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Archimandrite Panaretos Topalidis and his ecclesiastical and political environment.

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Abstract

This dissertation was written as part of the MA in Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Studies at the International Hellenic University.

The idea that Pontus would have become an independent state, was brought up to the surface not many years after the Great War. This idea was also, mentioned by the Armenians. During the last decade of the 20th century and up until the first and the second Balkan Wars, we could say that Pontus was a somehow neutral place. After the movement of Young Turks, which took the leadership from sultan Abdul Hamit II, things took another route. Besides all the other adversities that came along the Young Turks movement (such as the heavy taxations or the violence that was been held against the Pontic people), the worst was the enlistment in the army, which was leading to the labor battalions (*Amele Taburlari*). Death was imminent. On the other hand, despite those facts there was many Pontic people that lived a part or all of their lives in regions outside of Pontus. Some of those people include Archimandrite Panaretos Topalidis, and Chrysanthos, the Metropolitan of Trebizond (1913-1923). They were the root of the idea, of a self-determined Pontic state.

The purpose of this thorough dissertation is to provide the reader with the basic aspects of Pontus's trials throughout the Young Turks movement and afterwards. In addition, it aims to inform about specifically Panaretos Topalidis and his ecclesiastical and political action to Greece and in the area of Pontus.

I would like to express my gratitude to the people who contributed to this project. First, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Theodosios Kyriakidis, for the advice the support and the guidance he provided through this time, and for challenging me to reach beyond my expectations. Moreover, I would like to thank my family, my girlfriend and my friends that expressed their support my effort during the writing process. Lastly, I want to express my gratitude towards Euxeinos Leshi of Thessaloniki for the archival material they provided me, without which I would not be able to compose my dissertation. This archival material has never been published again.

Nikolaos Iordanidis
14/2/2022

Preface

Before you lie the dissertation with the title "Archimandrite Panaretos Topalidis: his religious and national action in Greece and in Pontus." the purpose of the study is to discover various reasons and conditions that prevented Pontus from becoming an independent state. Additionally, it provides the reader with the information about the actions of archimandrite Panaretos Topalidis and the problem with the Exarchies. The dissertation has been written, in order to fulfill the graduation requirements of the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Studies at the International Hellenic University. I was engaged in researching and authoring this dissertation from June 2021 to February 2022.

The fact that, I come from a Pontic family, I have been to seminars concerning Pontus (such as *The Genocide of the Christian Populations of the Ottoman Empire and its Aftermath 1908-1923* or *Genocides of the Christian Peoples of Anatolia 1875-1923, and the handling of memory*) the engagement that I always had with the Pontic issues and my vast interest in history generally aided the whole process of this dissertation. My research question was formulated together with my supervisor, Dr. Theodosios Kyriakidis. The research was difficult but conducting extensive investigation and reading it was made possible to analyze this particular subject.

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Introduction

Panaretos Topalidis

My dissertation's topic would be about a historical figure, Panaretos Topalidis, that played a vital role in the whole area of Pontus, in Russia and in Greece. Having spent a lot of hours discussing about the topic of the dissertation, me, and my supervisor Dr. Theodosios Kyriakidis thought that it would be great to showcase something that wasn't that much known to the public. We chose this figure because of its personality, because its religious and political role both in Pontus and in Greece and lastly because of the aid he offered to the Greek people coming from Russia and the general area of Pontus.

Throughout the writing process we stumbled upon some major difficulties. Some of them include the fact that a large part of his personal archive has been lost, or that his only living relative lives in Drama and refuses to cooperate in terms of identifying clues or providing information regarding the archive or about his life. Additionally, it was not possible to receive advice from the Bishop of Drama due to the study he is preparing on a related subject. Last but not least, there was an effort from our side to visit and collect any information we could possibly find in the political archive of Euxeinos Leshi of Thessaloniki. As a result, those efforts were futile because the archive was not classified and the remaining archives about Panaretos would be ready for public access in the near future.

In addition, during all this constant effort of finding material for Panaretos, there has been an indexing of the *Thematiki apodeltiosi periodikou Pontiaki Estia (1950-1990)*, the *Pontiaki Estia, Euretirio syggrafeon analytika thematika periexomena all of the dekatessaron tomon from Konstantinou K. Papoulidi*, the *Hronika tou Pontou tomos A' volumes 1-12*, the *Hronika of Pontos tomos B' teuhi 13-24* and *Pontiaka fylla volume B'*. The paradox about those is that, even though Panaretos is such an important figure not only in the area of Pontus but also in Russia and Greece, those periodicals that used to track down the movement of the Pontic refugees to Greece do not refer to him at all. There is not even an obituary, as they used to do even for personalities that they did not have that active action, or they were not that important as Panaretos.

The area of Pontus

The area of Pontus had always been a little different than all the other Greek areas. Those differences had to do with the population, the geography and the cultural. They became progressively more and more vivid during the Ottoman rule. To begin with, geographically even though the place where Pontus was located it was perfect for trading via not only the sea but also the land, it had the downside that it was far away from all the other Greek areas and so it was isolated from Hellenism. The population differences had to do with the fact that, the Greek people living in the general area of Pontus went through extensive bloody Islamizations and the migrations from and to Russia and Caucasus (in order to stay out of slavery). Moreover, due to the fact that there were more and more Islamifications taking place, the area of Pontus started becoming less interactive with the Greeks living in other countries¹. The relationships among Greeks and Muslims started to differ especially after 1908, relations between Greeks and Muslims began to deteriorate².

Pontus until 1912 and the Balkan Wars.

Until 1912 and the very beginning of the Balkan Wars³, there was a somehow harmonic connection between the Greeks located in areas of Pontus and the Greeks located in Greece. Before the Balkan Wars, the Young Turks movement (Committee of Union and Progress - CUP) took place in 1908, negatively affecting the lives of the Greek community. Basically, it restored the 1876 Ottoman constitution. At first, they promised various rights to the minorities that were living in the Ottoman Empire such

¹ Georganopoulos Enripidis, *“Οι Προσπάθειες Των Ελλήνων Του Πόντου Για Αυτοδιάθεση Κατά Το Τέλος Της Οθωμανικής Αυτοκρατορίας 1916-1922,”* Ph.D. Thesis (Thessaloniki: Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, 2007), 18.

² Georganopoulos, *Οι προσπάθειες των Ελλήνων*, 24.

³ The First Balkan War occurred in the spring of 1912 and was fought among Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro (the as known as Balkan League) on the one hand and the Ottoman Empire on the other. The Balkan League was victorious and ended with the treaty of London (1913). By signing this treaty, the Ottoman Empire lost almost all of its European territories, including all of Macedonia and Albania. The Second Balkan War happened on June of 1913. This time Serbia, Greece and Romania quarreled with Bulgaria over the division of their joint conquests in Macedonia. The hostilities ended in August of the same year with the treaty of Bucharest, with which Greece and Serbia divided most of Macedonia between themselves, leaving Bulgaria with only a small part of the region.

as religious and cultural autonomy, equality, and liberty. Nevertheless, the circumstances soon changed dramatically, leading to a dark path⁴. Some of the most important repercussions of the Young Turks movement were confiscation of the Greek properties, and the recruitment of the Christians in the army without their consent⁵. Many other people died during the period of the Ottoman Empire in the so-called Labour battalions⁶⁷. Because of the strict recruitment and the general situation, a huge flee movement occurred. Due to the Balkan Wars, Greeks felt that they had to do something altogether in order to overturn the current situation. The result was a big growth of their national sentiment. After the Balkan Wars were terminated, Greeks were attacked at a much higher rate. Those persecutions against Greeks of Pontus led to a rupture between the Greek – Ottoman relationships in a level that it may have led to war in 1914. Those actions were ceased by the Great Powers⁸.

For the first time during that crisis, an exchange of populations was suggested (regarding the Greek population of the vilayet in Smyrna and the Turkish population in Macedonia)⁹. Greece accepted that plan, but it was not implemented, and it was

⁴ Fotiadis, Konstantinos, *The genocide of the Pontian Greeks*, Thessaloniki: Εκδοτικός Οίκος Σταμούλη, 2015, 83. See also, Enepekidis, Polyhronis, *Η δόξα και ο διχασμός: από τα μυστικά αρχεία Βιέννης, Βερολίνου και Βέρνης 1908-1918*, Athens: Ζαχαρόπουλος, 1992, 35-42.

⁵ Georganopoulos, *Οι προσπάθειες των Ελλήνων*, 28.

⁶ Theofylaktou, Theofylaktos, *Γύρω στην άσβεστη φλόγα*, Thessaloniki: Εκδοτικός Οίκος Αδερφών Κυριακίδη, 1997, 217. See also, Fotiadis, *The genocide*, 155., Gavriilidis, Antonios, *Σελίδες εκ της μαύρης συμφοράς του Πόντου*, Thessaloniki: Μαλλιάρης, 2013, 48., Apostolidis, Dimitris, *Η μεγάλη τραγωδία του Πόντου*, Athens, 1919, 47., *Μαύρη Βίβλος διωγμών και μαρτυριών του εν Τουρκία Ελληνισμού (1914-1918)*, Constantinople: Πατριαρχικό Τυπογραφείο, 1919, 309-313., Ailianos, Mihail, *Το έργο της ελληνικής περιθάλψεως*, Athens: Εκδόσεις Γραφείου Τύπου Υπουργείου Εξωτερικών, 1921, 85-87. Also known as Work Battalions/Amele Taburu/Amele Tabulari. They were instituted by Turkey before the outbreak of the World War I. Those battalions were made up of men from regular army and were primarily constituted of Greeks and Armenians. Men that were between the ages of 19 and 45 were called to arms and had eleven days to show up. In the case they did not, they were sentenced to death. The general plan was not only to disarm and isolate them but also to exterminate them. The extermination was carried out in many different ways. The women and children were among the ages of 16 and 60 were forced to move to the interior of Asia Minor.

⁷ Theofylaktou, *Γύρω στην άσβεστη φλόγα*, 217.

⁸ Georganopoulos, *Οι προσπάθειες των Ελλήνων*, 30.

⁹ Fotiadis, *idem.*, 130.

stopped after the Great War has started¹⁰. There was a brief period that Ottoman Empire stalled its participation to the War. The Greeks that lived inside the Ottoman Empire, were forced to join the army. In the beginning though, the freshly joined had the option to redeem their military service¹¹. With the First World War going on the Ottoman Empire joined forces with Germany and tried to permeate the idea of the Jihad (Holy War) war, which did not affect the Muslims which did not affect the Muslims in India and Egypt as they would have liked¹². During the Great War, the Young Turks turned against Greece, with whom did not want any kind of peaceful approaching as it did with other Balkan countries, such as Bulgaria. The Ottoman Empire came to realize that the biggest fear of losing any other territories (apart the European ones that it had already lost) was coming solely from Greek element (because of the population and the economy).

The hostile treatment again the Greeks started with a military levy on 3/8/1914, it continued the economic blockade and the displacements of Greeks living in the west Asia Minor¹³.

The situation became a lot more difficult for the Greeks of Pontus after the conflict in 1916, between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in the Caucasus area (eastern and southeastern Pontus). That was because during this period the Turkish nationalism starts growing more and more. Additionally, it should be mentions that after the Young Turks conference in Thessaloniki (October 1911), there was established a new slogan in Turkey 'Turkey for the Turks'. The Greek people of Pontus welcomed the Russian army with real excitement, thinking that by joining forces with them they could liberate their enslaved people¹⁴. By the time that conflict between Russia and Young Turks occurred, a big part of Greeks in Pontus received retaliation in forms of prosecutions, economic blockade, and sending them as defendants to military courts. Many of them tried to escape from this situation, an incident that made the situation even more severe. It

¹⁰ Georganopoulos, idem., 30–31.

¹¹ As it was proven later, this was a measure that the Ottoman Empire applied to the Greek men that joined the army, only to increase its profit. It was some kind of latent taxation. Apostolidis, Dimitris, *Η μεγάλη τραγωδία του Πόντου*, 53.

¹² Georganopoulos, idem., 36.

¹³ Georganopoulos, idem., 36.

¹⁴ Georganopoulos, idem., 37.

was anticipated for guerillas corps to be created (some of those corps had even recruited Russians)¹⁵. This economic blockade took form with the commandeering of every item in the Greek shops and in buildings that were Greek. In other words, those measurements were only a legal façade for plundering and increased taxation. As for the education, the usage of the Greek language was confined only on the lingual subjects¹⁶.

Pontus after 1916 and the Revolution of 1917.

After 1916 the attacks against the Greek people of Pontus started again with the known now method of displacements. Those displacements were different from those that happened with the Armenians, in time (more concise) and they were not that massive. The excuse for the displacements did not change at all, the Young Turks did not alter their explanation for the displacements, and they said that they were happening due to military reasons. Ottoman Empire was "afraid" of the gearing of the Greek people by the Russians because they might revolt. The real reason though was that they wanted their extermination. Those indirect extermination tactics were called "white death"¹⁷.

The Greeks of Russia, after the Revolution (1917)¹⁸, tried without coordination but as quickly as possible to prepare the ground for their autonomy, educational first and ecclesiastical later. The most prominent organizations were formed in Batum and

¹⁵ Georganopoulos, *Οι προσπάθειες των Ελλήνων*, 37–38.

¹⁶ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 43.

¹⁷ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 63–64.

¹⁸ There were two revolutions that took pace in 1917 in Russia. One in February and one in October. The last one had the hardest impacts on the Greeks. Because the temporary government of Russia did not recognize the requests for autonomy. Moreover, in the Russian army started growing a disobedient spirit which led to gradual disorganization, which eventually gave Muslims the opportunity to start once again the acts of violence. Alexandris Alexis, "Η ανάπτυξη του εθνικού πνεύματος των Ελλήνων του Πόντου 1918-1922: ελληνική εξωτερική πολιτική και τουρκική αντίδραση" in *Μελετήματα γύρω από τον Βενιζέλο και την εποχή του*, ed. Thanos Veremis, Odysseas Dimitrakopoulos (Athens: Φιλλιπότης, 1980), 430. See also, Xanthopoulou-Kyriakou, Artemis, Georganopoulos, Euripidis, Hatzikiriakidis, Kyriakos, *Οι Έλληνες του Πόντου και η Οθωμανική Αυτοκρατορία (1461-1923)*, (Παράρτημα Αρχείου Πόντου), (Athens: Επιτροπή Ποντιακών Μελετών, 2015), 323.

