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POPULATION DISTRIBUTION OF GREECE TODAY ACCORDING
TO LANGUAGE NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND RELIGION

(ON THE BASIS OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS AND CENSUS RETURNS)

The mass settlement of Moslems throughout the Balkan Peninsula, in combination with successive movements of Moslem, Greek and Slav populations, especially in the Peninsula's central regions, brought about substantial modifications in the ethnic and linguistic composition of the Balkan Peninsula during the period of Ottoman rule.

Moslem, Slav and Jewish intruders repeatedly made their way, whether violently or peacefully, into Macedonia in particular. There they grouped themselves into separate communities and lived side by side with the indigenous Greek population which, in spite of these intrusions, kept up its own extremely flourishing communities in the cities and villages and never lost its supremacy in the intellectual and economic life of Macedonia.

The ethnic problem of Macedonia arose as a natural consequence of all this. It became exacerbated with time, particularly during the period of the Macedonian Question (1870-1912), when these alien and heterodox communities were pressured into racial tension, open antagonism and mutual slaughter. The liberation of Macedonia by the neighbouring Balkan countries of Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria solved the Macedonian Question on a theoretical level, but brought the peoples involved into confrontation over the bitter ethnological problem which they inherited in Macedonia.

The manner in which the ethnic and related linguistic and religious questions in Greece were resolved after the annexation of the New Lands forms the subject of the present study; its object is to present a clear picture, based on official League of Nations statistics and Greek general census, of the population of Greece today in terms of language, national consciousness and religion.

According to the official figures of the League of Nations' Refugee Settlement Commission, the following ethnic groups inhabited Greek Macedonia in 1912: Greek (513.000 or 42.6%), Moslem (475.000 or 39.4%), Bulgarian (119.000 or 9.9%), and others (98.000 or 8.1%)¹. Thus, there were Bulgarian and Moslem minorities within Greek territory immediately after the liberation of Macedonia (1912-1913).

1. League of Nations, *Greek Refugee Settlement*, Geneva 1926; G. Zotiades, *The Macedonian Controversy*, Thessaloniki 1961², p. 39.

1. From 1912 and thereafter, military and diplomatic circumstances, both regional and international, progressively eliminated this ethnic heterogeneity in the following manner:

a) The Bulgarian minority was settled by stages in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. During the Second Balkan War (1913) and subsequently the First World War (1914-1918), a two-way population exchange took place across the borders of the three Balkan countries involved. The major population group to migrate consisted of bilingual Greeks (Greek — and Slav-speaking) who were driven into Greece from Bulgaria and Yugoslavia by the occupying armies. The majority of these refugees, who numbered approximately 65.000, eventually settled in Greek Macedonia. At the same time, some 20.000 Slav-speakers with Bulgarian national consciousness left Greek Macedonia with the Bulgarian occupying forces, whether voluntarily or from fear, to escape punishment under Greek justice for atrocities perpetrated during the period of occupation².

The second phase was enacted under the terms of the Pact of Neuilly (1919), “concerning the voluntary migration of racial minorities in Greece and Bulgaria”; by 1926, 53.000 Slav-speakers with Bulgarian national consciousness³ had left Greece and either settled in Bulgaria or passed through Bulgaria on their way as immigrants to other countries, mainly Australia, the USA and Canada. During the same period approximately 50.000 bilingual Greeks arrived in Greece from Bulgaria⁴. It must be emphasized here that this migration was voluntary; the people involved were called upon to submit to the Committee an application stating the nationality to which they wished to belong. It should also be stressed that those who migrated received proportionate compensation under the supervision of representatives of the League of Nations, while real estate abandoned by them passed on both sides under public jurisdiction.

