicines (*TMH*, Aug 1872:233; Aug 1874:240-241).

In 1886, the number of Protestants [town and campus] had increased to 2,010; the Sunday congregation was 1,990 and the school pupils up to 1,185. The Boys' High School on the campus had its course extended and renamed Anatolia Boys' College (*TMH*, Sep 1886:328; May 1899:185).

In late 1895, a Turkish mob killed 125 Armenians (Note 2.1). Fortunately, soldiers protected the campus (White 1918:35).⁴

⁴ See Topalidis (2023).

In 1898–1899, the campus offered the youth to work their way through their education via the joiner’s house, bindery, shoemaker and tailor which provided them a professional job (Özerol and Akalin, 2019:38). Girls in the high school and the orphanage made clothes, rugs, quilts and gingham cloth (Maksudyan 2010).

In 1913, there were 425 students in the Anatolia Boys’ College and the Boys’ High School and 275 pupils in the Girls’ School. The number of people on the campus was around 1,000. On the campus there was also a School for the Deaf, a nurses’ training school and of course, a Theological School for preparing pastors (White 1918:23; 67; Compton 2008:65).

1915 Armenian genocide

In August 1915, deportation of Armenians from Merzifon was in full swing (72 Armenians were taken away from the campus (Şahin 2018)). Then soldiers loaded [63] girls from the campus school into carriages and were taken away. Most of these girls returned (Compton (2008:70); *TMH*, Dec 1915:581).

1916

In May, the Ottomans closed the American campus, but five staff were allowed to stay (*TMH*, Mar 1920:116, 118).

1919

During World War I, the Merzifon campus Girls’ School was open. In March 1919, the campus hospital was handed over to the organisation,

Near East Relief (Compton 2008:88).⁵ The campus reopened in late 1919. Protestant church services usually attracted 600 people (*TMH*, Oct 1919:425). The campus also housed some 600 Christian war orphans (Compton 2008).

1921 atrocities

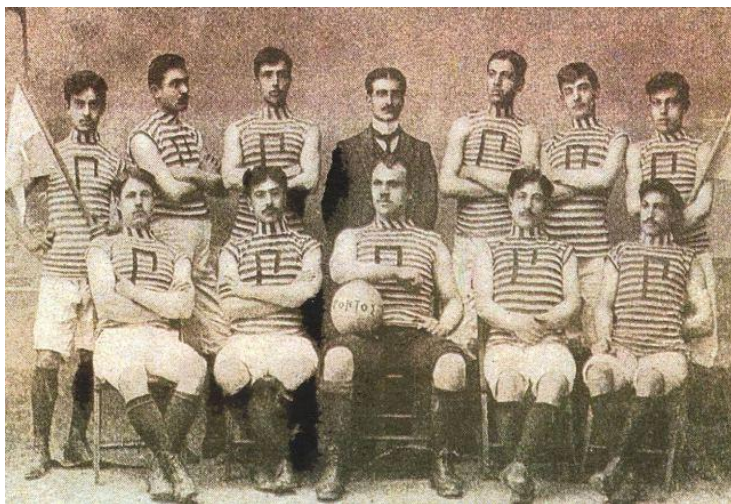
In March, General Jemil Jahid believed there was a Greek revolutionary plot on the campus and the buildings were searched.⁶ They found the following three items which they considered to be evidence of subversive activities:

- A map of St Paul's missionary journeys where an area was labelled Pontos. They claimed that the Greeks were planning to reclaim this area.
- The list of officers in the Anatolia College Greek Literary Society.
- A black and white picture of a football team (probably Pl 2.1). They claimed that the shirts were in the Greek national colours.

The campus was closed and the Americans were told to leave Anatolia. Three missionaries stayed to look after the orphans. Six Greek teachers and two students were sent to Amasya and hanged. Mr Pavlides, pastor of the Greek Protestant Church, suffered the same fate (Compton 2008:89–90, 94).

⁵ The *Near East Relief* was formed in 1915 to aid the deported Armenians in Anatolia.

⁶ The Greco-Turkish War (1919–1922) was waging in western Anatolia.



Pl 2.1: Merzifon College football team 1906 (Fotiadis 2019:657).

Then a massacre of Christians in Merzifon began in July when Topal Osman and his brigands spent days pillaging and killing. This was followed by several days of murder by the Turks in the town. Hundreds of Christians fled to the Merzifon campus (Morris and Ze'evi 2019:412).

In no way was there any distinction in the treatment as between Greeks and Armenians ... From a Christian population of 2,000 to 2,500 [in the town], almost all men were killed ... Women and children were also killed, in all upwards of 700. All Greeks were deported. About 700 Armenians were left in the city ... (Meichanetsidis 2015:133).

Ordu⁷

By 1869, the Protestants had a chapel with a preacher and school with 60 pupils. In 1874, the new Protestant pastor arrived. He perished during the 1915 Armenian genocide (*TMH*, Feb 1870:54; Sep 1910:411; Payaslian (2009)).

In 1887, the Protestant Greeks decided to worship in their own building using their Pontic Greek dialect. In 1888, the Protestant Greek church was led by Reverend Philadelphets and the town had a guesstimate of 1,000 Greek, 300 Armenian and 200 Turkish houses. A Protestant Greek church and school was completed in 1892 but the congregation suffered repeated stoning from the Orthodox Greeks and the church was temporarily closed. In 1894, when 300 Protestants were able to meet in this church, a mob of Orthodox Greeks again stoned the church. The Protestant Armenian and Greek congregations in Ordu numbered up to 600 people (*TMH*, May 1888:208, Aug 1888:353; Jul 1894:271; Aug 1894:313; May 1899:195).

In 1899, a new Protestant Greek church and school were officially opened. In 1913, Ordu had the largest Protestant Greek church in the Ottoman empire which housed around 400 people (*TMH*, May 1899:194, Nov 1913:517).⁸

In August 1917, a Russian flotilla bombarded Ordu (during World War I). Two thousand Greeks scrambled aboard the Russian ships and were

⁷ See Topalidis and Triandafillou (2022).

⁸ In 1913–1914, 3,000 Armenians lived in the town (Kévorkian 2011:483).

taken to Trabzon. Pastor Philadelphets and his wife joined the Greeks on the Russian ships (*The New York Times*, 7 Apr 1918; *TMH*, Dec 1917:571). (Note 2.2.)

Samsun

A Protestant mission was established in 1862. In 1880, the congregation had a school with a student teacher. In 1887, they acquired a Greek teacher for 40 pupils (*TMH*, Jul 1880:267; Apr 1887:144; Oct 1891:403).

Semen

Semen was 15 hours from Ordu near Tsampasin. In 1874, the Protestant community suffered bitter persecution. In 1876, the villagers were all Greeks, with 150 houses—about 20 households were Protestant. The Armenian teacher from Ordu laboured at Semen during the summer (*TMH*, Apr 1874:114; Feb 1877:57–58).

In 1886, the Protestant chapel had been expanded at the Semen *parhar*⁹ to hold 250 people. In 1897, Mr Manousarides served as the pastor in Semen. He was succeeded in 1904 by Mr Anastasiades (McGrew 2015:99).

Trabzon

In 1834, a mission was established in Trabzon. The town boasted an American ‘College’, an Armenian private school and from 1846, an Armenian Protestant congregation (Hewsen 2009:56). In 1858, there was a pastor at the Protestant church. An American missionary,

⁹ *Parhar* is Pontic Greek for the village in the mountains that people moved to in summer.

Dr Parmelee, resided there from 1878 to 1911 (*TMH*, Dec 1858:369; www.dlir.org/archive/orc-exhibit/items/show/collection/12/id/17331).

In 1891, there were 820 Protestants and 410 pupils, but few were Greeks (*TMH*, Jul 1891:292; Jul 1897:265).

In October 1895, the Armenian losses precipitated a relief effort to save survivors. Dr Parmelee and Dr Crawford alleviated the suffering of some 5,000 people (Merguerian 2009). In 1915, [after the Armenian genocide] around 300 children were cared for by Dr and Mrs Crawford. In 1922, Mrs Crawford was the only missionary left in Trabzon and by late 1923, there was no American missionary (Payaslian (2009); *TMH*, Mar 1922:122; Sep 1923:392).

Tsampasin

In 1886, the town of Tsampasin, 60 km south of Ordu, is a summer settlement (*Parhar*) with between 5,000 and 6,000 inhabitants. The two Protestant pastors from Ordu were in Tsampasin in summer (*TMH*, Apr 1887:147; Dec 1890:517).

Unye

In 1866, a Protestant mission was established and the Greek Protestants recently opened a school—persecutions followed. In 1880, the Protestants led by a Greek doctor, purchased a house as a chapel. In 1900, the little congregation was still led by a physician, while the school students were taught by his wife (*TMH*, Dec 1866:376; Dec 1880:505; Oct 1891:403; Apr 1900:157).

Vezirokopru

Vezirokopru is a town in the mountains [around 40 km] north of Merzifon. In 1862, the population was 'estimated' to be from 8,000 to 10,000 Turks and Greeks (mostly Turks) and about 1,000 Armenians. In 1863, a Protestant mission was established. In 1874, a Protestant church and pastor had 300 followers (*TMH*, May 1862:147; Jul 1874:213; Sep 1874:280; Dec 1875:382; Oct 1891:403).

Zile

The Protestant mission was established in 1876. By 1886, the Protestant school had 70 students with a congregation of 150 people—they were condemned by the Orthodox Christians (*TMH*, Oct 1886:386; Oct 1891:403).

