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**Educational and economic activities in the Greek community
of Koritsa during the second half of the nineteenth century**

In the second half of the nineteenth century Koritsa developed into one of the major urban centres in the Balkans. Under the Turks it was part of the *vilayet* of Monastir and was the capital of the *sanjak* of the same name.

The town of the *kaza* of Koritsa was the seat of a Greek Orthodox Metropolitane and a Turkish mutessarif. According to the French traveller Pouqueville, who visited the city in 1805, there were 1.300 families living in Koritsa two thirds of which were Christian. Around 1875, the city had 8.200 inhabitants, and by 1905 the population had reached 18.000, 14.000 of whom were Greek and 4.000 Albanian. The Christians were concentrated in the “Varossi” district (1.250 households) and the Moslems in “Kasaba”¹.

The inhabitants of both the city of Koritsa and the surrounding area spoke Greek and Albanian as well. As in most of Epirus, Strabon’s words applied here too: “The race of Epirots was ever bilingual”. The customs and traditions of the Greek community in the city, the greetings, the banqueting ceremonies, and the style of dress and footwear were much closer to the Epirot than to the Macedonian customs². Like all religious or ethnic communities in the Ottoman Empire, after the publication of the *Hatt-i Humayun* charter of 1856, the Greek Christian community of Koritsa, “in accordance with the age of enlightenment and civilisation”, and with the Patriarch as its civil and religious leader³,

1. S. Papadopoulos, “Κοριτσά”, *Ηπειρωτική Εστία*, vol. 124, Yannina 1962, pp. 605-6.

2. I. Dassaritis, “Περί της Κοριτσάς”, *Δελτίο Ιστορικής Εθνολογικής Εταιρείας* (1896-1900), p. 136.

3. V. Stefanidou, *Εκκλησιαστική Ιστορία*, Athens 1959, pp. 659ff.

was granted the right to set up a council and run its own ecclesiastical and ethnic affairs according to local customs and needs. The relevant provisions, needless to say, operated within the framework of Ottoman legislation and the General Regulations of the Patriarchate⁴. The specific provisions were ratified in 1862 under the title “General Regulations for the Arrangement of the Ecclesiastical and Ethnic Affairs of His Majesty the Sultan’s Orthodox Christian Subjects under the Ecumenical Throne” and were in force until 1923, when they were abolished by the Treaty of Lausanne⁵. The “General Regulations for the Common Institutions of the City of Koritsa” were based on this principle. The acts were ratified (reg. No. 5041) by Ioakeim III, Patriarch of Constantinople, in 1876. Meanwhile, on 5 November 1875, the Metropolitan of Koritsa, Dorotheos Christidis, had convened a general meeting of the citizens of Koritsa to elect a ten-member committee, with which he worked out some general provisions for the running of the community. According to the regulations, the council of elders formed the nucleus of the city; it was presided over by the Metropolitite and had eight members, who enjoyed the confidence of the community and were elected at a general meeting⁶.

One clear indication of the inhabitants’ strong religious faith was the magnificent churches in the city, the many smaller churches in the surrounding countryside, and the numerous monasteries. The churches included the cathedral⁷ —dedicated to the Source of Life, St Haralambos, and St Bessarion— the Churches of St George, Virgin, St Andrew, St John, and St Nicholas, and the country Churches of St Athanasius and Prophet Elijah.

The economic life of the Greeks of Koritsa was rich and varied. They mainly engaged in horticulture, viticulture, stock-breeding, bread-making, blacksmithery, tanning, dyeing, clockmaking, and goldsmithery, and there was a strong local tradition of carpet-, rug-, and sandal-making. Another major occupation was the building. Highly skilled builders travelled all over Epirus and beyond, constructing buildings both public

4. C. Papastathis, *Οι κανονισμοί των Ορθοδόξων κοινοτήτων του Οθωμανικού κράτους και της διασποράς*, Thessaloniki 1984, p. 115.

5. For details, see G. Young, *Corps de droit ottoman*, 7 vols., Oxford 1905-6.

6. C. Papaspathis, *Οι κανονισμοί...*, p. 352, “Κανονισμός Δημογεγοντίας”.

7. P. Aravantinos, *Περιγραφή της Ηλείου*, Yannina 1984, p. 115.

and private. Such was their fame, indeed, that Epirot builders went by the general name of *Koritsalides*⁸. Just outside the Monastir entrance to the city there were also two lime-kilns, the older of which had been built by Athanassios Kalfas in 1870. The ornamentation of the city was largely due to the existence of these two kilns. The surrounding mountains were rich in minerals and high-quality coal, and the red marble of Polena was renowned. Anthracite from the Morava Valley powered the local light industry, the lime-kilns, and the steam mill⁹.

Koritsa also became a major transit-trade centre for goods passing between Ioannina, Thessaloniki, Monastir, Constantinople, and Northern Epirus, mainly after Moskhopolis' destruction in 1769¹⁰. It had enjoyed commercial relations with Vienna, Trieste, Venice, and Corfu for a long time ago¹¹. In the city's commercial centre, which was destroyed by fire three times (in 1822, 1858, and 1879), there were hotels, workshops, and 800 retail stores, almost all of them Greek. Although Koritsa's commercial centre was smaller than Monastir's, many people believed it did more business, because the city was a natural repository for virtually every kind of industrial product, either produced locally or imported from European commercial centres and sent on to southern Albania for consumption. Saturday was market day and drew hawkers and farmers from all over the district, with select cheeses, soft wool, beautiful woollen textiles, and excellent fruit. It's worth noticing that the merchants of Koritsa used Greek for their business, correspondence, and book-keeping. In fact, written monuments exist long before this period, as early as 1700, before the idea of the Greek War of Independence had even dawned. Koritsa had also had a Greek school since 1724¹².

