The Tolerant Policy of the Habsburg Authorities towards the Orthodox People from South-Eastern Europe and the Formation of National Identities (18\textsuperscript{th}-early 19\textsuperscript{th} Century)

The modern concept of tolerance is a result of the Age of Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{1} Although the problem of how to deal with the ‘Other’ was by no means new – after all, Greeks, Jews, Christians, heretics and Muslims had found ways to coexist in antiquity, the Roman era and the Middle Ages – it was inherited by the Enlightenment as a set of critical issues specifically rooted in the tumultuous history of the early modern era. A crucial group of terms interwoven with the salient forms of collective identification, are those relating to migration in the framework of multi-ethnic states (such as the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires): identity (religious, social, political, ethnic, national), naturalization, migration and diaspora.

The real aim of our paper is to shed light on the developing national self-consciousness of Orthodox groups established in Habsburg territories in the Central Europe of the eighteenth century. Note that these people came from an Empire, the Ottoman, in which they were organized into a millet system according to their religion; in this system the Sultan granted them, on certain conditions, the right to worship.\textsuperscript{2} The core problem, however, were the

\textsuperscript{1} The first version of this article was presented at the International Congress of Europeanists in Amsterdam, June 2013. We would like to thank the NGUA of the University of Athens and the Special Account for Research Grants of the Democritus University of Thrace for supporting this research.

\textsuperscript{2} From the rich literature on the subject, see: Gunnar Hering, “Das islamische Recht und die Investitur des Gennadios Scholarios (1454)”, \textit{Balkan Studies} 2 (1961), pp. 231-256; Steven Runciman, \textit{The Great Church in Captivity: a Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence}, London: Cambridge University Press, 1968; Paraskevas Konortas, \textit{Οθωμανικές προσεγγίσεις για το Οικουμενικό Πατριάρχειό:}
Tolerance-edicts of 1781 promulgated by the Enlightened Habsburg Emperor, Joseph II – namely the Tolerance-edicts issued for the various Hereditary Lands and for Hungary and Transylvania. These edicts were part of the complex philosophical and political theory and praxis of Josephinism. Our interest will also be focused on another parameter of ‘coexistence’: the tolerance or intolerance displayed by the various groups of South-Eastern European migrants established in the Habsburg countries (for instance, the Protestant ‘Saxons’ and the Greek Orthodox in Brașov, Sibiu) as a consequence of the privileges granted to them by the emperors.

To better understand the era we will be discussing, we shall provide a brief introduction to the subjects of Josephinism and of tolerance. In the context of Enlightened Despotism, an era of reform known as Josephinism began in 1780, when Joseph II, as the sole ruler of the Habsburg Monarchy (1780-1790), attempted to legislate a series of drastic reforms to remodel his Empire in the form of the ideal Enlightened state.\(^3\) One might point out that the Maria Theresa reforms, especially after 1760, were also aimed at the organization of a centralized state in terms of administration, and particularly of the economic and fiscal aspects of gov-

ernance. But her son, Joseph II, would continue to pursue these reforms very actively. Guided by a dogma of *Alles für das Volk, nichts durch das Volk* [Everything for the People and nothing through the People], the Emperor sought mainly to centralize the bureaucracy. One of his purposes was also to establish compulsory school attendance for all children and a centralized schools inspection system. He also undertook measures to relax censorship [=Zensurpatent, 1781], regulate matrimonial relations through the Patent of Marriage [=Ehepatent, 1783], abolish serfdom, redefine relations between State and Church, reform the legal system through the introduction of both general criminal (*Allgemeines Strafgesetzbuch*; 1787) and civil codes (*Allgemeines bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*, 1787), establish German as the official language of the Empire (with some exceptions, such as the free-port of Trieste), and –most significantly– to establish a series of measures concerning the unification of the customs system [=Zollsystem]. Josephinism has been examined as a system, both because of the philosophical trends of the time and because of its practical political applications.\(^4\) It was still “nicht nur eine Sonderform der praktischen Aufklärung, sondern eine gesamtgesellschaftliche und politisch-kulturelle Bewegung”,\(^5\) but the radicality and rapidity of Joseph’s reforms –and of his church policy, in particular– still provoked powerful reactions, though covered by an enlightened, progressive ideal.

For our argument, we will focus particularly on his tolerance policy, as the secularization of the state’s power and of state theory was a first step towards a pluralistic society.\(^6\) A pluralistic society

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could not be content with the principle of ‘cujus regio eius religio’, and enlightened precepts on the autonomy of the individual and the relativity of the knowledge of truth\textsuperscript{7} could be conducive to a sufferance of religious minorities. The tolerance policy could also help deal with population growth. As Charles O’Brien has noted: “Religious toleration in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century is usually associated with Protestant England, Holland and Prussia. It is less well known that, shortly before the French Revolution, the Habsburg monarchy became the first Catholic state to extend full civil rights to most non-Catholics. In the Edict of Toleration, Oct. 13, 1781, Joseph II. initiated this reform”.\textsuperscript{8}

Before proceeding with a presentation of this particular policy, we shall consider the various terms and nuances surrounding ‘tolerance’. “There is a tendency in the literature today to reduce toleration to generalized multiculturalism on the one hand, or freedom of belief/choice on the other. But this reduction leaves it incapable of addressing many confrontations”.\textsuperscript{9} One of the standard definitions of toleration emphasizes the “restraint of oneself from imposing one’s reaction”.\textsuperscript{10} The specific term ‘toleration’ and its associated concepts (‘Recognition’, ‘Privileges’, ‘Permission’, ‘Sufferance (souffrir), Freedom of Conscience’, ‘Freedom of religion’, ‘political Freedom’, ‘commercial Freedom’, ‘Coexistence’ etc.) had come into being and been re-determined in the religious and

\textsuperscript{7} Ibidem.


