An Introduction
to
Pontic Greek History:
Part III

Sam Topalidis
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Cover Page: Photograph of Canberran Adam Neou and his *kemenche*.

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Preface

Pontic Greeks are rightful members of Greek society because they came from a land that they lost because of their Greekness (Tsekouras 2016:113).

This booklet is the third part of a series of essays which provide *An Introduction to Pontic Greek History*. They have been written for those who are not interested in reading detailed analyses on Pontic history. Each chapter is devoted to a specific aspect of our history and when read with the previous parts of the series, the reader will acquire a good knowledge of Pontic history. Within this document, words within square brackets '[ ]' within a reference are my words. All the many references are included at the end of the booklet.

I want to stress that Greeks from Pontos (Pontic Greeks), north-east Anatolia in modern Türkiye, are Greeks from Anatolia. For those of us who proudly identify as Pontic Greeks, we should not think that we are any better or worse than other Greeks. We are all temeteron.

In this booklet, chapter 1, *A Survey of Greek Churches in Gumushane, Kromni and Stavri*, briefly discusses the history of these three areas south of Trabzon and most of their churches, which are in varying stages of decay. By the number of churches that were built, even in small communities, Christianity was an inseparable part of the life of Pontic Greeks.

Chapter 2, *The History and Greek Churches of Santa*, describes the history and all the Greek churches in famous Santa, which is located in an isolated area in the Pontic mountains, south of Trabzon. The Greeks of the nucleated seven main districts of Santa were well-known for their independence and fighting spirit.

Chapter 3, *Fedor Uspenskii's Archaeological Research in Trabzon During World War I*, which was co-written with Russell McCaskie, describes some of the Byzantine archaeological work conducted by renowned Russian Professor Uspenskii and his team while in Trabzon. This information includes first-hand observations by Russian army officer Sergei Mintslov. Considerable documents and other items were removed by Uspenskii from Trabzon and sent to the Russia shortly before the 1917 Revolution from which the Soviet Union would emerge. These artefacts have not been returned to Türkiye.

Chapter 4, *The American Protestant Mission at Merzifon*, covers the period from mid-19th century till 1921 of this respected Protestant mission which covered 16 ha at Merzifon, south-west of Samsun. The mission was closed in 1921, but its much respected Anatolian College re-opened in 1924 in Thessaloniki and is still operating there today.

Chapter 5 *Rifles Used in Anatolia, Late 19th-Early 20th Century*, was written with my late brother Terry who guided me through the various rifles and ammunition used in the last 100 years. (Although Terry loved rifles, I do not.) The Ottoman Turks were not able to manufacture rifles, so they relied heavily on purchasing rifles and ammunition from abroad, particularly from Mauser in Germany. Later, during the Greco-Turkish war, Mustafa Kemal received weapons and ammunition from the Soviet Union, France and Italy.

Chapter 6, *Observations by Foreign Visitors of the Soumela Monastery*', covers first-hand observations of the famous Soumela Greek monastery, 50 km south of Trabzon from some famous people from 1701 to 1929. The monastery was built by at least the 10th century and was abandoned by its monks in 1923, under the exchange of populations. For those of us who have visited this

monastery, the epitome of Greek Pontos, it is an emotional experience. The monastery and its surrounding landscape is awe inspiring.

Chapter 7, *History of Kerasous (Giresun)* west of Trabzon, describes the little that is known of the history of this former Greek colony and focuses on the town from the 19th century. It famously had a Pontic Greek lord mayor for 19 years up to 1904—quite an achievement.

Chapter 8, *Pontic Greek Music*, is a summary of the different categories researchers have used to describe this music after Pontic Greeks left north-east Anatolia and moved to Greece. Pontic music differs from music in the rest of Türkiye and Greece.

Chapter 9 lists all the many references used in this well-researched booklet. This list can be used for those who are interested in reading more detailed information. Pontic Greeks were great survivors.

I wish to thank Michael Bennett and Russell McCaskie for their comments on this work. My many articles on Pontic history and culture can be found at: (www.pontosworld.com/index.php/history/sam-topalidis). My last two books can be purchased from the publisher in Thessaloniki at: (www.afoikyriakidi.gr/en/search?orderby=position&orderway=desc&search_query=Topalidis). Please, if you have any queries on Pontos, don't hesitate to contact me at: sam.topalidis@bigpond.com

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1. A Survey of Greek Churches in Gumushane, Kromni and Stavri

Introduction

This chapter is a summary of the history and research on most Pontic Greek Orthodox churches in old Gumushane, Stavri and Kromni in Chaldia (south of Trabzon, Fig. 1.1)[1]. Chaldia is high country with harsh winters and arid hot summers (Bryer and Winfield 1985) and has been subject to damaging earthquakes (Note 1.1).

It appears that most of the churches were built in the 19th century with walls of rubble (rough uneven) stone, with the arches, corner stones, door and window jambs built with smooth cut stone. They were built in an east-west direction with the circular apses at the eastern end. The roofs appear to be covered with rock tiles, probably slate.

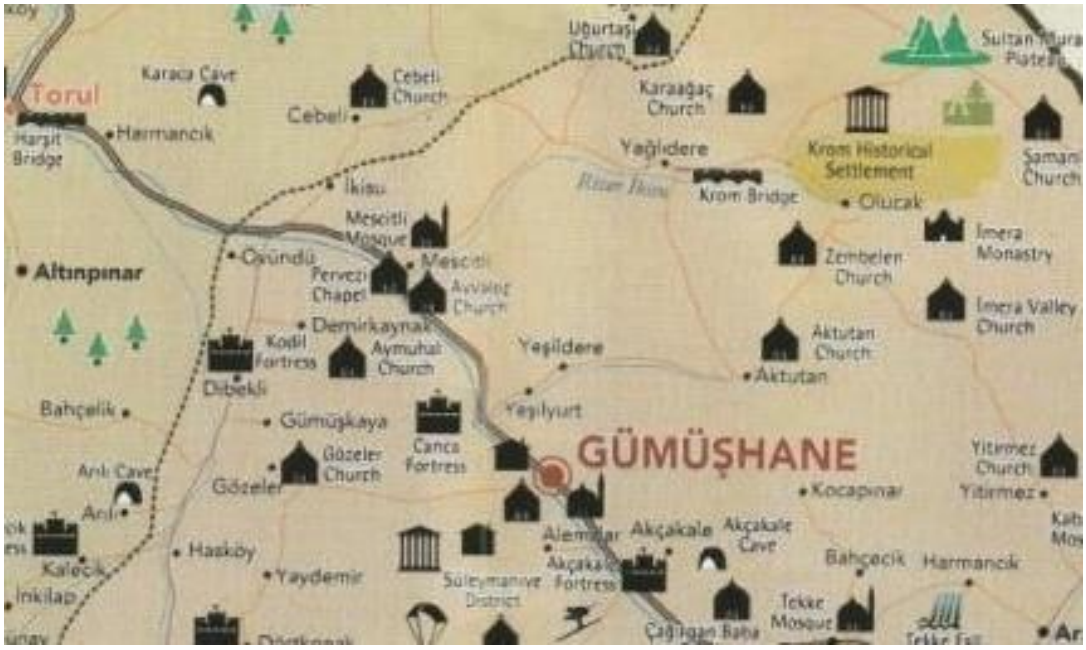

Fig.1.1: Map of the Gümüşhane area (Köse (2013:82), Torul to Gümüşhane = 20 km)

Chaldia

In 400 BC, Xenophon[2] reported several Anatolian natives south of the Greek colony of Trabzon. Some of these people included the Chalybes around Gümüşhane and the Scytheni further west. Although the army of Alexander the Great (336–323 BC) defeated the Persians in Anatolia, the Greeks did not conquer the Black Sea coast. This area however, eventually accepted Greek authority (Şerifoğlu and Bakan 2015). In 302 BC, Mithradates I of Persian descent, established the kingdom of Pontos (Roller 2020). With the defeat of Mithradates VI by the Romans in 64 BC, his kingdom eventually became part of the Roman empire (Erciyas 2001). Later, Chaldia was integrated into the Early Byzantine empire.

From 1204 to 1461, Chaldia then became part of the small Byzantine Komnenoi empire of Trebizond and Chaldian barons guarded the trunk road from

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1 This chapter is an updated summary of the author's article 'A survey of churches in inner Chaldia, Pontos'.

2 Xenophon was a General and historian from Athens.

Trabzon to Erzurum. Chaldia was incorporated into the Ottoman empire from 1479 (Bryer 2009b).

The most important town of the region was Gümüşhane (Turkish for silver city). From the 1680s, the lands were settled by Greek Christians and crypto-Christians who were miners, smelters, charcoal-burners and graziers (Bryer and Winfield 1985). Crypto-Christians were people who had openly converted from Christianity to Islam, but retained their Christian beliefs and practices in secret.

The 18th century brought income from silver mining which enriched its newly-founded churches and monasteries in Chaldia (www.ehw.gr/asiaminor/Forms/fLemmaBody.aspx?lemmaid=10204). Chaldia has been subject to damaging earthquakes (Note 1.1).

Gümüşhane

The silver mining town of Gümüşhane was established in the 1590s, on the Harşit River at 1,500 m above sea level, about 100 km south-west of Trabzon. The silver mines produced lead, silver and a little gold (Bryer and Winfield 1985).

From at least the mid-17th century, the Greeks of Gümüşhane and the surrounding villages worked in silver mining, smelting or in the related charcoal burning [/tree-felling] industries. [Lead poisoning and mining injuries must have reduced the life expectancy of its workers.] For this work, they were given tax exemptions and at a time of persecution from the Pontic feudal valley lords, it attracted Greek migrants from coastal Pontos (Ballian (1995); Bryer and Winfield (1970)).

After the 1828–1829 Russo-Turkish war, 42,000 Greeks from Gümüşhane and Erzurum (200 km south-east of Gümüşhane) settled in the Russian empire (Xanthopoulou-Kyriakou 1991).

In 1844, the death penalty for renouncing Islam was abolished and from 1845, conscription was introduced, although Christians were able to pay a tax to escape conscription (Zürcher 2017). In 1856, the *Hatt-i-Humayun* proclaimed the principle of freedom of religion in the Ottoman empire. Most of the crypto-Christians admitted their Christian faith from 1856 after the mines in Gümüşhane had been abandoned. In 1857, it was reported that in Gümüşhane there were around 1,500 houses of which 53% were occupied by Muslims, the rest were Greeks or crypto-Christians (Bryer 1983).

The end of silver mining coincided with the building of the Trabzon to Erzurum rural highway which bypassed [old] Gümüşhane by 4 km to the location of the new town (Bryer and Winfield 1970).

In July 1916, the Russians occupied Gümüşhane. From February 1918, around 45,000 Greeks, mostly from the counties of Gümüşhane, Kelkit and Şiran (the last two counties were south of Gümüşhane) sought refuge in Russia during the Turkish reoccupation (Fotiadis 2019).

From September 1922, after the defeat of the Greek army in western Anatolia in the Greco-Turkish War (1919–1922), Greeks were pressured to leave Anatolia for Greece. The forced expulsion was finalised from January 1923 under the exchange of populations under the Lausanne Convention.[3] All the churches were abandoned but many have survived to varying degrees and this is the focus of the following discussion.

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[3] In the 1930s, it was believed that there were 100,000 Pontic Greek speakers [seems high] at Rostov-on-Don in Russia who spoke Pontic Greek [*Romeyka*] consistent with that spoken in the Gümüşhane district (Dawkins 1937).

