

Athanassios E. Karathanassis

Concerning Thrace: Adrianople in the eighteen-sixties

The movement known as Bulgarianism had already made its appearance in Eastern Thrace and the anxieties of the Greek diplomats serving in Thrace were justified by the activities of the Bulgarians. The Greek consul in Adrianople, P. Logothetis, who was well acquainted with the situation, informed his Ministry about prevailing conditions in the vilayet of Adrianople in his report of 17th October 1865 during this critical period, that is to say before the publishing of the firman that recognised the Bulgarian Exarchate.

Logothetis begins this report with a statement on education in Adrianople, a situation which he considers inimical to Greek interests; he certainly gives a negative picture of jealousy and poorly understood antagonism between the local Greek citizens and those Greeks who were temporary residents in Adrianople: whatever the latter propose, he writes, the former reject, because they want everything that is achieved in their town to spring from their own initiative, and cannot tolerate anything instigated by the Greek nationals. The incomers for their part take exactly the same attitude and behave in the same way towards the Adrianopolitans. However, both the Greek factions have the same zeal for the progress of Greek education; but it is difficult, he writes, to find a point of mutual understanding between them. There was a further problem, though, for the young Adrianopolitans: a lack of will among their parents to provide for them anything beyond elementary education, so that few indeed were the instances when children were sent for wider studies. This in the estimation of Logothetis was due to the citizens' perception that elementary education was sufficient for all the demands of life. Nevertheless, continues Logothetis, all the Greeks of Adrianople were in one respect worthy of admiration and praise: in their love for their race and their native land, especially those who belonged to the second and third social classes; Logothetis cites as an illustration

of this patriotism among the Greeks of Adrianople their years-long struggle against Panslavism and the Uniate doctrine; their opposition, he stresses, demonstrated their ethnic pre-eminence, as much in Adrianople as in the wider area as far as the boundaries of Philippoupoli.

According to P. Logothetis two special schools of letters were functioning during that period in Adrianople, as well as six demotic schools, two girls' schools, two Bulgarian elementary schools, and the Greek Central School; of these, two demotic schools, the girls' schools, one Bulgarian school and the central School were situated inside the city, the Castle as it was called. The two demotic schools had about 230 pupils, the Girls' School 130, the Bulgarian 50, the Greek Central 70; that is to say, 430 Greek pupils and 50 Bulgarian. In the surrounding area, 200 pupils studied in the village of Ildrimi, 100 in Kigikio, 65 in At-Pazar and in Kirischane 180. In demotic education the mutual learning method had been introduced with the aim of preparing pupils for entrance to the Greek School. The teachers were all local and had been educated in Adrianople; no doubt their teaching aimed mainly to fit their pupils to earn a living. The Girls' Schools supplied basic education, reading, writing, arithmetic and Scripture. The first of the two schools of letters was directed by an elderly male teacher with a young woman assistant who taught handicrafts, while the second was directed by a young woman teacher who also was educated in Adrianople.

The Central School aimed to deliver Greek Christian education of the young in conjunction with practical knowledge useful in everyday life; at that time it was run by the Epirote educator P. Kyratsidis who had been trained in the Zosimaian School of Ioannina and in the past taught at the School of Philippoupolis. Most of the students turned at an early age towards the arts (which here clearly means handicrafts) and to trade, while only a very few went on to secondary education or to university which obliged them to move elsewhere. The Central School followed the curriculum and the teaching methods of the schools in Greece, which were divided into three classes. Kyratsidis taught the two higher classes and the lowest was taught by his assistant who belonged to Adrianople. The lessons were as follows: in the third class, Greek, Plutarch, the orators, syntax, arithmetic, Greek history, geography with specific subject-matter relating to Greece and to Turkey, the holy catechism, the French language, and composition; in the second class, Greek, Lucian or Xeno-

phon, etymology, arithmetic, geography, the sacred story of Messiah, and practice in reading and writing with a view to the promotion of good diction, personal enrichment and the development of patriotism, which last was introduced as a result of P. Logothetis' intervention. In the first class the subjects taught were Greek phrases and Aesop's fables, the rules of grammar and arithmetic, geography, sacred history and writing practice. The principal aim in the first class was to teach contemporary Greek, while ancient Greek was taught as a means "of understanding and enriching it". At the end Logothetis points out that a third of the students were very impoverished.