Mariupol¹⁹. Those movements which had their roots in the organizations bloomed when they led to the A' Panhellenic Conference of the Transcaucasus in Tbilisi. The Greek government was up to date about the situation in Pontus and it was in favor of a self-determined Pontic state²⁰. The unfortunate things were that took place after the landing of Kemal in Samsun, the October Revolution, and the Eleftherios Venizelos's loss in all the above developments, made it impossible to help the people in Pontus²¹.

Archimandrite Panaretos Topalidis

His early life until The Russian Revolution

Panaretos Topalidis was born in a village called Fargananta, in a province of Rhodopoli, in the district of Trebizond, on 1st September 1877 and took the name Panagiotis. His parents were Konstantinos and Helen. He graduated from the high school of Trebizond in 1897. He became the principal of the Hapsikioi school for three years. His abilities were assessed early by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and so in 1898 he was sent by the Ecumenical Patriarchate to Constantinople as a representative of the three patriarchic Exarchies of Pontus (Vazelon, Soumela and Peristereota) in order to solve an ecclesiastical issue that appeared. After those three years being a principal, he became a monk in the Brotherhood of the Holy Basilica Patriarchal and Stauropegial Monastery of Saint John of Prodromos Vazelonas. He worked hard for this Monastery, and he was the one that renovated it²².

In 1901 he was sent by the Monastery of Vazelon as a representative of it, to Constantinople to solve an issue with the Holy Metropolis of Trebizond concerning the chapel of Holy Paraksevi. He also in 1905 was called by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1905 together with the abbots of the Soumela and Peristerota Monasteries to Constantinople in order to resolve the differences those three had with the Metropolis of Rhodopolis.

¹⁹ Georganopoulos, idem., 75.

²⁰ Georganopoulos, idem., 76–78.

²¹ Georganopoulos, idem., 78–79.

²² Topalidis, *Ο Πόντος Ανά Του Αιώνα*, Drama: Μυγδονία, 2016, 21–22.

In October 1907 he resigned from his ecclesiastical duties and his abbotship in Vazelon Monastery and was sent by the Monastery to Russia for some cases concerning it. He came back from Russia in 1908 and he started writing right away the history of the Monastery. This project of his came out in Trebizond in 1909. The same year he was designated as Abbot of the Patriarchal and Stauropegial Monastery of Virgin Mary Soumela from the Ecumenical Patriarch. Around 1909-1911 he became the representative of the Metropolis of both Trebizond and Rhodopoleos. Metropolitans of Trebizond, Konstantinos Arapoglou, was the one that during the period 1911-1914, called Panaretos in Constantinople, as a member of the Holy Synod (Archimandrites cannot become members of the Holy Synod, whereas the Metropolitans can). Konstantinos Arapoglou also designated Panaretos, General Archieratic Commissioner of the Holy Metropolis of Trebizond, which by the time being was the capital of the Greeks of Pontus. He served there right after the entrance of the Hellenic troops in Thessaloniki under Bekir-Sami's bey command²³.

It was in 1914, when Panaretos was sent to Russia again, where he remained there until 1916, because of the World War I. Panaretos was not alone in his trip, he had alongside with him Archimandrite and former abbot Elissaios and the deacon Dionysios. Probably, those two ecclesiastical figures stucked with Panaretos to aid him in his purpose²⁴ and to assist him facing the difficulties he would come across²⁵. This time he was sent by Hrysanthos Filippidis, Metropolitan of Trebizond. During the time that he stayed in Russia, Panaretos visited various Greek communities and he dealt with the problems they had. Around April 1916, he came back in Trebizond, which was occupied by the Russian army (April 1916- February 1918). From Trebizond he once again travelled back to Russia and visited Moscow and Petersburg. The Metropolitan of Petersburg, Pitirim was the one that welcomed Panaretos there and he also informed him about the political situation and some things that concerned the Church. In addition, they talked over about the fortune of the Greek Church, which was occupied by the Russian Army, and what would the Ecumenical Patriarch do about this situation

²³ Topalidis, idem., 22–23.

²⁴ *Απολογισμός της εν Ρωσσία περιοδείου μοναστηριακής επιτροπής "Βαζελώνος,"* (Trebizond: Τυπογραφείον Σεράση, 1917), 3, 11. This valid and extensive report has been composed by Archimandrite Panaretos Topalidis.

²⁵ *Απολογισμός της εν Ρωσσία,* 13

(via the Greek Embassy in Petersburg and via the trustworthy written communication with the project officers in Athens and Constantinople²⁶.

It was the year 1917, when the first Panhellenic Conference of Hellenism took place in Russia and more specific in Taganrog. Panaretos participated in this conference as proxy of the Greek Community of Krasnodar²⁷. It played a key role in the Greek people's lives, because in this conference most of the rights and the demands of the people living in Russia were defined and submitted. When he returned, he was sent by Metropolitan Rhodopoleos Kyrillou in Tbilisi (which was the capital of Anticaucasus and succeeded in the provisioning of the General Staff Army of Caucasus). During the same year, he was invited to take place in the Regional Conference of Representatives of Greek Communities in both Caucasus and Anticaucasus in Tbilisi. This whole operation was organized by the Greek Military Contingent, which would consist of Greek soldiers and officers coming from the dissolved Russian army and would cooperate with other Caucasian armies to retrieve the grounds that were in Turkish hands.

The third time that he came back to Russia (1917), Panaretos participated actively in the liberating movement of the Greeks in Pontus, as a member of the «Central Union», that took place in Krasnodar. Its president was the judge Nikolaos Orfanidis, and the secretary-general was Leonidas Iasonidis. Aim of this Central Union, which consisted of Pontic Greeks, was to organize these people in smaller associations throughout Russia, which would fight for the independence of Pontus, and they would take care of the nursing of almost 100.000 refugees of the WW1. Moreover, he participated in the general territory of Kuban of Pontus, in the Panhellenic Conference in Taganrog and the National Assembly of Pontus in Batum. Panaretos was a figure that wanted to offer help, wherever he could possibly do. Panaretos always had the will to take care of others and he stood out with his actions among the Greek in Russia (who trusted him a lot) and that's why in Krasnodar was appointed as the one in command of the «Refugees Nursing Office» and he achieved to find the ways to house and nourish 100.000 Greek refugees of Pontus. He also managed in an exceedingly small period to bring a committee from Athens, which eventually established in South Russia under

²⁶ Topalidis, *idem.*, 23–24.

²⁷ *Απολογισμός της εν Ρωσσία*, 5.

Ioannis Zervos's command. Panaretos was designated as a consultant of this newbuilt office (National Hellenic Health Dispatch)²⁸.

His actions from 1918-1933

After the termination of the First World War, Panaretos was sent from «Central Union» in Krasnodar to the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Hellenic Commission in Constantinople and then he met up with the famous doctor Konstantinos Fotiadis. In 1919, he was sent from Krasnodar together with Avraam Akritas, the President of the Hellenic Community, in Athens. Their trip was aiming to inform the Greek authorities for the situation going on with the Greek people in Russia under the new regime of 1917. From Athens, Panaretos travelled all the way back to Batum, where as a representative of the National Assembly of Pontus, from there went back to Russia and from there to Krasnodar in order to negotiate his position in accordance with the Soviet and the Greeks of Pontus. The negotiations occurred with the General Chief of Soviets in Caucasus (his origins were Armenian, and he was coming from Russia, correspondent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

The same year (1919), the meeting Holy Synod of the Church of Russia in Krasnodar, under the presidency of metropolitan Pitirim took place. Alongside with the president²⁹ Avraam Akrita in Athens, they elected Panaretos as the Bishop of Greeks in south Russia. This decree did not achieve its goals because of the displacement of the Holy Synod from Russia. All the records with the decrees and all the other files were transferred to Serbia. In this Holy Synod, the philhellene metropolitan of Harkovo Antonios coming from Athens, also was a member³⁰.

In 1920, the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Constantinople contacted the Minor Asia Association in Athens in order to create a diversion against the expansion of Kemalism. Panaretos, in addition was elected the Secretary General of the Central Board of Metropolitan Regions of Pontus and he designated from the Ecumenical Patriarchate as the manager who would be responsible for the pickup and the nursing

²⁸ Topalidis, *Ο Πόντος*, 24–25.

²⁹ *Απολογισμός εν τη Ρωσσία*, 28.

³⁰ Topalidis, *Ο Πόντος*, 25–26.

of the Greek refugees that were coming from Russia and Pontus heading towards Greece³¹.

It was October 1922 and Kemalism had spread across Constantinople when Panaretos departed for the Metropolis of Drama and was appointed as Protosygellos of the Metropolis of Drama by the Metropolitan Haldia – Giresun. 1928 was the year that, after the death of the metropolitan Laurentios, Panaretos was ordained by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Archbishop of Athens, as Topotiritis of the Metropolis of Drama and he administrated it until February 1931. In 1929 Panaretos published his second work, entitled *Ο Πόντος ανά τους αιώνες* (Pontus through the centuries), counting 325 pages and containing a lot of maps of the Pontic population. He left the Metropolis of Drama in 1933³².

Life in Greece till his death

In 1938 Panaretos was recruited by the famous Metropolitan of Maronia, Anthimus, as Protosygellos of that Metropole. The same year some months later, he was appointed from the Holy Synod of Church of Greece as deputy (Topotiritis) until 1939. On 27 April he was designated as Archieratic Commissioner Neas and Palaias Kokkinias and Korydallou by the Makariotato Archbishop of Athens and whole Greece, Chrysanthos. On 18 May Panaretos was also ordained as Head Efimerios in the Holy Church of Saint Nikolas in Nea Kokkinia. Two years later, the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece ordered him to leave immediately and to go to Kommotini where the headquarters of the General Administration of Thrace and the Holy Metropole of Maronia and Thasos were located. Panaretos's duty there was to carry the project of the restoration from the German – Bulgarian intrusion and the safety of the people who had left everything behind and had gathered to the train stations to leave for Thessaloniki. His mission was successful, and he sent a long report to Bishop of Kommotini, informing him that the people could return to their homes. After that, Panaretos came back to Nea Kokkinia in Piraeus. During the Italian and German occupation, he aided people in the best

³¹ Topalidis, idem., 26–27.

³² Topalidis, idem., 27.

possible way he could. As a result of his actions, he was sycophantically accused by Mr. Hantzis who stated that he would have to be exiled in Italy³³.

In 1944 alongside archimandrite Nikodimos Papazoglou, Panaretos fought with great persistence and caution, and they managed to prevent the city of Nikaia from many threatening measures caused by the rebels. Those two archimandrites also saved many people from dying by organizing providing free meals for sixteen days. He was one of the most important historical figures that helped so many people in so many ways, even during his last years. He resigned from his duties in 1955, when he started taking his pension. He died on June 3, 1958. His grave is located in the suburb of Nea Kromni in Drama³⁴.

³³ Topalidis, *Ο Πόντος*, 28–29.

³⁴ Topalidis, *idem.*, 29–31.

Authorship activity

Archimandrite Panaretos Topalidis has written two books during his lifespan. Both are providing the reader with the necessary information regarding the area of Pontus. They were published in Drama.

O Pontos ana tou aionas

The very book of Panaretos *O Pontos ana tous aionas* is nearly six hundred pages long and contains a small photography section in it. It consists of twelve chapters and every one of them is about Pontus at a different period of time. Panaretos begins his narration giving us some basic information concerning some general information about Pontus (where it got its name from, population, coverage area, bronze era) and its characteristics³⁵. Then he continues by stating how the Greeks started settling in Pontus³⁶, the importance of their presence there and their connection with Byzantine emperors³⁷. Next come up the fall of Trebizond (1461-1666), some notable and historical families like Gavrades, Ipsilandai, Mourouzai, Akritai, Kavasitai and the reconquest of Trebizond³⁸. In the next chapter Panaretos gives the reader some brief information about three periods: 1666-1821, 1821-1832, 1832-1908³⁹. He keeps going on about the mixed-up people that were living in Pontus which were, Cryptochristians, Klostoi, Stauriotai, Mesohaldinoi, Kolhoi, Ivires, Laz, Circassians, Gypsies and Jews⁴⁰. The book continues with a discussion of the period 1908-1914 when Greeks were required to join the military compulsory and the effects it had on the Pontus area. Moreover, it informs about the Pontus statutory text⁴¹. Moving forward, Panaretos discusses points such as the inferiority of Greeks of Pontus and as well as the relations between Greeks and Turks⁴². The next chapter is one of the biggest in the book and it concerns, the tragedy of the Pontic Greek people, the Armenian slaughter, the

³⁵ Topalidis, idem., 47–59.

³⁶ Topalidis, idem., 63–37.

³⁷ Topalidis, idem., 75–105.

³⁸ Topalidis, idem., 121–68.

³⁹ Topalidis, *Ο Πόντος*, 175–87.

⁴⁰ Topalidis, idem., 195–229.

⁴¹ Topalidis, idem., 231–48.

⁴² Topalidis, *Ο Πόντος*, 251–64.

persecutions of the Greek people and the disasters in Amisos, Erpaa, Giresun and the region of Trebizond⁴³. In this next chapter Panaretos refers to the Greek people in Russia, how those people always cared about the Greek people in Pontus, the refugee committee in Russia and the statutory text of the Greek people in Russia⁴⁴.

In the last chapters of the book, the author discusses the Pontic people's movement for the liberation of Pontus, the numerous conferences that took place outside of Greece, and the many Greeks that supported Pontus. Additionally, Panaretos writes about the stance of the Greek government towards Pontus⁴⁵. Lastly there is a conclusion, some events before the Paris Peace Conference and a general statutory text of Pontus⁴⁶. The appendix of the book could be found in the end⁴⁷.