\textsuperscript{10} Creppell, \textit{Toleration, op.cit.}, p. 3.
political discourse of early Modern Europe. At that time, tensions between individual conscience and authority moved centre-stage, forcing a rethinking and restructuring of normative socio-political and socio-cultural constellations. The relationship between church and state, the reason of state, the relationship between subject and sovereign, the development of the concept of the self, the economy and commerce, all began to change in ways that must be understood to fully comprehend the meaning of the new concept of toleration.

As a word, toleration derives from the Latin tolerantia, which is unconnected to religious dissidence. However, in post-Reformation 16th and 17th century Europe, tolerance meant allowing another religion to exist rather than permission or concession; it meant to endure or bear rival confessions established in the same state or kingdom in order to avoid a “rapid collapse of the dynastic authority and a dangerous disruption of civil peace”.

Toleration bolsters ‘living together, confronting the issues and the problems of collective life’, especially in multinational empires. After Jean Bodin’s aspects on toleration and Montaigne’s ideas on toleration as “the condition of living in the midst of diversity and multiplicity”, John Locke’s A Letter Concerning Toleration (1689) shifts toleration to the “boundaries of recognition” and cen-

tress the discussion in a ‘negotiation’ between the state and its people and in a recognition of rights and moral expression. Voltaire’s *Traité sur la tolérance* (1763), which aimed to exonerate the Protestant Jean Calas after his trial in 1762, initiated an intense discussion on the rehabilitation of the Protestants. We can also consider the debate presented by Evgenios Voulgaris’ in his *Σχέδιασμα περί της ανεξιθρησκείας* (1768) in this context. A long discussion on toleration or its absence, the liberty of commerce and the ‘naturalization’ of foreigners had also been underway since the 17th century in the context of economic state theory, and the philosophical discourse of the Enlightenment contributed to a deepening and a diversification of the tolerance concept. We must also include the toleration discourse in the identity debate—which is to say the differentiation of individuals and their membership and agency in one political/social/cultural collective or another (such as nation, race, religion, ethnicity, language, gender)—in the discourse on human rights, particularly after the French Revolution.

It was in this context that Joseph’s Tolerance appeared. However, it is better to speak about the Edicts of Tolerance in the plural rather than the Edict of Tolerance (Toleranzpatent-e) of 1781, as various forms of resolutions in the spirit of Josephinian Tolerance were issued in and after 1781 all over the Empire. This Tolerance policy has to be seen as the hegemony of State over Church within the general framework of Josephinism, and as the reaction of the state’s religious policy to the consequences of the Catholic Reformation because of the Protestant Reformation.\(^{23}\) The denomination of these Tolerance edicts for the several parts of the Empire, especially for Hungary and Transylvania, such as Benigna Resolutio (25 Oct. 1781) or Edictum tolerantiae\(^ {24}\) besides the German one: Toleranzpatent exudes the various nuances of their political concept and amplitude; an amplitude that derived, in part, from the multilateral content of tolerance per se since the time of John Locke’s Letter of Tolerance and from the differentiated theoretical approach of philosophers and politicians after it, and, on the other, from the great administrative, religious, jurisdictional and economic heterogeneity of the huge Habsburg imperial lands. According to the cameralist economic theory of Maria Theresa and Joseph’s ministers, “the state’s power varied directly in proportion to the size and quality of its population”\(^ {25}\). Specifically, the Josephinian approach to Tolerance has been constructed in accordance


\(^{25}\) O’Brien, “Ideas”, op.cit., p. 15, “Cameralism indirectly improved the position of religious minorities by habituating the government to look more to the state’s economic than to its ecclesiastical interests”. 
with Joseph’s religiosity with the assistance of an enlightened elite of academicians and philosophers surrounding the Emperor, and in the light of new state-political theories and practices (*Kameralistik* etc.). Joseph II’s instruction in natural law was influenced by the pedagogue Christian August Beck, according to whom the treatment of religious nonconformists should be governed by natural law and social utility.\(^{26}\) As Beck notes, this *tolérance civile* was a necessity “Out of respect for the people who had delegated the authority to the sovereign”.\(^{27}\) The “*beneficium emigrandi*” was one of them.\(^{28}\) Various explanations have been proffered surrounding the motivations behind Joseph’s tolerance policy, including “attracting foreign skilled craftsmen to the new industries of Austria and settlers to the wastes of Hungary”.\(^{29}\) 

We can, however, assume the Edict/s of Tolerance expresses the religious tendencies of Joseph II., a loyal Catholic Christian, as well as utility. As he wrote to his Mother in a letter dated July 20, 1777: “Tolerance means to me that in purely temporal affairs, I would, without regard to religion, employ anyone in my service who is capable and industrious, and works for the welfare of the state; I would let him have land and exercise his profession, and I would give him citizenship”.\(^{30}\) In every form of Tolerance edict, the public *Religions-exercitium* remained the exclusive preserve of the Emperor’s Catholic subjects, a decision that essentially restricted the amplitude of the sense of tolerance to a form of forbearance. A *Privat-exercitium* was reserved for the non-Catholics