The goods exported from Koritsa were wool, cheese, leather, wine, and dried fruit. Colonial products, minerals, and English cotton were imported. The people of Koritsa did business with Switzerland, England,

8. Anonymous, "Περί Κοριτσάς", *Πανδώρα*, No. 442, vol. 19, Αθήνα 1898, p. 195.

9. C. Karimitsis, *Γεωγραφία της πόλεως Κοριτσάς και της περιουκίδος*, Thessaloniki 1988, p. 27.

10. K. Skenderis, *Ιστορία της αρχαίας και συγχρόνου Μοσχόπολεως*, Athens 1928, p. 606.

11. Aravantinos, *Περιγραφή...*, p. 114.

12. T. Evangelidis, *Η παιδεία επί τουρκοκρατίας*, vol. 1, Athens 1936, pp. 129-30.

France, Holland, and Ottoman Empire. Trade was conducted by means of caravans travelling overland from and to various parts of Epirus and Macedonia; the main route was to Dyrrachio, where there was a commercial port. The increasing mobility of the inhabitants, which was a prerequisite for commercial development and consequently for social and cultural progress too, was also due to the *Hatt-i Humayun* of 1856, which accorded the non-Moslem (Greek, Armenian, and Jewish) subjects of the Ottoman Empire considerable possibilities for development and freedom. Because of Koritsa's links with British commerce, an English vice-consulate established in 1858, though it closed again in 1862¹³. According to a letter from the Consul in Monastir, Charles Calvert, to the Ambassador in Constantinople, Henry L. Bulwer (16 October 1860), M. Georgevich was appointed Commercial Vice-Consul in Koritsa. His intention was to consolidate commercial relations with England directly rather than via Monastir, despite the difficult conditions. Georgevich's appointment is mentioned in Calvert's aforementioned letter on 18 March 1861, though he had already been acting as unsalaried Commercial Vice-Consul seven months earlier¹⁴. Despite the difficult conditions, Georgevich tried to establish a commercial lawcourt and a bank in Koritsa, in the belief that they would be helpful to Koritsa's commercial community. However, constant embroilments with the townspeople in the penal court at Monastir forced him to abandon his plans for direct trade with England, rather than via Monastir. This also explains the brief duration of the British Consulate in Koritsa.

Foreign Office data show a deficit in the balance of trade. In 1859, imports from Europe totalled £76,920 (67%), against exports of only £25,921 (34%). Although, the trade deficit was offset by an inflow of capital or goods sent by Koritsa émigrants. Thus, in the same year, remittances totalled £68,214. These data provide further documentation of the nature of Koritsa's economic life, which was based chiefly on trade and remittances from abroad¹⁵.

13. Anonymous, "Περί Κοριτσάς", *Πανδώρα*, No. 442, vol. 19, Αθήνα 1868, p. 145.

14. F.O., f. 605r, No. 49, 195/606, Calvert to Bulwer, Monastir, 16 Oct. 1860, with attached report from Georgevich, dated 1 Mar. 1860, on commerce in Koritsa in 1859.

15. *Ibid.*

Colonial products, both in Koritsa and in the whole of the *vilayet* of Monastir, were imported chiefly by the English. The commercial routes used were via Trieste and the ports of Dyrrachio and Avlona, or inland routes to Austro-Hungary by way of Bosnia and Belgrade. Cotton, linen, and wool for clothing and domestic goods were chiefly imported into Koritsa by Saxon industrialists; silk was imported from France and Germany.

Parallel with the city's agricultural and light industrial economy, it is also mentioned a permanent source of external income in the form of remittances from émigrants and the transfer of capital and interest coupons¹⁶. In fact, in the second half of the nineteenth century, apart from the usual remittances, the middle-class émigrants from Koritsa were also helping their home city with legacies and bequests, in the hope of making a social and cultural name for themselves¹⁷. The various forms of economic aid received from the émigrants contributed considerably to the rise of the wealthier social groups and to the city's intellectual and cultural development, and also helped to differentiate the Greeks from the Albanians. With its lively commercial, agricultural, and intellectual mobility, and the inhabitants' frequent contacts with other cities in the Balkans, Northern Epirus, mainland Greece in general, and outside Greece too, the city was burgeoning rapidly, and the people of Koritsa took full advantage of this. Not only did they acquire material comforts, but, thanks to their good economic situation, they were able to find outlets for their intellectual and spiritual progress and to draw sustenance from other major Greek centres. The Evangelical School and the Ayia Fotini hostel in Smyrna, for instance, frequently opened their doors to boys from the city and environs of Koritsa¹⁸.

The structures of the city's natural economy led to the emergence of new occupations. The constant migratory flow that had been taking

16. For further information about the remittances sent by émigrants and external sources of income, see K. Tsoukalas, *Εξάριτηση και αναπαραγωγή (1830-1922): Ο κοινωνικός ρόλος των εκπαιδευτικών μηχανισμών στην Ελλάδα*, with a foreword by N. Svoronos, Athens 1985, *passim*.