The importance of this particular book is immense because the author, Panaretos, is taking active part in some of the events that the book describes and thus he preserves valuable attestations. Panaretos had taken all those responsible positions, both ecclesiastical and political, has become a protagonist in the historical course of the Greeks of Pontus the last years before the exodus. Because of that, Panaretos has the opportunity to imprint those activities in his book with great details that concern the Hellenism maintaining at the same time original archival material. This was a critical epoch for Hellenism, dense in facts that would change once and for all its fate.

Istoria tis Ieras Vasilikis Patriarhikis kai Stauropigiakis Monis tou Timiou Prodromou kai Vaptistou Ioannou Zavoulou I Vazelon

This second book of Panaretos is about five hundred pages long and contains a big photography section in the end of it. It consists of eight chapters, and each one of them describes a different aspect of this Monastery in Trebizond. The very first one is giving the reader some basic key aspects of the Monastery, the economic condition,

⁴³ Topalidis, idem., 269–330.

⁴⁴ Topalidis, idem., 339–65.

⁴⁵ Topalidis, idem., 367–81.

⁴⁶ Topalidis, idem., 391–466.

⁴⁷ Topalidis, idem., 469–561.

and the monastic brotherhood of it⁴⁸. Continuing, it analyzes the history of it, starting with the foundation of the Monastery in 270 B.C. until the reign of the Grand Komninoi. In the same chapter, Panaretos narrates the Persian destruction of it and the reconstruction of this Monastery⁴⁹. During the third chapter of the book, the abbots, and the monks during the Komnenian period are stated (also how they helped the Monastery during this period)⁵⁰.

Moreover, in the next chapter, Panaretos talks about the Monastery after the occupation of Trebizond until 1665⁵¹. The fifth is one of the most extensive chapters of the book and it begins with the history of the Monastery from 1666-1863. It goes on by referring to the metropolitan Azaria coming from Theodosiopouli and the first sigil of Patriarch Parthenios around 1660. After that, Panaretos mentions the sigil from the Ecumenical Patriarch Grigorios E' in favor of the Monastery of Vazelona. Then, he refers to the bishop in Ahtaleia, Sofronios coming from the same monastery and then he continues with the biographies from the fathers of it from 1750 and on⁵².

The book continues with the highly lauded affair of exarchies in Pontus and giving brief information concerning the Archbishop of Rhodopoli, the community of the monasteries in Pontus, the patriarchal eksarxies of the monasteries of Pontus and the abolishment of the exarchies⁵³. It goes on mentioning the second abolishment of the eksarxies in Pontus⁵⁴. During the last chapter, Panaretos states some people living in Pontus (such as Egipides, Proestotes, Kleftes), and some catalogue mentioning some figures from the church that contributed to the monastery of Vazelon⁵⁵.

As an abbot of the monastery of Vazelon, Panaretos was in a position which allowed him to have direct access to original archival material. Panaretos makes the most out of this archival material (codex and Patriarchal documents) during his writing of this

⁴⁸ Topalidis, *Ιστορία Της Ιεράς Βασιλικής Πατριαρχικής Και Σταυροπηγιακής Μονής Του Τιμίου Προδρόμου Και Βαπτιστού Ιωάννου Ζαβουλών ή Βαζελών*, Drama: Μυγδονία, 2016, 49–83.

⁴⁹ Topalidis, *idem.*, 93–126.

⁵⁰ Topalidis, *Ιστορία της Ιεράς*, 129–36.

⁵¹ Topalidis, *idem.*, 163.

⁵² Topalidis, *idem.*, 177–287.

⁵³ Topalidis, *idem.*, 303–26.

⁵⁴ Topalidis, *idem.*, 404.

⁵⁵ Topalidis, *idem.*, 429–57.

book. Through his writing process Panaretos manages to save valuable piece of the history of the monastery of Vazelon, which if they would not have been recorded by him, they would be lost or unknown to us.

The conception of an idea of a self-determined Pontic State

Panaretos alongside with other great historical figures of Pontus, such as Chrysanthos were enthusiastic with the idea of Pontus, becoming an autonomous state. They always knew that this was something really hard not unachievable though. The idea of the creation of a newly Pontic state begins to take shape during the First World War and especially close to its end when the persecutions of the Greek element began to show that a harmonic cohabitation among Greeks and Turks was impossible. The Greek people of Pontus started forming up guerilla forces against the Turkish policy, which was no other than to exterminate them. In every and almost each one of the areas of Pontus starting from 1918, there are many secret organizations that aim in the creation of an independent Greek state in Pontus⁵⁶. There are also some small teams that support and want Pontus's unity with Greece. There are many reasons though why this unity could not be completed. In eastern Pontus, the Russians have conquered Trebizond. Besides that, they accept a Greek administration there, which is known as the "temporary administration of Trebizond". Moreover, this acceptance and the Greek administration in Trebizond is recognized by Entente as a legal authority of the Trebizond vilayet⁵⁷.

March 1917 is a date that is well known for the civil rebellion in Russia and the overthrowal of the czarist regime. With that, *soviets* = rebellious commissions, started

⁵⁶ Agtzidis, "Το Κίνημα Ανεξαρτησίας Του Πόντου Και Οι Αυτόνομες Ελληνικές Περιοχές Στη Σοβιετική Ένωση Του Μεσοπολέμου," *Δελτίο Κέντρου Μικρασιατικών Σπουδών*, αρ. 9 (1992): 167–68.

⁵⁷ Agtzidis, *Το κίνημα Ανεξαρτησίας*, 168. A recent study about this case, which is making a very good use of the Russian archives for the first time is: Τσατσανίδης Παναγιώτης και Κωνσταντίνος Φωτιάδης, *Η Ρωσσοκρατία στον Πόντο (1916-1918)*, (Thessaloniki: Εκδοτικός Οίκος Σταμούλη, 2021).

to establish in the areas that have been captured by the Russian army. Chrysanthos was also taking place in those *soviets*⁵⁸.

It is in 1916 when the Caucasus was being crossed by the Russian army, which starts concerning the Greek orthodox and the Muslims that lived in that area. The Greek people were thinking of the Russian army as liberators due to the strict and challenging times they had with the Muslims. Also, they thought of that because the Russians were orthodox as well. The Russian army arrived at Trebizond in the same year and Chrysanthos was the one that was put in charge of this area⁵⁹. That cooperation was also making Russians excited because they thought Trebizond as a passage through which they would arrive to Constantinople. There were many people living in Pontus that moved to Russia. The Turkish army damaged and destroyed some parts of the Holy Monasteries Vazelon and Soumela⁶⁰. It was on 19 April 1916 when the monks of the monastery of Soumela, due to the constant threats for their lives and plunders of the Turkish army, they started fleeing during the night⁶¹. Those monks tried to find shelter in Livera, which was under Russian occupation⁶². The same fate had the Vazelon monastery, which again during the summer of 1916, was plundered and it had been depopulated for three months⁶³. This was what Panaretos noted when he came across the Monastery:

«Φρίκη σπαραξικάρδιος καὶ ἀπογοήτευσis κατέλαβεν ἡμᾶς μόλις πλησιάσαντας εἰς τὴν Μονήν. Ἡ ἐξωτερικὴ αὐλὴ, οἱ δρόμοι, οἱ θάμνοι καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν Μονήν τοπία ἔβριθον συντριμμάτων σκευῶν, ἐπίπλων καὶ ἐγκαταλελειμμένων ἐνδυμασιῶν καὶ ἄλλων ἀποσκευῶν, δυσσομία δὲ ἀποκρουστικὴ ἀνεδίδετο ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς Μονῆς καθιστώσα ἀφόρητον καὶ μελάγχολον τὴν προσέγγισιν πρὸς αὐτήν.»⁶⁴

⁵⁸ Agtzidis, *idem.*, 168.

⁵⁹ Xanthopoulou, et al., *Οἱ Ἕλληνες τοῦ Πόντου*, 314-315.

⁶⁰ Georganopoulos, *Οἱ προσπάθειες τῶν Ἑλλήνων*, 58–59. See also, Xanthopoulou et al., *Οἱ Ἕλληνες τοῦ Πόντου*, 316., Gavriilidis, *Σελίδες ἐκ τῆς μαύρης*, 21-22.

⁶¹ Fotiadis, *The genocide*, 195.

⁶² Οικουμενικὸ Πατριαρχεῖο, *Μαύρη Βίβλος διωγμῶν καὶ μαρτυριῶν τοῦ ἐν Τουρκίᾳ Ἑλληνισμοῦ 1914-1918*, 269–70.

⁶³ *Απολογισμὸς τῆς ἐν Ρωσσίᾳ*, 9-10.

⁶⁴ *Απολογισμὸς τῆς ἐν Ρωσσίᾳ*, 21.

These Pontus territories were not new to the Russian Army. They have visited them again in the past, in 1829 and 1877-1878 during the Russo-Turkish Wars⁶⁵. During those wars the Greek people of Pontus went through tough times, and they were happening in order to protect and liberate the Christians living in Turkey as they Russian government was stating⁶⁶. The very first ideas about a self-determined Pontic state occurred under the function of the municipality of Trebizond under the Russian occupation⁶⁷.

The Conferences in Pontus

The Russian Revolution made the climate extremely fertile for the exhibition of democratic disposition of the Greeks of Trebizond. With the freedom and the ideas of independence, Greeks started forming their political path which would lead to the acquisition of their rights⁶⁸. The first step happened when the *Ethiniki Syneleusi* of the Greeks of Transcaucasus, took place in Tbilisi, in May 1917. This was one of the most important steps towards the democratic disposition of the Greeks having in mind that because of this *Syneleusi* some major decisions have been made for the future of the Hellenism. Those included, the nationalization of the Greek schools, the publishing of the Greek newspaper and also their participation in the Panhellenic Conference in Taganrog. During this Panhellenic Conference some major things were discussed concerning the Greek people living in Russia, ecclesiastical, economical, rural, and political issues and they were asking to be treated equally with the other ethnicities regarding the things mentioned above⁶⁹. But the most vital issue was the independence of Pontus. The Conference agreed and transmitted those resolutions to the Russian government⁷⁰. In accordance with all the other people of Caucasus, they advance in the creation of an autonomous regime for the Greek areas, and they started to form a Greek corporal army in order to achieve it⁷¹.

⁶⁵ Georganopoulos *Οι προσπάθειες των Ελλήνων*, 60.

⁶⁶ Topalidis, *Ο Πόντος*, 342.

⁶⁷ Georganopoulos, *Οι προσπάθειες των Ελλήνων*, 68.

⁶⁸ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 75.

⁶⁹ Panagiotidis, *Ο εν Ρωσσία Ελληνισμός*, 8-11.

⁷⁰ Topalidis, *Ο Πόντος*, 369.

⁷¹ Agtzidis, *Το κίνημα Ανεξαρτησίας*, 169–70.

In 1917 the Conference of Greek people living in Russia was taking place in Taganrog, and it was decided there the foundation of the "Union of Greeks of Russia" which was located in Rostov. This Conference also was responsible for the hospitality and the nursing of the refugees coming in Pontus. During the same year, there is a meeting happening in Tbilisi, where all of the ethnic groups of Pontus (Armenians, Georgians, Greeks and Russians) were gathered in order to create a communal army corps depending on the people each and every one had⁷².

Furthermore, in 1918 in the city of Krasnodar, Greek people living in this area founded the political association called "Central Union of Pontic Greeks in Krasnodar". Its existence served the cause of the organization of the one thousand and one hundred Greek people living in the other districts of Russia to political associations. In addition, the Central Union was responsible for the representation of six hundred Pontic people living in Russia, and the request of independence of Pontus, in the Paris Peace Conference. Lastly, this political association was put to work to deal with the medical care of the refugees of the World War. The Central Union of Pontic Greeks in Krasnodar has been one of the most active political associations and has achieved in a very short period of time to co-create over 80 smaller associations in the southern Russia, which all had to do with the independence of Pontus⁷³.

Another conference is held in Marseilles in February 1918 and is called "First Panpontion Conference". It was there, when the participants of the conference decided to send a telegram to the commissar of foreign affairs, Trotsky, asking for his support on the issue of the self-determination of Pontus and the creation of an independent state⁷⁴.

A month later, it is the time when the Ottomans advanced in Caucasus started in 1918, with the Brest – Litovsk treaty is signed with which the Bolsheviks concede Ukraine to Germany and the Kars, Aradhana and Batum region to Turkey⁷⁵. So, Russia due to the advance of the German and Austro-Hungarian troops in the area of Pontus had to walk

⁷² Agtzidis, *Το κίνημα Ανεξαρτησίας*, 170.

⁷³ Topalidis, *Ο Πόντος*, 370.

⁷⁴ Agtzidis, *idem.*, 171–73.

⁷⁵ Agtzidis, *idem.*, 173.

out from it⁷⁶. A few months later, in July 1918, there is another conference in Baku in which representatives of the Greek people of Southern Russia, Transcaucasus and Pontus participated. This conference proclaimed the independence of Pontus, and a 7-membered council is being elected. This council has under its protection all the other Pontic associations.

The last cry for help

The defeat of the Central Powers in the War gave hopes in the Greek people living in Pontus, concerning the resolution of the Greek issue in the Black Sea. During November 1918, in the Inter-Allied Conference in London, Greeks of Pontus finally were getting organized, and a petition was sent to the allied governments, asking for the independence of Greek citizens, both Christian and Muslim, living in Pontus⁷⁷. People of Pontus were basing their hope for a self-determined Pontic state on Eleftherios Venizelos. Venizelos in the Paris Peace Conference held in 1919, decided that it would be better not to bring up the issue of Pontus. He thought that if he brought up Pontus, all the other claims would seem excessive. Venizelos's critical thinking concerning the migration issue of the Greeks living in Pontus to Greece was affected by the fear that they might spread communistic ideas and that their presence in Greece would seem like the evidence of the failure of his plan and of course it would affect his political position⁷⁸.

