

## Article

# Poverty, Wars, and Migrations: The Jonovski Family from the Village of Orovo

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**Abstract:** This article will cover the different types of migration in Macedonia and its Prespa region at the end of the 19th and 20th centuries through the Jonovski family from the village of Orovo. Poverty and wars caused many men to look for work and to earn money in distant places. Joshe, who was born around 1766, was first an economic migrant with his father, Marko, internally within the Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor (1880–1890). Later, he immigrated to the USA (1914–1918), before returning home to his family. However, after WWI, with the harsh attitude of the Greek government toward the Macedonian minority, this turned into permanent migration. His sons would be migrant workers in the USA, France, and Australia, while their wives and children stayed in Orovo. The village was destroyed and depopulated at the end of the Greek Civil War (1946–1949). Joshe and the remaining family reunited in Wrocław, Poland, where in the 1950s Joshe died, and his daughters-in-law finally joined their husbands in the USA and Australia. His son Boris, with his family, moved to Skopje, Macedonia, Yugoslavia in 1968. We will look at the life and migrations of Joshe, his four children, and four grandchildren.

**Keywords:** economic migration; war migration; Macedonia migration

## 1. Introduction

Poverty and wars have caused many migrations, whether temporary, economic, or permanent migrations. This paper will cover the migration in Macedonia's Prespa region (consisting of the big Prespa Lake and the small Prespa Lake) at the end of the 19th and 20th centuries through the Jonovski Family from the village of Orovo in the small Prespa Lake Region, in Macedonia, which is today the most north-western point of Greece. The oldest known ancestor is Joshe, born around 1766. Due to poverty, the men first went to work as temporary internal migrant workers in Asia Minor in the Ottoman Empire, leaving their wives and children at home. At the beginning of the 20th century, they started working in America, Australia, and to a lesser degree Europe, with the idea of returning home to their families. Joshe first went to Asia Minor (~1880–1890) with his father Marko and then to the USA (1914–1918), followed by his oldest son, Vangel (1920–1926), then Boris to France (1931–1937), and then the youngest Alexander went to Australia in 1939, never to return.

After the Balkan Wars in 1912, the Aegean part of Macedonia, together with the village of Orovo came under the rule of Greece. The suffering from the Balkan Wars 1912–1913 and WWI (1914–1918) forced many to migrate permanently. In 1928, the Greek government changed the Macedonian name of the village Orovo to the Greek name Pyxos and changed the family name to Joanidis in order to Hellenize them. The last members of the Jonovski family born in Orovo were Spasa (1937) and Germanija (1943). The village was largely destroyed and depopulated during the Greek Civil War (1946–1949). Before the war, of the Jonovski family in the village, there was Joshe, his second wife Ana, his son Boris, his three daughters-in-law, Fania, Sofia, and Tranda, and his grandchildren Dimitar, Spasa, and Germanija. His oldest grandson, Trajko, joined the partisans and moved to Yugoslavia in 1944. His son, Vangel, had already migrated to America and Alexander had migrated to Australia.



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At the end of the Greek Civil War, Ana died in Orovo, and Fania was imprisoned in Athens. As children refugees, Spasa and Germanija were evacuated to Czechoslovakia. Joshe, Sofia, and Tranda were evacuated to Poland. Boris fought in the war and was wounded, and after surgery in Bulgaria, was sent to Czechoslovakia. There he found Spasa and Germania and joined the rest of the family in Poland. When Fania was released from prison, she joined her husband Vangel in America. Later Tranda and Spasa joined Alexander in Australia.

Dimitar was also fighting in the Greek Civil War and after the democratic army lost, he was evacuated to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, USSR. There, he finished Military Academy and then completed night school while working as a truck driver in Tashkent. After that, he studied mechanical engineering in Kyiv, Ukraine, USSR. After completing three years there, he joined his family in Wroclaw, Poland where he finished his studies at Politechnika Wroclawska.

Finally, Boris, Sofia, Dimitar, and his wife Viktorija moved to Skopje, Macedonia, in Yugoslavia, leaving Germanija in Poland where she married Stanislav Jez. Originally in the Ottoman Empire and then Greece, the life of the family also spanned the USA, Australia, Albania, France, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the USSR, Yugoslavia, and the Republic of Macedonia.