From 1886, Sunday services usually comprised 50 people but when Mr White came from Merzifon to preach, the congregation was nearly 400. After the 1895 Armenian massacres by the Turks, money was distributed by the Protestant Church so that 31 looms could operate turning out cloth for sale. In 1912, the town of perhaps 40,000 people, all but 1,000 were Moslems (*TMH*, Mar 1897:111–112; Apr 1912:180).

The End of the Protestant Missions

Most of the missionaries within Anatolia were expelled in 1921. In 1924, the Anatolia College in Merzifon moved to Thessaloniki in Greece. Some Protestant activities remained in Turkiye but were limited to centres such as Istanbul and Izmir (Yücel 2012:63–64).

Conclusion

In addition to Orthodoxy, Protestantism spread primarily due to the efforts of American missionaries from the 1830s to the early 1920s. Greek and Armenian Protestants were outnumbered and at times abused by adherents to the Orthodox church. These Protestants were indeed resilient. The Protestant and the Orthodox church schools helped to improve the education of at least the Christian population in Anatolia.

Notes

Note 2.1

The last decades of the 19th century saw the emergence of an Armenian national movement which was suppressed by sultan Abdulhamid II. The Hamidian massacres were carried out against the Armenians. A wave of killing occurred in September 1895, when the Ottoman authorities' repressed an Armenian protest in Istanbul. This was followed by a series of massacres in towns with Armenian communities (www.britannica.com/topic/Hamidian-massacres).

Note 2.2

After the Russians left Ordu, the Turks ordered the first Greek relocation (genocide) out of Ordu in 1917. More than 3,000 Greeks were deported into the Anatolian interior. Many were murdered. Later, in December 1920, the Turkish bandit, Topal Osman, entered Ordu and damaged buildings and murdered Christians (Hionides 1996).

In June 1921, the Kemalists decided to deport the Pontic Greeks from Ordu. Approximately 800 men and children [probably boys] were taken

south. By the end of August 1921 nearly all the Greek men from the Ordu region had been deported (Shenk and Koktzoglou 2020:151). During the deportation many were killed by bandits led by Topal Osman and Shaki Ali. In September, an additional 4,910 Greeks from the Ordu area were deported (Korucu and Daglioglu 2019:25).

Later, in February 1922, Topal Osman and his bandits rode into Ordu again and torched Greek houses (Morris and Ze'evi 2019:416). Immediately after the defeat of the Greek army in the Greco-Turkish War in August 1922, Greeks were pressured to leave Anatolia. Some Greek women and children from Ordu who had not been exiled boarded ships for Greece in late 1922.

After the Lausanne Convention and the protocols about the exchange of Orthodox and Muslim populations were signed in January 1923, Orthodox Greeks who had not left Ottoman lands were forced to leave for Greece. Although Protestant Greeks and Greek Catholics were technically excluded from the exchange of populations (they were not Orthodox), they left Anatolia (Göktürk 2015:236–237).

3. The Family History of Maria Spyridopoulou

Introduction

This chapter describes the family history of Maria (Karapidou) Spyridopoulou (1905–2000), a Pontic Greek Protestant from Ordu.

Stories about Protestant Pontic Greeks are not common and this work increases our knowledge of those believers who were at times abused by their fellow Orthodox Greeks.

Maria (Karapidou) Spyridopoulou

Life in Ordu

Maria (Pl 3.1) was born in Ordu in 1905 to Pontic Greek parents Sofia Hionides and Savvas Karapidis. She attended the local Protestant Greek school. Savvas was born in Ordu before 1888 and was Greek Orthodox. His occupation was tin-plating copper utensils and his family lived in a two-storey house. He also owned a house at Tsampasin, south of Ordu. Savvas worked away from Ordu six months of the year and travelled as far as Bulgaria applying his skills.¹⁰

¹⁰ In summer, families from Ordu moved to the mountains to their summer village. The lack of trade compelled men to leave in early spring for Russia or Bulgaria to find work (*TMH*, Oct 1889:428).



Pl 3.1: Maria (Karapidou) Spyridopoulou
(photograph by Angela Triandafillou 1995).

In August 1917, a Russian flotilla bombarded Ordu. Two thousand Greeks scrambled aboard the Russian ships and were taken to Trabzon (*The New York Times*, 7 Apr 1918). Maria's family stayed in Ordu. Then the Turks ordered the first Greek

deportation out of Ordu. The elderly and sick Greeks stayed behind. More than 3,000 Greeks were deported in groups into the interior—many were murdered. Maria's mother's mother, Maria Hionides along with other old and sick people were drowned in the Black Sea (Hionides 1996:275).

Maria's father, Savvas, was forced to join this deportation out of Ordu. He returned to Ordu after the end of World War I, but died soon after. His children were evicted from their house and were fed and housed by neighbouring Turks. From late 1918 to late 1922, Maria and her orphaned siblings were again fed and housed by their generous Muslim neighbours.

Maria's mother, Sofia Hionides, was also born in Ordu before 1888 and died in 1916. (Sofia probably converted to Protestantism.) Each summer she took her children to their house at Tsampasin.

In 1915, Maria witnessed Armenians, mostly children, tied together being marched by Turks in Ordu. Later, in December 1920, the Turkish bandit, Topal Osman, entered Ordu and murdered Christians (Hionides 1996). In June 1921, the Kemalists decided to deport the Pontic Greeks from Ordu. By the end of August 1921 all the Greek men from the Ordu region had been deported (Shenk and Koktzoglou 2020). In September, an additional 4,900 Greeks from the Ordu area were forced into the interior (Korucu and Daglioglu 2019).

After the defeat of the Greek army in western Anatolia in August 1922, Greeks were pressured to leave Anatolia. Orphaned Maria and her siblings were forced in late 1922, to leave Ordu for Greece.

Maria arrives in Greece

Maria and her siblings arrived at Thessaloniki and were sent to the inland town of Veria in northern Greece. From Veria, Maria would travel to Katerini to attend the Protestant Greek church where she became a Sunday School teacher.

Savvas Spyridopoulos, Maria's future husband, had also arrived in Veria in 1922. He and his wife had a daughter. His wife died in 1931 and in 1933, Savvas married Maria Karapidou in Veria and in 1934, they moved to nearby Katerini. They had three children, Sofia, Elias and George. Elias moved to Australia. George lives in Boston, USA. Sofia immigrated to Australia in 1961.¹¹ Maria, a very religious woman, continued as a Sunday School teacher in Katerini.

The Evangelical Church in Katerini was built in 1925, but in 1930, it was destroyed by fire [the Orthodox Greeks were implicated]. The reconstruction of the church began in 1931 (<https://eek.gec.gr/>).

¹¹ The history of her daughter, Sofia Dimarhos has been written (see Topalidis 2022b).

Maria's gaoling in World War II

In April 1941, during World War I, the German army entered Katerini. Maria hid two New Zealand soldiers but in July they were caught. The Germans arrested Maria and transferred her to the Pavlos Melas concentration camp in Thessaloniki. Two months later, Maria was interrogated by the Gestapo who threatened to kill her, but she refused to provide any information. Maria was tried by a court and she declared that the New Zealanders came to her house and asked for help and since she was a Christian woman, she saw this as her duty. Maria was acquitted and returned to Katerini.

In early December 1941, Maria was imprisoned again in Thessaloniki where she became very ill. In February 1942, Maria was carried into a military court where the Germans questioned her again. She was released and she returned to Katerini. Maria stated, only God had sustained her during her ordeals in prison. She was so ill she was bed-ridden for four years. Maria received formal recognition for protecting the New Zealand soldiers but never received the financial compensation she was promised.¹²

Life became difficult after World War II and the Greek Civil War (which ended in 1949) and even more so from 1957 when Maria's husband died. Providing food for the table was a struggle.

¹² Maria's experiences in prison were sourced from Spyridopoulos (2016), i.e. Maria's son, George and Anonymous (1977).

Arrival in Australia

In 1971, Maria moved to Sydney to live with her daughter Sofia Dimarhos' family. (In 1970, her step-daughter had moved to Sydney.) In 1977, Maria and her daughter's family moved to Canberra. Years later, Maria travelled between Canberra and Sydney living with relatives. Maria died in Sydney in 2000, aged 95 years. Even though during her life she had suffered greatly, Maria held no malice. This attitude is admirable.

Conclusion

In addition to Orthodoxy, Protestantism spread in Pontos primarily due to the American missionaries. Greeks who adopted Protestantism, were outnumbered and at times abused by Orthodox Greeks. Maria Spyridopoulou's life was indeed the very epitome of a resilient Protestant Pontic Greek. Indeed, her life in Pontos and Greece resonates with a series of challenges that tragically many could not endure. She was a kind and very religious woman whose faith sustained her during hard times. Her story adds to the rich knowledge of Pontic Greeks who struggled to survive.