Old Gümüşhane Greek Churches

Panagia Greek church

The ruined former Panagia Greek church was probably built in the 19th century. The apse is carved into the rock with a holy spring. The interior of the church measures 11 m by 8 m (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-231649/merkes-suleymaniye-mahallesi-panaghia-kaya-kilisesi.html).

St John Greek church

The ruined former St John the Prodromos and Baptist Greek church (Plate 1.1) was possibly founded in 1736, but the present single-apse structure was rebuilt in 1819 and repaired and painted in 1832 (Bryer and Winfield 1970). Its dimensions were 20 m by 8 m (https://gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/59094,suleymaniye-gezi-rehberipdf.pdf).

Plate 1.1: St John Greek church, old Gümüşhane (karadeniz.gov.tr/gumushane-kulturel-tasinmaz-varliklar/?amp=evet&sahife=4)

St Theodore Greek church

The ruined former St Theodore Greek church was partially restored in 1702. Its dimensions were 12 m by 9 m (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/59094,suleymaniye-gezi-rehberipdf.pdf).

St George Greek metropolitan church

In 1723, the St George Greek metropolitan church with three apses was founded (Plate 1.2). It was the largest church in Gümüşhane. The long annex added to its southern side probably represented the cathedral offices and perhaps the library of Chaldia (Bryer and Winfield 1970). The church measures 18 m by 13 m (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-219991/suleymaniye-mahallesi-39hagios-georgios-metropolitik-ki-.html).

Plate 1.2: St George Greek metropolitan church, old Gümüşhane, 2022
(orthodoxtimes.com/the-ecumenical-patriarch-visited-argyroupoli-pontus-photos/)

The St Stephanos Greek church

This ruined Greek church was built in 1832. A narrow chapel and fourth apse were added (Bryer and Winfield 1970).

Alemdar Village

Greek monastery of St George

Alemdar village is 6 km south of modern Gumushane (Fig. 1.1). In 1624, the monastery of St George, Choutoura (now Alemdar) was founded or renovated (Ballian 1995). It was the leading monastery of Chaldia (Plate 1.3).

Plate 1.3: St George Greek church Alemdar, 2023
(hurriyetdailynews.com/orthodox-church-in-black-sea-region-plundered-by-treasure-hunters-162404)

Its library was burnt in 1764. Some of its sacramental items (such as liturgical fans, chalices and crosses) are now in the Benaki Museum in Athens. Its main church was replaced in 1883 and abuts a sacred cave in a cliff face (Bryer et al. (1972–1973); Bryer and Winfield (1985)).

The church had three apses and has been plundered by treasure hunters. The locals hope that the church will be renovated (hurriyetdailynews.com/orthodox-church-in-black-sea-region-plundered-by-treasure-hunters-162404).

Karşiyaka district church

Before 1923, Alemdar had a Greek school and three churches: St Euphemia (built in 1736), St George and the Koimesis of the Theotokos. The church in the village that had survived was a 19th century three apsed structure with a dome (name unknown) (Bryer et al. 1972–1973). This ruined former church [either St Euphemia or the Koimesis of the Theotokos] with no roof, was built 8 m by 8 m (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-219959/merkez-alemdar-hutura-koyu-39kilisesi.html).

Kromni

Kromni (today Krom) is over 35 km north-east of Gümüşhane (Fig. 1.1) and some 2,000 m above sea level. In 1857, it was reported that in its 10 villages, there were 1,080 houses of which 67% were occupied by Greeks and 32% were occupied by crypto-Christians (Bryer 1983). Some of the crypto-Christians were probably the descendants of Muslims (Tzedopoulos 2009).

In 1815, the crypto-Christians built the first mosque in Kromni in the Alithinos neighbourhood. The first church, St George, was built in 1831 also at Alithinos (Fig. 1.2) (Andreadis 2008).

In 1850, the main road from Trabzon through the Zigana Pass, bypassed the old route through Kromni (Ballance et al. 1966). Türkfiliz (2023) states that the Krom valley is part of the larger Yağlıdere village area.[4] The Krom valley consists of the following neighbourhoods: Samananton, Fragkanton, Kavelak, Mancanton, Alithinos, Mohara, Saranton, Nanak, Zemberekia and Gluvena and Loria (Fig. 1.2). Samananton has the valley's only current mosque which was converted from a church [name unknown] with three apses (Plate 1.4) (Türkfiliz 2023).

Strangely, people from Kromni were able to carry firearms, like Muslims (Bryer 2009a). Cuinet (1890–1895) in Hasluck (1929) estimated there were 12,000 to 15,000 people in Kromni.

Yağlıdere Village

Introduction

The village of Yağlıdere is 30 km north of Gümüşhane (just west of Krom, Fig. 1.1). In 1857, it was reported that there were 330 houses in the four villages of Yağlıdere, 64% of the houses were occupied by crypto-Christians and 36% by Greeks (Bryer 1983). The names of the many former Greek Orthodox churches in this area are difficult to determine.

[4] Yağlıdere village area consisted of more neighbourhoods than those in the Kromni valley.

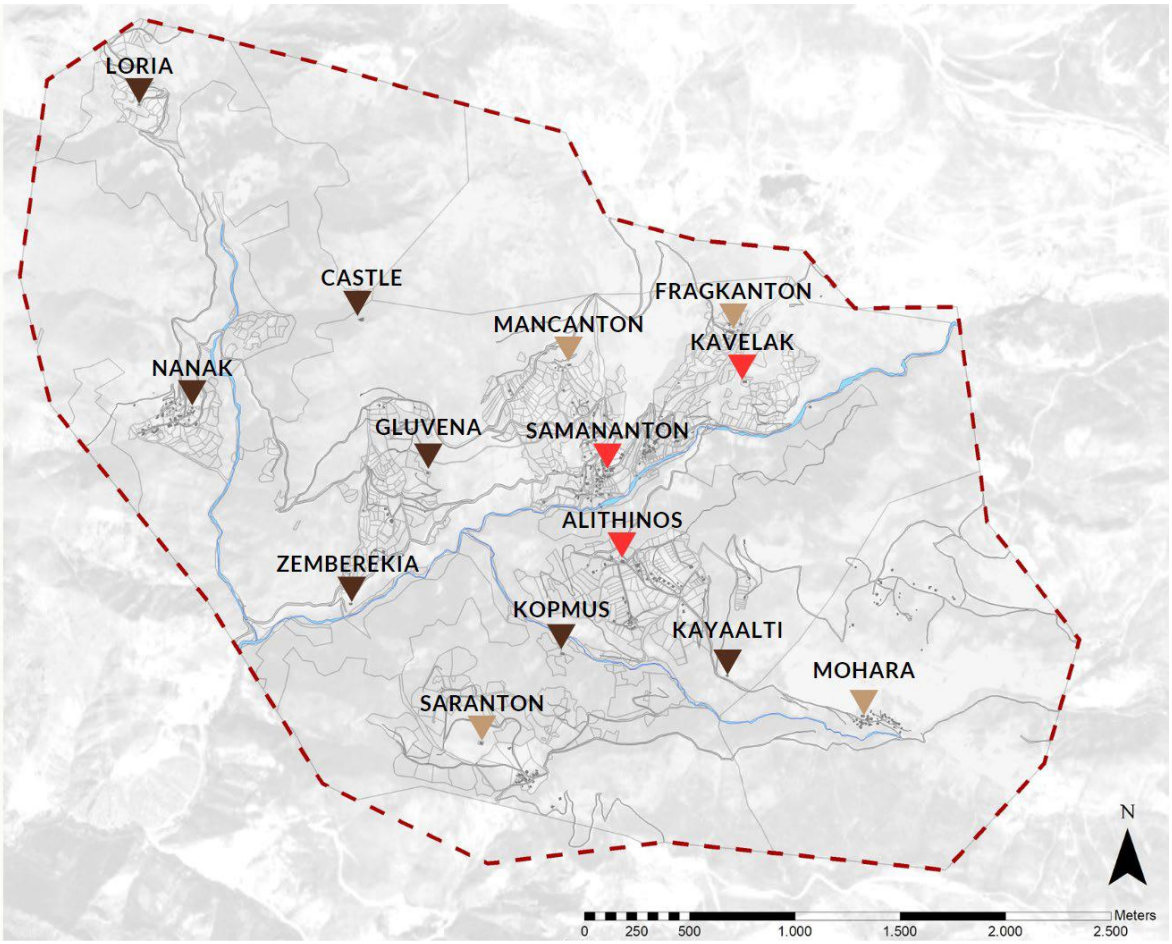

Fig. 1.2: Krom valley neighbourhoods—archaeological site (Türkfiliz 2023:82)


Plate. 1.4: The Samananton mosque (a former Greek church, name unknown)
(Türkfiliz 2023:185)

Panagia Greek church, Alithinos

The former Panagia Greek church with three apses in the Alithinos district measures 15 m by 11 m (Plate 1.5). Wooden beams which connected the internal columns have been cut. It is plastered and painted inside and is one of the rare churches with rock tiles covering its roof which is still intact (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232341/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-alikinos-kilisesi.html).

Plate 1.5: Panagia Greek church, Alithinos district, Yağlıdere (www.flickr.com/photos/fchmksfkcb/29377572760/in/photostream/)

Fragkanton church

This ruined former Greek church with three apses (name unknown) in the Fragkanton district was built 9 m by 8 m on a hill overlooking the valley (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232351/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-orta-yayla-kilise.html).

Karaağaç rocktop church

The former Greek church, with a single apse, (name unknown) is located on a hill in the Karaagaç district. It was probably built in 1894 (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-231654/merkez-yaglidere-koyu-karaagac-mahallesi-kayaustu-kilis-.html).

Karaağaç district church

The small former Greek church (name unknown) has a single apse (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232339/yaglidere-koyu-karaagac-mahallesi-kilise.html).

St John Greek church Kavelak

The ruined former [St John] Greek church was probably built in 1845, in the Kavelak district. Its dimensions are around 16 m by 12 m with a dome. Three apses are made of smooth cut stone as is the western narthex (Plate 1.6) (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232342/yaglidere-koyu-gavalak-kilisesi.html).

Plate 1.6: The St John Greek church Kavelak district, Yağlıdere
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOHFJ3mOznw)

Kayaüstü church

The former Greek church (name unknown) at Kayaüstü, Yağlıdere was built on the edge of a cliff. It has three apses. The door jambs are made of two-coloured stone in a cross-like shape (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232340/yaglidere-koyu-kayaustu-mevkii-kilise.html).

Kopmuş church

The ruined former [Greek] church (name unknown) in the Kopmuş district (Fig. 1.2) was built 10 m by 11.5 m with three apses (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232344/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-kopmus-mahallesi-kilise.html).

Livana church

The ruined former Greek church, built 7.5 m by 11.5 m (name unknown) is located in Livana, Yağlidere. The interior has frescoes (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232345/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-livana-kilisesi.html).

Loria church

This former Greek church (name unknown) with a single apse in the Loria district, was built 11 m by 9.5 m in the 19th century (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232346/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-lorya-kilisesi.html).

Mancanton church

This ruined former Greek church with one apse (name unknown) was built in the Mancanton district and measures 12 m by almost 9 m (Plate 1.7). There are cross motifs and cypress tree decorations around the entrance (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232348/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-mancandanos-kilisesi.html). The neighbourhood is famous for its geothermal water. The building has three apses of cut stones with no roof (Türkfiliz 2023).