During the Second World War, Bulgarian occupation was imposed on Greek Eastern Macedonia and coupled with an intensified Bulgarian propaganda campaign that spread throughout the rest of Greek Macedonia. A small proportion of the Slav-speakers who had remained in Greece became enmeshed in the snares of this Bulgarian propaganda and engaged in a variety of anti-Greek activities. Defeat of the Axis and the withdrawal of Bulgarian forces from Greek Macedonia resulted in the departure from Greek territory of nearly all those Slav-speakers who had co-operated with the Bulgarians, most of

2. Zotiades, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

3. *Ibid.*

4. P. Miliotis, *Ἡ ἐν Νεὺίλν Σύμβασις τῆς Ἑλληνοβουλγαρικῆς Μεταναστεύσεως τῆς 14/27 Νοεμβρίου 1919 καὶ ἡ Ἐφαρμογὴ αὐτῆς* (The Pact of Neuilly of 14/27 November 1919 on Greek-Bulgarian Migration and its Application), Thessaloniki 1962, p. 11.

whom had committed atrocities against both their Greek-speaking compatriots and those Slav-speaking Greeks who refused to collaborate with the Bulgarians under any circumstances or to work for the interests of Bulgarian propaganda. In this way there occurred a further reduction in Greece in the number of Slav-speakers who were without definite or decided national consciousness.

Finally, during the years 1945-1949, a series of communist incursions were launched by Greece's northern neighbours with the aim of turning her into a communist state and seizing Greek Macedonia and Thrace, under the guise of creating an independent Peoples' Republic of Macedonia and Thrace, as member of the Balkan communist federation. Yugoslavians and Bulgarians working on that plan endeavoured to win over the Slav-speaking Greek element in Macedonia; and in fact a few Slav-speaking Greeks collaborated with the invaders, either willingly or under compulsion, during the course of the armed communist insurrection. But these people later departed with the guerilla groups for the countries of the Iron Curtain, where they are now in permanent residence, and thus the problem of Slav-speakers with Bulgarian national consciousness in Greece was definitively resolved.

b) The settlement of the Moslem minority in Turkey also took place in two phases. In the period between the Balkan Wars and the First World War approximately 125.000 Moslems left Greece⁵. The second phase took place under the Treaty of Lauzanne (1923) "regarding the compulsory exchange of Greek and Turkish populations": 638.253 Greek refugees from Asia Minor were added to the Greek population of Macedonia, while its entire Moslem element of about 348.000 residents departed⁶. Under the terms of this treaty, the existence of Moslem and Greek minorities was officially recognized only in Western and Eastern Thrace, with consular centres Komotini and Constantinople, the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

After the exchanges of the last fifty years that have been outlined above, only one conclusion can be drawn with regard to the ethnic homogeneity of Greece: there is no Slav minority⁷ nor any other alien community except for

5. Zotiades, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

6. Zotiades, *op. cit.*, p. 40. Cf. also St. Ladas, *The Exchange of Minorities, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey*, New York 1932.

7. State-recognized Slav, i.e. Bulgarian communal organizations have not existed in Greece since 1932, the date when the Pact of Neuilly (1919), which regulated the exchange of racial minorities between Greece and Bulgaria carried into effect during the years 1922 and 1932, expired. Based as they are on unofficial and inaccurate figures, the arguments emanating from Skopje to the effect that there exists a Skopje-type Macedonian minority in Greece today are shown upon examination to be groundless from an historical point of view and to bear no correspondence to the actual contemporary state of affairs. The fact that some residents along Greece's northern borders speak, in addition to Greek, a form of Slav that has affinities with

the small Moslem one. Thus there no longer exists any substantial ethnological question in Greece.

2. The progressive ethnic unification of the population of Greece after 1913 brought about a similar degree of homogeneity in language, as may also be demonstrated from official statistics collated in 1928 and 1951, in the earliest and latest general census conducted within the last 50⁸ years at which the language-question was asked.

a) According to the census of 1928⁹, of 6.204.684 inhabitants in Greece 5.759.523 (928 per thousand) had Greek as their mother tongue. Next came Turkish¹⁰ with 191.254 speakers (31‰), the Macedonian Bulgarian dialect¹¹ with 81.984 (13‰), Spanish¹² with 63.200 (10‰), Armenian with 33.634 (5‰), Koutsovlach¹³ with 19.703 (3‰), Albanian with 18.773 (3‰) and Bulgarian of the region of Sophia (Sopski dialect)¹⁴ with 16.775 (3‰).

Bulgarian cannot be taken as an indication of the existence of a Slav minority in Greece. Bilingualism amongst the border residents of all states is the product of historical and practical circumstances, and is by no means an unusual phenomenon. Furthermore, during the Macedonian Struggle, these bilingual Greeks fought with great spirit against every Slav attempt on Macedonia.