4. A History of Ordu (Kotyora)

Introduction

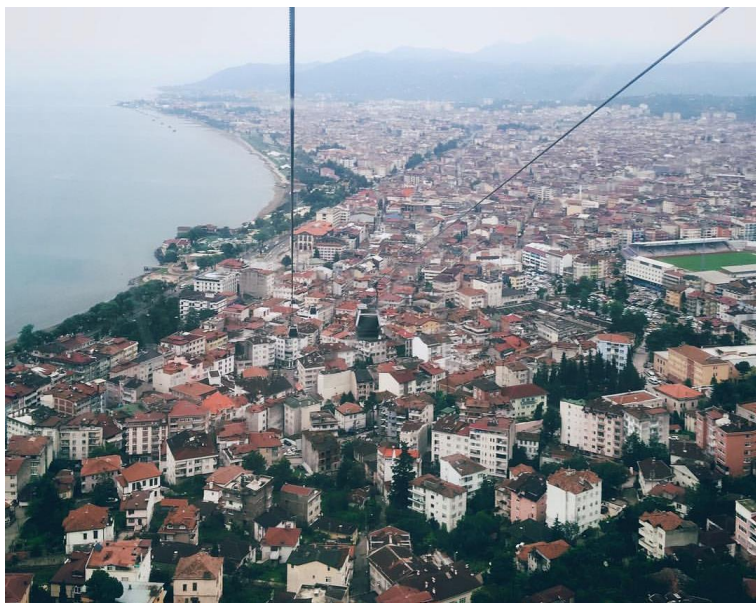
The harbour town of Ordu (Turkish word for army) is on the Black Sea coast (Pl 4.1, Fig 2.1). It lies at the mouth of the Melet River on the eastern slopes of Boztepe, a hill of 550 m elevation (Pl 4.2). Ordu is a centre for processing hazelnuts and exporting hazelnuts, fish and timber. Ordu's population was estimated (2013) to be 148,000 people (www.britannica.com/place/Ordu).



Pl 4.1: Ordu town centre (2023,
<https://mandry.club/en/cities/ordu-2/>)

Colonisation

Ordu stands on, or close to ancient Kotyora, but there is little or no continuity of settlement with it (Bryer and Winfield 1985). In 400 BC, Xenophon and his Greek mercenaries visited Kotyora. It had been settled by the Greeks from Sinope, who had taken the land away from the local natives. 'Around' 630 BC Sinope was settled by Greeks from Miletos (west coast of Anatolia) (Avram et al.



Pl 4.2: Ordu from Boztepe (2017, commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=91198492).

2004). Thus, Kotyora was settled by Greeks sometime after 630 BC and before 400 BC.

Alexander, Mithradates, Romans and Byzantines

Although the army of Alexander the Great (336–323 BC) defeated the Persians in Anatolia, the Greeks did not march to the Black Sea coast. After Alexander’s death, the provincial bureaucracy of his Asian empire consisted of what was left over from the Persian system (Thonemann 2016:23).

In 302 BC, Mithradates I established the kingdom of Pontos. He was descended from Persian governors and royalty. Kings from the Mithradates family ruled over the area from Heraclea (west of Sinope) to Trabzon (Fig 2.1) until Mithradates VI was defeated by the Romans in 64 BC (Erciyas (2001); Roller(2020)).

Pharnakes I (son of Mithradates III) captured Sinope, probably in 183 BC and also took possession of some of Sinope's colonies like Ordu. The kingdom of Mithradates VI (reign 119–63 BC) included much of the Black Sea coast and eastern Anatolia. His incursions into Anatolia led to war in 89 BC with the Roman empire (Thonemann (2016:45); Roller (2020:58, 111)).

After the Romans defeated Mithradates, Pontos remained allied with Rome until the 60s AD (Roller 2020) when it became part of the Roman empire. After Roman control, the history of Kotyora in the Byzantine [Eastern Roman empire period, i.e. after c. 324 AD] remains vague. At some stage, the settlement was abandoned (Sofou n.d.). A gap of many years remains in its history although it is known that Alexios I Komnenos, the first Trebizond emperor controlled the Ordu area briefly from 1204 as part of his small Byzantine empire.

Turks

The area around Kotyora came under the control of the Danishmends¹³, then the Seljuk Turks in 1214 and 1228 and the Hacıemiroğulları Beylik in 1346. It passed to the Ottoman Turks by 1461. The modern town was founded by the Ottomans as a military outpost (virtual-genocide-memorial.de).

In the early 19th century, the Kotyora area was resettled as Ordu. The earliest reference to the name Ordu was in 1813, when it was a large village. The new road to Sivas, coupled with the 're-Hellenisation' of the commercial towns of the coast, was responsible for the late-19th century expansion of Ordu (Bryer and Winfield 1985:120–121).

Greeks and Armenians from the 19th Century

In 1836, Ordu contained 120 Greek and 100 Armenian houses (Hamilton 1842). There were possibly few Turkish houses.

After 1875, malaria was reported as a problem. To overcome this problem in summer, people moved south to the Tsampasin Plateau. In 1883, a fire broke out in Ordu and most of the town was destroyed (www.gursoy.com.tr/en/ordu-history.html).

Orthodox Christians

Not all Greeks and Armenians in Ordu were Orthodox Christians. Some were Protestants. By the late 19th century, Ordu was served by three

¹³ The Danishmends was a Turkish beylik in Anatolia from c. 1071 to 1178. In early 12th century, Danishmends were rivals of the Seljuk Turks.

Greek Orthodox churches, two mosques and one Gregorian Armenian church (Hewsen 2009). It also included one Protestant Greek and one Protestant Armenian church, each with its own school.

In 1853, the Greek Orthodox Hypapante church (Pl 4.3) was built in the western area of Ordu near the sea (more details to follow) (www.tourmakerturkey.com/tasbasi-church.html). Next to the church stood the two-storey Greek school built in 1877. St George, the name of one of the other



Pl 4.3: Former Hypapante Greek Orthodox Church, Ordu (<https://ordu.goturkiye.com/48-hours>)

Greek Orthodox churches, was founded in 1870 (Hionides 1996). In 1888, the town had [a guesstimate of] 1,500 houses of which 1,000 were Greek, 300 Armenian and 200 Turkish (*TMH*, Aug 1888:353–354). Most people in Ordu were poor (*TMH*, Oct 1889:424) possibly as a result of the damage due to the 1883 fire.¹⁴

VK Hovannisian (2009) states that Armenians made up most of the artisans and craftsmen in Ordu and they competed with the Greeks in commerce. The hazelnut industry quickly flourished becoming the region's chief export. (In the second half of the 19th century, Armenians had introduced the cultivation of hazelnuts to the region (Kévorkian 2011)).

Adjacent to the Armenian [Gregorian] church *Surb Astvatsatsin*, (rebuilt in 1852 (Kertmenjian 2009)), was a large three-storey building housing a co-educational school for some 350 students. This school was converted into an orphanage for some of the survivors of the 1915 Armenian genocide. Later it was used as a Turkish school. This church was replaced by a mosque (VK Hovannisian 2009:301).

Protestant Christians

By 1888, Protestant Greeks, out-numbering the Armenians, decided to worship in their own building. In 1891, Ordu had the largest Evangelical Greek community in Anatolia. A permanent Protestant Greek church/school was completed in 1892, but the opposition from the

¹⁴ See Topalidis and Triandafillou (2022).

Orthodox Greeks was so fierce that it closed. In 1894, when 300 Protestants were able to meet again in this church, a mob of Orthodox Greeks stoned the building (McGrew (2015); *TMH*, Jul 1891:293; Jul 1894:271; Aug 1894:313; May 1899:195).

In 1899, the new Protestant Greek building for school and worship was officially opened with the service consisting of up to 750 Armenians and Greeks. In 1913, Ordu was reported to have the largest Protestant Greek church in the Ottoman empire housing around 400 people (*TMH*, May 1899:194–196; Nov 1913:517).

World War I

The Greek population (1910–1912) in the *kaza* of Ordu was 18,900¹⁵ while 3,000 Armenians (1913–1914) lived in the town (Kévorkian 2011:483).

In July 1915, the Armenian genocide commenced in Ordu (Payaslian 2009). The first Armenians to be exiled to the interior were men who left in convoys. According to a witness [Andreasian] these men had their throats slit in the vicinity. Some Armenian women and children went into hiding in the homes of Greek or Turkish friends. But the authorities' threats convinced their friends to turn them out. Some of these children were given to Greek and Turkish families and others were drowned out at sea (virtual-

¹⁵ Alexandris (1999:64). The *kaza* (county) of Ordu stretched to over 70 km to the south of the town and was around 50 km wide.

genocide-memorial.de). See section 'The Paşaoğlu Hüseyin Efendi Mansion'.

An article in *The New York Times* (7 Apr 1918), stated that Russian ships bombarded Ordu in August 1917 and 2,000 Greeks boarded the Russian ships and were taken to Trabzon.

This bombardment by the Russian navy damaged several houses. Pastor Philadelphets and his wife found their Protestant Greek church and school torn down and their home in flames, so they joined the Greeks on the Russian ships (*TMH*, Dec 1917:570–571).

After the Russians left Ordu, the Turks ordered the first Greek deportation [genocide] out of Ordu in 1917. Elderly and sick Greeks stayed behind. More than 3,000 Greeks were deported in groups into the interior. Many were murdered. After this deportation, the old and sick Greeks in Ordu were drowned in the sea (Hionides 1996:275).

Post 1918 Genocide of Greeks

After World War I, the survivors of the Greek deportation were able to return home, including Ordu. Then, in May 1919, the Greek army landed in Smyrna on the west coast of Anatolia.

1920

In November, a report was received that all Christian males between 20 and 34 years of age were to enlist in the army [in the unarmed labour battalions]. In December, 100 of Topal Osman's men pillaged the shops of Christians in Ordu (Yeghiayan 2007).

1921

In June, following a Greek warship bombing Inebolu (west of Sinope), Greek males [around the Anatolian Black Sea coastal area] aged between 15 and 50 years were to be deported to the interior (Mango 2002). The Kemalists initially deported approximately 800 Greek men and children [probably boys] from Ordu south to Mesudiye without casualties.