The schools had no income at all, which made smooth functioning very difficult; their only means were the contributions of the parish churches, of patriotic townspeople, of Greek citizen merchants, of the Metropolitan of Adrianople and the insignificant offerings of the pupils' parents. And since none of this money was handed over with any regularity, the teachers were usually paid at the end of the school year.

The school inspectors were chosen from the respectable citizens of the district and undertook to attend to the smooth running of the schools. In all the Greek schools, six-member committees operated which by their example tried to awaken the conscience of their fellow-townspeople and draw them out of their indifference to educational matters¹.

The female sex. His assertions supported by intelligent citizens of Adrianople and temporarily resident Greek merchants alike, as well as by his own observations, P. Logothetis considered that the women of Adrianople were distinguished by their "mental agility", their sense of honour, their cleanliness, their diligence, their wifely virtue; for their lack of schooling the women of Adrianople substituted their intelligence and their aptitude for learning. The female population of Adrianople was always busy with craftwork, embroidery, knitting, sewing, making silken fabrics on old and inadequate looms; and most of the women reared silkworms. Many of these occupations they tackled in groups. The women of Adrianople loved gossip and dabbling in other people's

1. For education in Adrianople generally see G. Konstantinidis, "A Little About Adrianople", *Θρακικά* 17 (1942) 292-307, *Θρακικά* 18 (1943) 50-84, and *Θρακικά* 19 (1944) 39-71.

business; they were less superstitious than their husbands.

The Ottoman women were more intelligent than their husbands and had a strongly assertive demeanour; usually they were on good terms with the Greek women. They were by nature impractical, however, and extremely lazy, most of them not knowing even how to sew. The Ottomans of Adrianople were distinguished from the others of their race firstly by their manly bearing and second by their love of all things Russian. The beys especially loved the Russians, but this love was born of the fear that Russian power induced in them, fear which gradually had developed into sympathy and a conviction that sooner or later the Thracian lands would be ruled by the Russians. According to Logothetis, the Turkish beys were disillusioned with central government and expected the Russians to relieve them of the heavy burden of taxation they bore; they pretended to be law-abiding while confessing often to their respectable Greek fellow-citizens their inmost longings, receiving in return the consolation of an “assurance” that the Russians would very soon be established in Thrace and put an end to all their tribulations².

Significant from every point of view in the opinion of P. Logothetis was the dwindling or even vanishing of the Ottoman element of the population from certain quarters of Adrianople and its replacement by Greeks or Bulgarians; various areas populated by Ottomans literally emptied while other small areas were increased by the settlement of Greeks and Bulgarians³.

The basic reason for the shrinking or disappearance of these Turkish quarters was the Ottoman notion of *kismet* or destiny, because of which they never would take preventive measures against danger or epidemics or modify their very poor diet which shortened their lives. Ottoman women at this time were wholly dependent on their husbands, and fearing that they themselves would die of starvation they would choose to poison their infants or to drown them at birth. Other reasons were the

2. Georgios Vizyenos in his short story *Mosk of Selim* characterised in the most reasonable way the feelings of the Russophile sections of Ottoman society in Thrace.

3. The depopulation was due to the confused situation created in Thrace by the Russo-Turkish wars, the threatened Russian invasions, but chiefly (as Logothetis himself notes) to the lack of state care for the Ottoman element (among others) which resulted in the flight of the Turks towards Constantinople and the interior of the Turkish empire. Naturally this drift of population was due also to other causes which the Greek consul cites later.

abuse of bodily pleasures, and the men's confining themselves to mosques in order to avoid the privations of army life. The secret use of a variety of contraceptive medicines by the Ottoman women contributed to the weakening of the Ottoman race; so also did conscription of the Ottoman citizens of the vilayet of Adrianople, which signed the death-warrant of hundreds of thousands of men.