After the landing of Kemal in Samsun in 1919 things started getting worse. The Allies are holding a negative attitude towards the Pontic movement⁷⁹. Moving to Greece, the government there rejected completely the suggestion of the Pontic people for intervention. During the London Conference Chrysanthos was also trying his best to be heard about the self-determined Pontic state, but without any luck. In order for Venizelos to have some arguments in his possession, the *Ethniko Symvoulion Pontou* tried to register the people living in Pontus⁸⁰. The Allies were rejecting Chrysanthos's proposals because the Greek population group was the smallest one. Even in San Remo

⁷⁶ Georganopoulos, *Οι προσπάθειες των Ελλήνων*, 94.

⁷⁷ Agtzidis, *Το κίνημα Ανεξαρτησίας*, 174.

⁷⁸ Georganopoulos, *Οι προσπάθειες των Ελλήνων*, 200–201.

⁷⁹ Agtzidis, *idem* 177.

⁸⁰ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 307.

in Italy in 1920, where the leaders of Entente met, the pleadings about Pontus did not find their targets⁸¹. The conference in San Remo held in order for those leaders to negotiate about issues concerning the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire (which was in great connection with Greece during this period). During this conference, Greece was not even allowed to participate. After the conference at San Remo, it was time for the Treaty of Sevres (1920). This treaty was signed among the Allied Powers and the Ottoman Empire. In addition, it did not make much difference in the claims of the area of Pontus. The only attributes concerning this area were in the field of the rights of the Christian communities, which eventually did not apply.

The only thing that made an impression was that Kurds became autonomous. Moreover, the people that left the general area of Pontus and found shelter in Russia, were not allowed to return to it. But those people were not giving up that easily. Despite the difficulties and all the obstacles in their way, they did not lose their spirit and in accordance with the Batum's National Conference, they tried to continue fighting for an independent Pontic state⁸². This time, things were looking more promising, since Pontus had with its side, Eleftherios Venizelos (he was in favor of the operation in Pontus)⁸³. He was supporting the idea of an independent Pontic state because, as he saw it, it was the only solution to fight Kemal. Together with this state, Venizelos would have organized a campaign and a coordinated attack against Ankara. This new state would have on its base not only the Greeks that were left in the general area of Pontus but also the Greeks that left Pontus and tried to find shelter in the northern parts of Russia during the last 50 years. But this plan could not stand on its own, from an economic point of view. It would require the economic aid from England⁸⁴. Venizelos was believing that Pontus would be liberated, and he stated in the Treaty of Sevres that if the Ottomans would not accept and apply the treaty's rules, they would lose both Pontus and Constantinople.

In 1920 Eleftherios Venizelos lost the elections and the front that supported the king won, leading to disaster, having no plans neither for Pontus nor for Asia Minor. He was

⁸¹ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 316.

⁸² Georganopoulos, *Οι προσπάθειες των Ελλήνων*, 158–59.

⁸³ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 337.

⁸⁴ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 344.

somehow self-exiled in Paris. His loss in the elections disappointed some people living in Greece, the people living in Pontus (because they were thinking that all of their efforts went to waste and that only with Venizelos, they could do something about their state) and the Allies (Venizelos was the one that was supporting Greece to take part in the World War One with the side of Entente)⁸⁵. The new government of the king did not have any plan about Pontus and did not care at all about it. It was in 1921 when the things started taking the worst turn, they could. The supporters of Kemal were excited with the events taking place in Greece and gave them the opportunity not only to continue but also to maximize their anti-Greek atrocities⁸⁶. The most commonly used excuse was that because the people of Pontus were in favor of the creation of an independent Pontic state and because of their actions, they were accused with high treason⁸⁷. The last emergency call for help towards Pontus occurred in the summer of 1921, when the Pontic organizations asked for help, unfortunately without any response to their demand. From then and till the Asia Minor disaster, Greeks tried to intervene in Pontus, either themselves or with the Allies help, wanting to protect the people there from the prosecutions of Kemal's supporters⁸⁸. Greece's position to the Asia Minor front was not good, and that verified with the stance of the Allies against Greece, with which it was terminating the warfare with terms that overthrew the Treaty of Sevres. The one term that jumps out of all is the withdrawal of the Greek army from the Asia Minor front. The Kemal's supporters had a challenging time facing the guerilla Greek Pontic forces, which led to an armistice between them, till the Asia Minor disaster⁸⁹. Greece was in a short position after knowing that the Allies were not on its side and the amplification of Kemal's politics led the Greek politics to a stalemate. The Asia Minor disaster, the departure of the Greek army from there, and cancelation of the liberation of Constantinople (under the Allies commands), showed the troublesome position the Greek government was in and that it would be extremely hard to get out of this situation⁹⁰. The loss of the Greek army in

⁸⁵ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 346.

⁸⁶ Georganopoulos, *Οι προσπάθειες των Ελλήνων*, 348.

⁸⁷ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 349.

⁸⁸ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 372.

⁸⁹ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 374.

⁹⁰ Georganopoulos, *idem.*, 379.

Asia Minor sealed the domination of the Turks in that area⁹¹. In this very vital and critical geopolitical context for the Greeks in Pontus, Panaretos took political action through his constant participation in the committees and the conferences. But despite progress, neither Panaretos, nor the rest Pontic leaders were in a position to affect the Greek government and the Great Powers, regarding a positive outcome in Pontus.

Panaretos as a figure of the church

Panaretos Topalidis besides his intense occupation with the political and national concerns, has been above all a church leader and played a very important role in the ecclesiastical life not only in Pontus, but also in Russia and in Greece.

The black sheep of the Monasteries

Panaretos's representative church (Monastery of Vazelon) was one of the three Basilical, Patriarchal, Stauropegical and Exarhical Monasteries. The others being the Peristereota Cathedral, and the Soumela Cathedral. The Metropolis of Rhodopolis was the "black sheep" of the rest of the Monasteries. The province of Matsuka (which is located south of Trebizond), together with the area of Santa, constitute the province of Rhodopoli, with the head office located in Livera. This province is divided in five smaller areas: 1. Upper Matsoukas, 2. Down Matsoukas, 3. Holy Soumela, 4. Galiaina, and 5. Moulakas⁹². In addition, there had been more or less 70 villages (there is not an exact number). From those most of them were occupied by the Greek element, 14 of those belonged to Turkish populations and almost 9 of them were a mix of both, Greeks and Turks. Even though, it is strenuous to be precise concerning the exact chronology of the constitution of those Basilical, Stauropegical and Exarhical Monasteries, their existence was of immense importance. The reason behind it, is because they provided Christian with a safety veil regarding the preservation of the spiritual cohesion of the Greeks, during many tough times in the passage of history⁹³.

⁹¹ Agtzidis, *Το κίνημα Ανεξαρτησίας*, 178–79.

⁹² Apostolidis, *Η Μητρόπολις Ροδοπόλεως, Το Ζήτημα Των Εξαρχιών Του Πόντου*, 51.

⁹³ Xanthopoulou, et. al., *Οι Έλληνες του Πόντου*, 79.

Exarchies and the General/National Rules

The term Patriarchal Exarhia used to be usually the casual delegation of one person with the instruction to prosecute, as the patriarch's representative, one particular case. This case could concern the solution of an on-the-spot issue, or a dispute or even (which was the most common) to collect the economic demands of the Patriarchate. Orthodox, Christian people that were living together in a small residential unit, scattered throughout the empire (Byzantine at first and Ottoman later), were not coming under in any ecclesiastical periphery nor they were administrated by a local bishop. They belonged totally to the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople.

Those people living together in the small residential areas, were called *patriarhika kasterllia* in the beginning, *patriarhika horia*, and *patriarhika nisia*. They were named Patriarchal Exarchies only after the end of the 14th century. The patriarch was giving these areas to secular to take care of for the rest of their lives. They had the right to take advantage of the ecclesiastical income with the obligation to look after the spiritual administration of the Christian people. After the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 the institution of patriarchal Exarchies survived and took a better form. They were annulled definitively with the application of the General / National Rules in 1860-1862⁹⁴.

The General / National Rules were the result of a pack of reforms, which were established by the sultan Abdul Mejid in the mid-19th century. Those reforms would lead to the resolution and the modernization of the Ottoman Empire. So, in 1862 in the 13th article of the 5th Rules is stated that the Exarchies cease to exist and that they granted to the local bishops. The idea behind the abolition of Exarchies was that the patriarch did not have the need for a personal income as he would be paid annually. Concerning the Exarchies that the clerics and priests had in their jurisdiction, they were also abolished and there were no compensations⁹⁵.

The Exarchies of Pontus cannot be compared with other that have been constructed in other areas, or via donations or by trading and they have served as fiefs with the tolerance of the church. The Patriarchal Exarchies were becoming more or less in

⁹⁴ Paizi-Apostolopoulou, Mahi, *Ο Θεσμός Της Πατριαρχικής Εξαρχίας: 14ος-19ος Αιώνας*, Athens: Εθνικό Ίδρυμα Ερευνών, 1995, 9.

⁹⁵ Paizi-Apostolopoulou, *Ο Θεσμός*, 74–75.

number throughout the years. Most of them abolished with the establishment and the service of the National Rules in 1859-1860, which established permanent salaries for the patriarchs. The constitution of the National Assembly of 1863 activated the "National Rules" who stopped in 1859-1860⁹⁶. Moreover, they were validated by the church, and they become one of the fundamental basis and rule of whole the Ecumenical Patriarchate's church administration. The Exarchies were given by the church to those who ruled them also as a homage. The oldest one of the Exarchies is going back in 1317 in a letter, written by the Patriarch of Constantinople Ioannis Glykis. In addition, the patriarchal Exarchies were given by the Patriarchate in the bravest men of Pontus and to the men that played a vital role in the ecclesiastical services⁹⁷. The aim behind the Exarchies though, was to maintain the Exarhia as it was and to collect ecclesiastical taxes from those who stayed in it. Apart from the ecclesiastical Exarchies there were also some kind of donations, which is met due to the enormous number of poor and abandoned monasteries (stopped operating due to various economic issues. This institution did not mean in any case that the people that were being donated that the monastery instantly ceased to be in Empire's jurisdiction. It just helped in the preservation and the utilization of the property of the monasteries and by extension in the preservation of the monastery life⁹⁸.

Monasteries and Christians

In the general area of Pontus, the existence of the monasteries in Exarchies was different both in form and in purpose. People due to the persecutions throughout the years (especially the first years of Christianity), were finding shelter in one of the oldest monasteries of Pontus, Vazelonos Monastery. With the years passing by, more and more people started gathering around monasteries like Vazelon creating a spiritual bond among people and monasteries. The priests played an especially vital role in this bonding process. People living around the monasteries were being called "paroikoi ton monon". Those people were incorporated in the monasteries, and they were obliged

⁹⁶ Apostolidis, *Η Μητρόπολις Ροδοπόλεως*, 77.

⁹⁷ Apostolidis, *idem.*, 79.

⁹⁸ Apostolidis, *Η Μητρόπολις Ροδοπόλεως*, 84–85.

to enhance their spiritual levels and the administration of the paroikies⁹⁹. This very particular system of Exarchies was one of most vital in the area of Pontus. That is why, over the years despite the fact that many bishoprics of Pontus have disappeared, and many Greek souls have perished, this very system was the reason that many citizens became more in numbers and helped others in minor cities, and the monasteries became spiritual oasis, national hearths, in which all these years the light of faith and national resistance has never go out. A statement that concerned the system of Exarchies and was opposed to them was that this system was going against the apostolic and synodic rules. In details, those rules did not allow to any face of the church to do anything without the compliance of a bishop. Moreover, Christians were not allowed to be deprived from a visit from a high-ranking priest¹⁰⁰.

The duties of the abbots

According to nine articles of the regulation of the Soumela Monastery in 1886, there are some duties (ecclesiastical) in Exarchies (these duties were inspected by the Ecumenical Patriarchate). The abbot, in accordance with the rules and the privileges, which have been validated through patriarchate sigils, was the spiritual father of the monastery's municipality. He was responsible for the spiritual needs of the Christians and if needed he had the ability to communicate immediately with the Patriarch. In addition, he was obliged to visit at least three time per year the villages to fulfil people's spiritual needs, to solve any issue of emergency and to gather the taxes concerning the church. Furthermore, the abbot, as the spiritual leader of each Exarhia, had the right to judge the cases among Christians and to communicate with the political authorities in order to defend in the best possible way the interests of the Christians in the Exarhia. Last but not least, abbots had the responsibility for the supervision of the schools in each Exarhia. It was thought that the education was particularly important and so they supported it via helping to cover the school expenditures and by travelling from village to village and preaching the Word. So, the

⁹⁹ Apostolidis, idem., 85.

¹⁰⁰ Apostolidis, idem., 86–90.

bond that there was formed among the monasteries and the areas around them was strong and lasted many years¹⁰¹.

¹⁰¹ Apostolidis, *Η Μητρόπολις Ροδοπόλεως*, 91–92.

The provisional end of Exarchies

The 13th article of the Rules states that the Patriarchal Exarchies cease to exist. Till that period of time and due to the previous system in Pontus, the education was underdeveloped in the countryside. It was due to the unstable environment caused by thieves and raids against the local population that there was no room for spiritual growth¹⁰². The foundation of the Archbishop of Rhodopolis was aided by the disorder in administration issues among the churches and the monks. It was the creation of the Archbishopric of Rhodopolis and the presence of an archbishop that resulted in a great deal of animosity among the monasteries and the newly established Archbishopric, who refused to accept the dissolution of their old privileges¹⁰³. Even the people of the other Monasteries reacted to this either alone themselves or incited by other people or priests. Some of the arguments include the infertile ground of the Monastery, the mountainous spot of the Monastery or even the inadequacy of preserving a priest there. Panaretos was supporting that during his election, Gennadios formed a secret agreement with Konstantinos Gatoglou coming from Livera, in order to aid Gennadios becoming a bishop.