17. S. Papadopoulos, "Κοριτσά", *Ηπειρωτική Εστία*, vol. 11, Yannina 1962, p. 606.

18. A. Mihalopoulos, *Δίπτυχον: Γεννήθηκα στην Κοριτσά το 1781*, Athens 1975, p. 174.

generations of local people away from the city and the surrounding area played a large part in the creation of occupations connected with currency exchange, credit grants, and movement of capital, all of which were necessary to keep the economy of Koritsa and the surrounding area thriving and to forge links with economic circles abroad.

The variety of currencies circulating in Koritsa, as in the rest of the Ottoman Empire, created a complex currency situation, which, with its gold sovereigns, silver *mecit*, and copper *kurusç*, made the financial transactions difficult¹⁹. The Koritsa Greeks of the diaspora also sent bills of exchange in French francs or pounds sterling, and these circulated, together with the Ottoman pounds, as regular cash, because there were no exchange restrictions in the Ottoman Empire. Because of this complicated currency circulation, local bankers were essential. The inhabitants' limited ease of communication with the various large banking centres, the distances involved, and the state of the transport and communications networks at that time, made the bankers' function even more vital. The Koritsa bankers were well informed about exchange parities, which were regulated by market values in Constantinople, which were in turn based on the London and Paris markets. They received immediate information about parity fluctuations by telegram from the banks in Thessaloniki²⁰. The importance of the local bankers in the city of Koritsa consisted precisely in this point, because not only was the local economy thus renewed and strengthened, but also the city connected directly with the Greek and European economies in general.

The role of the banker-cum-money-lender was absolutely vital to the process of emigration. The prospective émigrant had to contact travel bureaux and put up a sum of money to cover the cost of the journey and his initial settling-in expenses. All these were handled by the local banker, who, in this case, also acted more or less as a travel agent. The émigrant paid off his debt to the banker (which was secured mainly by property mortgages) by *tsekia*, cheques in sterling or francs, which he started sending as soon as he had found work in the host country²¹. It is

19. The parity of the Ottoman pound was not stable, but varied from place to place, depending on stock-breeding and agricultural production.

20. E. A. Hekimoglou, *Οικονομία και τραπεζίτες της Κοριτσάς στις αρχές του αιώνα*, Thessaloniki 1993, pp. 403-422.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 416.

interesting to note that, at a time when even the branches of the Greek banks corresponded with each other in French, all the bankers in Koritsa communicated exclusively in Greek. The banking offices were owned by the Foundos', Manos', Viblis', Papadopoulos', Treskas', Tsitsos', and Kostouris' families. The total turnover of these seven establishments (most of the available data relate to post-1908) amounted to 35,000 Ottoman pounds, which indicates clearly the economic and commercial situation in the city of Koritsa.

These figures account for the rapidity of Koritsa's development as an urban centre. These rising economic indicators show not only the city's economic range, which covered the whole of Epirus and Macedonia and what is now southern Albania, but also that this activity was exclusively in the hands of the Greek element. At the same time, it also invigorated the intellectual life and educational activities of the city, with all the positive (albeit indirect) implications of such progress.

In view of all this, the Greeks of Koritsa were better dressed, had better homes, a better lifestyle, and better education, while the city's Albanian element was virtually uneducated and earned less money, chiefly from stock-breeding and farming. Another clear indicator of the prosperity of the Greek community was the design of the Greeks' houses. Their commercial connections, their travelling, and their contacts with other centres of the Greek world or the diaspora, all played a part in the development of a type of dwelling comfortable and functional, while still retaining its traditional elements. The commercial and economic activity in Koritsa flourished steadily, and the Greek population constantly increased as a result.

A landmark in this general advance was the establishment in 1850 of the "Lasso" Community Fund by the Metropolitan of Koritsa, Neofytos (1845-78), who was a native of Argirokastro. His intention was to safeguard the donations and endowments of the local émigrants, who had for many years been sending large sums of money for the building and support of schools chiefly, but also of churches, pharmacies, hostels, and other public welfare institutions. So it was the need to safeguard all these donations, to ensure that they would be disposed of honestly and properly, and also to stimulate the educational enthusiasm of the people of Koritsa that prompted Neofytos to set up "Lasso". All the citizens contributed, but "Lasso" biggest assets came chiefly from the Koritsa émi-

grants in Romania and Egypt. “Lasso” owned a small piece of property in Koritsa; but the capital was deposited in the National Bank of Greece in an account titled “Assets of the Educational Institutions of Koritsa” with an annual rate of depreciation of 6% on the capital circulating in the form of bonds. According to the special regulations for “Lasso” in the city’s by-laws, the schools were maintained exclusively by the interest on the capital, and only a part of the capital was given to solvent citizens in the form of interest-bearing loans. “Lasso” was certified as being the inalienable property of the schools of Koritsa and every citizen was required to defend and promote the institution. Its basic purpose is documented as being to establish and maintain the city’s schools and to propagate Greek learning among all classes of citizens of both sexes, and it is specified that the aims are to be pursued using only the interest on the capital, leaving the capital itself untouched. The various needs relating to the founding, upkeep, and running of the schools in most areas of the Ottoman Empire were chiefly covered by the local Church, the communities, the associations²², and sometimes donations from émigrants. In about 1850, Koritsa was the richest community in Macedonia and Epirus²³, a situation that was largely due to the Greek émigrants who maintained close and lasting bonds with their home city, at the ideological level particularly. Thus, the expatriate natives of Koritsa preserved their noble traditions, their industriousness, their pride, and their lifelong burning desire to benefit the greek place of their birth and its spiritual and intellectual institutions²⁴. Despite occupying high positions in the economic circles in their host countries (particularly Romania and Egypt), they always lived as a foreign minority, and showed no desire to join or be assimilated by the local population. Typically, neither Ioannis Bangas nor Anastassios Avramidis-Liaktis ever married, believing that, unburdened by a family, they would be better able to use their property in the service of the nation. The chief characteristic of the period 1850-1900 for the middle-class