(Akatholiken): for the Christians of the Confessio Augustana et Helvética as well as for the Greeks not united with the Catholic Church (Griechen nicht unirte). Special edicts were also issued for the Jews in the various imperial provinces, as well, stimulating a long debate and confrontation. According to this Privatexercitium, all Akatholiken had the right to erect a temple and a school if more than 100 families lived in a place, though bell-towers, other towers or street entrances were prohibited. However, privileges or other freedom letters [=Freiheitsbriefe] granted in the past to several groups and places within the Empire had to be recognized. As we will demonstrate below, there was considerable heterogeneity in the vast area between the free city-port of Trieste to the capital city of Vienna, between the southern Hungarian provinces, where the Serbian Orthodox Church was also tolerated, and the Transylvanian cities of Brașov and Sibiu, where the antagonism of the Protestant Saxons, who had lived there since the 12th century, proved conducive to another form of tolerance or intolerance. In these different cases, we very often have to distinguish between the ‘tolerance’ of the central authori-

32. O’Brien, “Ideas”, op.cit., pp. 29-31, where he discusses very briefly the cases referring to the Jews in the various Edicts of Tolerance in Galicia and Trieste, the two most opposite examples. The Judenpatent for Galicia tended to an assimilation of the Jewish people, which provoked many reactions. Different was the case in the free port of Trieste, Lois Dubin, The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste: Absolutist Politics and Enlightened Culture, Stanford, CA, 1999; Tullia Catalan, La Comunità ebraica di Trieste (1781-1914). Politica, società e cultura, Trieste: LINT, 2000.
ties and the ‘intolerance’ of established conditions and the local population or population groups, which led to contradictory behaviour, difficult circumstances and a differentiated meaning of tolerance per se.

The move toward religious tolerance had been prepared by the establishment during Maria Theresa’s reign of various Commissions such as the Court Censorship Commission, the Court Commission on Education and the Court for Religious Affairs. Some of these Commissions, including the Commission for Education, were transformed during the 1770s, especially after the educational edict of 1774 and the catalytic appointment of the Prussian Johann Ignaz Felbiger to lead educational reform. Schools had also to be founded, given the Enlightened policy’s focus on educating the Emperor’s people. Teaching methods, schoolbooks and school administration had all to be conducted according to special imperial laws and under imperial supervision.

Given the state policy of toleration, we will be discussing three specific points concentrating our attention on the diverse content of the term “tolerance” and its various versions. Our focus will be on the local level, both within the Habsburg Empire and the various religious and political equilibria brought into being both by the religious wars of the 16th century and by the different socio-economic composition of specific regions (Transylvania, Hungary) and their annexation into the Monarchy after the Karlowitz Treaty (1699), but also on specific cities (the free port of Trieste and the capital, Vienna, and the cities and scattered rural population of Hungary). We will also be focusing on the cycles of Greek Ortho-

dox settlers (*paroikoi*), the Serbs, Greeks and Vlachs (Aromunians) who migrated from South-eastern Europe to the Habsburg lands in Central Europe during the long 18th century; our purpose here is to highlight some aspects of toleration or intolerance among various local populations adhering to different religious dogmas in the Habsburg Empire. Finally, we will delineate different dimensions of tolerance or intolerance (at the local and social level) within the cities of the Monarchy, from cosmopolitan Trieste to the imperial capital, Vienna, and both Hungarian and Transylvanian towns.

At this point, we will examine the role of the ‘tolerant’ policy the Habsburg authorities maintained towards Orthodox groups (Ottoman subjects in the main, but Venetian subjects, too, from the Ionian Islands, in particular), with a view to their establishing merchant communities in imperial lands. The initial aim of the Habsburg authorities was to encourage commercial exchanges with the South-Eastern regions after the Treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718) and with their people, who specialized in trading products vital for the industrial development of the host Habsburg countries. This policy can also be understood within the framework of the theory and practice of ‘populationism’.

We are coming nearer to our argumentation on the basis of the practice of populationism and particularly the colonization of the Military Frontier across Croatian-Slavonia and Hungary during the long Ottoman-Habsburg wars, the Banat of Temesvar, as well


40. Josef Kallbrunner, Das kaiserliche Banat. Einrichtung und Entwicklung des Banats bis 1739, München 1958; Benjamin Landais, “Habsburg’s State and
the impopulation policy pursued through the so-called ‘Deutsche Schwaben’ in the 18th century, especially in Hungary. The bright Banat area was colonized by Croats, Serbs and Vlachs (Aromunians) from South-Eastern Europe in an effort both to defend the Habsburg Empire against the Ottomans and to cultivate the large areas destroyed and depopulated by the years of wars between the Habsburgs and Ottomans. The first permanent military institution in the Habsburg realm was not a standing army but a craggy line of frontier defences begun in 1522 to ward off the Ottomans; it was manned by mercenaries, local militia and –most significantly– armed peasants organized into military colonies. The structure of these colonies was based on the zadruğa, a multi-extended family organizational schema. In November 1630, the Emperor proclaimed the Statuta Wallachorum or Vlach Statute, which regulated the status of the ‘Vlach’ settlers (including Croats, Serbs and Vlachs) from the Ottoman Empire with regard to the military command, their obligations, and their right to internal self-administration.
To encourage settlers, the Habsburg rulers promised special privileges such as free land or exemption from feudal obligations. The guarantees of religious freedom and exemption from feudal obligations made the Orthodox Serbs valuable allies for the monarchy in its seventeenth-century struggle against the Catholic Croatian nobility, especially after the so-called Serbian ‘velika seoba’ of 1690-1691. When the Military Frontier was extended eastward after the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699, Serb (and some Croat) border guards played a similar role for the Monarchy against the Hungarian nobility. The newly-founded Serbian Orthodox Metropolis of Karlowitz and the ‘Illyrische Hofdeputation’ would serve as authorities for the Serbs in the Habsburg Monarchy for many years.