Panaretos publishes the following agreement:

- A. «Ἐν ὀνόματι τῆς Παναγίας Τριάδος ὁμολογῶ ἐν συνειδήσει ὅτι ἐάν ὁ κύριος Κωνσταντῖνος Γατόγλης Δουβερίτης κατὰ τὴν ὑπόσχεσιν τοῦ ἐνεργήσῃ καὶ κατορθώσῃ νὰ γείνω Ἀρχιερεὺς εἰς τὴν πατρίδα μου τὴ Ματσούκαν· τότε ὑποχρεοῦμαι νὰ πληρώσω εἰς αὐτὸν διὰ τοὺς κόπους τοῦ γρόσια, ἀριθμοῦ 10000 καὶ νὰ τὸν ἔχω πρῶτον λογιώτατον καὶ λογοθέτην εἰς ὅλην τὴν ἐπαρχίαν ἕως τέλους τῆς ζωῆς μου ἐν τῇ πατρίδι μας καὶ ἀκόμη νὰ πληρώσω κατὰ μῆνα ἀριθ. 500 γρόσια διὰ τοὺς κόπους ὅποῦ θὰ κάμει διὰ τὸ γενικὸν καλὸν τῆς πατρίδος μας ἄλλως δὲ μένει ἄκυρος ἡ συμφωνία μας· καὶ ὅποιος ἀπὸ τοὺς δύο μας φανῆ ἀπατεῶν καὶ ἄδικος καὶ δὲν στέκει εἰς τὴν συμφωνίαν τοῦ νὰ ἔχη ἀντίδικον τὸν Θεὸν καὶ τὴν Κυρίαν Θεοτόκον μὲ ὅλους τοὺς Ἁγίους.

τῇ 20ῇ Ἰουνίου 1862

¹⁰² Apostolidis, *Ἡ Μητρόπολις Ροδοπόλεως*, 94–95.

¹⁰³ Apostolidis, *idem.*, 96. The first priest-deacon who is elected in Rhodopolis is Gennadios Peristereotis (Misailidis).

Γεννάδιος ιεροδιάκονος Μισαηλίδης, Γαλιανίτες υπόσχομαι και υποφαίνομαι».

He made a similar agreement with the community of Douvera, the content of which is published below:

- B. «Ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ Παναγάρχου Θεοῦ, συμφωνῶ ὁ υποφαινόμενος μετὰ καθαρᾶς συνειδήσεως μὲ τοὺς πατριώτας μου Δουβερίτας, ὅτι ἔὰν οὗτοι οἱ πατριῶται μου Δουβερῖται ἐνεργήσουν καὶ μὲ κάμουν Ἀρχιερέα εἰς τὴν πατρίδα μου τὴν Ματσούκαν, πρῶτον· υπόσχομαι εἰς αὐτοὺς ὅτι θὰ κτίσω τὴν Μητρόπολιν μου μέσα εἰς τὴν Δουβερὰν μὲ ἰδικὰ μου ἔξοδα· δεύτερον· ὅτι θὰ πληρώσω εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ ἁγίου Γεωργίου Δουβεῤᾤς ἀριθ. 10000 ἤτοι δέκα χιλ. γρόσια· τρίτον ὅτι θὰ πληρώσω εἰς τὸ σχολεῖον Δουβεῤᾤς ἀριθ. 5000 ἤτοι πέντε χιλιάδες γρόσια· τέταρτον ὅλας τὰς υποθέσεις τῆς ἐπαρχίας θὰ τελειώσω μὲ τὴν θέλησιν τῆς δημογεροντίας· πέμπτον· ὅτι ἐπειδὴ εἶνε δίκαιον διὰ τοῦτο τὸν Γαῖγλιᾶν «Σουρμανόη» θὰ ἀποδώσω εἰς Δουβερὰν καὶ ἕκτον, ὅτι μετὰ θάνατόν μου τὴν ἡμίσειαν κατάστασιν κινητὴν καὶ ἀκίνητον θὰ πληρώσω εἰς τὸ κοινὸν τῆς Δουβεῤᾤς.

τῇ 23 Ἰουνίου 1862

Γεννάδιος ιεροδιάκονος Μισαηλίδης, Γαλιανίτες υπόσχομαι και υποφαίνομαι»¹⁰⁴.

There were some monastery loyal followers that were sending reports to protest to the Patriarchate and Gennadios was sending his reports denouncing that the monks of the monasteries were the one to blame, because they stirred up the people in protest. In 1863 there is a patriarchate epistle sent to the Vazelon monastery in order to cease those disputes, but without any result¹⁰⁵. This problematic argument ended with the repeal of the Archbishopric of Rhodopolis (7/9/1867) and the priest Gennadios was placed in indefinite leave¹⁰⁶. Because of that the old system with the Exarchies was re-

¹⁰⁴ Topalidis, *Ιστορία της Ιεράς Βασιλικής*, 284–85.

¹⁰⁵ Apostolidis, *Η Μητρόπολις Ροδοπόλεως*, 104.

¹⁰⁶ Apostolidis *idem.*, 98–100.

established. In 1876, there was yet another attempt to recreate the archbishopric, but without any success.

The reconstitution of Exarchies

It was not until later in 1902 when the second revocation of the Exarchies happens and the reconstitution of the Rhodopolis not as Archbishopric this time but as Metropolis (which was abolished in 1867). During the same year, it is decided that all the Monasteries and the Exarchies should be controlled by the Holy Metropolis of Trebizond¹⁰⁷. People were in favor of having an archbishop, but they preferred the old regime due to 1. They would disappoint their relatives' monks 2. They were poor and they were skeptical about how they will conserve the archbishop expenses 3. They were afraid that there might be a case, in which the archbishop would be inequitable against them 4. They did not want to lack the support they were getting from the monasteries, because of the poor situation they were in, monasteries were the only rest they could rely on and 5. The re-establishment of the archdiocese would deprive the other monasteries from their reinforcements¹⁰⁸.

Another event that occurred during 1876-1877 was the supervision of the Monasteries and the Exarchies from the Holy Metropolis of Trebizond. The Holy Synod of 1879 decided that the supervisor of the holy monasteries would be the metropolitan of Trebizond, Grigorios Kallidis. That decision recanted all the previous patriarchal decisions, with which all the privileges of the monasteries have been established and the ones that profited from that were the Trebizond people. That was because for a long time they wanted, the Exarchies and their Metropolis to become one with ulterior motive to provide the schools located in province, with the surplus of their monasteries¹⁰⁹. The only logical thing that could happen after this decision was that the other monasteries put up a fight against it considering that by accepting that they will lose their free will and their infallible¹¹⁰. It is the failure of that measurement that seals that period. The results of this contradiction were basically not in favor of the

¹⁰⁷ Xanthopoulou et. al., *Οι Έλληνες του Πόντου*, 82.

¹⁰⁸ Apostolidis, *Η Μητρόπολις Ροδοπόλεως*, 114–19.

¹⁰⁹ Apostolidis, *idem.*, 120–21.

¹¹⁰ Apostolidis, *idem.*, 121.

education, and it had a really negative effect on it¹¹¹. During the period 1882-1894 the schools not only were not functioning correctly, but also there were not any new ones. The very first hierarch of Rhodopolis after its reconstitution was Gervasios Sarasitis¹¹². During this whole time, the three Monasteries were the only that could not be satisfied with the reconstitute of Rhodopolis. People were divided in two big groups, the one supporting the reconstitution of Rhodopolis and stating that the monks are the only responsible for all this agitation, and the other that was asking the abolition of it.

Panaretos was not having a good relationship with Gervasios. According to Panaretos, he did not take advantage of the morality of the church fathers, but rather sought fame in people, and was what angered him. He did That was because with this attitude he was humiliating publicly the Monastery. The Metropolitan started "attacking" Panaretos (Vazelon Monastery) and Grigorios (Peristereota Monastery) and asking for their removal from their places. Panaretos, repelling the accusations, answered with many epistles. This conflict between the Monasteries made the Patriarchate to send an epistle to Gervasios (Rhodopolis) in order to announce to him that the withdrawal of punishments to Panaretos, Elissaios, Grigorios and Theodosios has occurred, and they have been warned to confine in their monastery duties. Moreover, after patriarchal commandment the three representatives of the Monasteries were called in Trebizond, and they were accused as instigators of the events against Gervasios. The abbots thought that they were being falsely accused and unfair and that is why they stated that they will not accept the transmission of the decisions of the H. Church coming from the metropolitans above them. They asked for those decisions to be transferred immediately to the monasteries and they threatened that if they were called again, they would disobey¹¹³.

With the whole inner church fighting thing continuing the Metropolitan asked Panaretos (Vazelon) and Grigorios (Peristereota) and Parthenios (Soumela) this time for their resignation. In case they would not do it, they threaten them with his

¹¹¹ Apostolidis, *idem.*, 125.

¹¹² Apostolidis, *Η Μητρόπολις Ροδοπόλεως*, 129–31.

¹¹³ Apostolidis, *idem.*, 141–42.

resignation¹¹⁴. The Church decided that they must once again gather in Constantinople in 1904 to be brought in justice. According to Panaretos the metropolitan of Rhodopolis Gervasios, in order to make things worse he was sending peoples reports in the Patriarchate and he was trying to motivate the countrymen in Constantinople to take action as soon as possible. That is what happened, those countrymen who supported him a lot, submitted a lot of report in the Patriarchate and they hired two judges one for the Patriarchate and one for the Sublime Porte¹¹⁵.

The Holy Synod decided after the session in 1905, that the abbots are acquitted from the charges, but it will not let them return to their monasteries. This was happening due to the continuing fuss for the reconstitution of Rhodopolis. After five whole months in Constantinople, abbots were free at last to return to their monasteries. The aftermath of this constant strife among the ecclesiastical members showed how big of an influence had during this period. This can also be seen throughout the patriarchal mail. The approach of the problem of reconstitution of Rhodopolis by the three metropolitans during this second period, showed the tough side of the problem. Only the First World War and the events that came alongside with it would reveal the true side of importance on this matter¹¹⁶.

Panaretos as we already said was the abbot of the Monastery of Vazelon during the period 1903-1907. During this period, he had to deal with a lot of things concerning the ecclesiastical duties. As it can be seen from the Patriarchal correspondence among the monasteries of Pontus, there were many economic issues and disputes between both the monasteries themselves and between the Patriarchate and the monasteries. There were many times that the Patriarchate was sending epistles to the monasteries and the abbots reminding them the financial debts they had. A characteristic example of this, is the epistle on 10 June 1904 with the following content:

Τῷ Ἡγουμένῳ τῆς Μονῆς Βαζελῶνος (γρ. 1500)

Ἐπαναλαμβάνομεν και διά τῆς παρούσης ὑπομνήσαι τήν ὀσιότητά σου ὦν προς τὸ ἔθνικόν Ταμεῖον ὀφειλήν τοῦ ἐτησίου τοῦ παρελθόντος ἔτους 1903 γρ... ἦν

¹¹⁴ Apostolidis, *idem.*, 144.

¹¹⁵ Apostolidis, *Η Μητρόπολις Ροδοπόλεως*, 144–45.

¹¹⁶ Apostolidis, *idem.*, 146–47.

ἀποροῦμεν ἔτη μέχρι τοῦδε αὕτη ἐξώφλησας ἔτη παρά τὰ καὶ πρότερον γραφέντα σου ἐκκλησιαστικῶς· ἀνάγκην τούτων ἵνα ἐσπεύσης εἰς τὴν ἐξώφλησιν τοῦ εἰρημένου ἐτησίου, καθ' ὅσον μετ' οὐ πολὺ λήγει καὶ τὸ τοῦ ἐνεστῶτος ἔτους περὶ οὗ ὀφείλεις ὡσαύτος φροντίσαι ἐγκαίρως¹¹⁷.

10 Ιουνίου 1904.

The Patriarchate returned a few days later from the first letter, returning to the financial issues and debts of the Monastery with the following letter:

Τῷ Ἠγουμένῳ τῆς Μονῆς Βαζελῶνος Παναρέτω.

Μετ' ἀπορίας ἀναγνόντες ὡ τῷ ἀπό β'. ἐνεστῶτος μηνός ἀπαντητικῶ γράμματί σου ὅτι τὸ πρὸς τὸ ἐθνικὸν Ταμεῖον κανονικὸν ἐτήσιον τῆς Μονῆς τοῦ ἔτους 1903 πρό ἱκανῶν ἤδη μηνῶν ἀπεστάλη πρὸς ἡμᾶς διὰ γράμματος ἀπὸ ἰδ.' Φεβρουαρίου ἐνεστ. ἔτους, προαγόμεθα δηλῶσαι τῇ ὀσιότητι σου εἰς ἀπάντησιν ἐτι οὔτε τὸ ρηθὲν γράμμα ἀφίκετο πρὸς ἡμᾶς, κατὰ ἐξηκριβῶθη ἐκ τοῦ γραφείου τοῦ πρωτοκόλλου, οὔτε σταλέν ποσὸν εἰσπράχθη, ὥς εἰκός, εἰς τὸ Ταμεῖον ὑφ' οὗ ἄλλως τε θὰ ἐξεδίδετο ἡ τακτικὴ διπλότυπος ἀπόδειξις. Ταῦτα τοῖνυν πρὸς γνῶσιν σου διὰ τὰ περαιτέρω¹¹⁸.

21 Ιουλίου 1904.

Despite the constant annoyance by the Patriarchate so that the economic issues would be taken care of, it seems that the monastery did not have the proper economic capacity to face those affairs. Hence the Patriarchate continues to send epistles, declaring that in the correspondence it received there was not any bill of exchange settlement. It seems that the economic problems did not knock off and they continued until the next year, as the Patriarchate kept sending epistles for financial debts. By reason of the harsh state of the monastery, it was one of the reasons that Panaretos decided to travel to Russia, to gather financial aid for the monastery.

In this point it is vital to mention that it was common for priests and abbots to travel in order to gather economic aid for their monasteries. This phenomenon was particularly spread across Pontus. When the things began to look gloomy for the

¹¹⁷ Αρχαιοφυλάκιο Οικουμενικού Πατριαρχείου, Κώδικες Πατριαρχικής Αλληλογραφίας, Κώδιξ, Α'/77 σ. 197.