8. The first general census in Greece, covering detailed demographic and some economic characteristics of the population, was conducted in 1861. Since then, general population census have been held at roughly ten-year intervals: 1870, 1879, 1889, 1896, 1907, 1920, 1928, 1940, 1951, 1961, 1971. In addition, four special census have been conducted on the occasion of the annexation of territory of the influx of a large numbers of refugees. These have been: the census of Thessaly and Arta upon their annexation in 1881; the special census of the Greek New Lands after the Balkan Wars (Macedonia, Epirus, Crete, Aegean Islands) in 1913; the special census of refugees after the Asia Minor catastrophe in 1923; and finally, the special census of the Dodecanese after their annexation in 1947.

9. Στατιστικά Αποτελέσματα της Απογραφής του Πληθυσμού της Ελλάδος της 15-16 Μαΐου 1928 (Statistical results of the population - census of Greece conducted 15 - 16 May, 1928), Athens 1935, p. κε' and Table II, p. 246 ff.

10. In this figure are included the Turkish-speaking Greeks (65.237 or 1%) who fled to Greece after 1922, and the Moslems of the Moslem minority in Greece (126.017 or 2%). *Ibid.*, p. κβ'.

11. Included in this figure are Slav-speaking Bulgarians from Macedonia and Thrace who emigrated to Bulgaria during the period 1922-1932, under the provisions of the Pact signed at Neuilly on the 14/27 November 1919 between Greece and Bulgaria for the exchange of racial minorities; as well as Slav-speaking Greeks who were residents of border districts.

12. Spanish-speakers in Greece were principally Jews living in the *deme* of Thessaloniki; according to the 1928 results, their numbers amounted to some 55.250. *Op. cit.*, p. κβ'.

13. Of Greek extraction. Cf. D. Popović, *O cincarina* (The Koutsovlachs), Belgrade 1937^a, p. 199 ff. T. Koutsoiannis, *Περί των Βλάχων των Ἑλληνικῶν χωρῶν, Β'*, Ἐκ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς ἱστορίας τῶν Κουτσοβλάχων ἐπὶ Τουρκοκρατίας (The Vlachs of Greece, II, From the Life and History of the Koutsovlachs under the Turkish Occupation), Thessaloniki 1966; A. Keramopoulos, *Τί εἶναι οἱ Κουτσοβλάχοι;* (What are the Koutsovlachs?), Athens 1939; I. Pa-

Thus, in accordance with the 1928 census, the main language spoken was Greek, with 92.8%. There followed Turkish with 3.1%, Bulgarian with 1.3%, Spanish with 0.5%, and Armenian, Koutsovlach and Albanian with 0.3% each.

b) According to the 1951 census¹⁵, of 7.632.801 residents in Greece 7.297.878 (956.12‰) had Greek as their mother tongue. After these, 179.895 (23.57‰) spoke Turkish, 41.017 (5.37‰) the Macedonian Bulgarian dialect, 39.855 (5.22‰) Koutsovlach, 22.736 (2.98‰) Albanian, 18.671 (2.45‰) Pomacian, 8.990 (1.18‰) Armenian, 3.815 (0.50‰) Russian, and 1.339 (0.18‰) Spanish¹⁶.

padrianos, "Ένας Μεγάλος Κοζανίτης Ἀπόδημος: Εὐφρόνιος Ραφαήλ Παπαγιαννούσης - Πόποβιτς (A Great Emigré from Kozani, Euphronius Raphael Papaianousis - Popovitch), Thessaloniki 1973, p. 12-13; A. Chrysochoos, *Οἱ Βλάχοι τῆς Μακεδονίας, Θεσσαλίας καὶ Ἡπείρου* (The Vlachs of Macedonia, Thessaly and Epirus), Thessaloniki 1942. A. Lazarou, *Ἡ Ἀρωμωνική καὶ αἱ μετὰ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς σχέσεις αὐτῆς* (The Aromunian and its relations with Greek), Athens 1976.