22. K. Hatzopoulos, *Ελληνικά σχολεία στην περίοδο της Οθωμανικής κυριαρχίας (1453-1821)*, p. 315f.

23. D. Kallimachos, “Ο πολιτισμός της Βορείου Ηπείρου: Η ελληνικότης της Κορίνθου”, *Ηπειρωτική Εστία*, Yannina 1959, p.15.

24. *Ibid.*, p.16.

émigrants in Romania was the question of legacies. In 1892, for instance, Ioannis Zappas bequeathed his vast fortune to the Greek state, thus perturbing Greek–Romanian relations for the next five years. Avramidis-Liaktsis' bequest also originated from Romania, where that beneficent native of Koritsa had lived and worked for several decades. These legacies usually took the form of immovable property, frequently arable land and leased land. The sources show that until 1887–90, it was the large donations and benefactions that supported education in Koritsa. This revenue brought in a satisfactory regular (usually annual) income. The sums received also covered the building, purchase, or leasing of buildings, the setting-up of libraries and workshops, the running of orphanages, part of the salaries of the teaching staff, and a number of scholarships. It would not have been possible for the educational institutions (particularly at the secondary level, in the form of the Bangas Gymnasium) to be built and operating so quickly without the contribution of the Koritsa émigrants, especially Ioannis Bangas'.

The fortune Ioannis Bangas donated to serve national needs amounted to some 1.500.000 drachmas. According to the account presented on 31 December 1906 by the Donations Committee, it amounted to 2.139.593, thanks to the foresight of the donor, who, even after his specific stipulations had been met, continued to save up whatever was left over from his annuity, which was in excess of 115.000 dr. in 1906²⁵.

The Bangas Committee had the legal right to administer and allocate the annual return as soon as it topped 150.000 dr. After this the Committee expended 64.000 dr. a year on national and charitable works, saved the remaining 50.000 dr., and paid out 36.000 dr. annually to cover the specific stipulations of the endowment. In Cairo, where he settled in a large Epiro-Macedonian community, most of whose members after 1800 were from the province of Koritsa, he worked as a tailor at first, making traditional Greek-Albanian clothing. Then he embarked on the more lucrative occupation of cultivating the land. The climate of Egypt damaged his health and he left in search of a more northern place of residence. He chose Romania, another place where

25. S. Dragoumis, "Ιωάννης Μπάγκας Κοριτσαίος", *ΜΗΠΣ* (1908), p. 288.

many merchants from Koritsa had settled. On the advice of Evangelos Zappas, he decided to rent out large tracts of arable land, and this made him very wealthy. Despite this, he lived frugally and saved his money, always with the notion of contributing to the development of his native city and the economic recovery of his homeland in general. Actuated by these patriotic ideals, he rebuffed the artful attempts of Albano-Romanian associations and political organisations to recruit him as a member. In 1850, when he was still in Egypt, he and other natives of Koritsa contributed generous sums towards the founding of primary and secondary schools for boys and girls in Koritsa, the building of churches, and particularly the diocesan headquarters, as also towards the aqueducts and other works for the public benefit. He thus became the main contributor to "Lasso", the community fund that had been set up in Koritsa for the public benefit of the Greek community, and particularly for the building of the Bangas Gymnasium. In 1889 he made all his property over to the President of the Greek Government and a committee was jointly appointed to spend the money on works "of benefit to the nation" or "charitable" works²⁶. His industriousness was allied with a certain amount of good luck: one of his debtors went bankrupt, but nevertheless, through a third party, repaid him the sum of 110.000 dr.; and when the contractor for the laying of the Romanian railway went bankrupt, rather than losing two thirds of the value of his shares, Bangas in fact made 20-25% on the price he had paid for them²⁷. On 16 August 1889, Ioannis Bangas, landowner and resident of Athens, asked the notaries Ilias Glykofrydis and Ilias Tsokas to draw up a contract in the presence of the Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Harilaos Trikoupis. The purpose was stipulated as the use of his property for works of public benefit to the nation. The immutable donation of his movable and immovable property to the Greek state stipulated that all the property should remain untouched and only the income be used for the stipulated works of public benefit²⁸. The appointees were to allocate 18.000 dr. a year for the upkeep of the Greek Gymnasium of Koritsa,

26. *Ibid.*, p. 287.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

28. *Συλλογή των περί της Εθνικής δωρεάς Ι. Μ. Μπάγκα επισημών κειμένων*, Αθήνα 1968, p. 2.