The inhabitants of Adrianople were Greeks, Slav-speaking Greeks, Slavs, Ottoman Turks and a crowd of every race and language, with an obvious preponderance of the Greek element; the Ottoman was next in size, then the Slav-speaking Greeks, known as Graecoslavs⁴ or Hellenic Slavs, the Slavic element, and finally the foreigners. These ratios, moreover, were observable in all of Thrace, from the coastal towns of Anchialos and Pyrgos to Komotini and Karagats; "to a distance of three or four hours from every coast; from this imaginary line to Adrianople, including the midland regions throughout the length of Thrace", as Logothetis informs us. He estimated that above the Aimos the Slavic races preponderated to such an extent that Philippoupoli and Stenemachos⁵ seemed oases of Greekness. In general the population of the vilayet of Adrianople amounted to approximately 1,800,000 souls (*sous benefice d'inventaire* in Logothetis' own phrase).

The population of Adrianople in 1865 rose to 100,000, of whom the Greeks numbered 30,000 with 5,000 households, 10 churches, 9 schools and 975 pupils; the Ottoman Turks numbered 42,000 with 8,000 households and 60 mosques, of which the most important was that of Sultan Selim built in the style of the church of Agia Sophia; the Turks had 80 schools, a military school and 800 pupils who had basic lessons. The Bulgarians numbered 7,000 and had 1,200 households and 3 schools of

4. Different kinds of intercourse had little by little resulted in the formation of a Graecoslavic society in Eastern Romylia and Northern Thrace which even as late as the nineteen-twenties was little understood. Most of these Hellenoslavs (or Hellenobulgarians) considered themselves Greeks and remained stubbornly subject to the Patriarch when the controversy occurred between Greeks and Bulgarians, for which reason the Exarchates called them Graecomanes.

5. In other places too in the present volume we have noted this fact, Greek preponderance, that is to say, in this wide geographical area as indicated here by Logothetis, which led even the Sublime Porte, always biased towards the Bulgarians, to exempt the populations of these areas, as Greek, from the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate by the issue of a firman on the subject in 1872.

mutual instruction with 110 pupils. The Jews numbered 4,000 in 500 households with 10 places of worship, 2 schools and 500 pupils. The Catholics were 200 in 50 households with 2 churches and 1 school with 50 pupils, among whom were some Uniates. There were 60 Protestants from 15 households with 1 church but no school. There were 5,000 Armenians from 1,000 households, who had 2 churches, 2 schools and 300 pupils. There were 500 tent-dwelling gypsies, and those of various other races numbered 8,000-10,000⁶.

Slavs and Bulgarians. The majority of these lived in the northern parts of Thrace and had Philippoupoli as their headquarters. The Bulgarians (again, according to P. Logothetis) up until 1850 were being hellenized rapidly, were taught in the Greek language and copied everything Greek. After the Crimean War (1853-1856) things changed: on the one hand the lack of systematic support and on the other the total absence of Greek power combined with the activities of certain ambitious and pretentious Slavs in Constantinople and Philippoupoli brought a dramatic change to the relations between Greeks and Bulgarians which had an immediate impact on the progress of Hellenism. Then the idea of nationalism was born in the Slavs, which chiefly took the form of hatred towards the Greeks whom they regarded as a barrier to the development of their plans. The confused situation which was created in Thrace was exploited by Jesuit propaganda which deceived and continued until 1865 to deceive a few Bulgarians. The involvement of the Jesuits, frequent (and tiresome) collections of money and recorded financial irregularities not only wore out the goodwill of many Bulgarians but also moderated their dislike of the Greeks, so that they seemed more conciliatory, at least in Adrianople. From this point on, in whatever concerned Hellenism in Adrianople and the interests of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in this town, if the bishops had been more assiduous and the elders more

6. The figures given by P. Logothetis are more or less exact; he himself admits that the number of inhabitants is approximate. Consul K. P. Phoivos noted in his article about Adrianople in the periodical *Pandora* in 1862, volume 13, page 69, that Adrianople had 45,000 Greeks, 35,000 Turks, 5,000 Bulgarians and 4,000 Jews, while the Frenchman A. Synvet in his book *Ethnographic Table of Turkey*, page 8, notes for the year 1877 24,450 Greeks — see S. T. B. Psaltis, *Thrace* etc., Athens 1919, p. 99, 174-175. Phoivos too gives 9 Greek schools in Adrianople, but 1,109 pupils instead of Logothetis' 975 — see Psaltis, *ibid.*, 176.

skilful then they would have been able in the shortest time to remove the difficulties between the Greeks and the Slavs.