Mercantilism led the Habsburg authorities to take a series of special measures in order to expand the Empire’s commercial and maritime activities. Around the time of the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718), Charles VI issued a number of edicts including the ‘Patent on Freedom of Navigation in the Adriatic’ (1717), the Patent designating Trieste and Fiume (Rijeka) as Free-ports (1719), and


45. Ioannis Tarnanidis, Ta προβλήματα της Μπροσόλος Καρλοβικίων κατά τον ΙΗ’ αιώνα και o Jovan Rajić (1726-1801), Thessaloniki 1972.

46. During the period 1741-1749, the Theiss-Marosh military frontier was gradually abolished in the face of bitter Serbian resistance; the lands passed under Hungarian administration. Thereafter, about 3,000 Serbs decided to emigrate to Russia (Alfred Rieber, The Struggle for the Eurasian Borderlands: from the Rise of Early Modern Empires to the End of the First World War, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 48).

47. From the rich literature on the Treaty, see the recent book: Gharles Ing–Nikola Samardžić–Jovan Pešalj (eds.), The Peace of Passarowitz, 1718, Purdue University Press 2011.
the foundation of the so-called *Orientalische Kompagnie* (1719) aiming to consolidate Habsburg influence in South-Eastern Europe.\(^{48}\) Free land and sea trade between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires by Ottoman and Habsburg subjects was established on a pre-emptive duty of 3%-5% on imports and exports, while the Treaty also provided for free navigation of the Danube. Maria Theresa followed a more intensive policy, which sought to invite people to establish their commercial networks in Habsburg lands and to contribute to the industrial expansion on the other.\(^{49}\) Ottoman and Venetian subjects took advantage of the treaty and the Habsburg Monarchy’s need for Ottoman agricultural and handicraft products, and activated the trade. This encouraging of the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire to migrate can also be seen in the light of the Eastern Question, whereby a Great Power typically extended protection to a selected minority in the Ottoman Empire in the hopes of extending its influence there. Moreover, the reconquest of the Ottoman Lands by the Habsburg Empire was followed by policies that ultimately favoured Greek Orthodox traders. The Habsburgs needed to expand their commercial and maritime activities and consolidate their influence in the Ottoman lands.

The core of our argument, however, will be an examination of the evolution of ‘permission’ or ‘recognition’ into ‘tolerance’. It has to be mentioned that before the era of the ‘Toleration-edict’ (1781), the Habsburgs had also faced difficulties relating to the co-existence of various ethnic and religious groups (Catholics, Unitar-


The wars of the Habsburgs against the Ottomans and their need to make alliances with other Christians (among them Protestants) also led them to adopt a practice of ‘tolerance’. Moreover, in some cases the authorities permitted the newcomers to organize their social and economic life, granting them privileges allowing the formation of confraternities, ‘companies’ and communities.

It is clear that the integration of Greek Orthodox people into a mutually shared Western European value system began in early Modern times, and particularly during the Age of Enlightenment and the era of the French Revolution. Orthodox people from the regions of Epirus, Macedonia, Thessaly, the Peloponnese, Asia Minor and Serbia became integrated in the networks of the Mediterranean (along the axis of the Adriatic) and South-Eastern Europe.


(tending to extend from south to north and into central Europe), through either collaboration or collision in the communitarian and commercial sector, paving the way for social, cultural and national identity consciousness.

Now, it is convenient to sketch the immigration of Greek Orthodox populations from the Balkans into the Habsburg Empire, on the one hand, and their establishment in the host societies, on the other. It is known that from the 18th century, particularly after the commercial treaty of Passarowitz (1718), the Habsburg Monarchy became a locus for a maritime and overland trade, which led to the emergence of Greek Orthodox urban merchant colonies (commercial ‘paroikies’). Following the proclamation of Trieste as a free port, the city became one of the major destinations for Greci immigrants from the Ionian Islands, Western Continental Greece, the Peloponnese, and –principally– the Aegean Islands and the coast of Asia Minor.53

In the mid-18th century, the Greeks who settled in Trieste very quickly acquired religious and political privileges. It is true that Austria was interested in luring experienced merchants including Greeks to their realm in order to make Austrian trade competitive with other mercantile powers, for instance Venice. Thus, in 1751, Maria-Theresa issued a Decree of Privileges for the ‘Greci’ (Greeks and ‘Illyrici’)54 of Trieste. In the following years, and on the basis of the decree in question, the ‘Greci’ managed to erect the