Plate 1.7: Mancanton Greek church, Yağlidere (name unknown, Türkfiliz 2022:125)

Mohara district Greek church under the rock

This ruined former [Greek] church with a single apse (Plate 1.8, name unknown) and measuring 9.5 m by 7.5 m, was built against a cliff on the road to the Mohara district, Yağlıdere (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232343/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-kaya-alti-kilise.html). In 1857, all 100 Mohara houses were occupied by crypto-Christians (Bryer 1983).

Plate 1.8: Greek church (name unknown) Mohara district, Yağlıdere
(gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232343/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-kaya-alti-kilise.html)

Greek church of the Panagia, Mohara

The ruined former Greek church [of Panagia] measures 14 m by 10.5 m (Plate 1.9). The roof has collapsed up to the [three] apses (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232349/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-mohra-kilisesi.html).

Plate 1.9: Greek church of Panagia, Mohara district, Yağlıdere (Türkfiliz 2023:134)

Nanak church

The ruined former [Greek] church (name unknown) in the Nanak district (Fig. 1.2), was built 11 m by 9.5 m. The single apse has partially collapsed and the roof and south wall of the church have been destroyed (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232350/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-nanak-kilisesi.html).

The metropolitan church/chapel, Samananton

This ruined former Greek metropolitan church/chapel (name unknown) is located in the Samananton neighbourhood. It has lost its roof. Next to this church/chapel was the metropolitan Greek school (Türkfiliz 2023). It has a single apse. Its floor and dome have been demolished (Plate 1.10) (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232353/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-samanli-kilise.html).

Plate 1.10: The Greek metropolitan church/chapel Samananton, Yağlıdere (name unknown, gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232353/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-samanli-kilise.html)

St Theodore church, Saranton

The ruined St Theodore Greek church (Andreadis 2008) (Plate 1.11) in the Saranton district, was constructed in the 19th century on a hill (Korkmaz and Beeson 2022). The church measures 11.5 m by 10 m with three apses (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232352/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-sarioglu-kilisesi.html).

Plate 1.11: St Theodore Greek church Saranton district, Yağlıdere (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232352/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-sarioglu-kilisesi.html)

Soğuk Pınar locality church

The former church (name unknown) with three apses in Soğuk Pınar, Yağlıdere was built with inside dimensions of 11 m by 7 m (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232356/yaglidere-koyu-soguk-pinar-mevkii-kilise.html).

Viranköy church-1

The ruined former Greek church (name unknown) with no roof in Viranköy, Yağlıdere had a triple apse (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232358/yaglidere-koyu-virankoy-mevkii-harabe-kilise-1.html).

Viranköy church-2

This ruined former Greek church (name unknown) is located outside the residential area in Viranköy. While much of its walls have collapsed, it had three apses (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232359/yaglidere-koyu-virankoy-mevkii-haraba-kilise-2.html).

Yoğurtlu church

The ruined former Greek church (name unknown) in Yoğurtlu in Yağlıdere (Plate 1.12) has a single apse (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232361/yaglidere-koyu-yogurtlu-mevkii-harabe-kilise.html).

Plate 1.12: Yogurtlu district Greek church Yağlıdere (name unknown, gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232361/yaglidere-koyu-yogurtlu-mevkii-harabe-kilise.html)

St George Greek church, Zemberekia

The ruined former St George Greek church in the Zemberekia district measures 11 m by 9 m (Plate 1.13) (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232354/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-zemberek-kilisesi.html). It has a single apse and a very elaborate design of smooth cut stone around the doorway (Ballance et al. 1966).

Plate 1.13: St George Greek church Zemberekia district, Yağlıdere (https://kromni.blogspot.com/search/label/%CE%9A%CE%A1%CE%A9%CE%9C%CE%9D%CE%97)

Ziganetli church

The ruined former Greek church (name unknown) in the Ziganetli district, Yağlıdere measures 7 m by 9 m with a single apse. The roof is damaged (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232355/yaglidere-koyu-krom-vadisi-ziganetli-mahallesi-kilise.html).

Stavri (now Ugurtaşi)

Introduction

Stavri is located 31 km east of Torul just north of Yağlıdere (Fig. 1.1). In 1857, it was reported that in its four villages, there were 296 houses, most of which were occupied by Christians and the remainder by crypto-Christians. In 1890, Cuinet estimated the population of the nine villages of Stavri at 12,000–15,000 (Ballance et al. (1966); Bryer (1983)).

Alpullu Greek church-1

This former Greek church (name unknown) in the Alpullu [Greek Monobanton] district, is at the entrance of Ugurtaşi village and measures 8 m by 9 m with a dome (Plate 1.14) (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232440/torul-ugurtas-koyu-alpullu-mahallesi-kilise-1.html). The church dates back to 1864 and had a belfry which is now destroyed. In 1971, it was being converted into a mosque (Bryer et al. 1972–1973). The author is unaware when the converted mosque was abandoned.

Plate 1.14: Alpullu (Monobanton) Greek church-1, Stavri (name unknown, gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232440/torul-ugurtas-koyu-alpullu-mahallesi-kilise-1.html)

Alpullu district church-2

This former Greek church with three apses (name unknown) has internal measurements of 13 m by 9 m (Plate 1.15). The internal columns were originally connected with wooden rods (now cut). It was probably built in 1862 (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232441/torul-ugurtas-koyu-alpullu-mahallesi-kilise-2.html).

Plate 1.15: Alpullu district Greek church-2, Stavri (name unknown, gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232441/torul-ugurtas-koyu-alpullu-mahallesi-kilise-2.html)

St Theodore Greek church

The ruined former St Theodore Greek church with a dome was built in 1867 with a now destroyed belfry (Ballance et al. 1966). It is located in the former Emir district and measures 13 m by 7 m with three apses (Plate 1.16). Inside columns are connected with iron bars[5] (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232442/torul-ugurtas-koyu-emir-mahallesi--istavri-kilisesi.html).

Plate 1.16: St Theodore Greek church, Stavri (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232442/torul-ugurtas-koyu-emir-mahallesi--istavri-kilisesi.html)

Manatli district church

The ruined former Greek church (name unknown) was built 10 m by 7 m in the Manatli district. Most of the roof has been destroyed (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-232443/torul-ugurtas-koyu-manatli-mahallesi--kilisesi.html).

Conclusion

All the former churches discussed are believed to be Greek Orthodox. It is clear the devotion to Christianity of the resident Orthodox Pontic Greeks in Chaldia by the large number of churches which were built. Nearly all of the churches are in ruins. Some of these churches should be renovated to attract tourism.

Most churches seem to have been built in the 19th century and have a similar design. Some churches had painted decoration. Sadly, the names of many of these Greek churches are unknown.

Note 1.1

1939 Erzincan earthquake

[5] Iron bars have been used in churches in the 19th century to provide reinforcement against earthquakes (Petrou and Charmpis 2019).

In 1939, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Erzincan [80 km, straight line distance south of Gümüşhane], destroying more than 110,000 buildings and claiming 33,000 lives. The event triggered disturbances 350 km away (Tunc and Tunc 2022).

1992 Erzincan earthquake

In 1992, a 6.8 magnitude earthquake struck Erzincan causing about 500 deaths and about 11,000 damaged households (Erdik et al. 1992).

2. The History and Greek Churches of Santa

Introduction

Santa (Turkish Dumanli) with its seven nucleated districts between 1500 m and 1800 m elevation, is located around 70 km by road south of Trabzon (Fig. 2.1). These districts are Ishananton (Turkish Işhanli), Kozlaranton (Cinganli), Pinatanton (Binatli), Pistofanton (Pištoflu), Terzanton (Terzili), Tsakalanton (Çakali) and Zournatsanton (Zurnaçili). Santali were famed for their independence and fighting spirit (Bryer 1968).

Santa is located at the end of a valley, at an isolated point of the Pontic mountains. The roads to Santa are impassable during the colder months (Eastern Black Sea Development Agency 2016). It is known for its fog and strong winds (Tutkun 2015).

Fig. 2.1: Location map of Santa (Dumanli) (Trabzon to Macka = 22 km, https://mapcarta.com/13841388/Map)

History up to 1914

It seems that its population began to expand in the 17th and 18th centuries, when it became a Greek refuge. These Greek Christians and crypto-Christians became miners, smelters, [tree-fellers and] charcoal-burners and graziers (Bryer (1968); Bryer and Winfield (1985)).

In 1775, due to the metalworking of its inhabitants and the services they provided, Santa gained semi-autonomy (Abay 2023).

By 1857, the men from Santa were chiefly stone masons, stone-putters, bricklayers and builders and Greek families produced dairy products and vegetables. It appears to have had 59% Greek families and 41% crypto-Christian.

Bryer tentatively suggested that the crypto-Christians may once have been Muslims. By the end of the 19th century, however, Santa was inhabited entirely by [*Romeyka*] Greek-speaking Christians. Importantly, it was noted in 1879 that the Santalis kept guns, like Muslims. In 1898, it was believed that the population included over 5,100 Santalis (Bryer (1968); (1983)).

There were no schools in Santa until 1863 and by 1911–12, each of its seven districts had a school (including a girl's school at Ishananton) (Bryer 1968).

History From 1914 to 1923

In April 1915, Ottoman soldiers appeared in Santa searching for army deserters. After burning and plundering some of the houses, the soldiers forced 50 men to join labour battalions. Nearly all of them died (Fotiadis 2019).

For years, local Muslims had been laying claim to the pastures owned by the Santalis which often led to conflict. In 1916, Santa formed a guerrilla group in order to defend themselves. The retreat of the Russian army from the region in early 1918 brought Turkish armed bandits into the countryside (Abay (2023); Fotiadis (2019); Rogan 2015)). Chrysanthos, Greek metropolitan of Trabzon, alerted Ottoman General Vehid Pasha of the damage that Ottoman armed brigands were doing to the Christians. Chrysanthos then distributed firearms to the Greeks (including Santa) for their own protection (Greek Patriarchate 1919).

In September 1919, 200 women and 15–20 men returning to Santa were attacked by an Ottoman band. Men died on both sides. Turkish brigands would raid the [Greek] villages close to Santa. The Santalis guerrilla group was enhanced by up to 100 armed men from the surrounding villages (Fotiadis 2019).

The Kemalist government [1920] implemented harsh measures to supress the Santa guerrillas. In early September 1921, the Turks ordered Santa men to enlist for military service [labour battalions]. On 6 September, the Ottoman army occupied three Santa villages. As a result, men were locked up with other women and children from the surrounding districts (Fotiadis 2019).

From 10 to 12 September, people from Santa were deported via Erzincan, Erzurum to Hunuz. When the Lausanne Convention was signed in January 1923 (with the implementation of the population exchange, Note 2.1), the deported Santalis moved to Greece. The only Greeks left in the Santa area were the guerrillas and over 400 non-combatants following the occupation of Santa by the Kemalist army. The guerrillas continued fighting the Kemalist army until the population exchange (Fotiadis 2019).

Greek Orthodox Churches

Introduction

Santa currently has nine former Greek churches in varying states of decay (Abay 2023) due to Turkish treasure hunters, neglect and probably as a result of the damaging Erzincan earthquakes (Note 1.1).

The Santa churches were built in the 1860s–1870s and are similar in design. The triple semi-circular apses are from the east and nearly all churches had entrances from the south and west. The churches were built with rubble stone, while quality cut stone was used for the corner stones, pillars, window and door

jams and decorations around the doors (Bryer 1968). A description of the Greek churches still standing follows.

Pinatanton

The Prophet Elias Greek church is located in the Pinatanton (Turkish Binatli) district (Plate 2.1). It is built of sandstone and is the best preserved church in Santa (Abay 2023). The church measures 8.7 m by 12 m (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-219968/merkez-dumanli-koyu-binatli--pinetendon-mahallesi.html).