By the end of August, all Greek men of the Ordu region had been deported (Shenk and Koktzoglou 2020). Many were killed by bandits. According to Turkish Central Army records, 4,900 Greeks from the Ordu area were forced into the interior (Korucu and Daglioglu 2019:25).

1922

In February, Topal Osman and up to 300 armed bandits entered Ordu, which still had many Greek women. The bandits torched all but two [Greek] houses (Morris and Ze'evi 2019:416).

After the defeat of the Greek army in the Greco-Turkish War in August 1922, Greeks were pressured to leave Anatolia. In late 1922, many Christian women and children from Ordu left for Greece.

1923

In January 1923, after the Lausanne Convention and the protocols about the exchange of Orthodox and Muslim populations were signed, those Orthodox Greeks who had not left Turkish lands were forced to leave for Greece. In March,

1,500 people awaited passage at the port of Ordu (Morris and Ze'evi 2019).

In April, embarkations were impeded due to the demand for high fees of passage [by the Turks and some others] and Greece's momentary unwillingness to take in more refugees.

Ordu Today

There has been a focus in Türkiye to increase its tourism. In Ordu, this had led to the renovation of some of its historic buildings. Some details about these buildings follow.

Taşbaşı Cultural Centre

This former Hypapante Greek Orthodox Church (Pl 4.3) which overlooks the sea, was abandoned in the early 1920s. Between 1937 and 1977, it was used as a prison. Since 2000, the building in the Taşbaşı neighbourhood has been used as a Cultural Centre (multi-purpose hall) (<https://www.tourmakerturkey.com/tasbasi-church.html>
https://ordu-ktb-gov-tr.translate.goog/TR-130738/tasbasi-kultur-merkezi-eski-cezaevi-kilise-altinorduord-.html?_x_tr_sl=tr&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en&_x_tr_pto=sc).

The Paşaoğlu Hüseyin Efendi Mansion

The Paşaoğlu Mansion (Pl 4.4) was built in 1896 and was opened as an ethnographic museum in 1987 (www.allaboutturkey.com/ordu.html). During the Armenian deportation in 1915 about 40 Armenian women and girls were fortunate to find refuge in this mansion for nearly 2.5 years (www.orduolay.com/haber/14703775/pasaoglu-ailesinin-yazilmayan-hikayesi).



Pl 4.4: Paşaoğlu mansion

(www.ordu.bel.tr/Kesfedin/Pasaoglu-Konagi-Etnografya-Muzesi/1217).

The Duzmahalle Church

This former Greek [Orthodox] church with three apses (Pl 4.5) was built in the second half of the 19th century and was abandoned in the early 1920s. It is located in Duzmahalle, Ordu and briefly served as a fire station. It was restored and

now serves as the Ordu Metropolitan Municipality Theatre building (www.ordu.bel.tr/Kesfedin/Duz-Mahalle-Klisesi/1215). The original name of the church is unknown.



Pl 4.5: Former Greek church at Duzmahalle
(www.ordu.bel.tr/Kesfedin/Duz-Mahalle-Klisesi/1215).

Atik Ibrahim Pasha Mosque

This mosque is located in Ordu's Altinordu district. The mosque was built by Atik Ibrahim Pasha in 1770 and rebuilt in 1802 (<https://ordu-ktb-gov-tr.translate.google.com/translate?sl=tr&tl=en&hl=en&ptq=sc>). It has been renovated.

5. A History of Bafra

Introduction

Bafra (Pl 5.1) is located nearly 20 km from the Black Sea near Samsun in northern Turkiye (Fig 2.1). It is a town with around 88,000 people (2014) (<http://population.city/turkey/>). The Kizilirmak River flows north on the western edge of the town. The area around Bafra is agriculturally rich with most inhabitants involved in farming. Tobacco is the major cash crop (Abdurahman 2016).



Pl 5.1: Bafra (www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g780953-d3632579-Reviews-Bafra_Museum-Bafra_Turkish_Black_Sea_Coast.html#/media-atf/3632579/?albumid=-160&type=0&category=-160).

Early Settlement

The site of İkiztepe, 7 km west of Bafra was settled from the Early Chalcolithic period [5500–4500 BC] (Düring 2011). The Late Iron Age settlements (c. 650–500 BC) at İkiztepe ended before the arrival of the Greeks (Atasoy 2018). Amisos (modern Samsun) was settled by Greeks ‘around’ 564 BC (Tsetskhladze 2006). Greeks settled in Bafra after Amisos was settled.

The Mithradatic Kings & the Romans

For details on Mithradates see Chapter 4. The Roman station of Helega probably located on or near the mouth of the Kizilirmak River, was succeeded by Paurae (modern-day Bafra). Paurae is first mentioned in 1101 when it was in Byzantine hands. Alexios and David Komnenos of Trabzon took the district in 1204–1205, but it must have fallen with Sinope [to the Seljuk Turks] in 1214. In c. 1277, it formed part of a Mongol Seljuk Turk fief. This area was then settled by Turkmens (Bryer and Winfield 1985:91).

Rise of Bafra

By at least 1460, Bafra came under Ottoman Turk control (Yeşilirmak River Basin Development Union 2010). In 1836, Bafra contained 1,160 houses of which 1,000 were Turkish, up to 110 Greek and 50 Armenian (Hamilton 1842). In 1846, Bafra was producing over 1.8 million kg of tobacco. The massive increase in the Greek population owed more to immigration, rather than from Pontos. In 1896, the Greeks controlled

60% of the Bafra tobacco market (Bryer and Winfield 1970).

According to the 1910–1912 Greek population register, Bafra *kaza* [county] reported 27,400 Greeks or around 40% of the population [author's figure] (Alexandris 1999). In 1911, the *kaza* of Samsun had a Greek majority (Bryer and Winfield 1970).

Deportations

1915–1917

In 1913–1914, it appears there were 2,035 Armenians in the *kaza* of Bafra (Hewsen 2009). The head of the *kaza* was murdered after he tried to prevent the Armenians being deported in 1915 (Kévorkian 2011).

After April 1916, when the Russian army occupied NE Anatolia, the Turks announced that wherever Orthodox Christians failed to report for military service (to join the unarmed labour battalions) or deserted after joining up, their community would be held responsible. This resulted in the burning of villages by the Turks and that initiated retaliation by Christians (Clark 2006:73). Many Greek males from the Samsun-Bafra area joined the mountain guerrillas.

In late 1916, the Turks ordered the deportation of Greeks from the Black Sea coast to an area away from the Russian front. A letter by the Greek metropolitan of Amasya in Pontos, stated: the evacuation of Bafra occurred in February 1917 and this week another eight villages near Samsun and eight in Bafra were burned (Fotiadis 2019:240).

1919

By late January, between 10,000 and 40,000 Greeks returned to Samsun and Bafra (Morris and Ze'evi 2019). In May, the Greek population was being murdered systematically around Samsun and Bafra by Turkish guerrilla forces (Fotiadis 2011–12).

Pontic Greek guerrillas who carried out raids on Turkish villages or Turkish military groups, were not a significant military force (Shenk and Koktzoglou 2020), but they were an annoyance. They were essentially a defensive force, lacking equipment and food (Psomiades 2006).

1920

In summer, the persecution against Greeks was partly linked to the Greco-Turkish War in western Anatolia. Mustafa Kemal charged one of his Turkish Generals to pacify Pontos in December (Morris and Ze'evi 2019).

1921

In early June, Bafra was surrounded by Turkish forces. The Greek men were marched off in convoys. All men in the first convoy were killed. Another 500 men from the second convoy were reportedly burnt alive in a church in Selamelik. Another 680 were murdered in another church. Six convoys left Bafra that summer. At least another 900 were shot near Kavak Gorge outside Samsun. Around 31 August, some 6,000 Greek women and children were deported from Bafra and a further 2,500 on 19 September (Morris and Ze'evi 2019:408). Many Turks tried unsuccessfully to

stop these deportations (Shenk and Koktzoglou 2020).

1922

After the harvest, there were more killings against the unarmed Greeks in the regions of Samsun, Bafra and other areas in which guerrilla bands operated. The situation became worse in October when General Liva Pasha returned with his army after the end of the Greco-Turkish War. In November, 10,460 Christians from the area of Samsun (including Bafra) were deported by ship beyond Anatolia (Fotiadis 2019).

The Evacuation of 1923

The signing of the Lausanne Convention in January 1923 brought into effect the compulsory population exchange of Orthodox Christians from Turkish territory to Greece and a much smaller number of Muslims from Greece to Anatolia. The remaining Pontic Greeks, including those from Bafra trekked to the Black Sea ports.

Conclusion

Bafra had a chequered history up to the 15th century when it came under Ottoman control. It did not become economically important until the 19th century with Greek and Armenian businesses dominating Bafra's and nearby Samsun's economies. The early 20th century witnessed the genocide of Christians in Anatolia. The end of Greek occupation in Pontos effectively came in 1923 when Christians moved from Turkish lands.

6. Pontic Greek Dance

Introduction

Through distinctive dances, costumes (Pl 6.1) and musical instruments (e.g. the *kemenche*), Pontic dances connect Pontic Greeks to their social, geographical and historical origins. By the memories and emotions it evokes, Pontic dance [and song] becomes an expression of what it means to be Pontic Greek (Liddle 2016:63–64).