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54 At this time, Greci was used to designate not only the Greeks but Orthodox people in general, and therefore the “Illyrici” (Serbians) of Trieste. Katsiardi-Hering, Η Ελληνική παροικία, op.cit., pp. 85-102.
Orthodox Church of the Annunciation and St. Spyridon, despite major financial difficulties; they also sought to organize a Confraternità of the Orthodox Greek-Serbian (Illyrian) community in 1772.\textsuperscript{55} It was thus because of the policy of tolerance pursued by the state, and the tolerant behaviour of the residents of Trieste, that a cosmopolitan society emerged so very quickly in the city. The contribution of Greek and Serbian immigrants to Trieste’s economy and society may be reflected in the common topographical and architectural language of Trieste and in the tolerant coexistence of its inhabitants. Specifically, unlike in Venice (Campo dei Greci) or Vienna (Griechengasse), there was no Greek neighbourhood in the city. The Greeks, like other newcomers in the free port, were not considered “foreigners” by their host society, but belonged to the circle of people who together “made” Trieste.\textsuperscript{56}

Regarding the movements of groups or individuals from the Balkans to territories in Central and Northern Europe, we should stress that they did not take place exclusively in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, even though the opening up of continental trade and the impetus of entrepreneurial activity by the “Conquering Balkan Orthodox Merchant”\textsuperscript{57} in this period reinforced the migration phenomenon. Until the end of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, the majority of historical Hungary (including Transylvania) remained under Ottoman domination. Thus, as early as the second half of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, Aromunians, Greeks, Armenians and Serbs, all of whom were Ottoman subjects, relying on a network of local and regional markets,\textsuperscript{58} took an active part in trading local raw materials, agricultural products, fabrics, spices, salted products, nuts and other commodities from the Levant to

\textsuperscript{55} Katsiardi-Hering, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 98-102.
\textsuperscript{58} On the long-distance migration networks of these people from the 14\textsuperscript{th}-17\textsuperscript{th} century see Lidia Cotovanu, \textit{Migrations et mutations identitaires dans l’Europe du Sud-est} (vues de Valachie et de Moldavie, XIV\textsuperscript{e}-XVII\textsuperscript{e} siècles), Thèse de Doctorat nouveau régime, EHESS, Paris 2014.
Transylvania through Wallachia and Moldavia.\textsuperscript{59} However, given the various commercial privileges granted by the authorities, the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, as we will see in detail later, witnessed the most intense economic migration of all, displaying the features of a self-supplying chain phenomenon.

The case of Transylvania is of particular research interest, because its political situation was entirely different from that of Trieste. Transylvania had initially been obliged to pay tribute to the Sultan (1526-1699) before being transformed into the Principality of Transylvania (1571-1711), which was ruled primarily by Calvinist Hungarian princes; after the Treaty of Karlowitz, it became subject to the rule of the Habsburgs. When Transylvania became an independent principality in 1540, four major ethnic groups (whose exact ratio cannot be established) clearly lived within its borders: Hungarians, Székelys, “Romanians” and Saxons. The latter were a people of German ethnicity who settled in Transylvania after the mid-12\textsuperscript{th} century. The first Saxons, who had settled in and around Nagyszeben/Sibiu/Hermannstadt, and later arrivals who established themselves around Beszterce/Bistrita/Bistritz, became active in mining and farming, and the crucial eastern trade was mainly in their hands. In 1224, King Andrew II of Hungary codified their rights (\textit{Diploma Andreanum of 1224}), giving them a fixed territory, determining their taxes and military obligations, and conferring upon them religious and administrative autonomy. Thus, the Germans managed very quickly to control trade in and around the cities where they settled.\textsuperscript{60} Therefore, when Greek merchants arrived in the markets of Transylvania towards the end of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, the Saxon entrepreneurs considered them a threat to their interests and repeatedly attempted to create barriers to their commercial activities, often with the support of the local authorities.


Throughout the 16th century, their control and supervision over the Greeks was relentless. However, within a few generations, the Greeks obtained the privilege allowing them to found their own trading companies both in Sibiu (1636) and Brașov (1678), rendering the staple right privileges null and void, bolstering the presence of Greek merchants in Brașov and allowing them to dominate the region’s internal and external trade. In 1636, the Prince of Transylvania, George Rakoczy, granted a Privilege to the Universitas Quaestorum Graecorum, allowing Greek merchants to carry on a wholesale trade in Transylvanian fairs and to form self-governing "companies", a kind of corporation, in Sibiu (1639) and Brașov (1678). In 1701, Emperor Leopold I renewed the Privilege of the Societates Graecorum of Transylvania; seventy-six years later, Maria Theresa would also renew it, though she reduced their jurisdiction and the number of tax exceptions.


In contract to the tolerant state policy towards the Greek Orthodox was the intolerant behaviour of the dynamic commercial group of Lutheran Saxons.\textsuperscript{64} This tension was reflected in their inter-merchant relations and may also be verified by the topography of the town. For instance, the members of the compagnia grecesti in Sibiu who tried and finally managed to erect a church were not permitted to do so within the city walls, unlike the members of the Brașov merchant company who managed to get their church build in the heart of the city, albeit –given the strong Saxon presence there– in an out of sight spot.\textsuperscript{65}

Let us now take a look at the Greek diaspora in Central Europe in the 18\textsuperscript{th} century. Taking advantage of the favourable terms of the commercial treaty of 1718, Greek merchants were able to insist on their right to establish themselves and to trade, demanding property rights and the right to maintain retail stores from the local authorities.\textsuperscript{66} Most of them originated from Macedonia, Thessaly and Epirus and settled in Central Europe, particularly in Vienna and Hungarian cities (Pest, Gyöngyös, Eger, Miskolc, Tokaj, Nagyvárad, Kecskemét, Novisad etc.).\textsuperscript{67} Note that the Görögök (Greeks in Hungarian) settled in towns that had an elementary market structure and some local production, which lent itself to commercial exploitation. Some of them operated as peddlers around the villages.


and trade fairs of Hungary, profiting from agricultural products such as wine and livestock; others worked as wholesale merchants, transporting wool, cotton, red yarns, leather, tobacco, salted goods, saffron and other commodities (e.g. spices) from Ottoman provinces to the production centres of the Habsburg Monarchy.

