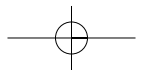
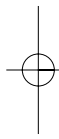
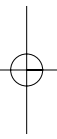


Vasso Seirinidou

Greeks in Vienna
(18th - first half of the 19th century)

(summary)



During the 18th and the first half of the 19th century merchants from Macedonia, Epirus and Thessaly, moved to Vienna and formed a vivid Greek merchant enclave in the city. The Greek diaspora in Vienna occupies a prominent position in modern Greek national memory.

The history of the Greek diaspora has been linked to some of the protagonists and the «topoi» of the national narrative: to Rhigas Pherraios, the «protomartyr» of Greek independence, who in 1797 was charting his revolutionary incursion into the Greek peninsula in the Habsburg capital, when he was arrested along with his companions by the Austrian police; furthermore, to the blossoming of Greek book production in the late 18th and early 19th century as well as to some of the most prominent scholars of the Greek Enlightenment movement, who flocked to the city to publish their work, very often with the financial support of the well-off Greek merchants; finally, to national benefactors and «glorious sons» of Greece living abroad, ranging from the benefactors Simon Sinas and Constantine Belios to Nikolaos Doumbas, the supporter of Austrian art, or the well-known maestro Herbert von Karajan, a descendant of the Macedonian Karajannes family.

In view of the emblematic character of this topic, the present book constitutes a synthetic approach to the history of the Greek diaspora in Vienna during the 18th and the first half of the 19th century from the viewpoint of the history of migration. The study is based on archival sources of the Vienna Municipal Archive (Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv), the Archive of the Habsburg Court Treasury (Hofkammerarchiv) and the Aus-

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trian State Archive (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv), as well as on ample works of secondary literature.

The book follows the migrants from the mountainous communities of Ottoman Macedonia, Epirus and Thessaly to the Habsburg capital. It looks at the geographic, economic and political conditions that fostered the development of trade migration from the Southern Balkans to Central Europe. It also sketches the demographic and social profile of the migrants and sheds light to the experience of travel. Furthermore, the book examines closely the different ways in which the migrants responded to the economic opportunities/constraints in their new place of settlement. It looks at their settlement and demographic patterns, their family life and social networks. Finally, it studies their religious and communal organization, their educational and charitable institutions, as well as their attitude towards the Greek Revolution and the nascent Greek state. Issues of religious, ethnic, and social identities are also widely discussed.

The book begins with the examination of the geographic, economic and political framework, in which trade migration to Vienna took place. The treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718) constitute the conventional starting point for the history of trade migrations to Vienna. These treaties sanctioned free trade by land and sea between the two empires, and ensured tax and tariff reductions for the subjects of both states, along with unilateral rights to settle and trade on the other's territories. Granting privileges of settlement and trade to Ottoman merchants, the Habsburg authorities aimed at the reinforcement of their external trade as well as at their economic penetration to the region of Southeastern Mediterranean, where maritime European states had already extended footholds. Those who traded on this economic and political conjuncture were Orthodox merchants from mountain communities and small cities in Macedonia, Epirus and Thessaly. Having knowledge of the merchant profession and of the trade routes of the Balkan peninsula as well as experience in the markets of Transylvania and Hungary from the preceding century, they became the exclusive carriers of the Habsburg's external trade with the East. In order to control the flow of products from the staple markets up to the place of distribution, the Macedonian and Epirot merchants formed during the 18th century an extended network of settlements

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along the trade arteries that connected the Balkans to Central Europe. Among these settlements, the Viennese held a central position. The Habsburg capital became the biggest depot and redistribution centre of Levantine cotton in Europe as well as the headquarters of most of the Greek merchant houses outside the Ottoman empire. The «golden age» of the Greek trade in Vienna coincided with the period of the Napoleonic Wars and the blockade of Continental Europe. After 1815 the trade migrations to the Habsburg capital continued with varied intensity only to stop in the middle of the 19th century, when the commercial communication between both Empires loosened.