Pl 6.1: Kyriakos Moisisdis in Pontic Greek costume (<https://eefc.org/teacher/kyriakos-moisidis/>)

Pontic Greek Dance in Greek Culture

Generally, Pontic dance movements are characterised by a vertical upper torso and an elasticity of the knees. Dance classes involve more than just performing the correct steps in unison. The unique shoulder shakes, arm swings and occasional forward bends, make Pontic dance distinctive from other Greek regional dances (Graziosi 1982:14). Steps are also more flat-footed, rather than on the toes.

The visualisation of Ponticness is the dance *Serra*. It is a characteristic all-male dance.¹⁶ Many people incorrectly draw a parallel between the *Serra* as it is danced today and the ancient *Pyrrhic* dance. This is entirely false (www.dance-pandect.gr).

Another spectacular Pontic dance is *Maheria* (knives) between two men who dance (with improvisation) while holding long metal knives (Pl 6.2).

However, the most widespread Pontic dance is *Tik* (the word apparently comes from the Turkish word 'dik', meaning upright). There are 14 different forms of *Tik* which differ in name, form of the hand grip, morphological elements, rhythm and positioning in the dance circle. The most common variant, the slower *Tik*, 'Tik on the knee' came from Kars, Gumushane and Ordu. It was encountered in almost all of Pontos and was popularised in Greece [after 1922] (Vavritsas et al. 2012).

¹⁶ One version of *Serra* was recorded in 1960 at:
www.youtube.com/watch?fv=OmuQOIbK0Fs



Pl 6.2: Pontic *Maheria* (knife) dance
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYelSpTWVUw).

In this variant, the dancers are positioned close to each other, hand to hand with elbows bent and forming an open circle. There is a distinctive style in executing significant steps which requires the dancers to bend their knees repeatedly and rhythmically, hence the name ‘*Tik on the knee*’, while the rest of the body stands upright (Vavritsas et al. 2012).

Other common Pontic Greek dances include, *Dipat*, *Karsilama*, *Kotsangel*, *Kotsari*, *Letchina*, *Omal*, *Sheranitsa* and *Trygona*.

Pontic Identity in Greece

There are two main periods of Pontic dancing identity in Greece—before and after the 1980s. After arriving in Greece [after 1922] and up to 1980, there was a tendency for Pontic Greeks to incorporate their music and dance within Greek public institutions. A single Pontic repertory was created to reinforce a common Pontic Greek sense of belonging. Thus, Pontic dances with Turkish connotations and dances shared with Armenians were excluded. The election of a Greek socialist government in 1981 initiated an era of cultural awareness. As a result, a Pontic Greek dance identity started materialising. Pontic dance was included in the public school curriculum. Contact with Turkish dance troupes from Pontos enriched the dance repertory. As a result, dances and variations on existing dances or dances invented according to known motifs raised the number of Pontic dances to over 90 (Zografou and Pipyrrou 2011).

A Final Note

Pontic Greek dance is taught by Greek cultural associations. It is performed during religious festivals, baptisms, weddings and parties. God bless those teachers in Greece and in the diaspora who share their knowledge with their dancers.

7. Byzantine Churches in Trabzon

Introduction

This chapter describes the Byzantine churches in Trabzon in northern Türkiye. While there are 37 Byzantine churches reported here (some maybe duplicates), only six have survived as mosques and two others are open to tourists. Another set of cave chapels have been abandoned.

Early Trabzon

Historic Trabzon consisted of two settlements between Boz Tepe (Grey Hill, 240 m elevation) and the sea. To the west, a defensive site which is walled, is wedged between two deep ravines to an acropolis 1 km inland on which the Upper City contained the citadel and palace of the Trebizond Grand Komnenoi Byzantine emperors (1204–1461) (Figs 7.1, 7.2). The second settlement was east of the walled town towards the harbour of Daphnous. Traders from Venice and Genoa built castles on the coast¹⁷ (Bryer 2006:715–716).

In 1204, Trabzon, protected by the Pontic Alps, was the capital of the small Komnenoi Byzantine empire (along the southern shore of the Black Sea). These emperors were Greek by language, Eastern Roman by culture and tradition and Orthodox Christian (Nicol 1996).

Trabzon's wealth and influence far outstripped its size and population. Transit trade was very profitable due to the taxes collected on goods entering and leaving the town to and from

¹⁷ Leontokastron was the fortification near Daphnous. It became the Genoese sovereign base in the early 14th century (Bryer and Winfield 1985:197).

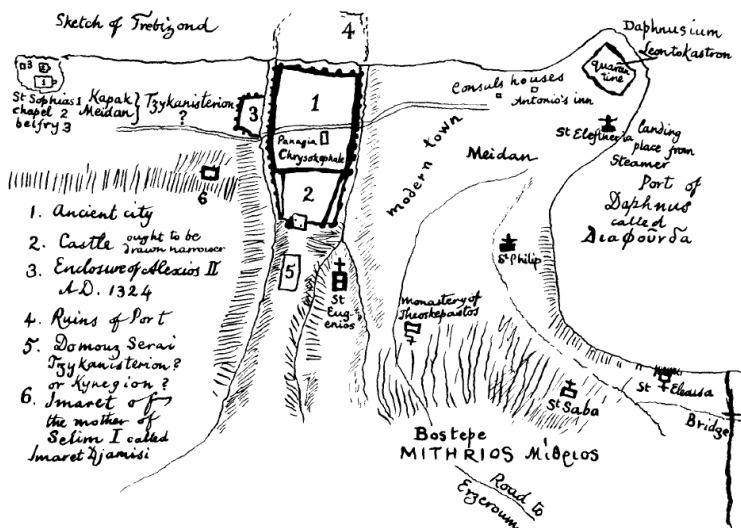


Fig 7.1: Map of Trabzon (Finlay (1850) in Bryer and Winfield (1985:194–195)).

Asia (Bryer 2006:715). In 1461, Trabzon surrendered to Ottoman sultan Mehmed II.

Byzantine Churches

In this chapter, the boundary of the town will extend from the St Sophia Church in the west, to the Degirmen River in the east (bottom right in Fig 7.1), a distance of around 5 km. Churches south of the Ataturk Kiosk, around 5 km SW from the town centre are excluded as are churches south of the top of Boz Tepe (around 3 km SE of the town centre).

Details on the churches follow with the same numbering/lettering system (e.g. Church B, when the name of the church was unknown) as presented in Bryer and Winfield (1985: 204–245) with

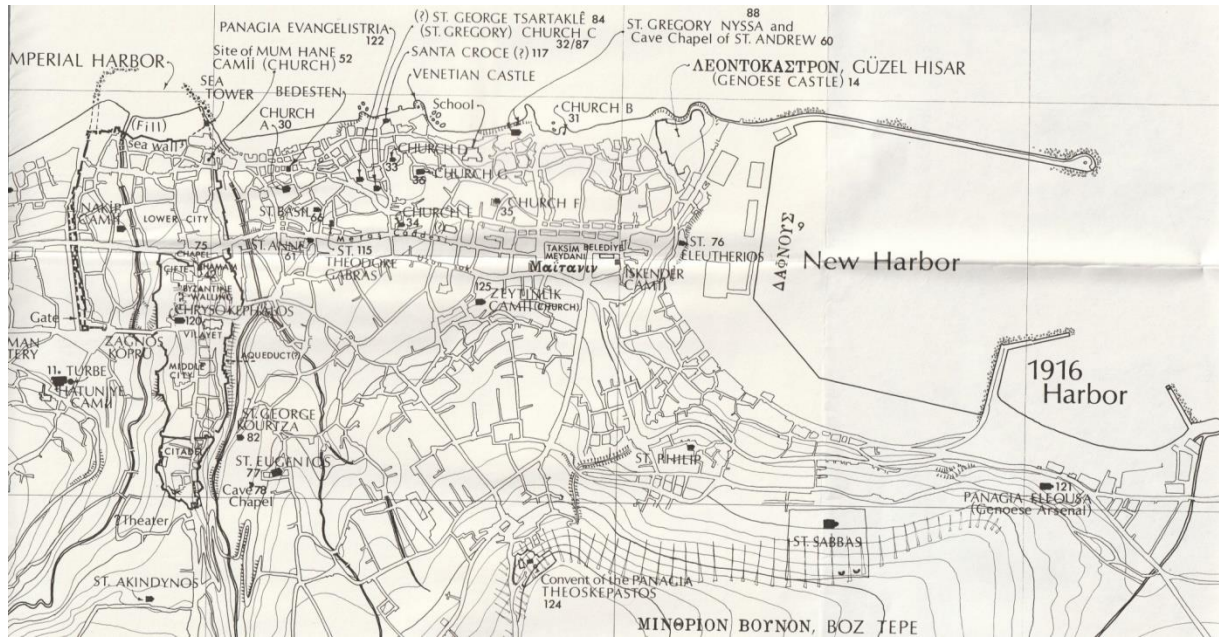


Fig 7.2: Churches between the western edge of the Byzantine walls to the harbour of Daphnous in Trabzon (Church A (30) to St Eleutherios (76) = 1 km) (Bryer and Winfield 1985, II).

updated information. Within the tables, the information is mostly from Bryer and Winfield (1985).

St Kyriake (no 30)

Parish 1913–14	St Basil.
Location	Marked Church A in Fig 7.2.
Build date	Between 1204 and 1461.
Demolished	Between 1929 and 1958 (Ballance 1960).



Pl 7.1: Church A—now St Kyriake Church, 1929 (D Talbot Rice 1929–1930:pl 10).

Talbot Rice (1929–1930) called this church ‘Church A’. It is the St Kyriake Church, based on a photograph in Tsyapkina (2021:91).