In 1865 the situation was still more confused because Bulgarian intellectuals, ambitious in the extreme, who had studied in Greece and in the West⁷ and who were devoid of Christian virtue and basic ethics, began operations in Thrace by putting themselves forward as self-appointed protectors of the Bulgarians and as reformers of Bulgarian ethnicity in Thrace. Unfortunately these ambitious Bulgarians used the most unethical methods against Hellenism, trying to stamp out the Greek language by seizing the churches that the Greeks had built and by destroying every Greek memorial⁸; it was a case of actual uprising on the part of the Bulgarians, who laid waste the Greek schools in many towns of Northern Thrace; by this method they completely suppressed the Greek language and imported many innovations into religion; and further, they changed the names of towns⁹ and countries and geographical borders. The misfortune was, however, that they misled the unpoliticised, uneducated and unsophisticated Bulgarian people and roused them to fanaticism by means of mob oratory that, demonstrating ignorance of history, represented the Bulgarians as a most ancient race, descended from the ancient Pelasgians; it was the appearance of the Greeks that had brought about their total decline, throwing into darkness this heroic and gallant nation. In the cafes and bars nothing was heard but words of hatred against the Greeks and the Ecumenical Patriarchate, with the result that the Bulgarians broke away from the Great Church and took revenge upon it by joining the Uniate Church or Protestantism or by becoming atheists. Logothetis notes that unfortunately Powers existed that were promoting their political and other schemes at this time by means of the Bulgarians, exploiting Bulgarian fantasies¹⁰.

In short, this small gang of Bulgarian intellectuals laid waste the heart and conscience “of this nation poor in spirit” in the words of

7. Dimitris Petropoulos, *Spiritual Links Between Greeks and Bulgarians in the 18th Century*, Athens 1954.

8. The Bulgarians employed in Macedonia too this tactic of seizing churches and schools.

9. A typical example of this was the change of the name of Philippoupoli to Plovdiv as described by G. Tsoukalas, *A Historiographical Account of the Region of Philippoupoli*, Vienna 1851, pp. 53-54.

10. Naturally this means France, England, Austria and, chiefly, Russia.

Logothetis, spread irrational revulsion and hatred against the Greeks, and plotted finally their complete downfall. By 1865 this group had lessened its activities; yet according to Logothetis it was preparing a fiercer new outbreak that would exploit the political and ethical sickness of the Turks and have the support of the Russian consuls as well as of the representatives of the Christian powers who would back their efforts in accordance with the circumstances. The men in this group reached the point of envisioning the degeneration of all the Greeks of Northern Thrace. It was a difficult time for Thracian Hellenism, wrote Logothetis, which in the near future, he foresaw, would face circumstances similar to those of the Graecobulgarian war during the Byzantine period¹¹. There was of course no shortage of opportunities for reconciliation between the two warring sides but the interference of foreign missionaries and agents did not permit of their success.

Means of healing. As a means of confronting Bulgarian propaganda, Logothetis advocated harmony, prudent circumspection and moderation on the part of the Greeks in the face of Bulgarian bitterness; he also recommended improving the standard of education in Thrace¹², which was lagging, and support for national consciousness on the part of the consuls, who according to him ought to have common sense and a good Greek heart and carry out their work selflessly. These were the chief means by which on the one hand Bulgarian propaganda might be curbed and on the other the great easily-swayed multitude, deprived of education by the age-long harsh yoke of slavery, might be enlightened.

Concerning the Greek Elders. The Consul P. Logothetis observed with sorrow that some of the important Greek elders, for all that they loved their mother-tongue and religion, nevertheless felt a sympathy towards Russia and naturally became pawns in Russia's game-plan, misled by the medals which that country showered on them. Others among them felt drawn to the Bulgarian movement because although they had had a proper Greek upbringing they were of Slavic extraction; they had acceded to Slav propaganda and although superficially they seemed like Greeks they had been rendered puppets of Pan Slavism. Other

11. See *Diodore's* (pseudonyme) observations in his memorandum *Le Vilayet d'Adriano-ple*, Paris 1919.

12. This was the era when the Greek state as well as Hellenism in Constantinople had not yet begun to take the necessary measures to develop Greek education in Thrace.

Greeks too had expressed feelings of sympathy towards Russia, but these had their own quite justifiable reasons. P. Logothetis did not agree, and was opposed to the clergy whom he considered poor and ill-educated.

