

# Chapter 4

## FOUNDING AND NAMING OF THE TOWN

**S**TRICTLY speaking, the date of the establishment of Asvestohorion is nowhere mentioned. It is said that its life is more than 350 years, as shown by the history of Asvestohorion of Dr. Michael Papadopoulos, the supporter of our schools, who contributed greatly to the progress of our schools and the community in general.

In this history of his, written by him in 1879, for his students of the third and fourth grades of the elementary school, he states distinctly that Asvestohorion from that date (1879) was about 300 years old and was called Neohorion (new town).

The name Neohorion lasted through the first settlement and by this name it was known for many years up until recently. This should be remembered by our older countrymen, because the people of Salonica called it Newhori and its inhabitants Neohorites.

It is not true that it was of the Byzantine period, as some wished to believe. The traditional belief, as related above, is the strongest one because there remains no sign, as there is in the nearby town of Hortiati, where aqueducts and ruins of churches of the Byzantine period are still to be found, and whose inhabitants communicated often with Neohorion and intermingled with them as one can see from the similarity of dress, both of the men and the women, which continued until recently.

This community, Neohorion, was therefore built during the Turkish occupation, or during the years 1580 to 1600, and its first inhabitants, as already mentioned, lived on the

salary paid to them as guards and as government employees. Only as time progressed and the population increased and the town grew larger, and the pay of the guards was not enough, did they look for new ways to earn a living and thus began to manufacture lime, as will be related below, having adequate means toward this end, namely fuel and limestone.

The production of lime appears to have started during the first century of the founding of Asvestohorion.

It is not mentioned, however, how the inhabitants learned of lime production. Lime was known for many years because it was used in old memorials and buildings, walls, etc. which remain until today in Salonica.

When lime began to be produced, the Turks changed the name of Neohorion to Kirets-Kioi, that is, Asvestohorion, a name which existed from the first century of its founding as shown by the following:

Mr. John Basdrabelles, in the historical archives of Macedonia, refers to the following two episodes, with the exact dates, using the name of Asvestohorion for our country and not Neohorion.

1. In the year 1696 in the month of July, an inhabitant of the town of Adrameri in the district of Pazarouda of the state of Salonica, by the name of Paraschos, departing from his town for Salonica, was killed by a Turk named Beles near the town of Asvestohorion. The heirs of Paraschos brought Beles to court, but because of a lack of evidence Beles was exonerated. (Page 21, Document No. 17).

2. In 1780, because the town government levied taxes on the inhabitants of Asvestohorion, Phylactos, son of Emmanuel of Asvestohorion objected to the taxes and asked to be exempted from paying them. (Page 312, Document No. 221).

From the above dates it is seen, first, that the production of lime started very early, in which were employed those

who were also government workers, as well as those who contributed some time toward this work in order to obtain a better living and; second, as far as the date with respect to the establishment of the first settlement, the reference of Mr. Basdrabelles to the above two incidents is close to that of Michael Papadopoulos, who wrote in his history that our hometown is about 300 years old, going back from 1879.

## Chapter 5

### ARRIVAL OF NEIGHBORS

WITH the passage of time the community grew and its population increased. Many of the inhabitants of Macedonia, persecuted by the Turks and oppressed like slaves, left their homes and fled wherever they thought they would be secure, taking along their families and thus began an assimilation which increased the population.

Among them were many who hailed from those parts of Macedonia where the Slavic dialect was spoken since they were neighbors with Serbs and Bulgarians.

At that time there also came and settled here some\* families, most of whom belonged to the Koupatiarides, who had their origins in the Pindus Mountains; and the Karagounes family whose origins have the two following explanations, the first of which said that the great grandfather of the above family, who used to go back and forth to Thessaly

\* The author used the words "our own" rather than some. Ed.

looking for work, always dressed like the inhabitants of Thessaly, from whence he was given the name Karagounes; whereas, according to the second version, the great grandfathers who came were genuine and native Karagounides from Thessaly, who left their homes and fled here and elsewhere due to the then abnormal conditions.

The most acceptable is the second explanation because the emigrations started much later as indicated below, in groups or in singles, and the settlement here from the various places which they fled was for security reasons.