which was intended for the city's Greek community. A further amount of 4.000 dr. a year was to be given from 1895 onwards to the Rizarios School so that children born and resident in Koritsa could study there, as long as they were in the last year of Koritsa's three-form middle school. The headmaster and trustees of the school were to send an annual list of the best students in good health, certified by the Metropolitan. The names of two children would be drawn by lot, and they would attend the Rizarios School as exhibitioners. If their performance was satisfactory, on leaving they would continue their studies at either the Theological or the Philosophical School of the National University and receive 125 dr. a month for five years²⁹. After this they would be appointed to teach at the Bangas Gymnasium in Koritsa. Those who had taken holy orders in the meantime and assumed the additional obligation of preaching the Word of God as preachers received an annual stipend of 500 dr. in addition to their regular teacher's salary. The permanent trustees of his property were the Metropolitan of Athens, the Foreign Minister, the Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Education, Mr Stefanos Dragoumis for life (who was also required to appoint his successor after his death), the Rector of the National University, and the Director of the National Bank. The administration of his estate under the supervision of the Greek government was entrusted to them. Their task had being to see to the upkeep of the immovable property and land and to invest the money safely in government securities, National Bank shares, or the purchase of property in Athens. In the event of deadlock, Mr Stefanos Dragoumis or his successor was to have the casting vote. For himself Bangas asked the administrators for only 1.000 dr. a month for the rest of his life. After all the specific grants had been made, the remainder was to be allocated for a boys' orphanage, pre-school education, and vocational training along the lines of the better European systems³⁰. The orphanage was to be built in Athens, but not for another twenty-five years. Five years after that, the trustees were to build a branch in Koritsa. Those boys who successfully completed their education at the

29. This particular distinction was similar to the case of the exhibitioners who continued their studies in Smyrna and stayed at the Ayia Fotini hostel: further evidence of Koritsa's links with major spiritual centres.

30. Συλλογή των περί της Εθνικής δωρεάς Ι. Μ. Μπάγκα επισήμων κειμένων, p. 4.

Athens orphanage would be required to teach arts at the Koritsa branch for five years, with the proper salary. The regulations governing the running of both the Athens and the Koritsa orphanage were to be drawn up by the trustees and approved by the government. A prize of 500 dr. was established for those boys whose conduct and academic performance were outstanding. There was also a clause to the effect that preference would be given to orphans from Koritsa and Macedonia. Lastly, more than three-quarters of the income was to be used for the upkeep of both the main orphanage and the Koritsa branch. The remainder was to be added to the capital *ad infinitum*. When the capital reached a level that was sufficient for the needs of both the main orphanage and the Koritsa branch, the trustees would be able, at their own discretion, to increase the annual sum to provide dowries for the girls of the Amalia Orphanage, for which a sum was designated by special provisions, as also for the Evangelismos Hospital. When he accepted the endowment as President of the Ministerial Council and Minister for Finance, Harilaos Trikoupi promised that the provisions would be faithfully and precisely adhered to, and expressed his gratitude to the “patriotic” donor on behalf of the Greek nation and the government³¹. Finally, it is worth noting that Metropolitan Gervassios also congratulated and blessed Ioannis Bangas for his colossal gift to the city of Koritsa, a gift which aroused the admiration of all its progressive and patriotic citizens and set them an example to follow. The clear specification that the donation was to be used to build a gymnasium was extremely useful, because it would produce educated individuals in all the various social groups and assist better communication between them³².

The Avramidis-Liaktsis endowment was another basic source of funding for the Greek community of Koritsa. The bequest of Anastassios Avramidis-Liaktsis also came into the possession of “Lasso” and financed the running of the two six-class junior schools for boys. Apart from their purely educational purposes, Avramidis-Liaktsis’ donations also extended to social aims, namely the running of a community phar-

31. S. Dragoumis, “Ιωάννης Μπάγκας Κοριτσαίος”, p. 6.

32. Correspondence of the Metropolis of Koritsa, Gervassios Orologas, Archives of the Northern Epirotic Studies Institute at Yannina). Metropolitan of Koritsa to Ioannis Bangas, Koritsa, 11 Oct. 1895.

macy, which also supplied drugs to needy citizens, and the renovation of the imposing Church of St George³³. Avramidis-Liaktsis' endowment amounted to 203.165 dr. in Greek government bonds. Anastassios Avramidis-Liaktsis lived in Bucharest. When it became known that he intended to make over his large fortune for the public benefit in its birthplace, Koritsa, he received considerable pressure from Albanian circles to donate sums for "Albanian letters". Not wanting an exclusively Albanian school to be built, Avramidis-Liaktsis proposed as one of the terms for the disposition of his gift that the Albanian language be taught twice a week at the Greek Lancasterian School. This was rejected by the elders and when the Avramidis-Liaktsis bequest devolved to the Greek community of Koritsa shorn of this clause, the Albanian community set up its own school in 1887. Avramidis-Liaktsis had decided to deposit 500.000 francs in the National Bank of Greece as a donation to the community of Koritsa for educational and charitable purposes. On 14 July 1887, he asked the community for leave to deposit an initial sum of 250.000 francs, and the remaining 250.000 some time later. This turned out to be a very clever move, because, according to economic analyses, during this period of time the donated amount doubled in value. After this, the Greek community of Koritsa hastened to inform the consulate in Monastir that it had received a signed letter from Anastassios Avramidis-Liaktsis making over the interest on the 250.000 francs for charitable work on behalf of the Christians³⁴. He did not, however, make his promised donation for the Greek schools, on the grounds that he had no bonds available. The community was thus concerned fear lest the donor change his mind about the original terms. Avramidis-Liaktsis drew up the document of his donation for charitable purposes to Koritsa and deposited it at the Greek Embassy in Bucharest for certification. He began by expressing his keen desire to be of service to his birthplace, that's why he was undertaking to put up capital for the boys' primary school and the building of the Church of St George³⁵. He was also