Trade in Adrianople. Adrianople was in the middle of Thrace but communicated with the interior and with the Mediterranean by means of the river Evros. It had contact too with the Sea of Marmara, with Kallipoli and Raidestos and with the Black Sea too by means of the lakes of Pyrgos and Anchialos; it was no more than twenty-four hours distant from all these centres and communication between them was easy because no insuperable obstacles were interposed. As a consequence it was considered, and is, a place well-suited to commerce. From Adrianople during this period were exported fleeces, animals large and small (sheep, calves, oxen, bulls, horses), cheese, butter, cereals of all kinds, silk that was considered the finest in all the East, rice, rose-oil, wines, oak-mast, linseed, small amounts of tobacco, and homemade textiles "of middling niceness".

In general the Adrianople area had rich grazing-lands, which is the reason that Selimno and Kalambakio of the Adrianople vilayet were famed for their wool and mutton. The amount of wool exported annually from Adrianople rose to a million okas (1280 tonnes); it was separated into three different qualities and into white, black and grey; it was transported by ox-cart to the harbour of Raidestos where it was transhipped on to sailing-vessels and steamers and carried to Europe via Massalia. More than 350,000 okas (448 tonnes) were reserved for internal consumption; the woollen-mills of Philippoupoli were as well-known as those of Selimno (Pyrgos). Widely known too during that period were the wool-workshop of the Greek Gioumousgerdanis in Philippoupoli and that of the Ottoman government in Pyrgos; their products were consumed by the home market, by the Ottoman army and by the markets of Asia Minor and Syria. Wool was paid for in advance during the first three months of every year (the so-called kaparo, or deposit); and its collection took about a month and a half, from the beginning of May until the 15th of June.

The export of carcasses and skins. An important source of income for the inhabitants of the vilayet of Adrianople was the export of meat which was absorbed by the market in Constantinople and in the islands of the Greek archipelago; from 1860 a large part of these exports was

directed to the Egyptian market. The skins of both large and small animals were exported to Europe, to Greece and to the Aegean islands, while large quantities of cheese and butter were exported to Constantinople, Smyrna, Syros and Alexandria.

Also important was the cultivation of cereals in the northerly and south-easterly districts of Adrianople, which produced more than three million kilos for Constantinople and exported via the harbours of Herakleia, Raideostos, the Black Sea ports and those of the Ainos, and also through Komotini to the Mediterranean. Produce was pushed on through the harbour of Ainos along the "navigable" river Evros by means of rafts, because the Evros did not freeze until the end of February.

The wheat of Adrianople was strong and soft and of good quality; however it presented certain problems in damp conditions and in transit to Ainos it became vulnerable, especially in summer; also cultivated were rye and maize, which did not do very well compared with that of Komotini, as well as barley and the oilseeds linseed, sesame, canary-seed (known as kouskoul) which were grown in the districts of Chaskioi and Zara. More than three hundred thousand kilos of these grains were exported annually to Constantinople, chiefly linseed and canary-seed, while sesame was needed for both food and lighting where previously it had been used in the manufacture of olive oil.

The production of silk was well-developed in the vilayet of Adrianople as in all of Central Thrace, and it came in many kinds. The silk of Adrianople, for example, was white, lustrous and smooth; however in 1857 the rearing of silk-worms suffered a severe blow, an epidemic which not only resulted in much-reduced yield but also in lowered quality. The annual yield of bales had reached a million okas but after 1857 it sank to 200,000.

From 1853 this product, already cleaned and dried, supplied the European market via Raideostos and Massalia. 26,000 okas of dry cocoons, processed by three silk-workshops in a suburb of Karagats, supplied the home market. The low-grade cocoons were made into thick silk and absorbed by the home market and by Constantinople, Bosnia, Syria and Tergesti.

Rice was cultivated in the region of Philippoupoli and was not much exported because most was consumed by the inhabitants and by the

Ottoman army, especially after rice imports from Egypt dwindled in response to price increases.

Rose oil was produced, and of course still is, in the provinces of Northern Thrace, chiefly in the provinces of Kazanlik and Zaarag; it was exported to Constantinople and sold by the *maskali*, a unit of measurement containing a dram and a half; it was known for its good quality and prized as a perfume and therefore used by both Greek and Turkish women in Constantinople.