Church B (no 31, name unknown)

Parish 1913–14	St Gregory.
Location	East of St Gregory of Nyssa church (Fig 7.2).
Build date	12th century, or earlier (Talbot Rice 1929–1930).
Demolished	Between 1929 and 1958 (Ballance 1960).

A single-apsed church.¹⁸ Probably the Taxiarchai (no 119) or St Paraskeve (no 106) or St Kyriake Church (no 97) (Bryer and Winfield 1985:204).

Chapel D (no 33, name unknown)

Parish 1913–14	Unsure.
Location	West of St Gregory of Nyssa (Fig 7.2).
Build date	1204–1461
Demolished	After 1958 and before 1980s.

Christ (no 41)

Location	Either within the citadel or above a town gate, or both. Perhaps it is the Palace Chapel (no 55).
Build date	Before 1263–1318.
Demolished	Possibly before 1915.

¹⁸ An apse is a semicircular or polygonal termination to the choir, chancel, or aisle of a church (www.britannica.com/topic/apse-church-architecture).

Çifte Hamami (Double Bath, no 42, church name unknown)

Location	Adjoining and to the eastern side of, the gate between the Middle and Lower Cities, the northern side of the structure following the inner side of the curtain wall (Fig 7.2).
Build date	Probably of medieval date.
Date if rebuilt	Rebuilt as a Turkish bath between 1461 and 1523.
Demolished	Closed in the 1980s [and in 2021, it was in ruins].

It was probably a triple-apsed domed basilica (Bryer and Winfield 1985:206).

St Andreas Church (Nakip Mosque, no 53)

Location	On the west side of the western ravine in the Lower City (Nakip Cami in Fig 7.2).
Build date	10th or 11th century.
Date converted to a mosque	Before 1557 (Çalik et al. 2017). [Renovated in 2015.]
Standing	Still standing as the Molla Siyah.

This church (Pl 7.2) was probably abandoned after 1461. As a mosque, it was abandoned in the 19th century. In 1958, it was a ruin (Bryer and Winfield 1985).



Pl 7.2: St Andreas Church, now Molla Siyah Mosque (author's photo 2018).

Palace Chapel (no 55)

Location	Perhaps identical with the church of Christ (no 41).
Build date	Probably 1204–1461.
Demolished	Largely demolished in 1932 and has now disappeared.

Monastery of the Pharos (no 56)

Location	Between Hagia Sophia and the Lower City (Fig 7.1).
Build date	Probably 14th century.
Demolished	Before 1913.

Theodora, wife of Alexios IV Komnenos, refounded it between 1395 and 1426 (Bryer and Winfield 1985:215–216).

St Akindynos (Fatih Küçük Mosque, no 57)

Location	In Bahçecik district, SW of the entrance to the citadel (Fig 7.2).
Build date	Probably no later than the 12th century.
Converted to a mosque	Sometime between 1523 and 1553.
Standing	As Fatih Küçük Mosque (Pl 7.3).

Today, the interior walls are plastered and painted white (<https://karadeniz.gov.tr/fatih-kucuk-camii/>).



Pl 7.3: St Akindynos Church, now Fatih Küçük Mosque (author's photo 2018).

St Andrew (no 60)

Parish 1913–14	St Gregory.
Location	Under St Gregory of Nyssa (Fig 7.2).
Build date	Possibly 14th century.
Demolished	Around 1964.

St Anne (no 61)

Parish 1913–14	St Basil.
Location	Near St Basil Church (Fig 7.2).
Build date	Before 884 AD.
Standing	[Open to tourists.]

The St Anne Church (Pl 7.4) is the oldest surviving church in Trabzon. It remained a Greek church until 1923 (Talbot Rice 1929–1930:57–58). The interior of the church has frescoes dated to the 14th and 15th century. It is a triple-apsed basilica (Bryer and Winfield 1985). In 2021, many new frescoes were revealed (see the cover page of this booklet).

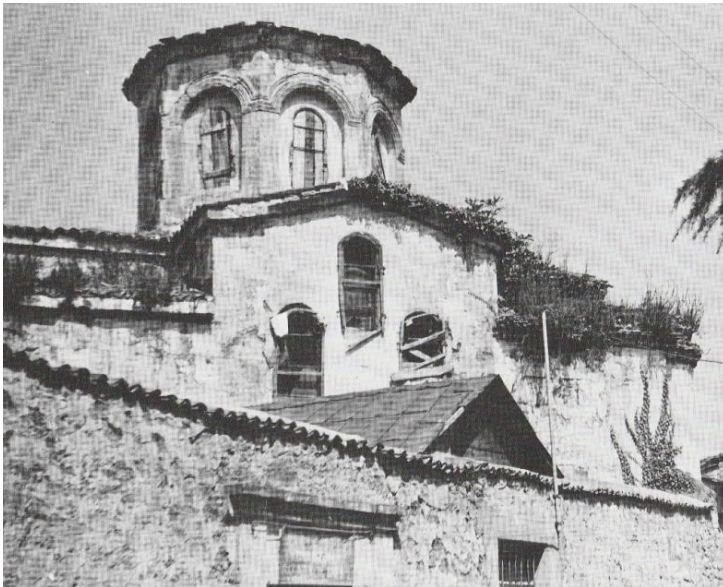


Pl 7.4: St Anne Church (author's photo 2018).

St Basil (no 66)

Parish 1913–14	St Basil.
Location	East of the eastern wall of the Lower City (Fig 7.2).
Build date	Probably 1204–1461.
Date rebuilt	1890–1895.
Demolished	Sometime between 1973 and 1981 (Lowry 2009).

This church (Pl 7.5) had three apses with wall paintings. Maybe its real founder was Grand Komnenos Basil (1332–1340) (Bryer and Winfield 1985).



Pl 7.5: St Basil Church 1958–1964 (Bryer and Winfield 1985: pl 168a).

St Christopher (no 69)

Location	Near St Niketas Church (no 105) and between St Theodore Gabras and the sea (Fig 7.2), identified by Meliopoulos (1930) as the Semerciler Mosque.
Build date	Probably 1204–1461.
Date converted to a mosque	[Unsure if it became the Semerciler Mosque.]
Demolished	[Unknown.]

St Constantine (no 71)

Parish 1913–14	St Basil.
Location	Exact location is unknown.
Build date	Founded or refounded in the 14th or 15th centuries.
Demolished	After 1880 and before 1915.

St Dynamis (no 75)

Location	At the gates leading from the Middle to the Lower City (Fig 7.2).
Build date	Possibly 13th century.
Demolished	Unknown.

The Seljuk Turk's attack in 1223 was directed upon the Gate of St Dynamis (Bryer and Winfield 1985:221).

St Eleutherios (no 76)

Parish 1913–14	St Marina.
Location	Daphnous south of Leontokastron (Figs 7.1, 7.2).
Build date	Before 1360.
Demolished	What was left was demolished in 1961.

St Eugenios (Yeni Cuma Mosque, no 77)

Location	East of the citadel (Figs 7.1, 7.2).
Build date	A church was built in 1021–1022. St Eugenios was rebuilt on the site in about 1291.
Converted to a mosque	Around 1500 (Lowry 2009).
Standing	As the Yeni Cuma Mosque (Pl 7.6).



Pl 7.6: St Eugenios Church—now Yeni Cuma Mosque (author’s photo 2018).

Eugenios and other martyrs were believed to have been put to death between 285 and 305 AD after overthrowing the statue of Mithras on Boz Tepe (Bryer and Winfield 1985). Trebizond emperor Alexios I (1204–1222) had Eugenios’ skeleton placed in the church. Apparently, prior to 1461, Eugenios’ skeleton was placed under the building (Yücel 1988). In 1916, Russian archaeologists uncovered a grave with two skeletons in the former church. Perhaps one of the skeletons was the remains of Eugenios?¹⁹

St Eugenios Cave Church (no 78)

Location	Just below the St Eugenios church (Fig 7.2).
Build date	May have predated the St Eugenios Church.
Demolished	Discovered in 1898 and not reported since 1904.

This was a rock cut chapel or shrine (Bryer and Winfield 1985).

¹⁹ See Topalidis and McCaskie (2022).

St George (no 80)

Parish 1913–14	Not identified.
Location	SW of St Gregory of Nyssa. (Church C in Fig 7.2.)
Build date	14th or 15th century (Ballance 1960).
Demolished	Shortly after 1958–1959 (Ballance 1960).

A domed, triple-apsed church (Pl 7.7) (Bryer and Winfield 1985). Church C (no 32) and St George (no 80) are probably the same church.



Pl 7.7: 'St Gregory' 1929 (Talbot Rice 1929–1930:pl 14)
now believed to be the St George Church.

However, this view may not be correct. In 1917, Meyer painted a church which looks like St George which he called 'Church of the Transfiguration of Christ'. This name does not correspond exactly with a church in Bryer and Winfield (1985). There is a possibility that the church in Pl 7.7 could be the church of Metamorphosis (Transfiguration) in the parish of Christ as recorded in Chrysanthos (1933:791-792). Maybe Meyer was mistaken in the name of the church?

St George Kourtza (no 82)

Parish 1913-14	Christ.
Location	Near St Eugenios (Fig 7.2).
Build date	Apparently a medieval chapel.
Date if rebuilt	Replaced in the 19th century.
Demolished	After 1915.

St John the Sanctifier Mt Minthrion (no 89)

Parish 1913-14	Not open in 1913.
Location	On the summit of Boz Tepe.
Build date	Before 1362.
Demolished	Demolished after 1850.