33. G. Baïraktrakis, *Τα κατά τον αγώνα της ανεξαρτησίας της πόλεως Κορυτσάς και της επαρχίας*, Athens 1916, pp. 32, 34.

34. Spyromilios Collection, housed at the Dept. of Modern History Univer. of Thessaloniki, Report from Greek Consulate in Monastir to Foreign Ministry, Monastir, 15 July 1887.

35. Also, in a list of contributions for the building of a Greek Orthodox church in

anxious to change the procedures between donor and National Bank. Specifically, he wanted the deposit receipts for the bonds to be issued exclusively in the name of the Greek Christian community of Koritsa and himself simply to be informed about the draw, and the bonds to be replaced by other, similar, bonds. The interest coupons for the new bonds, however, were to be sent to the donor until 1900, as stipulated by the terms of the donation document. The purpose of this change to the donation document by the donor was to avoid any possibility that the ownership of the receipts might be contested by the Greek Christian community of Koritsa. At the same time, by being sent the interest coupons for the new bonds until 1900, the donor would be able to keep an eye on the movement of the donated capital. Avramidis-Liaktsis had his way and there exists a holograph letter dated 14 March 1889 from P. Kalligas, Vice-Governor of the National Bank, assuring him that the drawn bonds would be replaced, in accordance with his request. At the same time, Stefanos Dragoumis asked the Bucharest embassy to advise Avramidis-Liaktsis to see to his naturalisation. It was imperative that he travel to Athens and become a naturalised Athenian citizen so that there would be no likelihood that any of his movable or immovable property would be bequeathed to the Romanian state after his death. Anastassios Avramidis-Liaktsis' bequest was delivered to the community of Koritsa and part of the capital was used in 1901 to build the Church of St George, though some problems were encountered in cashing the interest coupons³⁶. This should not have been the case, because, according to a letter written by Avramidis-Liaktsis on 30 February 1889 and addressed to the National Bank, the community of Koritsa had the right to cash the interest coupons on the sum of 250.000 francs before 1900³⁷, if the donor died prior to that date. There was also a copy of the donation document signed by the donor (9 August 1887) and certified by M. A. Doroutis, chargé d'affaires at the Greek Embassy in Bucharest, which

Bucharest, Anastassios Avramidis-Liaktsis is mentioned as having donated 5.000 francs through the intermediary of the chargé d'affaires at the Greek embassy.

36. Correspondence of the Metropolitan of Koritsa, Gervassios. Metropolitan Gervassios of Koritsa, to Patriarch Ioakeim III, Koritsa, 28 Oct. 1902.

37. The exact date of his death is not known, but there are references in documents to the effect that he died in 1899 and all the procedures were carried out by his executor Mihail Liakos.

meant that the interest coupons could be cashed³⁸. Some questions relating to Avramidis-Liaktsis' beneficence remain unanswered, one of these being whether or not he did in fact become a naturalised Greek citizen. The case of Ioannis Bangas complied with an unwritten law in accordance with which the benefactor made gifts both to his birthplace and to Athens. A similar case was that of Christakis Zografos, who founded schools in his birthplace of Kestorati, Argirokastro, and in Stavrodromi, Constantinople. Apart from the fact that his name is included in a list of donors to the Church of St George in Bucharest, we do not know whether Avramidis-Liaktsis made donations to his place of residence. No donations in his name are mentioned in Athens, which suggests that he did not in fact become naturalised. It is worth noting that, despite the persistent and strenuous efforts of various "Albanian" circles in Bucharest, Koritsa, and other Albanian diaspora centres in Egypt, Avramidis-Liaktsis ultimately acted as he had originally intended, according to his purely Greek consciousness.

As a result of these two large benefactions, as also other smaller ones, educational activity in Koritsa took off, and came to reflect the city's Greek profile quite strongly. The first school in Koritsa was founded in 1723 and was attended by children not only from the city itself but also from the surrounding villages. The names of the teachers at that time have not survived. The first extant reference dates from 1817, when the teacher was Archimandrite Iosif. The school was destroyed in 1821 and rebuilt on the same site, according to the inscription on the wall. Around 1826-30, a teacher named Giokas was running a school in Koritsa³⁹. The "General Regulations of the Common Institutions of the City of Koritsa" were drawn up in 1875, for the purpose of settling matters relating to the administrative structures, organisation, and upkeep of the community's Greek schools. A new educational system was

38. Correspondence of the Metropolitan of Koritsa Gervassios, to Metropolitan Kosmas of Pelagonia, No. 46, Koritsa, 25 May 1896.