Wines: These were produced in two villages, each eight hours from Adrianople, Aslani and Zaloufi; the wines of these two villages were distinguished by their taste, their bouquet, their "vigour" and also for their "extreme spiritual strength". In these villages they kept wine for thirty years. The wine was of a lesser quality in the other regions of the vilayet of Adrianople. The Saranta Ecclesiae (Forty Churches) which were twelve hours from Adrianople produced "most plentiful" wine, but of the lowest quality; it was weak white wine which at first was exported to Russia, but later, when the straits of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont were opened, it was supplanted by French wines and by Greek wines from the islands of the archipelago. The weakness of the Saranta Ecclesiae's (Forty Churches) wine exporting imposed the necessity of converting to spirits instead¹³.

Oak mast: This was produced in the area of Ainos and Makri and was sent to the harbour at Smyrna where it was exported to Europe. Its production was already much reduced by 1865, the year in which P. Logothetis wrote his account, because the inhabitants of the region had lost interest in the propagation of oaks and daily watched them crumble with indifference.

Olives: The situation with regard to oak trees was observable also in respect of the olive trees which filled Makri and the neighbouring districts of Ainos and Ksero; Logothetis indeed proposed the grafting of the wild olives, which would have transformed the district into vast olive groves, provided that the inhabitants were not neglectful.

Timber in the province of Philippoupoli was still providing revenue to the area since Rodope had extensive forests from which the

13. See the relevant passage in the recent book by I. S. Giannakopoulos, *In the Saranta Ecclesiae (Forty Churches) of Eastern Thrace*, Thessaloniki 1994, pp. 32-44.

inhabitants derived wood for fires and for building. A large part of this timber supplied the builders and the boat-yards of Alexandria and Smyrna.

Imports: Into the vilayet of Adrianople were imported fabrics of various colours made of cotton, silk and wool, in addition to thread, coffee, sugar, iron, lead, colouring materials and other less important items. These came from the markets of Constantinople and the various cities of Austria.

Trade fairs: Throughout the area from spring onwards until the end of autumn, various trade fairs were set up at which was consumed the greatest part of all natural produce and manufactured goods. The trade fair of Ouzounzova, which began on the first of September and lasted until the 20th, was a big fair and well-known in Thrace under Ottoman rule; merchants were drawn to it from different parts of Turkey, from the Principalities of the Danube, from Serbia, the Aegean islands, Asia Minor and from different parts of Austria.

Trade was largely in the hands of the Greeks, but also involved were a few Jews and Armenians as well as Franks who had arrived in Adrianople around 1700 and who had mostly become Hellenized as a result of intermarriage with local Greek women; these Franks kept their Catholic faith, spoke Greek, followed Greek customs and preferred to be known as Franks rather than Greeks. These Francohellènes were French, Italian or Prussian citizens. A very few Bulgarians of Adrianople were engaged in stock-raising, the Jews in banking, while the Armenians, who were already few in number, were occupied in commerce, in which calling they had particularly distinguished themselves during the preceding decades. As for the Ottoman Turks, ill-clad and barefoot apart from the beys, they did not work at all but frequented the cafes and passed their time telling stories and proverbs in the company of their narghiles.

The chief towns in the vilayet of Adrianople were: Adrianople itself, Philippoupoli, Raïdestos, Pyrgos and Komotini (Gemourtzina). In these towns the export trade flourished, especially in Adrianople where the merchants acted as agents for Greek shops based in Constantinople or simply as representatives; almost all were Greek citizens and under foreign protection in whatever concerned their shops. Although Philippoupoli was the centre of wheat production, no export trade existed there because almost everything produced was bought by agents,

merchants and representatives based in Adrianople or in other parts of Thrace; this meant that Philippoupoli sank to being a mere transport depot rather than a centre of the export business in the commercial sense. Philippoupoli imported various fabrics from Austria and from towns in Germany, while other Thracian towns obtained what they needed from Constantinople.

P. Logothetis explains in his notes that the information he makes available he collected from respectable native and Greek citizens who had been established in the Thracian megalopolis for many years and had visited most parts of Thrace and of the vilayet of Adrianople in the course of their commercial activities. Of course he complemented their evidence with his own personal assessments.