¹¹⁸ Α.Ο.Π., Κ.Π.Α., Κώδιξ, Α'/77 σ. 241.

current monastery each time (economically), the abbot council decided to send the abbots to Russia usually to boost their monastery's economy. The abbots were sent to Russia due to two reasons. The first was that Russia was Christian orthodox and the second one that Russia had gathered and imbued the Greek element so vividly that there were many Greeks living there. So, when a monastery each time underwent an economic crisis or difficulty, had the abbots asking for a permission to go to Russia through the Patriarchal correspondence¹¹⁹. Though those travels, the abbots more often than not were successful, and they were gathering a significant amount of money. With that aid in their disposition the monasteries were able to survive the difficulties, to augment their properties, to conserve the schools around the Exarhia and to provide help for their people in a time of need. In order for an abbot to fulfil his journey for the economic aid of the monastery there was a very specific procedure that it must be followed. First, the abbot council was the one that had to elect the abbot that would perform the journey. After that, an epistle must had been sent to the Ecumenical Patriarchate in order to receive the competent permission. In this permission it was stated the reason of the travel and the names of those who were about to make it. It was very much dependent on the condition of the monastery (economical and administrative). When the destination of the journey was Russia, then the abbot had also to acquire permission from the Holy Synod of Russia and the Imperial Court. During those missions, the abbots used to bear with them holy relics or relics of the saints. They also did that to stimulate the religious sentiment of the Greeks and by doing that to improve the results of their travel¹²⁰. Panaretos during the period of time that he spent in Russia, he managed to collect 28275,91 out of the 30544,91 rubles in total¹²¹. As Panaretos mentions during his aid-financially trip to Russia, he was left speechless by the homogenous people that were living there. That was because they Greeks in Russia showed huge empathy not only towards the Vazon monastery and the restructuring of it (after the plunders of the Turks) but also

¹¹⁹ Kiriakidis, Theodosios, "Μια περίπτωση αιτήσεως της μονής Σουμελά προς το Πατριαρχείο για ζητεία προς τη Ρωσία," *Γρηγόριος ο Παλαμάς*, (Δεκέμβριος 2008), 781.

¹²⁰ Kiriakidis, idem., 782–83.

¹²¹ *Απολογισμός της εν Ρωσσία*, 4.

towards the poor people. This empathy came in great contrast with the people living in Trebizond for which he notes the following:¹²²

«Ἡ ἐντύπωσίς μου ἐκ τῆς τοιαύτης κατ'ἐμέ ἀδιαφορίας τῶν ἐν Τραπεζοῦντι, ὑπῆρξε καὶ διαμενει πολὺ ἰσχυροτέρα καὶ ἐκπληκτικωτέρα ἀπὸ τὴν ἐντύπωσιν τὴν ὁποίαν ἠσθάνθην ἐκ τοῦ μεγέθους τῆς ὑπὸ τῶν Τούρκων γενομένης καταστροφῆς τῆς Μονῆς καὶ τῆς περιφερείας αὐτῆς.»

It is evident from the patriarchal correspondence that the Monastery remained under financial strain, a fact which forced Panaretos to face the financial problems:

Τῷ Ἱερ. Μονῆ Σουμελαῖ. Τῷ Ἱερ. Μονῆ Βαζελῶνος.

Περιοκλείοντες ἐν τῇ παροῦσῃ σημείωμα τῶν ὑπὸ τῆς Μονῆς ὀφειλομένων εἰς τὸ Ταμεῖον τῆς ἱεράς θ. Σχολῆς, ἐντελλόμεθα τῇ ὁσιότητί σου ἵνα ἐν πρώτη ταχυδρομικῇ εὐκαιρίᾳ ἀποστείλεις ἀνυπερθέτως αὐτά¹²³.

9 Φεβρουαρίου 1905.

With the information gathered from all the patriarchal correspondence, some conclusions could be made. Most of them refer to economic issues. The Patriarchate was very persistent to that kind of issues to the monasteries. Those economic issues included the contributions to the so-called National Fund, the subscription to Patriarchal journal Ecclesiastical Truth, the amplification of the Patriarchal School. The Stauropegial-Patriarchal Monasteries were giving a portion of their income to all those patriarchal foundations and due to the fact that the most times they were late to the delivery date of their donation, the Patriarchate used to send them those mails. Moreover, the Vazelon Monastery had to face the issue of the reconstitution of the Metropolis of Rhodopolis from the exarhical villages. The fact that the Vazelon Monastery loses those exarhical villages is the primitive reason for the economic woes.

¹²² *Απολογισμός της εν Ρωσσία, 26-27, 31.*

¹²³ Α.Ο.Π., Κ.Π.Α., Κώδιξ Α'/78 σ. 33.

Panaretos resigned from his position in the Vazelon Monastery in 1907 and the one that took his place was Anthimos. His resigning occurred due to health reasons as it is also seen in the patriarchal correspondence and afterwards, he went to Russia.

At this point, it is a little bit odd what Panaretos claims. From one point of view, he is alleging health issues, but on the other hand he is capable of travelling to Russia. Assumptively there could be only two explanations. The one is that Panaretos just claims health issues just to leave the monastery, and thus he is resigning. The other explanation is that he is truly facing some important health issues and besides being in this exhausting position, the love for his monastery and for the people of the Exarhia, gave him strength to accomplish this financial trip to Russia. Currently, the conditions are clouded due to the lack of more data, and there is little light on the horizon regarding this particular issue.

The patriarchal document that supports Panaretos's resignation and the election of Anthimos as Topotiritis is the following:

Τῷ ὀσιωτάτῳ ἱερομ: Ἀνθίμῳ, Τοποτηρητῇ τῆς ἡγουμενείας, καί τοῦς λοιποῦς πατράσι τῆς ἱεράς Μονῆς Βαζελῶνος. Ληφθέν ἀνεγνώσθη συνοδικό ἀπό β'. τοῦ¹²⁴

1 Μαρτίου 1907.

Παρελθόντος τῆς ὑμῶν ὀσιότητος γράμμα, δι' οὗ πληροφορεῖτε περί τῆς διά λόγους ὑγείας οἰκειοθελούς παραιτήσεως ἀπό τῶν καθηκόντων τῆς ἡγουμενείας τοῦ ἡγουμένου Παναρέτου καί περί τῆς ἐν κανῇ συνεδρία ἐκλογῆς ὡς τοποτηρητοῦ τοῦ ἱερομονάχου Ἀνθίμου. Εἰς ἀπάντησιν οὖν δηλοῦμεν τῇ ὑμῶν ὀσιότητα ὅτι τά οὕτως γενόμενα ἐνεκρίθησαν ὑπό τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἀνιστῶμεν δέ ἵνα ἐγκαίρως προβῆτε εἰς τήν ἐκλογὴν τακτικοῦ ἡγουμένου¹²⁵.

1 Μαρτίου 1907.

After Panaretos's resignation and Anthimos's succession by the Philadelphia Metropolitan, Leontios Papadopoulos-Houtouriotis (1909) the Holy Synod and the Ecumenical Patriarchate decided to take some measures in order to make the Soumela Monastery great again. Those measures needed to be taken because of the degraded

¹²⁴ Α.Ο.Π., Κ.Π.Α., Κώδιξ, Α'/80 σ. 68.

¹²⁵ Α.Ο.Π., Κ.Π.Α., Κώδιξ, Α'/80 σ. 69.

situation of economic scandals and the disputes between the fathers¹²⁶. Those measures included the implementation of the communal system (coenobitic) and that for five years the ecclesiastical fathers would be excluded from the participation and the interference concerning the administration things.

For those reasons, a six membered committee was established and had the obligation to lead and administrate the economic situation of the Soumela Monastery. Out of the six members, three would come from the eparhia of Trebizond and three from the eparhia of Rhodopolis. Those six members would be suggested by the metropolitans. As for president and supervisor of this committee it was decided to be the Metropolitan of Rhodopolis. The Holy Synod decided that deputy of the abbacy should be the hieromonachos Theodosios Peristereotis¹²⁷. With another Synodic decision the jurisdiction as well as the economic administration expanded also in the two other monasteries, Vazelon and Peristereota Monasteries¹²⁸.

¹²⁶ Apostolidis, *Η Μητρόπολις Ροδοπόλεως*, 166.

¹²⁷ Α.Ο.Π., Κ.Π.Α. Κώδιξ, Α'/79 σ. 334-335.

¹²⁸ Α.Ο.Π., Κ.Π.Α., Κώδιξ, Α'/80 σ. 132-133 , Α'/83 σ. 246.

Panaretos's political action

Archimandrite Panaretos Topalidis played an important political role in Pontus, Greece, and Russia. Out the many things this can be verified by the epistle of the metropolitan of the monastery of Rhodopolis, Kyrillos to Panaretos. This ecclesiastical epistle that was sent to him in 3/5/1919, mentions that after the meeting of the church people in Rhodopolis, Panaretos was elected as a member of the 4-people delegation. This delegation would represent the Eparhia of Rhodopolis in Batum in the Pamponian conference. By this conference, another 3-membered delegation was elected and was sent to Athens in order to meet with Eleftherios Venizelos and inform him about the situation that was going on in Pontus (the events in Giresun and the treatment of refugees in Russia).

The central political role of Panaretos in the Council of Pontus but also the efficiency in all the obligation he undertook, made him the most suitable person to classify and organize the saved archive of the Greeks of Pontus that is preserved in the Black Club of Thessaloniki. This archive is not completely ready yet (it is said to be ready by this time next year), due to the plethora of surviving archival material, volumes and handwritten epistles.

Political action in Greece

A very interesting proof of Panaretos's political action was also a letter he sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Πρὸς τὸ Σεβαστὸν Ὑπουργεῖον Ἐξωτερικῶν

Ἐνταῦθα

Κύριε Ὑπουργέ,

Ἐπ'εὐκαιρίᾳ τῆς μελλούσης νὰ συνέλθῃ ἐν Λονδίῳ, τῇ 8/21 Φεβρουαρίου, συνδιασκέψεως, πρὸς λύσιν τοῦ ἀνατολικοῦ ζητήματος, λαμβάνω τὴν τιμὴν νὰ ὑποβάλω τὰ ἐπόμενα:

Ἡ Συνθήκη τῶν Σεβρῶν ἀφῆκεν εἰς τὴν Τουρκίαν τὸν Πόντον τοῦ ὁποίου ὁ ἐλληνικὸς πληθυσμὸς ὑπερέβαινε, κατὰ τὸ ἔτος 1914, τὸ ἑν ἑκατομύριον ψυχῶν, ἑξ'ῶν, 500.000

περίπου, φεύγοντες τήν μάχαιραν τοῦ ἀπαισίου τυράννου, κατέφυγον κατά διαφόρους ἐποχάς εἰς τὰς χώρας αἱ ὁποῖαι πρὸ τοῦ ἔτους 1918 ἀπετέλουν τήν Ρωσικὴν Αὐτοκρατορίαν, καραδοκοῦντες εὐκαιρίαν νὰ ἐπανέλθωσι, 85.000 ἐξεδιώχθησαν τῶν ἐστιῶν των κατά τοὺς μῆνας Ἰανουάριον καὶ Φεβρουάριον τοῦ ἔτους 1918 διωγμούς, 170,576 ἐθανατώθησαν διὰ μυρίων βασάνων ἐν Πόντῳ καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ μένουσιν ἐν Πόντῳ, προσκαρτεροῦντες τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν τῆς Πατρίδος των καὶ ποτίζοντες μὲ δάκρυα καὶ αἷμα τὴν γῆν τῶν πατέρων των.

In this introductory part Panaretos states that the Sevres treaty made half a million Greeks to runaway from the Turks, mostly in Russia and they are waiting to return to their land. In addition, during the persecutions in the 1918, many Pontic people lost their lives.

Ἐξ' ἄλλου ἡ αὐτὴ συνθήκη διὰ τοῦ 144 ἄρθρου της, ἐπιβάλλει εἰς τὴν ὀθωμανικὴν κυβέρνησιν τὴν ὑποχρέωσιν νὰ διευκολύνῃ τὴν ἐπάνοδον τῶν μετὰ τὸ 1914 ἐκδιωχθέντων ἐκ τῶν ἐστιῶν των καὶ τὴν ἀπόδοσιν τῶν κινητῶν καὶ ἀκινήτων περιουσιῶν των, αἵτινες τυχὸν θὰ ἐπαναυρεθῶσι.

Αἱ διατάξεις τοῦ ἄρθρου τούτου, μεριμνῶσαι, κατ' ἐπιφάνειαν, διὰ τὴν ἐπανόρθωσιν τῶν εἰς βάρος... τῶν χριστιανῶν ἀδικημάτων, καλύπτουσι κατ' οὐσίαν αὐτὰ καὶ προλαμβάνουσι τὴν ἐπανορθωσίν των,

Knowing the treaty really well, Panaretos that the Ottoman government had the obligation to allow and facilitate the return of the populations that had been persecuted and that they should have been given homes. The provisions of the article had to take care of those things.

α) διότι ἐκ τῶν 600.000 περίπου Ἑλλήνων τοῦ Πόντου, οἱ ὁποῖοι κατά διαφόρους ἐποχάς ἠναγκάσθησαν ὑπὸ τῆς τουρκικῆς τυραννίας νὰ ἐγκαταλείψωσι τὸ πάτριον ἔδαφος καὶ οἱ ὁποῖοι ταλαιπωροῦνται σήμερον εἰς τὰς χώρας τοῦ Καυκάσου καὶ τῆς Ρωσίας, διαφλέγονται δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἱεροῦ πόθου τῆς ἐπανάδου εἰς τὰς ἐστίας των, ἐπιβάλλεται εἰς τὴν Τουρκίαν ἡ ὑποχρέωσις νὰ δεχθῆ καὶ νὰ διευκολύνῃ τὴν ἐπάνοδον μόνον τῶν ἐκδιωχθέντων μετὰ τὸ 1914, ἥτοι τοῦ ἐνὸς ἕκτου τοῦ ὅλικου πληθυσμοῦ, ὅστις ἐξηναγκάσθη νὰ εὐρεθῆ μακρὰν τῆς πατρίδος του,

He continues, that by the 600.000 Greek people that were forced to leave their land and today they are living in Russia, Turkey is obliged to help them return (only those that had left in 1914, which was around the 1/6 of the total population).