14. In their attempt to isolate this Bulgarian vernacular that is spoken in the south-western parts of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia from its Bulgarian roots, the glossologists of Skopje now talk of it as the 'Macedonian language'. Earlier, in their efforts to be more precise, others termed it 'Slavomacedonian' or 'Bulgaromacedonian'. In any case, the most unfortunate term used to characterize this patois is 'Macedonian' because this does not correspond to the principal geographical area in which, it is claimed, the dialect is spoken. Macedonia, where Greek is by far the predominant language, has had Thessaloniki as its cultural and administrative centre even from the Byzantine era, and today it forms a province of northern Greece.

15. *Ἀποτελέσματα τῆς Ἀπογραφῆς τοῦ Πληθυσμοῦ τῆς 7ης Ἀπριλίου 1951* (Results of the Population Census Conducted on 7th April 1951), Athens 1961, Vol I, p. cvii κ.έ. According to the immediately preceding census (1940), of 7.460.203 residents in Greece 6.902.339 (92.5%) spoke Greek, 229,075 (3.71%) Turkish, 86,086 (1.5%) the Macedonian Bulgarian dialect, 53,995 (0.7%) Koutsovlach, 53,125 (0.7%) Spanish, 49,632 (0.6%) Albanian, 26,827 (0.3%) Armenian and 18,086 (0.2%) Pomacian. *Op. cit.*, p. cx, Table X 3.

16. *Op. cit.* The number of those with Turkish as their mother tongue diminished from one census to the other. But this reduction refers not to the Moslem minority in Greece but to those Orthodox who indicated in 1940 that their mother tongue was Turkish; these were refugees from Turkey who, although they themselves had Turkish as their mother language, taught their children they were born in Greece to speak Greek as their mother tongue. The reduction in numbers of those with Slav as their mother tongue — more than half — is due to the fact that the Slav-speaking Bulgarians amongst them migrated to Bulgarian up until 1932, while the Pact of Neuilly was still in effect, and after the Bulgarian occupation of Eastern Macedonia during the Second World War; others emigrated to Yugoslavia in consequence of the communist disturbances during the period 1944-1949. Those who remained in Greece were bilinguals with Greek national consciousness. The number of those with Albanian as their mother tongue diminished between the census of 1940 and that of 1951 because most of the Moslems amongst them — 16.890 in 1940, limited to 487 in 1951 (cf. p. cxv and Table X 6 of the 1951 results) — departed to Albania after the Greek-Italian war of 1940. Of the 22.736 with Albanian as their mother tongue who remained in Greece in 1951, 22.207 were Orthodox (cf. p. cxv and Table X 6 of the 1951 results). The large reduction of those with Armenian as their mother tongue is due to the departure of many of these to Soviet Armenia. The massive reduction (97%) in the number of those with Spanish as their mother tongue is

Thus, in accordance with the census of 1951, 956 per thousand or 95.6% had Greek as their mother tongue and 44 per thousand or 4.4% some other language - specifically, 2.4% Turkish and a further 2% representing other languages spoken as a mother tongue but which, since they were used by individuals in isolation, can scarcely be termed 'minority languages'.

c) In the census of 1961¹⁷, when the population reached 8.388.553 and in 1971¹⁸, when it rose to 8.768.641 (an increase of over one million between the census of 1951 and that of 1971), the language question was not asked for the natural reason that, in accordance with the trend observable in the comparative data from the census of 1928, 1940 and 1951, the 44 per thousand or 4.4% foreign-speaking element registered in the 1951 census ought to have continued diminish even further, or at least to have maintained the same level.

3. The ethnic and linguistic homogeneity and uniformity is reflected in religion as well. According to the 1928 census¹⁹, of 6.204.684 residents in Greece, 5.961.529 (960.81‰) gave their religion as Orthodox, 35.182 (5.67‰) as Roman Catholic, 9.003 (1.45‰) as Protestant, 126.017 (20.31‰) as Moslem, and 72.791 (11.73‰) as Hebrew. Later, in the 1940²⁰ census, of 7.460.203 residents in the country 7.179.583 (964.80‰) gave their religion as Orthodox, 30.614 (4.10‰) as Roman Catholic, 6.349 (0.85‰) as Protestant, 16.350 (2.10‰) as Armenian Orthodox²¹, 529 (0.07‰) as Chiliast²², 141.090 (18.91‰) as Moslem, and 67.661 (9.07‰) as Hebrew.