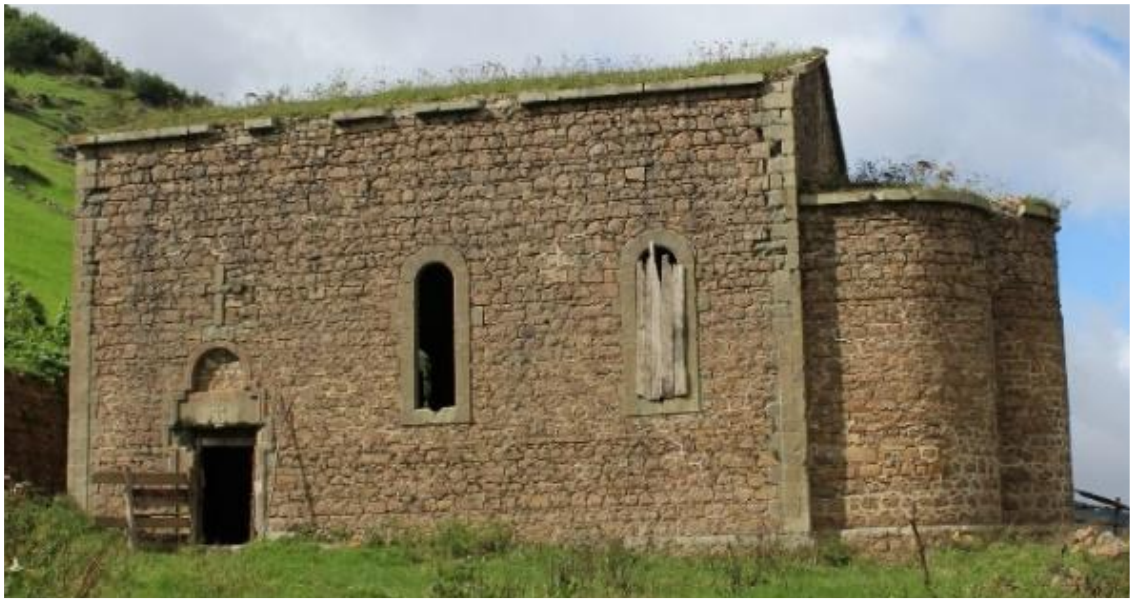

Plate 2.1: Prophet Elias Greek church Pinatanton, Santa (Abay 2023:120)

Kozlaranton

The ruined St Peter Greek church with three apses, was built of sandstone and has a collapsed roof. It is located in the Kozlaranton (Turkish Cinganli) district (Abay 2023).

Tsakalanton

The ruined Greek Church of the Source of Life in the Tsakalanton (Turkish Çakali) district (Plate 2.2) is 9.9 m by 13.3 m with walls 0.85 m thick. Inside, traces of frescoes are found (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-219970/merkez-dumanli-koyu-cakalli-cakalandon-mahallesi39kilis-.html). The church was built with grey rubble stone. The floor has been destroyed by treasure hunters (Bryer (1968); Abay (2023)).

Plate 2.2: The Greek Church of the Source of Life Tsakalanton, Santa (Abay 2023:117)

Ishananton

The ruined St Kyriake Greek church in the Ishananton (Turkish Işhanli) district was built with grey stone and sandstone (Plate 2.3). The floor was destroyed (Abay 2023). The church is 10.2 m by 12.5 m (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-219971/merkez-dumanli-koyu--ishanli-sihanandon-mahallesi-39kil-.html). Its bell tower was dynamited in 1921 (Bryer 1968).

Plate 2.3: St Kyriake church Ishananton, Santa (Abay 2023:118)

Pistofanton

In the Pistofanton (Turkish Pişstoflu) district, two of the three Greek churches survive. (The three churches were St Kyriake, St Christopher and St Panteleimon (Hionides 1996).) The ruined church, the only one with a single apse [possibly St Panteleimon] has exterior walls built of grey rubble stone. The second church is the ruined St Christopher Greek church, with no roof and is the largest church in Santa (Plate 2.4). The church's three apses are dressed with cut stone. The frame of the entrance is plastered red, yellow and blue. A bell tower was built adjacent to the church (Abay 2023). The church was 17 m by 13 m (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-219972/merkez-dumanli-koyu--pistov-mahallesi-39st-christoper-k-.html).

Plate 2.4: The St Christopher Greek church Pistofanton, Santa (Abay 2023:114)

Terzanton

The ruined former St Theodore Greek church, with its collapsed roof, is located in the Terzanton (Turkish Terzili) district (Plate 2.5). It was built with sandstone and grey stone with a bell tower (Abay 2023). The church was 9.1 m by 11.7 m (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-219973/merkez-dumanli-koyu-terzili-mahallesi-39st-theodoros-ki-.html).

Plate 2.5: St Theodore Greek church Terzanton, Santa (Abay 2023:121)

Zournatsanton

The ruined former St George Greek church, with no roof, is located in the Zournatsanton (Turkish Zurnaçili) district. It was built with grey stone and had a dome. The main church, the ruined St Constantine Greek church (Plate 2.6) was built with grey stone. The southern doorway is the most elaborate of all the churches in Santa (Abay 2023).

According to Hionides (1996) there was a third Greek church, St Kyriake in this district—it has not been found. It is hoped that the surviving churches in Santa can be preserved to attract tourism to the area.

Plate 2.6: St Constantine Greek church Zournatsanton, Santa (gumushane.ktb.gov.tr/TR-219974/merkez-dumanli-koyu-zurnacili-mahallesi-39kilise39.html)

Actions to Protect Historic Santa

After the 1923 population exchange, Santa was abandoned. In 1930, the area started to be used as summer highland pastures by people from the surrounding districts (Abay 2023).

The conservation of Santa dates from 1978. Current tourism is limited as access to Santa is still challenging. The site remains uninhabited for most of the year (Abay 2023). Property is being destroyed by treasure hunters and vandals (www.haberlobi.com/foto-galeri/tarihi-ve-turistik-hazine-santa-harabeleri-restorasyon-calismalarini-bekliyor).

Note 2.1

Population exchange

The Greek army was defeated in late August 1922 in western Anatolia during the Greco-Turkish War (1919–1922). This exposed the Christian population in Anatolia to retaliation. The Turks then started to force Greeks out of Anatolia. The Lausanne Convention signed in January 1923 concerned the terms for the compulsory exchange of Christian and Muslim populations between Greek territory and Turkish territory. The Greek inhabitants of Constantinople and the Muslim inhabitants of western Thrace were exempt from this population exchange. The exclusion of the Orthodox inhabitants of the north-east Aegean Islands of Imbros and Tenedos, however, was specified in the later Lausanne Treaty (July 1923) (Hirschon 2003).

3. Fedor Uspenskii's Archaeological Research in Trabzon During World War I

Introduction

A name associated with Byzantine (Eastern Roman empire) research is Fedor Ivanovich Uspenskii (1845–1928), a renowned Russian scholar (Üre (2012–2013)). Uspenskii was a University Professor and Director of the Russian Archaeological Institute (RAI) at Istanbul (The Great Soviet Encyclopedia 1979).

1916 Expedition

From April 1916 to February 1918 (during World War I), the Russian army occupied north-east Anatolia. Nearly all the Turks [initially] had evacuated Trabzon leaving a predominantly Greek population in the town.

In the summers of 1916 and 1917, the Russian Academy of Sciences sent expeditions to Trabzon under Uspenskii's leadership to study its historic monuments and artefacts (Tsypkina 2019).

In May 1916, Uspenskii, FI Shmidt and NK Kluge arrived in Trabzon. The 12 mosques, which had been converted from churches were closed and were left under their authority. Unfortunately, Shmidt and Kluge could not cope with Uspenskii's difficult manner and left Trabzon. The 71 years old was then aided in his research by the acting chief of the fortified region, Russian army officer, Sergei Mintslov (Akarca 2002; 2014), who had studied archaeology. FM Morozov, a Russian archaeologist from the field hospital in Trabzon, also assisted Uspenskii (Mintslov 1923).

Uspenskii collected a large number of Ottoman books and documents which were packed and sealed with the most precious items sent to St Petersburg to the Imperial Academy of Sciences. The rest of the items were stored in the church of Chrysokephalos. Uspenskii intended using these items in exchange for the confiscated library of the RAI in Istanbul (Akarca 2002).

The Chrysokephalos church seems to have been the burial place of the Komnenos Byzantine emperors of Trebizond (1204–1461). The only tomb which (appeared to have) survived stood near the apse of the church (Plate 3.1). Morozov and Uspenskii excavated this tomb and found a decapitated skeleton in a broken sarcophagus as well as a second skeleton of a youth lying above it. The lower skull (believed to be that of emperor Alexios IV) was similar to what Mintslov had found in the former Greek church of St Eugenios (Mintslov 1923).

The Trebizond emperor John IV Komnenos had his father, emperor Alexios IV, buried at the Chrysokephalos church. Uspenskii purported that the skeleton found at the church was that of Alexios IV. Later, an Ottoman tale claimed that the tomb was 'apparently' reused for a youth.[6]

The skeleton of Alexios IV was entrusted to Chrysanthos, Greek metropolitan of Trabzon. Subsequently, George Kandilaptis brought the remains of Alexios IV to Athens (Bryer 1984).

[6] Kennedy (2021) speculates that both skeletons excavated were Trabzon Byzantine emperors. We don't know.

Plate 3.1: Former Chrysokephalos church (probably 1917) (Baklanov and Grégoire 1927–1928:376)

In June 1916, Mintslov had been working in the former Greek church of St Eugenios with Uspenskii. In the altar, Mintslov came across a grave with two skeletons. Of the two skulls lying side by side, the face of one was in pieces, the other, remained intact. These bones may have been the remains of a holy person, perhaps even Eugenios.[7] Indeed, if the skeleton was Eugenios, the question to whom the bones of the second skeleton belong remains unanswered (Mintslov 1923).

Mintslov reflected on Uspenskii; 'some relate to him sarcastically, others with irritation: he is most querulous, tedious, demanding and useless'. Nevertheless, Mintslov's relationship with Uspenskii was, 'not bad'. Uspenskii showed Mintslov a skull stating, 'this is St Eugenios! … I brought it from that mosque'. Mintslov had what he believed to be the skull of Eugenios in his own collection. Mintslov states that 'the old man is always confusing and forgetting things!' Uspenskii left Trabzon in early October 1916 (Mintslov 1923:124, 129–130).

The 1917 Expedition

Uspenskii returned to Trabzon in June 1917, with a six man research team. Russian soldiers and locals had damaged churches. In Chrysokephalos, documents other than those that Uspenskii had packed were dispersed (Akarca 2002).

A primary task of the expedition was to describe account books and papers in Turkish crammed in hundreds of boxes and bags in the former church, Chrysokephalos (Tsypkina 2021). They paid attention to the legal documents for the ownership of property after the return of the Muslim inhabitants of the town. This

[7] Eugenios and other martyrs were believed to have been put to death in Trabzon during the reign of Roman emperor Diocletian (285–305). Trebizond emperor Alexios I (1204–1222) had St Eugenios's skeleton placed in the southern nave apse of the St Eugenios church in a silver sarcophagus. John Zanxis, a hero of the Muslim siege of Trabzon (1222–1223), was also buried in the St Eugenios monastery (Yücel (1988); Bryer and Winfield (1985)).

aroused the Greeks and in July, thieves broke into Chrysokephalos and stole documents and books (Akarca 2002).