β) διότι, ἐνώ ἀφ' ἐνός τὸ ἐν λόγῳ ἄρθρον ἀκυροῖ τὸν περὶ ἐγκαταλελειμμένων γαιῶν τουρκικὸν νόμον τοῦ 1919 καὶ τὰς συμπληρωματικὰς αὐτοῦ διατάξεις, δι' ὧν ἐπιδιώκετο ὑπὸ τῆς Τουρκίας ἢ νομιμοποιήσις τῆς κατασχέσεως τῶν κινητῶν καὶ ἀκινήτων περιουσιῶν τῶν ἐκδιωχθέντων, ἐκτοπισθέντων καὶ θανατωθέντων χριστιανῶν, ἀφ' ἑτέρου ἐπιβάλλει τὴν ἀπόδοσιν μόνον ἐκείνων τῶν περιουσιῶν, αἱ ὁποῖαι ἤθελον τυχὸν εὔρεθῆ.

Προφανῶς οἱ συντάκται τοῦ ἄρθρου ἠγνόουν τὰ γενόμενα ἐν Τουρκίᾳ.

Διαρκοῦντος τοῦ εὐρωπαϊκοῦ πολέμου ἡ Τουρκία ἐκ μόνου τοῦ Πόντου ἐξετόπισεν εἰς τὸ ἐσωτερικὸν τῆς Μικρᾶς Ἀσίας 259.674 Ἕλληνας καὶ ἐξεδίωξεν εἰς Ρωσίαν 85.800 χωρὶς νὰ ἐπιτρέψῃ αὐτοῖς νὰ λάβωσι τι ἐκ τούτου, κινητὰς καὶ ἀκινήτους, ἐν μέρει μὲν κατέχει ἢ ἰδία κυβέρνησις, ἐν μέρει δὲ συνετέλεσε καὶ ἐπέτρεψε νὰ διαρπάξῃ ὁ Τουρκικὸς ὄχλος, ὁ στρατὸς καὶ τὰ ἀνταρτικὰ τοῦ στρατοῦ σώματα. Αἱ οἰκίαι καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ οἰκοδομήματα τῶν ἐκτοπισθέντων, ἐν μὲν τοῖς χωρίοις ἐπυρπολήθησαν, ἐν δὲ ταῖς πόλεσι ἐπωλήθησαν ὀνομαστικῶς ὑπὸ τῆς κυβερνήσεως εἰς ἰδιώτας Τούρκους μὲ τὴν ὑποχρέωσιν νὰ κατεδαφίσωσιν αὐτὰ οἱ ἀγορασταί. Καὶ κατεδαφίσθησαν. Ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ μὴ ἐκτοπισθέντος ἐλληνικοῦ πληθυσμοῦ αἱ περιουσίαι καὶ πρὸ παντός τὰ ἐμπορεύματα κατεσχέθησαν κατὰ μέγα μέρος ὑπὸ τῆς κυβερνήσεως ἐπὶ διαφόροις προφάσεσι.

In this part, Panaretos becomes argumentative by stating that those who compiled this article had no idea what was going on in Turkey. During the First World War, more than 250.000 Greeks were banished towards the inner Asia Minor and almost 90.000 were displaced in Russia. Those people were not allowed to have any kind of asset with them (their commodities were confiscated by the Ottoman government claiming many things that were not true) and their homes and villages were burnt down, or they were sold to private citizens by the Ottoman government.

Εὐνόητον ὅτι ἡ Τουρκία, ἐκμεταλλευσμένη τὰς διατάξεις τοῦ ἄρθρου τούτου, ἐὰν δὲν μεταβληθῶσι αὐταί, θὰ ἠρνεῖτο ἀφ' ἐνός τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν εἰς τὰ πέντε ἕκτα τοῦ ἐκτοπισθέντος πληθυσμοῦ, καὶ δὲν θὰ ἀπέδιδεν ἀφ' ἑτέρου εἰς τοὺς ἰδιοκτῆτας οὐδὲν ἐκ τῆς διαρπαγείσης περιουσίας των, διότι οὔτε τὸ ἐν ἑκατοστὸν τῶν διαρπαγέντων δύναται νὰ εὔρεθῆ, περὶ οὗ λαμβάνει μέριμναν ἡ Συνθήκη!!!

Ἡ Συνδιάσκεψις τοῦ Λονδίνου, ἀναλαβοῦσα τὴν λύσιν τοῦ Ἀνατολικοῦ ζητήματος, ὀφείλει νὰ λάβῃ ὑπ' ὄψιν τὰ δεινοπαθήματα τοῦ ἐλληνισμοῦ τοῦ Πόντου καὶ νὰ θέσῃ

τέρμα εἰς τὴν δουλείαν αὐτοῦ, διότι μόνον τότε θὰ κατεδικάζεται νὰ συνεχίσῃ τὸ μαρτύριον του, αἱ διατάξεις τοῦ 144^{ου} ἄρθρου τῆς Συνθήκης εἶναι ἀνάγκη καὶ δίκαιον νὰ μεταβληθῶσιν, οὕτως ὥστε, ἡ μὲν παλιννόστησις νὰ εἶναι δικαίωμα πάντων τῶν εὐρισκομένων μακρὰν τῆς πατρίδος των, ἀνεξαρτήτως τοῦ χρόνου τῆς ἀπομακρύνσεως των ἐξ αὐτῆς, ἡ δὲ τουρκικὴ κυβέρνησις νὰ ὑποχρεωθῇ νὰ ἀποζημιώσῃ δικαίως, πάντας τοὺς χριστιανοὺς διὰ πᾶσαν ζημίαν προσγενομένην αὐτοῖς, λόγῳ ἐκτοπισμοῦ, ἐπιτάξεως, λεηλασίας, ἐμπρησμοῦ, κατεδαφίσεως, ἀποστερήσεως ἐργασίας εἰσοδημάτων, καὶ λοιπῶν.

In this last part of the epistle, Panaretos blames not only the composers of the article, but also Turkey, who is taking great advantage of the current situation of the treaty. Lastly, he writes that Conference in London should take care of the Eastern Question and to give an end to the trials that the Greeks of Pontus had to go through. Those people have the right to come back to their homes and land and they have to be compensated by the Turkish government for their acts of atrocities.

Ἀθῆναι, 15 Ἰανουαρίου 1921

*Μεθ' ὑπολήψεως πολλῆς
Ὁ ἡγούμενος τῆς ἐν Πόντῳ μονῆς Βαζελῶνος
καὶ ἀντιπρόσωπος τοῦ ἐν Ν. Ρωσίᾳ Ἑλληνισμοῦ
Ἀρχιμ. Πανάρετος¹²⁹*

What Archimandrite Panaretos was trying to exhibit was the Eastern Question¹³⁰ . His suggestions regarding the Eastern Question did not find resonance, because as it was

¹²⁹ Topalidis, *Ο Πόντος*, 461–63.

¹³⁰ Mackfie, Alexander, *The Eastern Question, 1774-1923*, London: Longman, 58. The Eastern Question is a diplomatic and historical term for the Ottoman Empire's political status and viability. This question was of high importance in view of the Empire's strategic position astride the Balkans, Near East and Eastern Mediterranean. Dated begins from the tsarist expansion towards the Black Sea during the reign of Catherine the Great (1762-1796) to the demise of the Ottoman Empire in 1923. The Eastern Question revolved around four issues. First was the decline of the Ottoman Empire, precipitated by military defeat and breakdown of administrative and financial institutions. Second failure of the Ottoman modernizing reform to stop being the "sick

seen later this question was not solved in the Paris Peace Conference as it should be. Greeks of Pontus, some of them went to Russia and couldn't come back, even though that the Ottoman Empire was obligated to facilitate their return, after 1914. He is also mentioning that many Greek people around Pontus were displaced deeper in Asia Minor, and many were deported to Russia without having the ability to take anything with them. That is why Panaretos is trying his best even through epistles to make things better for the Greek people of Pontus and to claim their rights, that the Ottoman Empire would not recognize. He also believes that the Allies played an important role, considering that they did not pay the attention the situation needed. Because of those, things kept going worse and worse, even after the Asia Minor Disaster and Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 with the population exchange. Panaretos is also mentioned many times in the meetings logs of the *Geniko Synedrio Ellinon tou Pontou*. That is because he was a very respected person, and he had a great position in the Conferences around Pontus, Russia, and Greece. During this Conference of the Greeks of Pontus, Panaretos suggested (precisely in 23/7/1919) to send to the English military commander and to the agency of the Russian Company a report about the piracy event to the Konstantinos steamship and the representative of the Central Union of Krasnodar, Turlidis, had to pay 78.000 rubles, that were destined for the province of Amasya¹³¹.

Political action in the area of Pontus and Russia

Moreover, a day later (24/7/1919) it is decided to send Panaretos in a mission of Central Union of Krasnodar. He would be accompanied by Ioannis Papadopoulos. During the same session and in accordance with the Patriarchates and the Greek commission, it was decided that a revolution in Pontus would be proven dangerous and impossible. In order for the issue of Pontus to be solved, it was suggested for the

man of Europe". Third issue would be the rise of nationalism among Ottoman subjects, especially Balkan Orthodox Christians, Arab Christians and Muslims, Armenians, and Turks. Last but not least, was the issue of the rivalries of the Great Powers concerning commercial, diplomatic, political, and strategic leverage in the Ottoman Near East.

¹³¹ Theofylaktou, *Γύρω στην άσβεστη φλόγα*, 137–38.

Pamopontiako Conference in Batum to be organized. This conference would elect a Supreme Executive Committee, which would be trusted by the Greek government¹³². In addition, in 31/7/1919 he suggested that all the people that were forced to leave Pontus in 1914, should return back having communicated with the Greek government, because they are Pontic people.

A few days later, in 2/8/1919, archimandrite Panaretos suggests that there should be a conversation regarding the relations between the Conference and the Unions or the local liaisons. He believed that the Unions that they are spread here and there, should be depended on the Central Unions only after the elections of the Supreme Executive Committee. Also, that this Committee should gather under its wings all the Unions and the Central Unions and should be responsible for the initiatives about the national issues. The Unions should only deal with local issues. They should be free to be in close contact with the Conference and that the connections among the Conference and the Foreign Unions should be discussed¹³³.

In 7/8/1919, a statement of Panaretos for the Archive of the Conference of the members of the Council, to be transferred in a safe place, in case that Batum ceases to be a safe place. His statement became accepted. On top of that, another statement of his that became accepted as well was about granting certificates of identity in all the Conference members that return to their provinces. Additionally, the Municipalities and the Unions should be also provided with a revision of the Conference proceedings. Furthermore, Panaretos suggested that the Municipalities should be given a financial aid (depending on the population and its needs)¹³⁴.

It is also in 14/12/1919 when the Conference of Greeks of Pontus changes its name and becomes the National Assembly of Pontus, and the Council of Pontus becomes the National Council of Pontus¹³⁵.

In 23/6/1920 archimandrite Panaretos provides very useful information to the meetings of the National Council, concerning Russia. Afterwards it is mentioned that he is sent there (to Russia), from the Health Committee to distribute financial aid to

¹³² Theofylaktou, *Γύρω στην άσβεστη φλόγα*, 139.

¹³³ Theofylaktou, *idem.*, 149–50.

¹³⁴ Theofylaktou, *idem.*, 151.

¹³⁵ Theofylaktou, *idem.*, 152.

those who were in need. That money was sent from the Greek government, and they were reaching Moscow¹³⁶.

We can also see Panaretos's political action through an epistle to Leonidas Iasonidis¹³⁷ in 11/11/1920 in which he displayed his disappointment about the loss of Eleftherios Venizelos in the elections that took place in 1920. He continues mentioning that the struggle for Pontus is something national and not regional. In addition, Panaretos believes that it is urgent for Iasonidis to be present in Batum and assemble the National Assembly, which would entrust the issue of Pontus to the National Council (which would follow the Greek governments leadership). Moreover, he is asking for two representatives of the Greek government, one in Constantinople and one in Athens in order to postpone the National Assembly indefinitely. Inside the same epistle from the political archive of the National Council, Panaretos compliments Ioannidis for his devotion to the issue of Pontus, he underlines the breakdown of V. Ioannidis's son from the attacks of his political enemies. Lastly, he suggests that V. Ioannidis¹³⁸ should be elected from the National Assembly as special envoy and authorized representative¹³⁹.

¹³⁶ Theofylaktou, 197.

¹³⁷ *Εγκυκλοπαίδεια του Ποντιακού Ελληνισμού*, τ. 4, (2007, Θεσσαλονίκη), σ. 42-43, 45-46. Leon/Leonidas Iasonidis was also a very important and historical figure of Pontus. He was born in 1884 in Poulantzaki in Pontus. After his education in the Phrontistirion of Trebizond (1902), he went to the university of Constantinople to pursue his studies in law. He graduated in 1912 and he left for Paris. In Paris he studied political sciences and he graduated in 1915. During the WW1 he left Paris and through Romania he went to Rostov to take care and support the Greeks of Caucasus, who fled there to escape the Turks. He was one of the founders of the Central Union of Pontus in Krasnodar (1918) and in 1919 he participated in the National Assembly of Pontus in Batum (in which he was also elected as the president of it). As president his aim was the independence of Pontus. In 1920, alongside Venizelos he visits Paris and London as leader of the Commission of National Defense and fights for the independence of Pontus, but without any fortune. For his heroic actions he was sentenced to death, but because the Turkish authorities could not find him, they found his brother and burnt him alive. After 1923, when he came to Greece and till 1952, he actively participated in the political life. He died in 1959.