Here also fled neighbors for their safety and also perhaps out of envy of our original settlers who enjoyed the privileges previously mentioned.

It is also said that the inhabitants of Neohorion came into strife over border disputes with the inhabitants of Stanovo, now a fief of the Abbot near St. Basil, which was older than Neohorion. The inhabitants of Stanovo were Bulgarians who were captured by the Turks during their forays northward and were resettled in Stanovo with their families for the purpose of cultivating the soil. They spoke only Bulgarian. The inhabitants of Neohorion made frequent raids into Stanovo abducting the inhabitants' wives and daughters with whom they lived and intermarried.

Those who fled here spoke Bulgarian and were incapable of, or had difficulty in, learning Greek. This resulted in the need for their hosts and protectors to learn Bulgarian as well as they could; hence there resulted a language idiom, a peculiar tongue, a mixture of Greek, Bulgarian and Turkish words with Greek roots and foreign endings, having no similarity with the accepted Bulgarian tongue since even the Bulgarians who passed through on their way to Salonica during the first Balkan War of 1912 had difficulty in communicating with our people.

This linguistic idiom is still spoken by a some adults among us who also speak and understand Greek very well.

A few words of the spoken idiom used by us are as follow:  
 Vapsah (evapsa), hindikou (indikou), porka (oporika), patih (epatha), bragouzonta, ganoutarout, glitomo, dikeliout, vlastar, diskoutou, diplosovam, portata, ksoporta, kato-fiout, kroumit, loulout, mintal, metargia, krosino, mitses, kladevtirout, kouvantirout, zimarout, mirologisavam, kapniata, karfiata, kalamarout, parastatout, patounta, pternata, xomisouvam, xilohteno, piaka, tarpan, sinteliou, varelda, roustkio, kamentou, paradexouvam, paratrout, panouom-out, ftaxmitkou, trihata, vamvakiout, kalesah, katavrexah, katirgar, koulimpa, kalotihou, kanakar, keramida, kanistrou, kandila, kokkal, kollisah, lagara, lathout, lahanisah, lostout, mangirih, virohitout, rothostoumou, sakourafa, sarantisah, ntavatout, tirgiasah, perifanepsouva, etc. all words of Greek origin.

## Chapter 6

### DRESS OF THE FIRST INHABITANTS

THE fact that the first settlers came from Central Greece is proven by the fact that dress worn by both men and women bore a great similarity with that worn by the inhabitants of Central Greece.

1. The dress of the men consisted, until recently, of a shirt which reached down to the knees, opening downward like a foustanella, which was commonly used in the entire region of Central Greece, and having a bluish color, with a crossed vest inside and another one outside with sleeves, free and

moveable, with a multicolored belt or a leather pouch, blue leg protectors or shin-guards, which at festivals were green, made out of homespun cloth which their wives made with silk red frills around them, headgear which reached down to the knees, pure white foustanella during the holidays, from homespun cloth with creases on both sides, black capote (shepherd's coat) renovated, and on the head a fez crushed down or a similar black folded cover, and eventually a special headgear.

In later years, especially for the winter months in order to protect from the cold, they used pantaloons (a Persian word) which they altered in the form of wide breeches, similar to the trousers of today.

2. As for the ladies, on their head they wore one or two white cotton cloths called toulpania, in place of the headgear of a shepherd-girl, under which for the purpose of holding and keeping clean the hair of the head, they wore an improvised fez held in place by a bandanna, always a white shirt, but embroidered at the ends of the hands and feet, covered with a dress made of multicolored cloth, with brilliant embroidery at the chest and extremities and with a heavy capote, fluffy inside, from Zagora, called "kapouda" or "cas-sock", a dress which resembles that common in Thessaly and the rest of Greece.

In addition, during holidays, the women wore around their waists broad belts which were very expensive since they were made of silver. Likewise, on the chest they wore the so-called giourdani, decorated with white, small silver coins and around these a chain of larger silver concave coins the size of a silver dollar. Strings or chains of thin coins hung from the forehead, near the temples, down to the chin. The coins were gold and silver and there were also other small coins called "phoenikia", derived from the word Phoenician.