About 32 tonnes of documents had been collected during the expedition (Tsypkina 2021). Uspenskii also studied the historic 'Acts of Vazelon' from the Greek monastery of Vazelon (south of Trabzon). These famous Acts are a collection of charters substantiating the monastery's rights to its lands and include agreements from the 13th century between the monastery and the general public (Shukurov 2011).

Not all the manuscripts sent by Uspenskii to Batumi were found there (Tsypkina 2019). However, while some manuscripts were kept in Batumi, others were sent to St Petersburg before the end of the war (Üre 2014).

Return of Confiscated Items

In 1929, the Soviet Union demanded the Turkish government return the RAI's property from Istanbul which had been confiscated during World War I. These items were promptly returned. In exchange, the Director of the Istanbul Archaeological Museum demanded the return of confiscated Turkish manuscripts by the Russians during World War I. They were not returned (Üre 2020).

Conclusion

While there is some conjecture by Mintslov about the quality of the research by Fedor Uspenskii in Trabzon in 1916, there can be no doubt about his efforts to uncover the history of the Byzantine world in Trabzon. Uspenskii's work is a remarkable contribution to a better understanding of the history of the Trabzon area. Türkiye is still waiting for items which were removed from Trabzon by Uspenskii to be returned.

4. The American Protestant Mission at Merzifon

Introduction

The American Protestant missionary mission[8] in Merzifon south-west of Samsun, in northern Anatolia (Fig. 4.1) worked to benefit the lives of local people through education and medical care. They included a more secular curriculum which focused on Western secondary schooling, vocational training and Bible studies. These Protestant missionaries relied on financial contributions from overseas (McGrew 2015).

Merzifon was a substantial mission station which looked more impressive than the town of Merzifon.

Fig. 4.1: Settlements from Samsun to Trabzon in north-eastern Anatolia
(85 km from Samsun to Merzifon, Google maps)

Tanzimat Reforms

In 1844, as part of the Tanzimat Reforms, the death penalty for renouncing Islam was abolished in the Ottoman empire (Zürcher 2017). Then in 1856, the freedom of religion was proclaimed which contributed to the spread of Protestantism in the Ottoman empire (Konstantinou 2020). However, in 1874, the government outlawed the conversion of Muslims to Christianity (Shaw and Shaw 2002).

American Missionaries in Anatolia

In the early 19th century, missionary societies were established in the United States to spread their evangelical mission to the world. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions developed into the most active missionary organisation in Anatolia (Erol 2018).

In 1819, American missionaries began working in the Ottoman empire to convert people to Protestantism. While the Greek Orthodox church and the Gregorian Armenian church [Armenian Orthodox or the Armenian Apostolic church] resisted attempts to convert their congregations, relations between the members of Orthodox and Protestant denominations were not always bitter. In Merzifon, they had a positive relationship (Göktürk (2015); McGrew (2015)).

Merzifon

[8] The Protestant doctrine believes in direct communication with God, basing its faith upon the authority of the Scriptures alone. Protestants object to the adoration of saints, the use of images, excessive rites and ceremonies, toleration of alcohol and a casual attitude towards respecting the Sabbath as a day of rest (McGrew 2015).

Merzifon had seen Protestant missionaries in the mid-19th century. Five out-stations were occupied by 1863. Many other out-stations followed until 1889 (*The Missionary Herald* (TMH) Oct 1891).

In 1867, Merzifon was a Turkish and Armenian settlement (McGrew 2015). The Merzifon American campus comprised 16 hectares, just outside the town's northern wall and was enclosed by its own wall (Özerol and Akalin (2019); Compton (2008)).

In the mid-19th century, there were few Greeks in Merzifon. Eventually, Greeks came to Merzifon and built a Greek Orthodox church. Later they maintained Greek schools.[9]

On the campus, the Theological Seminary was separate. In 1886, the Boys' High School was upgraded to become the Anatolia Boys' College (TMH, May 1899). Boys entered the high school and emphasis was placed on preparing them for the English curriculum. By their fourth year, graduates could enter the Anatolia Boys' College (McGrew 2015).

In 1887, the Protestant campus accommodated 1,000 people who met weekly for worship.[10] In 1894, the new Girls' School building was erected.

1895 Armenian massacre

In November 1895, a Turkish mob massacred Armenians in Merzifon and looted their property—about 125 men were killed. The American campus was spared (White 1918).

Prior to World War I

In 1898–1899, there were 246 students in the Anatolia Boys' College and the Boys' High School. Nearly one third of the students met part of their expenses in the Self-Help Industrial Department (TMH, May 1899). This Department, such as a joiner's house, bindery, shoemaker, tailor and trial farm offered the youth to work their way through their education (Özerol and Akalin 2019). Girls were involved in weaving (Maksudyan 2010).

In 1913, the Anatolia Boys' College listed 32 staff with 425 students enrolled in the College and Boys' High School. There were 275 pupils in the Girls' School and about 100 patients at any one time in the hospital. In total, missionary families, teachers, employees, students and others on the campus comprised around 1,000 souls (White 1918).

The prevalence of marriage in the mid-teens for females led most girls to leave before graduating. From 1910, the preparatory years were increased to four years for girls who would not continue to high school. At the same time, a department was introduced to teach cooking, sewing and dressmaking (McGrew 2015).

The new campus hospital was completed in 1914 (Plate 4.1) (Özerol and Akalin 2019).[11] By 1914, the town of Merzifon had an assumed Armenian population of 10,400 (Kévorkian 2011). The author is unaware of the number of Turks in the town.

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9 In addition, the St Basil's Club was founded by the community to further the education among the Greek Orthodox population of about 500 (TMH, Mar 1912:131).

10 TMH (Jan 1888:20).

11 In 1897, the hospital on the campus began its career (White 1918).

Plate 4.1: American campus hospital at Merzifon (Özerol and Akalin 2019:37)

1915 Armenian genocide

In March 1915, Ottoman Turks decided to annihilate (genocide) the Armenians in the Ottoman empire (Morris and Ze'evi 2019). In August, Armenians were removed from the Merzifon campus. (There were 72 people taken (Şahin 2018).) The women and little children were loaded onto carts. Others walked on the journey. On the second day, the men were shot. The soldiers had not entered the Girls' School. Two days later, [63] girls were loaded into carriages and taken away. Two teachers were allowed to follow after the girls. Most of the girls (22 had perished) and the teachers returned safely to Merzifon (Compton (2008); TMH (Dec 1915)).

Only a few hundred Armenians were left alive in Merzifon (Morris and Ze'evi 2019).

1916 closure of the American campus

In May 1916, the Americans (10 adults and four children) at the campus were told to leave. [The campus was used as a military hospital.] About two months later, five Americans were able to return to the campus (TMH, Mar 1920).

1919 reopening of the College

During World War I, the Merzifon campus Girls' School remained open (Özerol and Akalin 2019). In March 1919, the campus hospital was handed over to the American charity, *Near East Relief*. The campus reopened in October 1919 (TMH*,* Sep 1920). The campus also housed some 600 Greek and Armenian orphans (Compton 2008).

1921 Christian genocide

In March 1921, General Jemil Jahid came to the Merzifon campus and announced that there was a Greek revolutionary plot on the campus and buildings were to be searched. The campus was closed and the Americans were told to leave Anatolia. However, the around 600 orphans could remain. The missionaries, Don Hosford, Carl and Ruth Compton were permitted to look after the orphans and the campus property (Compton 2008).

Retributions continued to be served. The Pontos Club, the College Greek literary and athletic club, its leaders, four teachers and two students, were sent to Amasya and hanged (McGrew 2015). Mr Pavlides, pastor of the Greek Protestant Church in Merzifon town, suffered the same fate (Compton 2008).

A massacre of Christians in Merzifon began in July 1921 led by Topal Osman and his brigands. This was followed by several days of murder by local Turks, gendarmes and troops. Hundreds of Greeks and Armenians fled to the Merzifon campus (Morris and Ze'evi 2019) and were saved.

> From a Christian population of 2,000 to 2,500, almost all the men were killed. Women and children were also killed, in all upwards of 700. All [the remaining] Greeks were deported. About 700 Armenians were left in the town … tales of the utmost cruelty were borne to us, such as the burning of churches with Greeks inside (Meichanetsidis 2015:133).

Opening of the Anatolia College in Thessaloniki

In March 1921, the schools on the Merzifon campus closed [the orphanage was still operating]. Late in July 1922, Compton and his wife Ruth left for Istanbul. In 1924, the Anatolia College relocated to Thessaloniki, Greece. In March 1925, Compton and Ruth returned to Thessaloniki, to resume work at the Anatolia College (Compton 2008). The Anatolian College is still operating in Thessaloniki today.

5. Rifles Used in Anatolia, Late19th–Early 20th Century

Introduction

Various rifles were used by the Turks and other combatants (including the Pontic Greek guerrillas) in Anatolia from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. The Turks mainly used German Mauser rifles but included other captured rifles. During the Greco-Turkish War (1919–1922) many countries donated their rifles to Turkey. A description of most of the rifles used in Anatolia follows.

The Ottoman Turk Army

Throughout the 19th century, the Ottoman empire depended on weaponry supplied from other countries. During the 1877–1878 Russo-Turkish War, the Ottomans bought more than 600,000 rifles from USA—a duplicate of the single-shot British Martini-Henry rifle (www.militaryrifles.com/Turkey/TPeabMar.htm).

Later, around 220,000 German-made Mauser Model 1887 (M1887) rifles were produced for the Ottoman Turks. The contract was completed with 280,000 Mauser M1890 rifles, which used new smokeless ammunition.[12] In 1893, the Turks then purchased 201,000 Mauser M1893 rifles (Ball 2011).

Around 200,000 Mauser M1903 rifles (Plate 5.1) rifles were produced also for the Ottomans (Ball 2011). By 1908, the old Martini-Henry[13] and Winchester rifles together with the Mauser rifles brought the total number of rifles in the Ottoman army to 901,500. During World War I, [modern day] Austria adapted captured Russian Mosin-Nagant M1891 rifles (Plate 5.2) for the Ottoman Turks (http://turkeyswar.com/army/weaponry/).

Plate 5.1: Mauser Turkish M1903 rifle (Ball 2011:382)

By late 1917, Germany shipped Mauser Gewehr 1898 and Mauser Karabiner 98a infantry rifles to Anatolia (Salavrakos 2017).

In 1920 and 1921, during the Greco-Turkish War (1919–1922), the Turkish government of Mustafa Kemal received from the Soviet Union 200 kg of gold, 10 million gold Russian rubles, 39,000 rifles and 63 million rounds of ammunition (Salavrakos 2017).[14]

From early 1921 to early 1922, France also supplied Turkey with 128,000 rifles and ammunition. Between mid-1921 and mid-1922, the Italians also gave turkey 119,000 rifles (Salavrakos 2017).

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12 Smokeless gunpowder reduced fouling, produced less smoke and allowed the use of smaller calibre bullets allowing soldiers to carry more ammunition (Lapin 2010).

13 From 1916, photographs of Pontic Greek guerrillas often show them with old Martini-Henry rifles.

14 In the eyes of Lenin, Greece would act to protect British interests in the region. Thus, Turkey had to be supported against Greece (Salavrakos 2017).

The French Army

By 1894, France had produced around 3 million Lebel rifles for its army. The Lebel held an eight round magazine to the Mauser's five. In World War I, the French also adapted the Berthier rifle to complement the Lebel (https://gunsmagazine.com/ammo/french-1886-lebel/).