Finally, in the general census of 1951²³, the last one at which the population of Greece was asked to specify its religion, of a total of 7.632.801 residents 7.472.559 (979.01‰) gave their religion as Orthodox, 28.430 (3.72‰) as Roman Catholic, 7.034 (0.92‰) as Protestant, 1.205 (0.16‰) as Armenian Orthodox, 4.438 (0.58‰) as Chiliast, 112.665 (14.76‰) as Moslem and 6.325 (0.83‰) as Hebrew.

These official figures point to the conclusion that, according to the census of 1951, 97.9% of the population of Greece was Greek Orthodox, while other Christian beliefs and religions accounted for a further 2.1%. Bearing in mind

due to the well-known fact that they were almost completely exterminated during the German occupation (as can be seen from Table X 6 of the 1951 results).

17. *Αποτελέσματα της Απογραφής Πληθυσμού - Κατοίκων της 19 Μαρτίου 1961* (Results of the Resident Population Census of 19th March 1961), Vol. 1, Athens 1964, p. 27.

18. *Στατιστική Έπετ. της Ελλάδος* (Statistical Yearbook of Greece), Athens 1972, p. 18.

19. *Αποτελέσματα της Απογραφής του Πληθυσμού της 7ης Απριλίου 1951* (Results of the Population Census conducted on 7th April 1951), Vol. 1, p. cvii.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Referred to as 'Monophysites' in Table X 1, *op. cit.*

22. Referred to as 'Other Christians' in Table X 1, *loc. cit.*

23. *Ibid.*

that the population of Greece increased by over one million between the census of 1951 and the most recent one, that of 1971, approximately the same ratio ought to hold good for the present as well.

Comparative study of the numerical data reveals the following significant demographic features: first, the natural increase of Greek Orthodox; second, the large decrease in the number of Armenian Orthodox between the census of 1940 and that of 1951, due, as has been mentioned above, to the departure in the interim of a large number of Armenians from Greece bound for Soviet Armenia; third, the huge decrease to less than one tenth of the former Jewish population in Greece, brought about, as is known, by their extermination during the Second World War by the German forces occupying Greece; fourth, the natural decrease in Roman Catholics and Moslems; and fifth, the comparatively amazing increase in the proportion of Chiliasts, who have probably gained even further ground since the census in 1951²⁴.

The general conclusion from the analysis of the above-cited official statistics is that the predominance of Greek, the official language, is today almost absolute, being spoken by approximately 96% of the population. Of the remaining inhabitants of Greece, approximately 2% are Turkish-speaking Moslems and a further 2% speak a variety of other languages. This quantitative proportion is valid also for the ethnic composition of the population of this country: approximately 96% of the population are Greeks and about 2% Moslems, the remaining 2% including the Hebrew and Armenian alien communities and foreign subjects resident in Greece²⁵. Thus Greece represents, in Europe, a country with practically ideal ethnic, linguistic and religious homogeneity and unity.

24. According to the last census of 1971, of nearly 9.000.000 residents in Greece, 20.000 about gave their religion as Chiliast. Cf. A. G. Lenis, *Αί ἐνέγγειαι τῆς Ἱερᾶς Συνόδου πρὸς ἀντιμετώπισιν τοῦ χιλιαστικοῦ προβλήματος* (The initiatives of the Holy Synod to face the Chiliast problem), Athens 1976, p. 72. See also Ath. Angelopoulos review in *Θεολογία* 49 (1978) 206-208.

25. Encyclopaedias, Statistics and Dictionaries etc. that are published from time to time refer, among other things, to the languages spoken and the ethnic composition of the population of Greece. Examination of the figures presented in some of these proves them to be either incomplete or inaccurate, as occurred recently, for example, with the *New York Times Encyclopedic Almanac 1972*, p. 706: "Greece. Area 50.944 sq.mi. Population 8.736.367 (provisional, 1971 census). Languages: Modern Greek; Turkish, Albanian and Armenian are minority languages. Ethnic composition: about 94% of the population is Greek; Turks constitute about 4%. Other minority groups are Macedonian Slavs, Albanians, Armenians and Bulgarians". The inaccuracies published in this almanac prompted the composition of the present study.