The tolerance policy implemented by the Habsburgs in the first half of the 18th century played a key role in creating conditions in which the Greeks could organize and represent themselves before the authorities. Therefore, they organized themselves under the administratively comprehensive term ‘Greek’ by establishing communities (in Pest, Miskolc et al.) and commercial companies (in Zemun/Semlin, Neusatz, Temesvár, Gyöngyös, Tokaj, Szege-din, Szentes, Kecskemét, Debrecen, Várad, Vaz, Gyarmat, Karcag, Kecskit, Leva, Békés, Seben, Sopron, et al.) which were the main forms of their incorporation in Central Europe.

However, despite the occasional tolerance policy of local authorities, from the first half of the 18th century, the Habsburg authorities expressed concerns about foreign merchants in the internal retail and wholesale trade of the empire. In 1741, they decreed that Ottoman subjects had an unrestricted right to conduct wholesale and retail trade, provided they transfered their families to Hungary.

By dint of a decree issued by Maria Theresa in 1769, full freedom of trade for Ottoman subjects was directly linked to their permanent residency, to their transferring their families to Hungary.


and taking the oath of allegiance, which meant they would receive Hungarian citizenship.\textsuperscript{71} However, in doing so they lost the Ottoman subjects’ privilege of customs exemption secured for them by the treaty of Passarowitz. Only under these conditions were they given the right to develop commercial activity and permanent residency.\textsuperscript{72}

The Enlightened Habsburgs adopted \textit{inter alia} Josiah Child’s (1688) argument that naturalization had a significant role to play in foreign trade. The Act of Naturalization issued in 1774 led successful Greek entrepreneurs to lose their Ottoman Untertanenschaft (“subject status”). This procedure, on the part of the Greeks, was intensified mainly after the \textit{Edicts of Tolerance}. So this policy made it easier for Balkan Orthodox people to settle permanently in Hungary, while simultaneously accelerating their “Hungarization” and integration into local society. In fact, the Act of 1774 was a determining factor in the Greeks’ accession to a multi-ethnic Habsburgs Empire, which became their ‘zweites Vaterland’ or second ‘patria’. Moreover, it gave Greek capitalists the opportunity to acquire civil rights (\textit{Bürgerrechte}) and to become members of an economic elite known as \textit{Wirtschaftsbürgertum}.\textsuperscript{73}

Within the context of their institutional organization, and from their arrival in the urban settlements of Hungary, the migrants declared their interest in serving their religious needs. Building an Orthodox church and creating a cemetery were the most basic concerns of the Greeks established in non-Ottoman environments. In central Europe, they initially attended Serb churches and Catholic chapels as well as worshipping in private homes.\textsuperscript{74} In Pest, which was the most significant centre of the Greek Diaspora after Vienna, the Greeks and Macedonian-Vlachs (Aromunians), who moved there as early as the second decade of the eighteenth century, at-

\textsuperscript{71} Fuves, \textit{Oι Έλληνες της Ουγγαρίας}, op.cit., p. 28.
\textsuperscript{72} Op.cit.
\textsuperscript{73} Vaso Seirinidou, \textit{Oι Έλληνες στη Βιέννη (18\textsuperscript{ο}-μέσα 19\textsuperscript{ο} αιώνα)}, Athens: Herodotos, 2011, pp. 88, 91.
tended the Serbian church of Saint Georgios with their Serbian co-religionists until 1783, when they decided to secede from the Serbian community and found their own community association: the “Greek and Macedonian Vlach Community of Pest”. The Görögök exercised their religious duties, sometimes unhindered with the tolerance of the authorities, sometimes in a climate of opposition, restricted by local ecclesiastical and secular officials. In short, the process of consolidating their collective religious identity was frequently subject to strong social and political pressure, as was the case for the Orthodox population of Pec (German Fünfkirchen) in 1720 and 1729. This process prohibited them from exercising their religious rights freely.\(^75\)

Until 1745, the Greeks of Miskolc attended religious rites in a place assigned to them in the church rectory of the neighbouring town of Tapolca. Later, members of the community decided to rent a place owned by a member of the noble Vay family (because they had been forbidden to own landed property until then) and use it as a chapel consecrated to St Naum.\(^76\) The community was free to choose its own priest, whose name was then ratified by the Metropolitan of Karlowitz.\(^77\) Nevertheless, a basic request by Orthodox Balkan subjects was that the migrants’ ecclesiastical life be transferred from the small chapel to a large church.