After a brief presentation of the entrepreneurial landscape of the city and the different ethnic and religious groups that shaped the early Viennese entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, the book looks at the ways Greek migrants responded to their new economic environment. The main economic activity of the Greeks in Vienna was the wholesale trade between the Ottoman and Habsburg empires, whereas a part of them who had been naturalized as Habsburg subjects was active in the wholesale trade between Vienna and the Hungarian hinterland. The general impression is that Greeks remained in their traditional economic roles (wholesale trade and stock exchange) even after the 1820's, when new entrepreneurial opportunities emerged. George Sinas was a notable exemption, as he became the prototype of the «multi-potential entrepreneur», investing simultaneously in trade, finance, industry, constructions and transports. The book analyses also the organization of Greek companies in Vienna. It distinguishes between three ethno-local networks, with different patterns of entrepreneurial organization and different economic orientations. The Macedonians and Epirotes who settled first in Vienna as part of the ethno-local trade network that was already active in Transylvania and Hungary in the late 17th century; then the Thessalians who migrated after the 1770s trading with red cotton-yarns, and finally the Chiot merchants who came to Vienna in the beginning of the 19th century through Trieste and Livorno.

The book proceeds with the examination of the demographic and settlement patterns of the Greeks in Vienna. Fluctuation associated with recurrent migratory waves, overrepresentation of male and unmarried population, professional and ethno-local

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endogamy were some of the main demographic characteristics of the Greek diaspora. On the other hand, religious and ethnic segregation characterized its settlements patterns. The quarter of alter Fleischmarkt, on the north-eastern edge of Vienna's trade and finance centre was gradually transformed into a «Greek neighbourhood». The two Greek-Orthodox churches, the Greek school, the Greek coffeehouse, the adjacent dwellings, were all signs referring to experiences from the place of origin.

The last part of the book deals with different aspects of the collective organization of the Greek diaspora in Vienna. The existence of two Greek-Orthodox communities defined by the political authority to which their members were subject (Agios Georgios for the subjects of the Sultan, known as *tourkomerites* and Agia Triada for those who became subjects of the Kaiser, known as *entopioi*) made Vienna unique within the Greek trade diaspora. Insofar as this distinction was not imposed from above, it characterized the differing economic orientations of the ethno-local networks. Most of the *entopioi* came from Macedonia and Epirus, and were for the most part Vlachs. Numbering among them were some of the wealthiest Greek families that made a name for themselves in Viennese economic and social life. However, at the same time when political allegiance to the Sultan or to the Kaiser functioned as a dividing category, religious, linguistic, ethnic, or other ties between the members of the two communities reinforced their mutual coherence.

The book also discusses the perspectives and the problems of a Greek-speaking public education in Vienna. The so called National School (Ethniki Scholi) began its official operation in 1804 after an imperial decree granted to the community of Agia Triada. The decree restricted the school level to elementary education and provided its supervision by the curator of the German schools. Teachers were recommended by the community, but their appointment had to be countersigned by the Habsburg educational authorities. Teaching books — apart from those on religious education — had to be bilingual, Greek and German, and accredited by the authorities. Apart from the severe control by the state and the absence of secondary school courses, the Greek-speaking education in Vienna had to confront a dramatic retreat in the use of Greek among the second generation in favor of German language.

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The last chapter examines the attitude of the Greek diaspora in Vienna towards the Greek Revolution and the Greek state. The Greeks of Vienna had no active involvement either in the political events of the Greek Revolution of 1821, or in the movements of national integration following the foundation of the Greek state. Moreover, the foundation of the Greek state did not imply changes in their economic interests and their political status. The charitable activity of the Greeks in Vienna was not oriented towards the nascent Greek state, but towards Greek institutions in Vienna and Greek communities in Hungary and Transylvania. So, the Greek diaspora in Vienna acted as a «center» for the entire Greek diaspora in the Habsburg Empire.

The epilogue is entitled «Viennese Greeks» and epitomizes the idea of «double identity» that runs through the whole book. The wealthy Greeks in Vienna were not only members of a migrant group; they were members of the multi-ethnic Viennese bourgeoisie as well. Their lifestyle was compatible firstly with their social class and only secondary with their religious, or ethnic affiliation. As Viennese bourgeois, they participated in all those fields, where their class exclusiveness was articulated: in the wholesalers' chamber, in societies, in literary salons and in the city's philanthropic networks.

The book includes an extended appendix with tables concerning the Greek companies in Vienna and other data taken from archival sources.