APPENDIX I

Statistical Results of the Population Census of Greece Conducted 15-16 May 1928 (*Athens 1935, p. 246*)
 Table II. Actual Population According to Religion and Language
 a. Total for Greece (Both Sexes)

Languages	Total	Christians			Moslem	Hebrew	Other Religions	No Religion	
		Orthodox	Roman Catholic						Protestant
			Catholic	Protestant					
Greek	5,759,523	5,716,100	22,749	3,867	2,623	9,090	15	81	
Albanian	18,773	18,773	59	17	18,598	3	1	—	
Armenian	33,634	31,038	1,136	1,432	16	10	2	—	
Bulgarian	16,775	20	—	—	16,755	—	—	—	
English	2,098	201	274	1,605	1	15	—	—	
Gypsy	4,998	3,853	—	1	1,130	—	14	—	
Italian	3,199	98	2,875	18	1	203	—	2	
Koutsovlach	19,703	19,679	9	2	3	10	—	—	
Macedonian - Slav	81,984	81,884	68	11	2	58	—	1	
Russian	3,295	3,177	49	14	3	40	—	12	
Spanish	63,200	28	58	41	72	62,999	—	2	
Turkish	191,254	103,642	327	760	86,506	17	1	1	
Others	6,248	1,754	2,517	1,235	307	346	12	17	
Total non-Greek	445,161	245,429	7,435	5,136	123,394	63,701	30	36	
Total	6,204,684	5,961,529	35,182	9,003	126,017	72,791	45	117	

APPENDIX 2

Results of the Population Census of 7th April 1951 (Vol. 1, Athens 1961, p. cx). Table X 3. Population of Greece according to Mother Tongue, as recorded in the Census of 1951 and 1940

<i>Mother Tongue</i>	<i>Absolute Figures</i>		<i>Percentage Proportion ⁰/₁₀₀</i>	
	<i>1951</i>	<i>1940</i>	<i>1951</i>	<i>1940</i>
<i>General Total</i>	7.632.801	7.460.203	1.000.00	1.000.00
<i>Greek</i>	7.297.878	6.902.339	956.12	925.22
<i>Foreign Languages</i>	334.923	551.864	43.88	74.78
Turkish	179.895	229.075	23.57	30.71
Slav	41.017	86.086	5.37	11.54
Koutsovlach	39.855	53.997	5.22	7.24
Albanian	22.736	49.632	2.98	6.65
Pomacian	18.671	18.086	2.45	2.42
Armenian	8.990	26.827	1.18	3.60
Gypsy	7.429	8.141	0.97	1.09
Russian	3.815	8.126	0.50	1.09
French	2.101	4.518	0.27	0.61
Roumanian	2.082	2.901	0.27	0.39
English	1.456	3.529	0.19	0.47
Spanish	1.339	53.125	0.18	7.12
German	1.301	3.401	0.17	0.46
Italian	894	4.426	0.12	0.59
Hebrew or Yiddish	853	34	0.11	0.00
Other Languages	2.489	5.964	0.33	0.80

APPENDIX 3

Results of the Population Census of Greece of 7th April 1951 (vol. 1, Athens 1961, p. cvii).
 Table X I. Population of Greece According to Religion, as recorded in the Census of 1928, 1940 and 1951

Date of Census	Total with Religion	Orthodox	Roman Catholic	Protestant	Monophy-site	Other Christian	Moslem	Hebrew	Other non-Christian	No Religion
1928	6,204,684	5,961,529	35,182	9,003	—	—	126,017	72,791	45	117
1940	7,460,203	7,197,583	30,614	6,349	16,350	529	141,090	67,661	2	25
1951	7,632,801	7,472,559	28,430	7,034	1,205	4,438	112,665	6,325	24	121
I. Absolute Figures										
1928	1,000.00	960.81	5.67	1.45	—	—	20.31	11.73	0.01	0.02
1940	1,000.00	964.80	4.10	0.85	2.19	0.07	18.91	9.07	0.00	0.01
1951	1,000.00	979.01	3.72	0.92	0.16	0.58	14.76	0.83	0.00	0.02
2. Proportion per Thousand										