¹³⁸ *Εγκυκλοπαίδεια του Ποντιακού Ελληνισμού*, τ. 4, (2007, Θεσσαλονίκη), σ. 120-121. Vasileios Ioannidis was the son of Savvas Ioannidis. He was born in Trebizond in 1865 and he studied in the Phrontisirion of Trebizond. After his graduation there he continued in the Theological School of Halki. He came back in Trebizond in 1895 and got married. Following the retreat of the Russian Army, he travelled to Batum, and he

Archimandrite Panaretos Topalidis is also, as mentioned by Theofylaktos Theofylaktou, the one that was given the political archive, the epistles, of the Union of the Greeks of Pontus in Batum, the National Assembly and the National Council of Pontus. All of the above, were entrusted to him to numerate and classify in the Archive of the Euxeinos Leshi Thessalonikis¹⁴⁰.

Theofylaktos Theofylaktou seemed to have Panaretos in very high standards and appreciated him as a figure and a personality. This could be extracted from the words about Panaretos in his own book:

«Για τον ερευνητή της ιστορίας τον αυριανό, που θα ήθελε να ασχοληθή
αρτιώτερα, δίνω την πληροφορία ότι αυτούσια τα βιβλία των πρακτικών του
Συνδέσμου Ελλήνων Ποντίων της πόλεως Βατούμ, Εθνοσυνελεύσεως και
Εθνικού Συμβουλίου του Πόντου, το Πολιτικόν Αρχείον, δηλαδή η

fought for the independence of Pontus. He got elected from the National Assembly of Pontus, as the president of the National Council in 1919. Later he moved to Constantinople and from there he travelled to Marseilles. From France he came back to Greece, where he lived the rest of his life.

¹³⁹ Theofylaktou, *Γύρω Στη Άσβεστη Φλόγα*, 311–12. Γ/118

Λ. Ίασονίδην

Κων)πολιν

Περίληψις:

1. Δέν δικαιολογεῖται ἡ ἐκ τοῦ ἀποτελέσματος τῶν ἐκλογῶν ἀπογοήτευσις. Ὁ Ποντιακὸς Ἄγων ἐθνικὸς εἶναι. Ἔχει τὴν θέσιν του μέσα εἰς κάθε Ἑλληνικὸν Καθεστῶς. «Ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος εἰς τέλος στεφανοῦται».
2. Συνιστᾷ ὅτι ἀνάγκη νὰ μεταβῆ εἰς Βατούμ, νὰ συγκαλέσῃ τὴν Ἐθνοσυνέλευσιν, ν' ἀναθέσῃ αὕτη τὴν διαχείρισιν τοῦ Ποντιακοῦ Ζητήματος εἰς τὸ Ἐθνικὸν Συμβούλιον, τὸ ὁποῖον θὰ ἐνεργῆ πάντοτε ἀπὸ συμφώνου πρὸς τὰς ὁδηγίας τῆς Ἑλλην. Κυβερνήσεως, ν' ἀποστείλῃ ἓνα ἢ δύο Ἀντιπροσώπους τῆς (Πρεσβευτὰς) εἰς Κων)πολιν καὶ Ἀθήνας, ν' ἀναβάλῃ τὰς ἐργασίας τῆς Ἐθνοσυνελεύσεως ἐπ' ἀόριστον.
3. Ἐπαινεῖ ἀκλόνητον ἐμμονὴν τοῦ Ἰωαννίδου εἰς Ἐθνικὸν καθῆκον παρὰ τὰς ἀντιπράξεις τῶν προσωπικῶν του ἐχθρῶν.
4. Ὑπογραμμίζει κλονισμὸν Β. Ἰωαννίδου ἀπὸ τὴν ἀπάνθρωπον ἐναντίον τοῦ υἱοῦ του ἐπίθεσιν τῶν πολιτικῶν ἀντιπάλων του.
5. Συνιστᾷ νὰ ἐκλέξῃ ἡ Ἐθνοσυνέλευσις ἀπεσταλμένον καὶ Πληρεξούσιον Ἀντιπρόσωπον τὸν Β. Ἰωαννίδην.

Πανάρετος

Ἀθῆναι, 11.11.1920

¹⁴⁰ Theofylaktou, *Γύρω στην ἀσβεστη φλόγα*, 320.

αλληλογραφία του Συμβουλίου, μεταφερμένα από το Βατούμ, ευρίσκονται εις
το Αρχείον της «Ευξείνου Λέσχης» Θεσσαλονίκης, αριθμημένα και
ταξιθετημένα επιμελεία Αρχιμανδρίτου Παναρέτου Τοπαλίδου, μέλους της
Εθνοσυνελεύσεως του Πόντου, από τα επιφανή.»

As seen also in the epistle from Panaretos who was in Athens during this period to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (during this the minister of foreign affairs was Dimitrios Rallis) on 23 October 1920. Inside this epistle, Panaretos after a short greeting states the points that he agrees upon with the ministry. He starts by mention that the Greek government should contact Russia concerning the leaving permission of 100.000 Greek people that live in Soviet Union. He continues by saying that the Greek government, is occupied with the national matters and so it will not interfere with the transportation and the relocation of the people. Besides those, Panaretos agrees that upon the attainment of the leaving permission as mentioned above, in the town of Novorossiysk, a commission must be created in order for an order to be maintained referring to the aspirations of the Greek government. In addition, the Greek government, should be able to negotiate the accomplishment of the leaving permission of the Greeks living in Russia, having in mind that some conditions must be met, and that people should have the right to get with them a part of their property (this included money, furniture, livestock, tools, jewelry, and food). In the end of this epistle, Panaretos remarks that the Greek government is up to date about the big Greek properties that were confiscated in the Soviet Union and that is a problem that the Greek government will decide how and when will be solved.

Conclusions

Archimandrite Panaretos Topalidis was a historical figure that during the passage of time has left his traces in the ecclesiastical and political history not only in Greece but also in the area of Pontus. Panaretos was interested in things that related to mainly to church (that could easily explain his whole life, that it was devoted in ecclesiastical struggles) but also to political things such as the refugees coming from Russia to Pontus or from Pontus to Greece. His actions can be clearly seen through the patriarchal epistles that were sent from one ecclesiastical person / monastery to another.

The obnoxious relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the – ideal self-determined and autonomous- area of Pontus has struggled through many difficulties. Despite the fact that there were many periods of time that the two population groups (Christians and Muslims) were getting along, there was a very specific chronicle that brought them to strife. To be more precise, it was the movement of the Young Turks in 1908 when it all started. It negatively affected the Greek communities in Pontus. That was seen by the erosion of Greek properties and more importantly by the recruitment of many Christian people living in Pontus. But this recruitment would only be the beginning of a general masterplan against the minorities in the Pontic area. The so called, *labour battalions* were gathering people, which sometimes were not even making it there. There was a bunch of people that was killed on the way or died there due to the cruel and inhuman living conditions.

The Balkan Wars (1912, 1913) and eventually the First World War (1914) came to make this tension and rivalry many times more intense. This was because Turkey was opposed to Greece in the War (Central vs Allied powers). People of Pontus realized they had to do something in order to tackle this inappropriate living conditions. Ottomans Empire biggest fear was to lose any territories (especially in Pontus) because of the Muslim population living in those areas but also because of the economy which was starting to flourish.

The situation in Pontus became more difficult especially with the conflict among the Ottoman Empire and Russian in 1916-1917 (after the Revolution). This was because the Russian army started moving northern and conquered some areas (besides this

would not be the first time that Russian interfere with the Ottoman Empire, 1829, and the Russo-Turkish Wars of 1877-1878), with a lot of Pontic people fleeing in Russia or becoming guerillas. But Russians were welcomed in Pontus as liberators from the Ottoman yoke. The very first ideas about the self-determined Pontic state started forming under the function of the municipality of Trebizond during the Russian occupation. Greeks in Pontus begun forming conferences, electing representatives, and wanting to be heard about the issue of Pontus.

The voices of those issues were Chrysanthos archimandrite Panaretos Topalidis, and many people from Pontus living in other countries. In Greece Eleftherios Venizelos and his politic was bizarre because he was in favor of a self-determined Pontic state, but he did not want to get involved in achieving this goal. He was afraid that it was too much to ask for, (besides the Greek claims after the World War I) and that the Greeks of Pontus might spread communistic ideas and so his politic would be undermined. Those perspectives changed, because it was the only way to oppose Kemal, and Venizelos thought It would be a terrific opportunity for people of Pontus living abroad to return to their lands. As he stated in the Treaty of Sevres (1920), Pontus would be liberated and if Kemal does not obey to the terms of the Treaty, he will lose both Pontus and Constantinople. All these things stayed in the sphere of dreams as Venizelos lost the election in 1920 and Greece and Pontus took two awfully hard blows. The first one was that the Allies were not having a good relationship with the recently elected king and somehow that dream bubble popped off and the second and most important blow was the Asia Minor disaster, which sealed the domination of the Turks in this area. Despite the adversities in Pontus, people did not lose their spirit and always fought for their personal and cultural growth.

Panaretos Topalidis was not only an archimandrite that was keen on ecclesiastical matters but also was close to people caring for them. The fact that he became that famous in a truly brief period of time was a result drained from his actions. A distinguishing feature of his personality was the fact that he was moral and humble and that he was not a money-worshipper. This could be extracted from the fact that there used to be the custom, that each traveler who completed the trip to another country (sent by the monastery for ecclesiastical matters), could receive 10% of the total financial aid he gathered. Panaretos did not want that percentage and he gave it

to his monastery as a subscription to it¹⁴¹. This action from its own shows that he was really compassionate for the monastery. In addition, there were not few cases that similarly to Panaretos, many other abbots were sent to financial trips, and they were not as much innocent and honest as they should have been¹⁴². He was fighting for Pontus, Greece, their churches, and their people and those things can never be forgotten.

¹⁴¹ *Απολογισμός της εν Ρωσσία, 37.*

¹⁴² *Απολογισμός της εν Ρωσσία, 39-40.*

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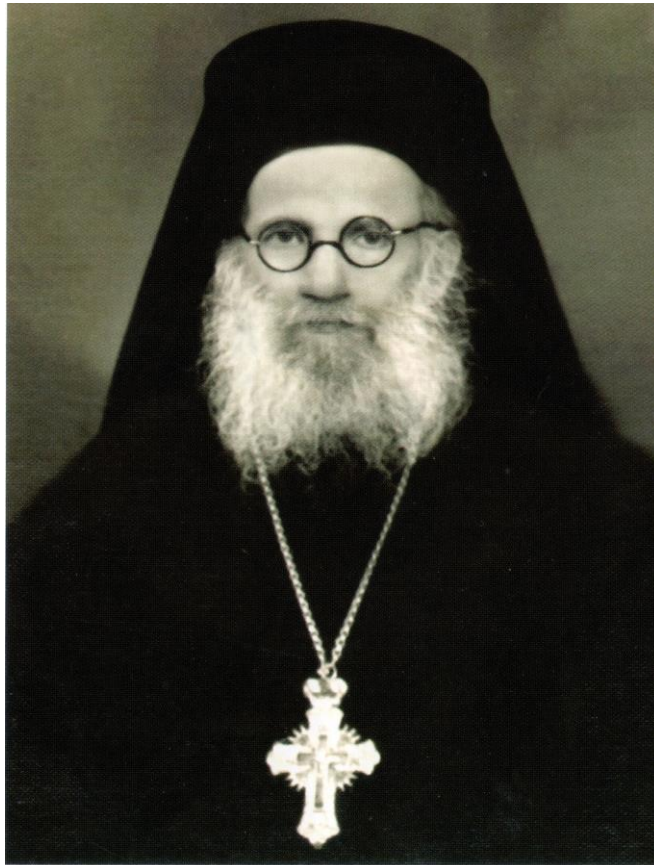
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Appendix



Ἀρχιμανδρίτης Πανάρετος Τοπαλίδης (1877-1958).

Αρχ. Πανάρετος



Ἀρχιμανδρίτης Πανάρετος Τοπαλίδης
1877-1958



Ο Πανάρετος με τον αρχιμανδρίτη Αμβρόσιο Σουμελιώτου στην Καστανιά Βερμίου.



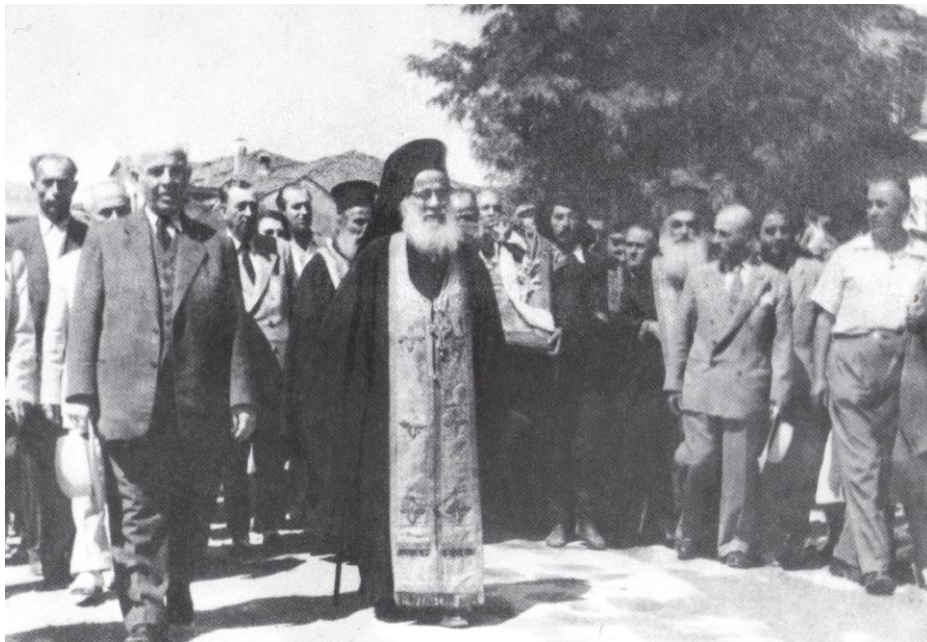
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