39. T. Evangelidis, *Η παιδεία επί Τουρκοκρατίας: Ελληνικά σχολεία από της αλώσεως μέχρι Καποδιστρίου*, vol. 2, Athens 1936, pp. 129-30. A brief description of the classroom presents the teacher sitting at his desk and the children cross-legged on the floor, with the dux (the best student in the upper forms) standing beside the teacher's desk. There is a calligraphic alphabet on the front of the desk and blackboards on the wall. On another wall is an icon of Jesus Christ.

established, particularly after 1870. It was resolved that the new system of teaching at primary level and for girls' school should be the "one teacher per class" system, rather than the system that had been used hitherto, i.e. teaching from high level students, and this decision was a watershed in the city's educational history⁴⁰.

Educational activity in Koritsa began to gather steam after the Berlin Conference of 1878, when the pressure of ethnic rivalries increased and signalled a new phase. The political changes in the Balkans imposed a new deontic code for educational aims and linked them to national and irredentist goals. After 1880, the Lancasterian school was now termed the primary school, to reflect the change in the teaching method and also the new educational principles, which required a regular progression of educational levels, kindergarten, primary school, girls' school and boys' gymnasium. It should be noted that the founding of a kindergarten was one of the aims of the Educational Society of Koritsa, which was probably founded in 1872. These were the issues that the Greek Philological Association in Constantinople was concerned with from 1873 onwards. The fact that the city had a girls' school means that the primary school was exclusively for boys. In the period when the city of Koritsa had redoubled its efforts in the educational sphere, spurred on by the climate of ethnic rivalry, the situation with regard to primary education was as follows. In 1883, it boasted one three-form secondary school with three teachers, one primary school with seven teachers, one girls' school with four teachers, and a number of five- or six-class primary schools. The cost of their upkeep amounted to 1.000 Ottoman pounds a year, which came mainly from the interest on the "Lasso" community fund, as also from contributions from the Association for the Propagation of Greek Letters. A total of 800 children were in primary education. By 1887, the student population had risen to 1.146, though the number of schools remained the same. The largest student numbers were concentrated in the kindergartens and primary schools, which had 486 and 400 pupils respectively. These figures attest that the priorities set forth by the Greek Philological Association of Constantinople in fact corresponded to the practical needs of the regions. The total number of children in primary education in the academic year 1886-7 was esti-

40. C. Papaspathis, *Οι κανονισμοί...*, p. 347.

mated at 1.146, the teaching staff comprised 18 teachers, and the annual salaries totalled 665 Ottoman pounds. In the early years of the twentieth century, having been better organised and more generously funded in the 1890s in response to the Albanians' intensified educational efforts, the Greek schools in Koritsa made spectacular progress. In 1903, the girls' school had 8 classes, 10 teachers, and 424 pupils; the boys' primary school had 7 classes, 14 teachers, and 678 pupils; and the two kindergartens had 4 teachers and 548 pupils. The total number of children in education was 1.650 and the total expenses for the teaching staff came to 35 pounds, 14 of which went to the staff of the primary school, 10 to the teachers at the girls' school, and 4 to the kindergarten teachers. Until 1840, school education was the exclusive privilege of boys in Koritsa. If they were educated at all, the girls must have been taught at home. This, of course, was due to the general mentality of the period, typical of Greek society under Ottoman rule. As the socio-economic situation of the people of Koritsa steadily improved, the social structures inevitably changed, and women were given more opportunities to play a part both in social activities and in ideological issues generally. Significantly enough, it was now that "Lasso" was founded and now too that the émigrants started to send their remittances for the founding of educational institutions. These changes went hand in hand with the maturing of Greek society's attitude towards female education⁴¹. Moreover, other Greek cities were also building girls' schools at about this time. The first girls' schools to be built in Epirus were in Koritsa and Tsepelovo. Epirots—such as the celebrated Zografos family from Kestorati—had already settled in Constantinople. As we have seen, the people of Koritsa had close contacts with both Constantinople and Smyrna: boys from Koritsa and the surrounding area stayed at the Ayia Fotini hostel and attended the Evangelical School in Smyrna. In Constantinople, the Phanariotes, who were the first agents of the ideological changes regarding women, had been influenced by the liberal intellectual trends in

41. K. T. Dimaras, "Δέκα χρόνια ελληνικής παιδείας στην ιστορική τους προοπτική (1791-1800)", in *Νεοελληνικός Διαφωτισμός*, Athens 1977, pp. 246-7:

"We observe the evolution, year by year, of the liberal spirit, the gradual liberation of 'secular' thought. These intellectual movements were influenced to a great extent by the developments in international politics and the progress of education in the West".

western Europe from the end of the eighteenth century onwards, and now began to show some concern for the education of their daughters. The bourgeoisie of other cities followed the Phanariotes' example⁴². So the people of Koritsa noted the signs of the times and made efforts to introduce female school education, which had become more widespread since 1856, into their own local society. This was yet another indication of their high standard of living. The girls' school originally comprised 2 kindergarten classes, 4 primary-level classes, and 2 higher classes (7th and 8th grades). The importance the society of Koritsa attached to girls' education was evidenced by the ever increasing number of girls attending school. Such was the demand that the citizens were forced to seek new premises or an extra floor for the new building, and in 1911 a second girls' school was built. The girls' school was founded in 1857, burnt down in 1882, and rebuilt at the expense of Georgios Theodorou Dokos. The girls received a full education. It comprised seven classes, with seven teachers and 150 pupils. On the façade of the building, in gold lettering, was the inscription:

Greek Girls' School of Koritsa [built by] Georgios Theodorou Dokos, lover of the arts, the name of whom, as benefactor, his grateful native city has inscribed in gold letters in eternal commemoration of the founder, his wife, Evgenia, and of their daughters, Theodora and Aikaterini—in the year of Our Lord 1882, the month of November:

On 11 December 1887, the *Astir* of Constantinople reported that Christakis Zografos⁴³ had made a financial contribution to the girls' school in the form of 130 pounds for the headmistress's salary. A letter from Metropolitan Gervassios reveals that the premises of the girls' school, which stood next to the diocesan headquarters and had been built with contributions from the citizens and the bequest of Georgios Adam⁴⁴, were not big enough for the ever increasing number of students,

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 246-7.