St John the Theologian (Mum Hane Mosque, no 94)

Location	Under the eastern wall of the Lower City, near the sea. Mum Hane Camii (church) in Fig 7.2.
Build date	Before 1461.
Date converted to a mosque	Maybe in 1654 (Tuluveli 2002).
Demolished	Disused before 1893, became a police station (Pl 7.8). Replaced before 1928 by a building.



Pl 7.8: St John the Theologian Church (1916–1917, www.historystudies.msu.ru/ojs2/index.php/ISIS/article/view/98/257).

St Nicholas (no 103)

Location	Near the Chrysokephalos Church.
Build date	Before 1426.
Demolished	Possibly before 1913.

Before 1426, it was sold to the Trebizond empress Theodora who gave it to the monastery of the Pharos (no 56) (Bryer and Winfield 1985:229).

St Niketas (no 105)

Location	Between St Theodore Gabras and the sea.
Build date	At least by 1364.
Demolished	Probably before 1913.

St Paraskeve (no 106)

Parish 1913–14	St Gregory.
Location	Eastern suburb (Lowry 2009).
Build date	Medieval Byzantine period.
Demolished	After 1915.

St Paraskeve could be Church B (no 31, Fig 7.2) (Bryer and Winfield 1985).

St Peter (no 107)

Location	Probably near St Prokopios (no 109) on Boz Tepe.
Build date	Possibly before 1214.
Demolished	Probably before 1913.

St Philip (no 108, Kudrettin Mosque)

Location	Harbour area (Figs 7.1, 7.2).
Build date	Probably before 1302.
Date converted to a mosque	It became the cathedral of Trabzon in 1461. In about 1665, it was converted into the Kudrettin Mosque and rebuilt in 1968–1969 (Yücel 1988) (Pl 7.9).
Standing	As the Kudrettin Mosque.



Pl 7.9: St Philip Church, now the Kudrettin Mosque (author's photo 2018).

St Prokopios (no 109)

Location	Probably on Boz Tepe (near St Peter Church).
Build date	Possibly before 1223.
Demolished	Possibly long before 1900.

St Sabbas (no 111)

Location	These small rock-cut tombs are on the northern slopes and cliff face of Boz Tepe (Figs 7.1, 7.2).
Build date	The tombs are probably pre-Byzantine. Byzantine Chapels were probably built from late 13th century.
Standing	The cave chapels are in ruins.

There had been a rectangular enclosure and four rock cut chapels. A series of wooden cells hung from the cliff face (Bryer and Winfield 1985:231). The St Savvas Caves can be seen by drone (www.youtube.com/watch?v=soqYzxbUCxl). It is not safe to be visited by tourists.

The Hagia Sophia (no 112, Ayasofya Mosque)

Location	2 km west of the walled town near the sea (Fig 7.1).
Build date	Probably mid-1250s (Eastmond 2004).
Date converted to a mosque	Probably 1572. In 1964, after restoration under D Winfield, it became a museum. [It became a mosque again in 2013.]
Standing	As the Ayasofya Mosque (Pl 7.10).



Pl 7.10: St Sophia Church, now Ayasofya Mosque
(commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ayasofyatrabzon.jpg).

The church with three porches and belltower were part of a monastery within a walled 50 m by 90 m enclosure (Bryer and Winfield 1985:232). It is the finest surviving Byzantine imperial monument of its period. The surface of the church is decorated with sculptures and reliefs. Inside the church, many wall paintings survive. The church measures 27 m by 35 m and the top of the dome is 18.5 m high (Eastmond 2004:i; 27). The belltower is 23.5 m high and was renovated in 2010 (Türker et al. 2011).

St Theodore Gabras (no 115)

Parish 1913–14	St Basil.
Location	Near St Basil church (Fig 7.2).
Build date	Before 1364.
Demolished	Possibly before 1915.

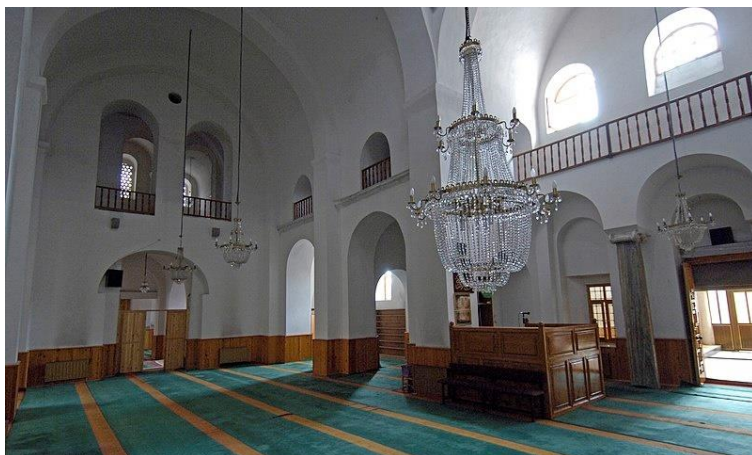
Santa Croce (no 117)

Parish 1913–14	[Not-operating in 1913.]
Location	Near the headland (Fig 7.2).
Build date	Before 1367.
Demolished	1963.

Chrysokephalos (no 120, Ortahisar Fatih Mosque)

Location	Between the Byzantine walls (Figs 7.1, 7.2).
Build date	913–914 AD at the latest.
Date converted to a mosque	In 1461 it became the main mosque of Trabzon and renamed Fatih Mosque (Lowry 2009). [Renovated 2015–2018.]
Standing	As the Ortahisar Fatih Mosque (Pl 7.11).

Chrysokephalos (Greek for ‘Golden-Headed’) was the metropolitan church of the Grand Komnenoi rulers of the empire of Trebizond (1204–1461) (Bryer and Winfield 1985:239). In 1916, Uspenskii uncovered the skeleton of Trebizond emperor Alexios IV Komnenos (died 1429) near the church.



Pl 7.11: Chrysokephalos now Ortahisar Fatih Mosque (2006) (commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Trabzon_Fatih_Mosque_0183.jpg).

Theotokos Eleousa (no 121)

Location	Close to Daphnous (Figs 7.1, 7.2).
Build date	Possibly before 1367.
Demolished	1916.

Theotokos Evangelistria (no 122)

Parish 1913–14	St Basil.
Location	NE of St Basil Church (Fig 7.2).
Build date	14th or 15th century.
Demolished	Between 1929 and 1958 (Ballance 1960).

Cave Church, Theoskepastos Monastery (no 124)

Parish 1913–14	Theoskepastos.
Location	On the northern slopes of Boz Tepe (Figs 7.1, 7.2).
Build date	At least by the 1340s.
Standing	[The monastery was renovated and reopened in 2020.]

This ‘God Protected’ Monastery is enclosed by a wall and was open until 1922. The cave of the monastery (Pl 7.12) was probably once associated with the cult of Mithras [Persian sun god] (Bryer and Winfield 1985:244–245).



Pl 7.12: Panagia Theoskepastos Cave Church

(2006,

commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Trabzon_K%C4%B1zlar_Manast%C4%B1r%C4%B1_4813.jpg).

Zeytinlik Mosque (no 125, church name unknown)

Location	In the eastern suburb (Fig 7.2).
Build date	Probably 13th to 14th century (Ballance 1960).
Date converted to a mosque	The possibly 17th or 18th century medrese ²⁰ replaced the church. In 1962–1963, it became the Zeytinlik Mosque.
Demolished	2003 (Ustün Demirkaya and Tuluk 2022).

Conclusion

Trabzon was handsomely endowed with Byzantine, Greek and Armenian ecclesiastical monuments (Bryer and Winfield 1985).

Of the 37 Byzantine churches described here, today only two are standing while another six have been converted to mosques. Another set of cave chapels have been abandoned and are not safe for visitors. The maintenance of Trabzon's historic buildings is important for the benefit of future generations. These maintained buildings will also bring much needed tourist revenue to the town.

²⁰ A school for Islamic religious instruction.

8. Pontic Greeks Moving to the Soviet Union Then Greece

Introduction

This chapter summarises the movement of Pontic Greeks to the Russian empire from the 18th century and later to the Soviet Union and their later movement from the former Soviet Republics to Greece up to the 2000s.

After the defeat of the Greeks (August 1922) in the Greco-Turkish War in western Anatolia and the compulsory population exchange under the January 1923 Lausanne Convention, Christian Greeks were forced out of Turkish territory back to Greece (Note 2.2). Some followed their fellow Greeks who had earlier settled in the Soviet Union. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, many ethnic Greeks moved to Greece.

18th Century

In 1763, 800 Pontic Greek families from Gumushane, south of Trabzon moved to the Caucasus (Fig 8.1). They established new settlements in modern Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the north Caucasus region in a migration that continued throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1775, Catherine the Great, empress of Russia, permitted people from Greece, Bulgaria and Moldova to settle in Crimea. Later, she assisted some Crimean Greeks and others to settle in and around Mariupol on the Black Sea coast (Manuylov 2015). The migration from Crimea involved over 31,000 Greeks (Kisilier 2022).



Fig 8.1: The Black Sea region (Samsun to Trabzon = 290 km, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Black_Sea_map.png#/media/File:Black_Sea_map_blank.png).

19th Century

In the first decade of the 19th century, almost 6,000 [Pontic] Greeks arrived in Tsalka (west of Tbilisi) and Akhaltsikhe (Fig 8.2) (Sideri 2017). After the 1828–1829 Russo-Turkish War, [an estimated] 42,000 Greeks from Gumushane and Erzurum²¹ settled in the Russian empire (Xanthopoulou-Kyriakou 1991).