Regarding the Greeks in Vienna, in 1717 Charles VI issued a patent addressed to Orthodox Ottoman subjects who traded in Vienna, enshrining their right to trade and defining the terms of their trade. In 1723, the Emperor allowed them to settle in the little Steyrerhof between the Fleischmarkt and the Rotenturmstraße. They also had the little Chapel Saint George at their disposal, where they could pray in privacy with the Serbs. In 1776, the chapel became a church and official toleration was admitted; there is no doubt that the group had arrived at their religious self-determination.78

The crucial change in the organization of the life of Greek communities in the Habsburg Empire came after the promulgation of the Edict of Toleration (1781) and Joseph II’s desire to solve the problems not only between Catholics and Protestants but also among members of the same religious dogma. As a consequence of this policy, after 1781 a series of imperial degrees issued in various parts of Austria, Hungary and Transylvania permitted Greeks and Serbs to establish not only their own churches (without campanile)79 but also their own schools. In some cases, local reactions forced the Greek merchants to erect their small churches outside the city walls (Sibiu) or, as mentioned above, in the centre but without direct street access (Brașov).80

It is not a coincidence that during the last decades of the 18th century, Greeks attempted and finally managed to build their own churches, assuring independence from their Serbian brethren. At the turn of the 18th century, permission to establish the Serbian Me-


79 In 1787 the members of the Greek community of Miskolc submitted a request to the bishop of Karlowitz, asking him to allow them to build their own church tower, “because we, scattered around the city, cannot be deprived of using bells, which is held absolutely necessary for the service of the Church” (Mantouvalos, “Μεταναστευτικές διαδρομές”, op.cit., pp. 234-235).

tropolis of Karlowitz was granted by the Habsburgs to provide for the religious needs of all Greek-Orthodox Balkan peoples. This, given that the smaller number of Greeks, allowed the Serbs to dominate the church and the affairs of the mixed communities. During the 18th century, economic and social differences between the Greek and Serb trade diasporas of the Habsburg Empire “were acted out in the form of disputes concerning ecclesiastical and cultural life”. At issue was the language of the church liturgy and of school education in the multi-ethnic Orthodox trade communities of the Habsburg Monarchy. Disputes broke out in many Greco-Illyrian communities, many of which resulted in the separation of the two groups after the Edict of Toleration. With the exception of the Vienna Community, where the church of St. George was officially ceded to the Greeks (1776), in other communities (including Trieste in 1782 and Pest in 1790), the Greeks decided to pursue their separate communal development and leave the church they shared with the Illyrians to build their own.81

In addition to the issues that were interwoven into the migrants’ religious life, the community also took care to build an educational system that would safeguard the linguistic and cultural identity of its members. This was also a necessary condition for assimilating migrant children into the host society. The interest in educational themes on the part of migrants throughout the Monarchy grew stronger after the second half of the 18th century, when legislative decrees were issued that regulated significant aspects of the basic education received by Habsburg subjects and which concerned not only the empire’s German Catholic population, but also inhabitants of other nationalities, whatever their faith. The educational reforms of 1774 made a crucial contribution to the real popular Enlightenment (Volskaufklärung) while simultaneously producing the “catalytic power”82 required to educate the people of South-Eastern Eu-

82. Alexandru Duțu, “Die ‘katalytische Kraft’ der deutschen Kultur: Das Beispiel Südost-Europas zur Zeit der Aufklärung”, in Anton Schwob (ed.), Metho-
rope (Serb colonists and migrants as well as Greek merchants), who established schools with programmes of study that reflected the new educational system. In Hungary, after the official state recognition and institution of the Orthodox Church, schools began to be established in Orthodox communities. The newcomers founded schools whose curricula reflected the new educational system. In the late 1770s, Court School-Commissions were established and their status was renewed by Joseph II within the framework of the Edict of Toleration. As O’Brien points out: “If the non-Catholics, Jews or Christians, were to enjoy their new rights, the intolerant mentality of the people had to undergo a fundamental change. For this purpose the government used the schools and the censorship to train the people and especially their spiritual leaders, the government officials, schoolteachers, and clergy, to regard the dissenters as fellow subjects”. Nevertheless, this project was not particularly easy, as is evident from the difficulties faced by the Greeks with regard to their effort to organize their own education system. However, despite the problems, by the end of the 18th century, the educational situation had improved considerably with the increase in the number of schools and their operation in 17 Hungarian cities.

In 1770-1771, a list was drawn up of the schools in Hungary, which showed that there were 89 functioning Orthodox churches,


83. The Court School Committees were established in the late 1770s; their status was renewed by Joseph II as part of the Edict of Tolerance. Another Committee was also established to monitor the religious and educational activities of the non-Catholics, including school books, with the help of the revitalized Committee for Judicial Censorship. On school reform among the Orthodox minorities in the Habsburg empire, see Philip J. Adler, “Habsburg School Reform Among the Orthodox Minorities, 1770-1780”, Slavic Review 33/1 (1974), pp. 23-45.

84. Regarding the history of the Orthodox Church in Hungary, see Feriz Berki, Η εν Ουγγαρία Ορθόδοξος Εκκλησία, Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1964.