The Russian Army

In 1916 to early 1918, the Russian army occupied north-east Anatolia. Their standard infantry rifle was the Mosin-Nagant M1891 with a five-round magazine (Plate 5.2). Much use was also made of captured Austro-Hungarian Steyr-Mannlicher M1895 rifles. Japanese, Italian and French rifles were also issued, along with the Russian Berdan rifle from the late 19th century (Cornish 2009).

In 1915–1917, Mosin-Nagant M1891 rifles were manufactured in the USA of which only 356,000 were delivered (Lapin 2010).

Plate 5.2: Mosin-Nagant M1891infantry rifle (https://lynxdefense.com/reviews/mosin-nagant/)

The British Army

The single shot Martini-Henry rifle was adopted in 1871 and became the standard service rifle in the British army (https://firearms.net.au/military/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=41). (Some of these rifles were used by the Pontic Greek guerrillas from 1916.)

In 1902, the Lee-Enfield rifle was adopted by the British army. It was superseded by the Lee-Enfield (SMLE) which fired 0.303 inch-calibre ammunition in a 10-round magazine (www.britannica.com/technology/Lee-Enfield-rifle). It became known as the '303'. In early 1916, the Lee-Enfield SMLE Mk III* rifle was introduced. The Mk III and MK III* rifles were used extensively by British Commonwealth forces in both World Wars (Plate 5.3) (https://firearms.net.au/military/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=15&Itemid=45). The Ottoman army would have used the 303 rifles they captured from the British or Commonwealth forces during World War I.

Plate 5.3: Lee-Enfield SMLE Mk III rifle '303' (www.rct.uk/collection/69430/te-lawrences-lee-enfield-rifle)

The Greek Army

The Mannlicher-Schönauer rifle with a 5-round magazine was introduced in 1900 and manufactured at Steyr, Austria (www.imfdb.org/wiki/Steyr_Mannlicher-Schoenauer).

The Mannlicher-Schönauer M1903 (Plate 5.4) was the main small arm for the Greek military for many years. The Greeks were replenished with a supply in 1914 with minor changes. After World War I, large numbers were given to the Greek army, as war reparations (https://firearms.net.au/site2/index.php/mannlicher-rifles/mannlicher-sch%C3%B6nauer).

In mid-1921, during the Greco-Turkish War, 3,500 Mannlicher type rifles, 20,000 Lebel type rifles and 40 million rounds of ammunition and other military equipment were purchased from France (Salavrakos 2017).

Plate 5.4: Mannlicher-Schönauer M1903 rifle (www.hungariae.com/Mann03.htm)

Conclusion

A variety of rifles were used in Anatolia from late 19th century to the early 20th century. The Ottoman Turks used Martini-Henry rifles in the late 19th century and then predominantly German made Mauser rifles. They also used a variety of captured rifles. The occupying Russian forces in north-east Anatolia during World War I predominantly used Mosin-Nagant rifles. From 1916, the relatively few Pontic Greek guerrillas accessed whatever rifles they could find (like the old Martini-Henry rifles). These defensive guerrillas were regularly short of ammunition.

The Greek army invading western Anatolia during the Greco-Turkish War (1919–1922) used predominantly Mannlicher type rifles. During this war, Turkey was also supplied with rifles from the Soviet Union, France and Italy.

6. Observations by Foreign Visitors of the Soumela Monastery

Introduction

The Panagia Soumela icon and the Soumela monastery (Plates 6.1–6.3) are extremely important symbols of Pontic Greek identity. The former Greek Orthodox monastery of the Virgin Mary, Soumela, is 50 km south of Trabzon. The monastery is perched on the cliff face of Karadağ (Mount Mela), nearly 300 m above the west bank of a tributary of the Degirmen (Mill) River. The monastery has five floors and 72 rooms and was probably founded by the 10th century—it was abandoned in 1923, after the exchange of populations (Bryer and Winfield (1985); Nuhoglu et al. (2017)). Today, the Soumela monastery is one of the most important tourist destinations in the Trabzon region in north-east Türkiye.

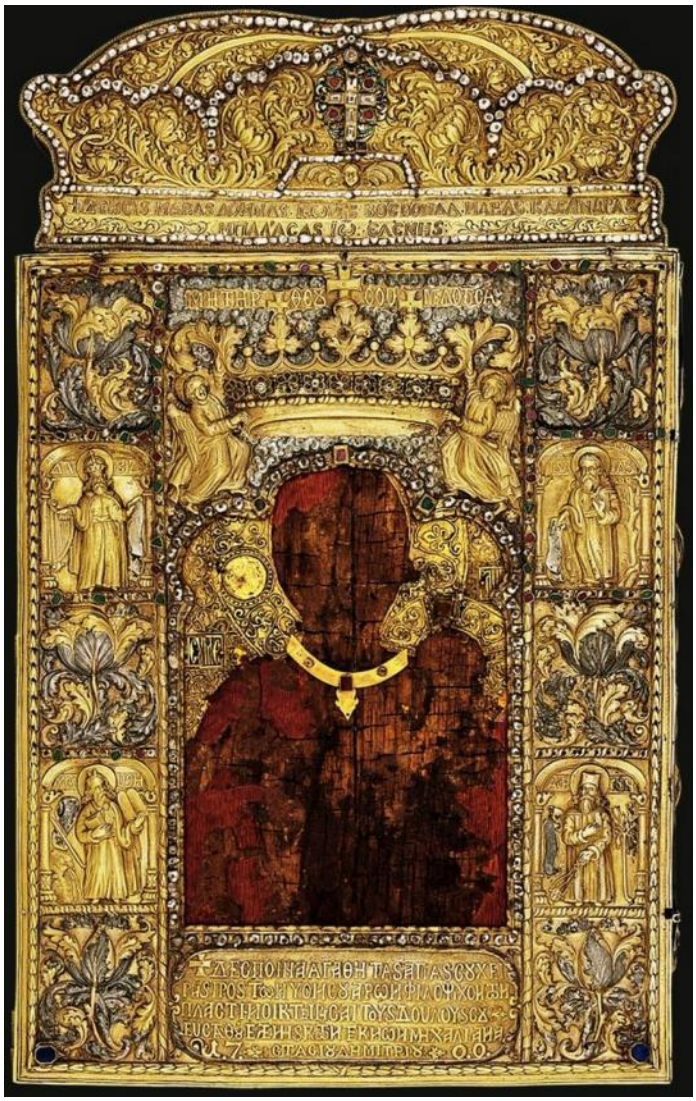

Plate 6.1: Panagia Soumela icon
(https://twitter.com/TempusFugit4016/status/1714476808710570456)

Plate 6.2: Soumela monastery (www.trabzon.gov.tr/turizm)

Plate 6.3: Courtyard of Soumela monastery, 1915 (Chrysanthos 1933:984)

In 1461, when the Ottoman sultan Mehmet II captured Trabzon, the three great monasteries of Peristereota, Soumela and Vazelon[15], south of Trabzon, retained their local holdings (Lowry 1991). More recently, the establishment of the small Greek Orthodox metropolitanate of Rhodopolis in 1863 encompassed these three monasteries. In 1864, the approach to the monastery, the aqueduct, the library and the façade were built. The old wooden cells on the cliff face were also replaced (Bryer and Winfield (1970); (1985)).

Closure of Soumela Monastery and Recovery of the Icon

In late 1922, the Soumela monastery's abbot and two monks placed the Soumela icon and other items in a chest which they buried in the nearby chapel of St Barbara. In February 1923, the monks were forced to leave the monastery for Greece (Tanimanidis 2020). The monastery was gutted by a fire in or before 1929 and suffered badly from vandalism (Bryer and Winfield 1985).

In 1931, Greece was allowed to retrieve the monastery's hidden treasures from the St Barbara chapel which were then deposited with the Benaki Museum in Athens. A new church to Panayia Soumela was built in the village of Kastania in northern Greece and the icon was placed in this new church on 15 August 1952 (Holy Apostles Convent 1991).

The majesty of Soumela has been recognised for centuries. This document will now focus on the observations of a few foreign travellers to Soumela: Joseph Pitton de Tournefort 1701, Reverend Henry Tozer 1879, Sergei Mintslov 1916 and David Talbot Rice[16] 1929. These accounts are a testimony to the impressive structure and the awe, its visitors over the centuries experienced on visiting the monastery and its environs.

Joseph Pitton de Tournefort

Frenchman, Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1656–1708) was the chief botanist to king Louis XIV of France. In 1701, it is believed that he was describing the Soumela monastery in this translation of his writings.

> Finer Forests are not among the Alps. … The House of the Religious is built of nothing but Wood, close against a very steep Rock, at the bottom of the finest Solitude in the World. The View of this Convent is bounded by nothing but the most charming Prospects; and I could gladly here have spent the rest of my Days. … not one of these Monks is in the least affected with all this, tho there are about forty of them. … These Hermits possess all the Country for about six miles about (Tournefort 1741:72–74).

Henry Tozer

In 1879, Reverend Henry Fanshawe Tozer (1829–1916), a British writer, teacher and geographer described his first vision of Soumela.

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15 See the author's articles on Soumela and Vazelon at: www.pontosworld.com/index.php/history/sam-topalidis

16 Talbot Rice is his surname.

What followed appeared to us like a fairy scene … Here a perpendicular cliff rises to the height of nearly a thousand feet and in the very middle of the face of this, in the hollow of a cavern, stands the monastery … The first feeling to the beholder is one of amazement that any human being should have established themselves in a place apparently so inaccessible (Tozer 1881:435).

The monastery of Soumela … now contains 12 monks ... The outer wall [of the cavern church] is covered with frescoes … close by is a newly built and painted bell-tower, with a dome, containing five bells. … The interior [of the cave church] … Numerous small Byzantine pictures are hung about in various places and parts of the walls are covered with frescoes … At the west end stands an elaborately carved and gilt pulpit, from which the Gospel is read and the iconostasis or alter screen, which faces it, is also richly decorated. Within this, in the sanctuary is kept the great object of veneration for which the monastery is famous—a small picture of the Virgin ... hardly anything more than the old wood on which it is painted is visible; but it is in great reputation amongst Mahometans as well as Christians, for this Madonna delivers her votaries without respect of creed from plagues of locusts and Turkish women are accustomed to visit her shrine in order to obtain relief from sickness and barrenness (Tozer 1881:439–442).

… within the church, is the firman of Mahomet II, by which he granted his protection to the monastery. … with it are a number of similar firmans of later sultans, granting the monks immunity from taxation. In the present days of Ottoman bankruptcy no such privileges are allowed and consequently the present occupants … have to pay taxes like other subjects of the Porte (Tozer 1881:443–444).

Sergei Mintslov

The following account is an extract from Sergei Rudol'fovich Mintslov's visit with his family and the Greek Orthodox metropolitan of Rhodopolis, Kirillos to Soumela from McCaskie (2022). Mintslov was a Russian army officer and author who was assigned in 1916 to its occupation forces in Trabzon. His experiences were captured in Mintslov (1923). The following translated extract is taken from Mintslov's entry for 27 August 1916.

In the morning of the 24th we went by car to Cevizlik.[17] … the horses brought us to the village of Livera[18] – the summer residence of the Rhodopolis metropolitan … In the morning, all, including the metropolitan, got on our horses and set off further – to the Soumela monastery …

ahead stood a high forested ridge furrowed by cliffs. The metropolitan stopped and got off his horse. 'We've arrived', he announced smiling, indicating somewhere higher up. I glanced in that direction and froze. … At some immeasurable height, up to where only eagles could fly, the long white buildings of the Soumela Monastery were stuck to the sheer rocky precipice.

… now suddenly showed itself in all its incredible beauty. … the completely vertical side of a reddish cliff rose further ahead.