After the Crimean War (1853–1856) and up to 1866, an ‘estimated’ 60,000 Greeks moved from the Trabzon and Erzurum regions to southern Russia (Karpozilos 1999). After 1878, Kars became part of the Russian empire (Fig 8.2) which attracted many Anatolian Greeks (Koromila 2002).

²¹ The cultural customs of the Greeks from the Erzurum area differed from Pontic Greeks (Pratsinakis 2021).

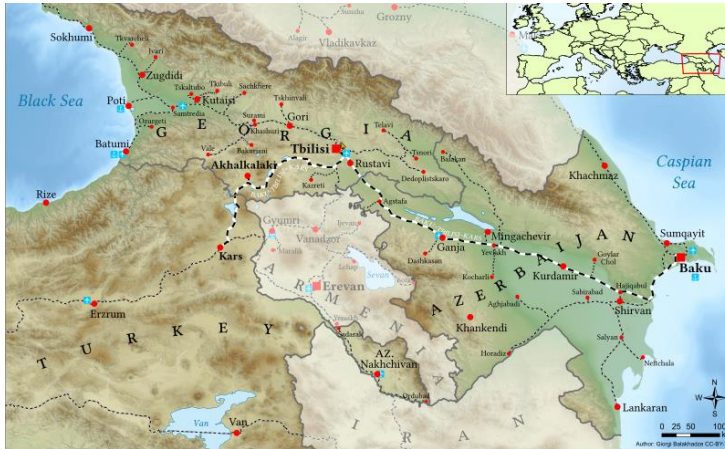


Fig 8.2: NE Anatolia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan
 (commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Baku-Tbilisi-Kars_Railway_Map.svg).

20th–21st Centuries

Introduction

Few Pontic Greeks lived in Ukraine [excluding Crimea]. Before the October 1917 Russian Revolution, it was believed [optimistically] that 450,000 Greeks were living in the Russian empire of whom 250,000 were thought to be Pontic Greeks (Hasiotis (1997) in Voutira (2011)).²² In the first half of the 20th century in the Soviet Union, there were four major periods of dislocation of Pontic Greeks

²² In 1910–1912, there were at least 416,000 Greeks in Pontos (Topalidis 2019b:8).

(based on Voutira (1991)):

1. 1918–1923, flight from Pontos to the Caucasus or to Greece.
2. 1936–1939, exile within the Soviet Union east to Siberia and Kazakhstan. [Some escaped to Greece.]
3. 1942–1946, deportation from southern Russia to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.
4. 1947–1949, deportation from Georgia to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

In early 1918, the Russian army had withdrawn from NE Anatolia. An estimated 80,000 Greeks [Pontic and other Anatolian Greeks] accompanied the Russians (Xanthopoulou-Kyriakou 1991). Batumi received an estimated 35,000, Sokhumi an estimated 15,000 and Novorossiisk an estimated 20,000 refugees (Fig 8.2) (Karpozilos 1999). Many also moved to the region around Kars.

Exodus from Kars

Then in April 1918, the Ottoman army captured Kars and 50,000 Anatolian Greeks from the region fled to Tbilisi. Of these Greeks, 30,000 went to southern Russia, about 10,000 settled in Georgia and the remaining around 10,000 probably perished (Petsalis-Diomidis 1972:226, 246).

More people around Kars left in mid-1919 for Tsalka and for the northern Caucasus. Finally, 15,000 Anatolian Greeks from the end of 1920 to the beginning of 1921 reached Batumi. From April 1920 to early 1921, nearly 53,000 Anatolian Greek refugees [seems too high] were shipped from Batumi to Greece (Perchanidou 2018).

Greek refugees in Greece (1928)

Many Greeks were forced out of Anatolia in 1922 after the Greco-Turkish War. The remainder were forced to leave mainly for Greece under the January 1923 Lausanne Convention—some went to the Soviet Union. (Greeks from Istanbul were able to remain in the city.)

Table 8.1 lists the number of refugees according to their reported place of origin in the 1928 population census in Greece. Just over 182,000 refugees declared Pontos and 58,500 declared Caucasus or Russia as their place of origin—nearly all of them were Pontic Greeks (Note 8.1).

1930–1940

In the 1930s, the Rostov-on-Don region (Fig 8.1) had 100,000 Greeks [seems high]. Most of them came from the Gumushane region (Dawkins 1937).

In 1929–1939, about 50,000 ethnic Greeks went to Greece from the Soviet Union (Voutira 2011). Under Stalin [1924–1953], ethnic minorities [and others], were persecuted or executed. In 1936–1937, many writers, priests, teachers, scientists and other intellectuals were purged (Rosen (1991); Psarrou (2005)). According to the January 1939 Soviet Union population census, nearly 287,000 people reported to be of Greek descent (an underestimate²³).

²³ From 1932 to 1991, at the age of 16 years, children from mixed marriages could choose between the nationalities of their parents (Kaurinkoski 2010). So some with Greek heritage were not recorded. Many Greeks left Georgia in 1939 after the 1939 census.

Table 8.1: Number of refugees and their place of origin, 1928 Greek population census

Place of origin	People who arrived		
	Before early Sept 1922	After early Sept 1922	Total
Asia Minor	37,728	589,226	626,954
Pontos	17,528	164,641	182,169
Caucasus and Russia	37,635	20,891	58,526
Thrace	27,057	229,578	256,635
Constantinople, Bulgaria & other areas	31,944	66,621	98,565
Total	151,892	1,070,957	1,222,849

Amended from the Statistical Yearbook of Greece (1930:41).

1941–1949

From 1941–1942, there was an evacuation of people within the Soviet Union ahead of the advancing German army. In 1944, 20,000 Greeks were deported from Crimea (estimates vary) (Voutira 2011, 2014). In 1946, a large number of Pontic Greeks in southern Russia were also deported to Kazakhstan (many dying on the way) (Agtzidis 1991).

In May-June 1949, approximately 50,000 [nearly all Pontic] Greeks were deported from southern Russia and Georgia to Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan (Voutira 2011).

1950–1979

In early 1953, 52,000 exiled Greeks were reported in the Russian Central Asian Republics—74% were in Kazakhstan (Voutira 2011).²⁴ In 1965–1967, around 13,500 Greeks left the Soviet Union for Greece and many other Greeks returned to southern Russia (Karpozilos 1999:153).

From 1959 to 1979, the number of reported [mostly Pontic] Greeks in the Soviet Union increased from around 309,000 to around 343,000 (Hionidou and Saunders 2010:1480)—probably underestimates.

1980–2002

Gorbachev, leader of the Soviet Union (1985–1991), removed restrictions on ethnic minorities and some Greeks moved to Greece (Psarrou 2005). In 1989, the Soviet Union population census reported an estimated 367,000 Greeks. There were just over 100,000 [nearly all Pontic] Greeks in Georgia and 92,000 Greeks [mostly Pontic Greeks] in Russia (Topalidis 2022a:43).

In 2002, there were nearly 98,000 Greeks reported in Russia (Manuylov 2015), but in Georgia (excluding Abkhazia and South Ossetia), the number of Greeks reported dropped dramatically to only 15,000 (Table 8.2).

²⁴ This excluded the 12,000 Greeks deported from Greece to Uzbekistan after the Greek Civil War (1944–1949) (Lampropoulos 2014).

Table 8.2: Number of Greeks in Georgian censuses (1939–2002)

Year	1939	1959	1979	1989	2002
No. of Greeks	84,640	72,940	95,100	100,320	15,170*

Manuylov (2015:34) *Excludes Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Movement in 1980s–2011 to Greece

Between 1945 and 1984, 21,500 ethnic Greeks arrived in Greece from the Soviet Union (Kaurinkoski 2010).

In Greece, an official survey reported that between 1987 and the end of 2000 around 155,000 immigrants of Greek descent came from the former Soviet Union and had remained in Greece. This total is an underestimate because the survey was not compulsory. Around 52% came from Georgia (Diamanti-Karanou (2003); Vergeti (2010–2011)).

Final data from the 2021 Greek Population census will be available in 2024.

Greeks in the Former Soviet Union

There is a lack of recent population census data on the number of Greeks in the republics of the former Soviet Union. In the Russian 2010 census, 85,600 people identified as Greeks (2016 personal communication from Dr Anton Popov). The 2021 Russian Population census data on its ethnic population cannot be considered accurate (https://russiapost.info/society/ethnic_landscape).

The 2009 population census in Kazakhstan reported only 8,850 Greeks (Manuylov 2015). Results of the 2021 population census will expect a lower number of Greeks.

The 2014 Georgian census (excluding Abkhazia and South Ossetia) reported only 5,500 Greeks (civil.ge/archives/124561).

In Uzbekistan, 10,500 Greeks were reported in the last population census in 1989 (Manuylov 2015).

In Ukraine, the last census was conducted in 2001 when 91,500 Greeks were reported (2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/results/general/nationality/).

Note 8.1

It is important to note that:

- some refugees in Greece in 1928 probably did not report as refugees and some Pontic Greeks may have reported that they came from Asia Minor or Thrace rather than Pontos.
- the Dodecanese Islands were not returned to Greece until 1947. Thus, any refugees who fled to these islands were not counted in that census.

More details on Table 8.1 can be found at: www.pontosworld.com/index.php/history/sam-topalidis/809-greeks-from-the-former-soviet-union

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