86. Andreas Horváth, H ζωή και τα έργα του Γεωργίου Ζαβίρα/ Zavirasz György élete és munkái, Budapest 1937, pp. 5-6.
63 of which were Serbian and 21 Romanian. Of these churches, only in Györ, Miskolc and Tokaj was there an exclusively Greek-speaking school, whereas in the cities of Eger and Komárom, the school was bilingual, and the children who attended it were taught their lessons in both Serbian and Greek. It should be noted that community education was not systematically organized at all, and that many of the communities did not have even their own buildings for teaching young students. Education in the Greek community of Miskolc was organized long before the school was built in 1805. As early as the 1770s, its members had arranged to rent space to cover the community’s educational needs. However, the problem of housing the school appears to have taken on a different form by the end of the century, owing to the increase in the number of pupils, a fact that obliged the administration to seek a permanent solution. Among the Greek schools, the one at Zemun was particularly well-known. The conflicts between Greeks and Serbs which had broken out in 1793 resulted in the mediation of the bishop of Karlowitz. One year later, the school was built, and its financial self-sufficiency was ensured by a school fund. In 1796, after their secession from the Community of Illyrici, the Greeks and Aromunians in Pest set up their own school. The first Greek school in Vienna, financed and overseen by the Greek Community of the Holy Trinity, was founded in 1804. In Trieste, the Greek school founded in 1801 was designed to function much like public

87. Regarding the education of Greek children in the Miskolc community, see Ikaros Mantouvalos, “Τὸ ἐλληνικὸν σχολεῖον εἶναι τὸ μόνον μέσον τῆς προκοπῆς καὶ μαθήσεως τῶν Νέων, εἰς τὰ ἐλληνικά γράμματα”: πτυχές τῆς εκπαιδευτικῆς ζωῆς τῆς ἐλληνοβλαχικῆς κοινότητας του Miskolc (τέλη 18ου-αρχές 19ου αἰ.). Μεσαιωνικά καὶ Νέα Ελληνικά 10 (2012), pp. 103-128.
schools throughout the Habsburg Monarchy, and was placed under the supervision of the Austrian educational authorities of the city.\(^{92}\)

As mentioned previously, the Commission for the ‘Aecatholics’ was also established to supervise the religious and the educational activities of the non-Catholics and to control the textbooks used with the aid of the renewed Court Censorship Commission. There is no doubt that the invention of the term ‘Aecatholics’ is more indicative of a policy of forbearance than of genuine tolerance. Nevertheless, these reforms made it easier to set up Greek printing presses in Vienna.\(^{93}\) Greek and Illyrian (Serbian) newspapers and journals had been edited in the Habsburg capital city. In the printing houses of the cities of Vienna, Pest, Trieste, Leipzig –and, after 1801, in Venice– reading primers (\textit{ABC-Lehrbücher}) were printed in the Cyrillic and Greek alphabets and included passages dealing with everyday life in their host cities rather than the pastoral space in which their parents had grown up. The reading passages in the schoolbooks praised the emperor, good manners and morality, but also the \textit{Volk}, their \(Γένος=Εθνος=Nation\) in its new connotation.\(^{94}\)

Enlightened Despotism wanted its urban subjects to be devout as well as upstanding members of the bourgeoisie, ready to engage in trade or with literature. In their new environment, the ‘\textit{paroikoi}’ [colonists] had the opportunity to manage the education of their children, to be integrated into local society and simultaneously to engage with the ideological waves of Nationalism. In the above mentioned printing houses, a large number of academic works on Geography, Physics, Mathematics, Grammar, Philosophy, History etc, were also published. It is well known that Vienna became both the ‘laboratory’ and the literary centre for Neohellenic and the Serbian national identity.

\(^{92}\) Katsiardi-Hering, \textit{Η Ελληνική παροικία}, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 256-296.


\(^{94}\) Katsiardi-Hering, “Southeastern European Migrant Groups”, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 154-162.
The communication of the various South-Eastern European People with each other in the host lands led to a new conjunction and cooperation on an ideological level, as well. The migrants were able to join the unitas multiplex that was Europe at the end of the 18th century. For all of them, Central Europe became a new patria and a new way of participating both in the dialogue on constructing the Idea of Europe and on founding their own modern nation-states. Through their texts and correspondence, they developed a real and ‘imagined’ dialogue with the enlightened, Christian, wise Europe in whose universities they studied; they tried and wished to be part of that ‘ἐυνομομενή’ (well-governed) Europe.95

To paraphrase Rabaut Saint Étienne, who addressed the French Assembly in August 1789 on tolerance and the freedom: “Mais Messieurs, ce n’est même pas la tolérance que je réclame; c’est la liberté! La tolérance! Le support! Le pardon! La clémence!”96 we can understand the desire for liberty, for political freedom, manifest in the Greek political texts published illegally in Vienna, Bologna or Livorno in the last decade of the 18th and the first of the 19th century. One needs only mention Rhigas Velestinlis, an extreme example of a scholar and Ottoman subject taking advantage of the brief window of opportunity provided by Josephinism and the French Revolution to publish liberal material and pursue political activities. Is it a coincidence that enlightenment political thought in South-Eastern Europe, as represented by the radical republicanism of Rhigas Velestinlis, incorporated the idea of cultural pluralism in a project for a unitary democratic state, modelled on the ‘Republic


of Virtue’, that was expected to replace despotism and to transform its subjects into free citizens?\textsuperscript{97}

Consequently, the multi-dimensional character of the diasporic identity of the Greeks took shape in the context of the policies of tolerance or intolerance pursued by the Habsburgs during the long 18\textsuperscript{th} century; this identity was interwoven not with cultural entrenchment or cultural assimilation in the host country, but with practices and choices that prevailed throughout the immigration experience and through osmosis with other groups in the host society or other ethnic communities in Europe.