… We went up the medieval stairway and came to a very small quadrangle; a small bell hung from the gate; a wall rose in front of us and the reddish walls of a church, painted from top to bottom with ancient frescoes looked out at us through an entrance arch.

The gatekeeper struck the bell and in response, small bells from behind the wall began to chime to meet the metropolitan … a second staircase led down to a long open back gallery of monastery buildings; we found ourselves in the monastery yard

[17] It is usually called Maçka (pronounced Machka).

[18] Livera is a Christian Greek village in the Maçka region and the seat of the Greek Orthodox metropolitanate of Rhodopolis.

paved with stones; before us above the church and white bell-tower hung the dark arch of a gigantic cave in the cliff. A large building housing the monastery's cells and rooms, right on the very edge of the precipice, fenced off the yard like a wall. The number of rooms for new arrivals bespeaks their size – there are 18 of them.

They took us to the largest … taking a seat on the opposite wall was the metropolitan, abbot and the monastery librarian – Father Anfim … In the Easter week [April 1916] of this year, several Turkish soldiers turned up at the entrance gate and demanded entry. They were refused. … The monks hid whatever they could and that night, they themselves ran from the monastery down the mountains paths and stole into Livera to the metropolitan.

The Turks turned up at the monastery the next day … and stayed for two months until Russian forces approached. … they took only silver and especially expensive carpets from the monastery; everything remaining – carpets, furniture and the valuable library – all remained untouched. They did, however, take one official document – a most ancient text of some sultan – from the library. They … ruined absolutely nothing. The walls of the cave cathedral, painted with frescoes, were covered in silver; they pulled this off but did not touch the valuable gold decorative metal plate on the most holy venerated icon of the Holy Mother ... The Turks also seized all the monastery's utensils …

In the church, a small altar is separated from the worshippers by a low iconostasis and has neither a pulpit nor a side door …

the external wooden frescoes on the wall and altar ledge of the cathedral have all been covered and spoiled by inscriptions, made by the knives of visitors.

… A balcony with a canopy leaning on columns of white stone stretched along the whole upper floor of the hostel building. I know nothing which can compare to the raw beauty of the view from this balcony!

David Talbot Rice

Professor David Talbot Rice (1902–1972) was an English art historian. He noted in 1929 that Soumela crouched under a giant ledge of rock above a rushing stream, in the most astounding position imaginable. The monastery bared witness to the skill of its builders. The monastery had suffered from a fire and its ceilings have been torn down and the floors torn up (Talbot Rice 1929–1930).

The only entrance is at the south end of the rectangle. It consists of a small door … at the top of a long narrow stair. … The main court ... is reached by a long stair, bordered on its eastern side by the main living and guest rooms which date from 1860. These continue along the east side of the main court, on the west of which is the rock cut church, a few minor buildings and a small chapel. To the north-east are further living rooms, built in among which are three minor chapels.

… to the north of the church stood the bell tower, but only the lower story of this now remains. To the north of the court the outside buildings again continue for some thirty five metres along a narrower portion of the ledge, their backs being separated from the rock by nothing more than a narrow veranda.

The main church is in two parts, a large irregular cavern cut out of the rock and closed at the eastern end by a wall and a small sanctuary built out of this wall … On the north side of the church is a cavern, separated from it by a wall only … on the south side is a small chapel. This is hewn entirely out of the rock ... Directly in front of the church to the east, but on a lower level, is a small chapel, the western portion of which now serves as a passage. … Under the bell tower to the north of the main church is a second small chapel (Talbot Rice 1929–1930:75–76).

Conclusion

The common theme of the descriptions by these foreign visitors from 1701 to 1929 of the Soumela monastery is absolute awe of its beauty and its surrounds. Those

of us who have visited the monastery can only but agree with these historical observations. Despite the grandeur of the site, we should not forget the harsh conditions, especially during the colder months, in which these dedicated monks lived in the monastery.

More recently, after years of renovations, the Soumela monastery was re-opened to tourists.

7. History of Kerasous (Giresun)

Introduction

The Greek colony of Kerasous (modern Giresun), on the Black Sea coast in north-eastern Anatolia, is 130 km (by road) west of Trabzon (Fig. 7.1). It was established by Greeks from Sinope sometime after 630 BC and before 400 BC, when Xenophon and his Greek mercenaries visited the settlement (Avram et al. 2004). Xenophon was told that Sinope (350 km by road west of Kerasous) had taken away the land from Kerasous' indigenous natives. In Xenophon's text, the indigenous Mossynoeci lived near Kerasous and the Tibareni around Ordu (to the west).

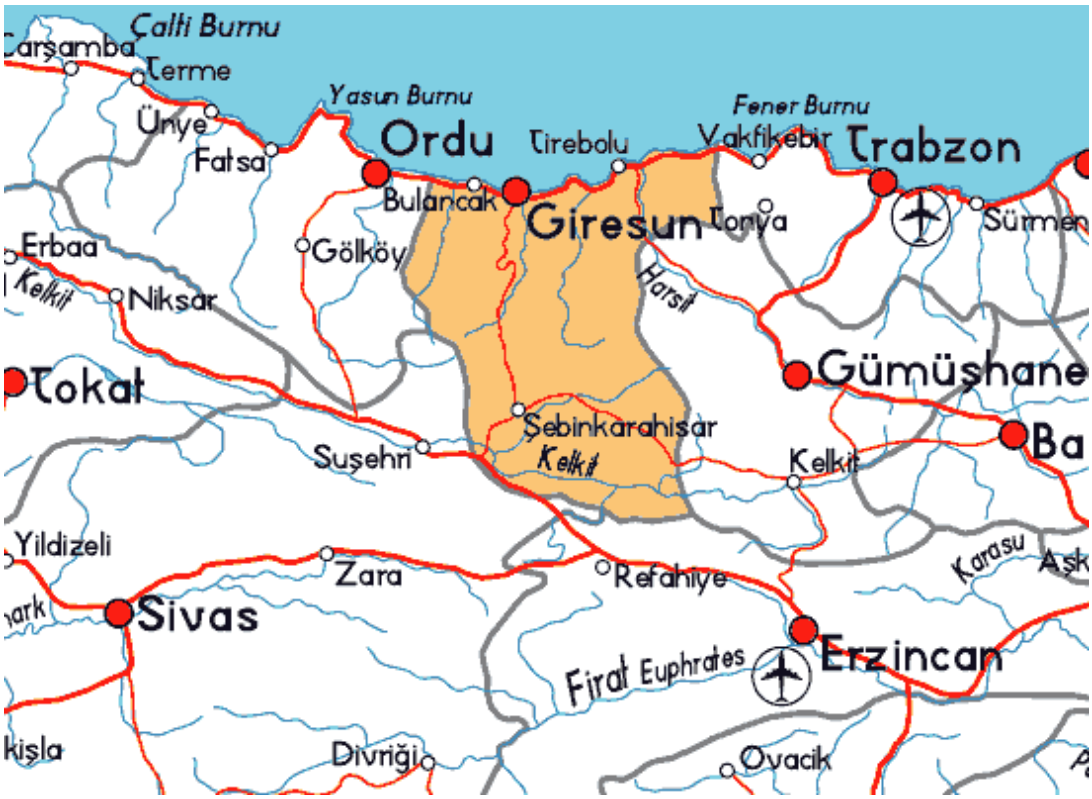

Fig. 7.1: Location map of Giresun, northern Türkiye (Giresun to Trabzon = 115 km, www.istanbul-city-guide.com/map/turkey/giresun-map.asp)

Although the army of Alexander the Great (336–323 BC) defeated the Persians in Anatolia, the Greeks did not conquer the Black Sea coast. This area however, eventually accepted Greek authority (Şerifoğlu and Bakan 2015). In 302 BC, Mithradates I of Persian descent, established the kingdom of Pontos (Roller 2020). Mithradates and kings from the same family ruled over the area from Heraclea (west of Sinope) east to Trabzon on the Black Sea coast until Mithradates VI was defeated by the Romans in 64 BC (Erciyas 2001). In 183 BC, Pharnakes I, son of Mithradates III captured Kerasous. Kerasous then fell to the Roman General Pompey around 63 BC. There is a story that Kerasous received its name from the Greek word for cherry (Bryer and Winfield 1985).

In the 13th century it was the most westerly possession of the small Komnenoi Byzantine empire of Trebizond (1204–1461). The fortress on the acropolis at Kerasous was built or rebuilt by Alexios II Komnenos (1297–1330). In 1348, the Genoese ransacked and burnt the town. It was also raided by Ottoman

pirates in 1368. The promontory projects almost 1 km into the sea, rising to 129 m (Fig. 7.2). The ancient and medieval town lay on the west side of the steep slope below the castle (Bryer and Winfield 1985). The harbour was divided by the castle into the eastern and the main western harbour (https://cities.blacksea.gr/en/giresun/5-1/). Probably in 1461, The Ottoman Turks took control of the town, probably in 1461.

In 1764, during the valley lord wars, the town was devastated which led to the destruction of its Greek church (Bryer and Winfield 1985).

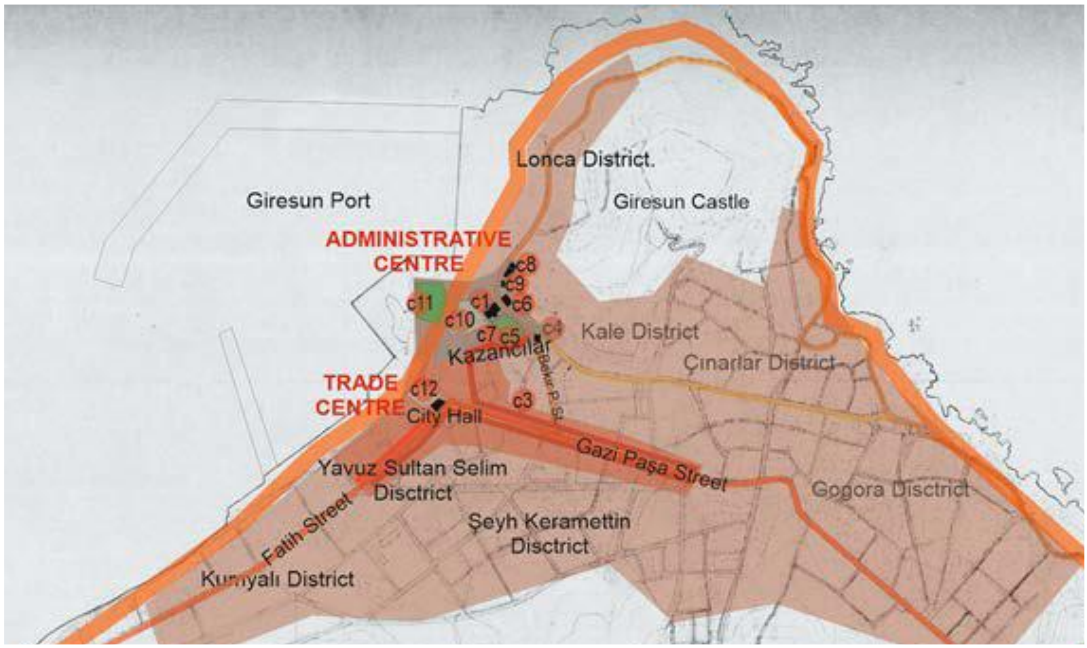

Fig. 7.2: Giresun at the beginning of the 20th century (scale not stated, Karaibrahimoğlu and Demirkan 2020:445)

Churches

According to Kertmenjian (2009), the Armenian quarter near the western port included the Armenian churches of St Sargis and St Grigor and an Armenian school.