43. A prominent banker in Constantinople, founder of the Zografos teacher-training colleges in his native Kestorati Argyrokastro, and donor of the Zografos schools in Stavrodromi, Constantinople.

44. This information comes from a letter from Gervassios Orogas, dated 28 Sept. 1896, to Dionyssios Adam, brother of Georgios and executor of his will, and Cor-

and for this purpose the community addressed a *taktirio* to the Mutesarîf, through the Metropolitan, proposing to use the residence of Vissarion Douros. During the academic year 1905-6, the need was keenly felt to add a second floor to the girls' school in the Douros residence. The cost was estimated at 250-300 pounds⁴⁵.

In general, girls' education in Koritsa, was of a high standard, considering the position of women and the prevailing attitudes at that time in the Greek areas under Ottoman rule. The general climate and the specific historical circumstances helped to keep female education within the bounds of a patriarchal ideology which confined women to specific and limited roles in public life. The number of pupils attending the girls' school was quite high, considering the circumstances of the time. This may be explained by the fact that the middle-class origins of the city's inhabitants created appropriate socio-economic conditions that boosted Greek education in general and women's education in particular. It should also be noted that in 1911, shortly before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, a second girls' school opened in Koritsa and the number of pupils rose to 2.115.

<i>Girls' school</i>	<i>1887</i>	<i>1903</i>	<i>1911</i>
Pupils	160	678	683
Teachers	4	14	

Secondary-level education was provided by the Bangas Gymnasium. The first form was housed in the "Greek" school, which had opened in 1724 and started to be re-organised in 1843⁴⁶. The reforms of 1887 officially did away with the one- to three-year course of studies at the "Greek" school, and systematic efforts were set in train to organise the gymnasium of Koritsa. The founding of the gymnasium—which, owing to limited government funding, was made possible chiefly by the Bangas endowment—was announced in writing to the school-board of the

response Sept. 1896, Koritsa.

45. "Lasso" Koritsa Λογοδοσία των πεπραγμένων υπό της Εφορίας αυτού κατά το σχολικό έτος 1905-6, Athens 1906, pp. 15-17.

46. As already mentioned, education in Koritsa was given a legislative structure and systematised in 1875, with the printing of the "General Regulations for the Common Institutions of the City of Koritsa", with a special chapter and special articles covering organisation, administration, and upkeep.

Greek community of Koritsa by Metropolitan Filotheos in 1887, and it opened its doors the following September, operating along the same lines as the gymnasia of Thessaloniki and Monastir. Like most such establishments in the Ottoman Empire and in Greece at that time, it was clearly oriented towards the classics. Its social function answered the needs of the bourgeoisie, though it was also open to the children of the local farming community. The tradition of accommodating students in hostels as close as possible to the gymnasium also conduced to this aim. The majority of the student population (70%) was native to Koritsa; the rest were from the outlying areas. A fundamental factor in, and a motivating force behind, the flowering of education in Koritsa was the benefactions. The benefactions of the Greek émigrants —Ioannis Bangas, Anastassios Avramidis-Liaktsis, and many others— uphold the view that national consciousness is closely bound up with “the cultural patriotism”. They built educational institutions and hostels. Another factor that played a part in the development of Greek education in Koritsa was the Greek government’s concern to strengthen the national consciousness of the populations living in ethnically contested areas of the Ottoman Empire. That’s why the Greek state was at pains to keep up its funding for Greek education in Koritsa, even in economic difficulties. At the same time, the Church also played a part, because the education of the Greek element in the Ottoman provinces was under the surveillance of the Patriarchate in general and the local diocesan authorities in particular, in accordance with the Ottoman concessions. The Patriarchate’s concern for education deepened after the Exarchate was established in 1870, and efforts were made to keep the Christian populations under the established sway of the Patriarchate and to dissuade them from acceding to the new ecclesiastical organisation. It is worth noting that all three foci of authority —the Greek community of Koritsa, the Church, and the Greek state— managed by and large to co-operate on educational issues, avoiding the rifts and polarisation that occurred elsewhere.

So, through various cultural structures and, particularly, education, the nineteenth century witnessed the evolution in this geographical area of a new national consciousness with purely Greek characteristics, defined by the Greek language, Orthodox Christianity, mentality, ideology, and tradition. The case of Koritsa is a typical, pioneering example. The

dynamics of constantly evolving school education at all levels, from kindergarten to the gradual birth of the full gymnasium and girls' school, led to the achievement of these aims. By contrast, the Albanian school proved quite unable to match the potential of Greek education in Koritsa and the rising student numbers: despite its competitive aims and its efforts to imitate the Greek schools, lack of students carried it into an irreversible decline.