There were few churches in the centre of Giresun before the 19th century. The Metamorphosis Greek church was built before 1861, south-west of the castle on the site of the current Revenue Office building (Balci and Yilmaz 2018). [The church was still standing in 1922 but was demolished before 1964.] Georgos Konstantinidis (the Lord Mayor) built his own mausoleum tower in the church grounds (Plate 7.1) (Rodriguez 2023). According to Balcı and Yilmaz (2018), his mausoleum was demolished in 1922. The bell tower was built [before 1904, Plate 7.1] in the grounds of the church, demolished [before mid-1923], rebuilt in 2016 and demolished again in 2019.

Plate 7.1: Greek church of Metamorphosis with bell tower and mausoleum (far right) (after 1906, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kerassunde_-_Bell_tower_of_the_church_of_metamorphosis.jpg)

In 1964, a small cave church (name unknown) was located on the eastern slopes below the castle. In addition, a mosaic floor was uncovered in the town near the port. It contained Greek lettering which suggests that it was part of a Byzantine church probably in the 5th- or 6th century (Bryer and Winfield 1985). Bryer and Winfield (1970) identified the following three surviving churches in Giresun:

1. The former Catholic Capuchin church (Plate 7.2) built in 1911 (Rodriguez 2023). Located south-east of the castle (Fig. 7.2). In 1964, it was converted into the Giresun Central Children's Library (Yilmaz Yildirim et al. 2023).

2. On the east side of the promontory stands the former [St Nicholas] Greek Orthodox church [possibly] built in the 18th century (Rodriguez 2023). (Plate 7.3). The St Nicholas church was used as a prison from 1948 to 1967. In 1988, it was opened as a museum (www.turkishmuseums.com/museum/detail/2053-giresun-museum/2053/4).

3. Remnants of a third church can be found on the rocky northern slopes of the castle. Only part of its single apse survived. According to Aslanidis (1976), this church could be the chapel of St Panteleimon.

Plate 7.2: The Giresun central children's library, former Catholic Capuchin church (Yilmaz Yildirim et al. 2023:48)

Plate 7.3: Giresun Museum, former Greek Orthodox church of St Nicholas (www.touristdailyprograms.com/historical/giresun-museum-gogora-church)

Greek School

There was a Greek school in Giresun before 1855 (http://constantinople.ehw.gr/Forms/flemmabody.aspx?lemmaid=9579). The new multi-storey Greek school building was built between 1905 and 1908 with 25 teachers. In 1914, during World War I, the Turks converted the building into army barracks (https://pontosworld.com/index.php/pontus/buildings/233-the-kerasunta-greek-tuition-center). The former Greek school stands between the Catholic church and the [St Nicholas] Greek church (Bryer and Winfield 1970). Since 1947, the school has been used as a Trade

Vocational High school (commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?search=Giresun&title=Special:MediaSearch&go=Go&type=image).

Georgos Konstantinidis

Georgos Konstantinidis (1828–1906) served as the mayor of Giresun from 1885 to 1904, quite an achievement for an Orthodox Greek.

Black Sea Greeks took advantage of the economic freedom provided after the Tanzimat Reforms [between 1839 and 1876]. Some Giresun Greeks became wealthy as the local agents or wholesale traders when Western governments began trading on the Black Sea coast (Balcı and Yilmaz 2018). At the same time, the Turkish community became relatively disadvantaged and would have been financially hampered by the removal of Muslim men due to military service.

Georgos' family would become Europe's largest hazelnut exporter, with the mayor's brother, Devonis in 1883 founding a hazelnut importing company in Marseille, France.[19] From 1889, Devonis introduced the first hazelnut harvesting machines, as well as new methods to break the hazelnut shells. These changes lead to the mass production and commercialisation of hazelnuts (Rodríguez 2023). Today, Giresun is famous for its hazelnut production. Türkiye accounts for 76% of the world's hazelnut exports (Bozoğlu et al. 2019).[20]

Genocide

From the approximate Ottoman population figures between 1905 and 1906, central Giresun possibly had a population of 8,440 of which half were Turks and the rest were Greeks and Armenians (https://cities.blacksea.gr/en/giresun/5-1/). Later, in 1914, the composition of Giresun's population, which was 19,000, included 8,500 Greeks [appears high] 7,500 Turks and 3,000 Armenians (Çetinoğlu 2021).

In June 1915, the police searched Armenian houses in Giresun and males aged between 16 and 50 years were confined in the courtyard of the town hall. Up to 160 notables were murdered the next night; other men were set free. The forced deportations of Armenians from Giresun commenced in July 1915. The first caravan comprised 1,200 people (500 of them men). Halfway to Şebinkarahisar (Fig. 7.1), the men were massacred. The convoy was then pillaged and young women abducted. In Kavalik, near Ezbider, the convoy was attacked by brigands. After a 28-day trek, 500 from Giresun and the counties of Tirebolu and Görele reached Kuruçay, between Şebinkarahisar and Divrig. They were attacked again by Kurdish villagers; the 40 survivors of the caravan then set out for south of Divrig. On the 36th day these survivors reached Kemaliye (Payaslian (2009); Kévorkian (2011)).

In December 1916, allegedly for military reasons, Ottoman War Minister Enver ordered the deportation of the Greek population from the Black Sea coastal regions [not under Russian control]. The Greeks of Giresun were driven over the mountains to Sivas (Fig. 7.1) (Hofmann 2011). After World War I, any surviving deported Greeks and Armenians were able to return home.

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19 Georgos' son, Konstantinos (1856–1930) moved to Marseille and became a wealthy merchant. He was one of the first to initiate the movement for an Independent Republic of Pontos and lobbied for it at the Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920) (pontosworld.com/index.php/history/biographies/129-konstantinos-konstantinidis-1856-1930).

20 In Pontos, the first recorded export of hazelnuts was in 259 BC and they were still a major export during the Komnenoi Byzantine empire of Trebizond (Bryer 1975).

In 1919, Dr Blanche Norton joined the *Near East Relief* charitable organisation at Trabzon. She went to Giresun before returning to America in 1920. She described Topal Osman from Giresun as the most fearful creature she had ever seen and that Christians lived in abject terror of him. Few Armenians were left in Giresun (www.greek-genocide.net/index.php/overview/humanitarianism/460-blanche-norton?highlight=WyJibGFuY2hlIiwibm9ydG9uIiwiYmxhbmNoZSBub3J0b24iXQ==).

With relocation being ordered by Mustafa Kemal in June 1921, the Greeks who were dispatched to the interior of Anatolia were killed by militias, most notably those led by Topal Osman and Şaki Ali. In September 1921, operations against Greeks picked up speed. According to Central Army records, 8,500 Greeks from Giresun were relocated (Korucu and Daglioglu 2019). Any surviving Christians were forced from their homeland under the exchange of populations in the Lausanne Convention (January 1923).

Conclusion

Kerasous was an ancient Greek colony after the native Anatolian inhabitants were deprived of their land. It passed to many rulers over the centuries including Persians, Greeks of Alexander the Great, Mithradates kings, the Roman empire, the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) empire, the Komnenoi Byzantine empire of Trebizond and finally the Ottoman Turks. A few churches remain as testimony to the influence of its former Christian inhabitants.

The genocide of Armenians and Greeks and their formal forced removal by the early 1920s (under the population exchange) from their homeland effectively removed Christians from Giresun and Turkish territory.

8. Pontic Greek Music[21]

Through the distinctive traditional Pontic dances, costumes and musical instruments, Pontic [music and] dance connects Pontic Greeks to their origins. By the memories and emotions it evokes, Pontic dance [music and song] becomes an expression of what it means to be Pontic Greek (Liddle 2016). History of Pontos, of course, also plays an important role in defining Pontic Greeks.[22] The most common Pontic musical instruments include the three string *kemenche* (Plate 8.1), the *daouli* (drum) and the *tulum* (bagpipe without a drone) (www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKxtuOhVis0). Some researchers have attempted to categorise Pontic music and this is the focus of the discussion which now follows.

Plate 8.1: Adam Neou from Canberra and his *kemenche*.

Tsekouras (2016:137–138) believes that Pontic music is divided into two main sub-genres, traditional Pontic music and new Pontic music (*neopontic*):

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21 The dances [and music] differ from those of Greece and the rest of Türkiye (Tsekouras 2016).

22 Well researched work on Pontic history can be found in the author's two latest books, Topalidis (2019); (2024) at: www.afoikyriakidi.gr/en/search?orderby=position&orderway=desc&search_query=Topalidis

- Traditional Pontic music refers to music brought from Pontos and its continuation in Greece.

- *Neopontic* music represents a departure with tradition. It emerged from the 1970s Greek night club scene and early Pontic recording of the same period. The *kemençe* is still the main instrument. It co-exists with the synthesizer, the drums, the electric bass and often with the clarinet, *bouzouki* and electric guitar. This sound resembles mainstream popular Greek music.

According to Zografou and Pipyrou (2011), there are two main periods of Pontic dancing [and music] identity in Greece—before and after the 1980s. After arriving in Greece in the 1920s and up to 1980, there was a tendency for Pontic Greeks to incorporate their music and dance within Greek public institutions. A Pontic repertory was created to reinforce a common Pontic Greek sense of belonging. The Greek government in 1981 initiated an era of cultural awareness. The inclusion of Pontic dance [with its music] in the public school curriculum was a major advance. The most obvious visualisation of Ponticness is the music and dance *Serra* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJbzez0uJIM).

According to K Tsahouridis (2013), the Pontic music repertory can be divided into two main categories:

- Music that accompanies poetry, is not danced to and has no specific rhythm; being freely interpreted by the singer and the player.

- Dance music in certain rhythmic patterns (2/4, 4/4, 6/8, 5/8, 7/8 and 9/8) which may or may not be accompanied by words.

Pontic singing is monophonic, encouraging solo singing. The music of Pontos has been neglected by scholars. Kilpatrick (1980), Efstathiadis (1992) and Baud-Bovy's (2005) are valuable documents in the field. Apart from these, the available documentation on Pontic music is in handbooks, leaflets, audio CDs and published practical methods on learning to play Pontic music by musicians. More recently, modern ethnographies have appeared such as Gaitanidis (2003) and M Tsahourides (2007) and K Tsahouridis (2008) (K Tsahouridis 2013:193–194). To this list can be added the valuable work by Michailidis (2016) and Tsekouras (2016).

Pontic singing would appear to exhibit a relatively unique vocal flexibility, including use of the soft uvula[23] and nasal cavity, a consciously movable larynx and use of falsetto voice, elements which extend the borders of the already documented Western classical vocal techniques (K Tsahouridis 2013).

The Pontic Greek community in Greece and in the diaspora regularly celebrate their culture during Pontic Greek functions. This Pontic diaspora regularly invites Pontic Greek singers and Pontic Greek musicians from Greece to perform at their events.[24] These gatherings help to cement these communities.

A Final Note

Traditional Greek music, song and dance has always played an important role in the life of a Greek. It is an expression of Greek life.

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23 Uvula is the little fleshy hanging ball in the back of the throat.

24 They usually join with the diaspora's own competent Pontic singers and Pontic musicians.

It creates a sense of overall well-being of a community. Additionally, the high social value of the activity within the Greek diaspora is a manifestation of the importance of promoting Greek culture (Avgoulas and Fanany 2019:109).

Music is strongly linked to emotional well-being and dance combines music with physical activity in the form of patterned motions and gestures. Music improves mood and encourages movement, while dance itself facilitates social interaction in a group activity that requires coordination and cooperation (Avgoulas and Fanany 2019:101).

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