## 2. Sources and Limitations

This turmoil of history led to the destruction of birth, marriage, and death records before the Greek occupation. This made it all the more difficult to research the genealogy of the Jonovski family, so a great deal of the family history is based on the oral traditions told by Boris Jonovski (1904–2007) ([Jonovski 2000](#)), noted by his grandson Jovan Jonovski and Boris' brother Alexander (1912–2004) ([Yovanovski 1990](#)) noted and translated to English by his grandson, Nikolai Mehanikov. There is a monography for Orovo that also contains genealogy tables of the Orovo families ([Миовски 1988](#)), later published in English ([Miovski 2006](#)). Miovski later self-published a book *Recollections* (Спомени), which is an autobiography including his life in Orovo and the migrations of his family ([Miovski n.d.](#)). A more detailed family tree was published in 2023 ([Jonovski 2023](#)). This article uses some materials about the people and the village from this article. Another monography of the neighboring village of Grazhdeno sheds light on the historical events and similar migrations that happened in Orovo ([Ристовски and Дробицки 2001](#)).

A problem following the lineages is the surname. In the village of Orovo, the family was referred to as Jonovskite (literally “the Jonovski” with the definite suffix (article)), uncommon to other parts of Macedonia. Jonovski is rather a rare surname and is often mistaken for Jovanovski, the more common surname. Therefore, several branches, by mistake, were administratively assigned the surname Jovanovski. Also, when people migrated, the officials in the various states recorded things differently. For example, in the USA, their surname was recorded as Yoanou, and in Australia as Yovanovski.

Another problem in the research is a custom connected to women's first names. After marriage, the wife used a female form of her husband's first name, and her real name simply disappeared from the public. In the context of the absence of vital records, in oral history, only the form of the husband's name for the wife is remembered.

## 3. Setting the Stage

To understand the political, economic, and social background of the processes that led to poverty and migration, we need to explain the greater context. For six centuries, Macedonia as a region was part of the Ottoman Empire until the beginning of the 20th century. Ancient cultivation of the land with millennia-old manual technology, and weaker atmospheric precipitation contributed to the difficult development of agriculture and caused poverty for the people. The general lack of available resources, together with centuries-old Ottoman influence left an oriental appearance and deep traces on the economy of this region, developing fragmented agriculture, manufacturing crafts, as well as domestic

handicrafts (Van Valkenburg and Held 1969, p. 679). The land in the Ottoman Empire was divided according to the administrative *Timarli-Sipahis* principle. A *timar* was a land grant by the Sultans. The revenues produced from the land acted as compensation to the *Sipahis* (provincial *timarli sipahi* cavalrymen) and other members of the military class. The *timar* system was one in which the projected revenue of a conquered territory was distributed in the form of temporary land grants as compensation for annual military service, for which they received no pay. In this way, the Ottoman state provided other means of paying the army and a source of revenue for the central treasury (Ozel 1999, p. 234).

From the 17th century, *sipahis* began to turn the *timarli-sipahis* into *chifliks* (private inheritable land), and themselves into *chiflik-saybies*, which practically meant forcibly taking away the land from the peasants that had lived on it for centuries. Now, the peasants were left without basic rights or their land, and had to rent it from the *sipahi* or work as “*irgat*”-servants (for monetary compensation/wage) or *ayakchi* (for a monthly salary). Farmers who cultivated the land had to pay a part of the production to all administrative-state structures connected to the land—from *beys* (lords) to *seğmen* (guards). When all the government structures were paid off, the rest of the agricultural production was divided into two equal parts: one to the *chiflikchi* (peasant) and the other part to the *chiflik sahi* (landowner). Therefore, the peasants were left with only about 30% of the total production.

This forced the men to look for work in other places to earn money, leaving their wives and children at home. The term used was “Печалба” (*pechalba*—to earn (save) money), the concept of temporal work rather than a permanent migration. At first, it occurred internally, within the Ottoman Empire, like in Asia Minor or Walachia. They were working there for some time, mostly as stonemasons, and coming back to their families. Later, they started going to the USA and Australia for longer periods but still returned home; however, with the deteriorating economic condition and mostly with the Ilinden Uprising of 1903 and subsequent wars, this turned into permanent migration, meaning they never lived in their birthplace again.

The rise of nationalism and the creation of the Balkan states in the 19th century made things worse. The Macedonian national identity was not freely formed due to national and romantic ideas, as well as the economic and political interests of neighboring countries that used their greater potential and newly formed modern-day states as single nation-states. From them began the denial of the formation of the Macedonian national identity through systematic attempts and influences via the schools and the church, imposing their national consciousness on the local population and convincing them that the Macedonian people were part of their (Bulgarian, Greek, or Serbian) national identity. Thus, the Greek state claimed that Macedonia had belonged to Greece since the reign of Alexander the Great and that, in the new division after the defeat of the Turkish Empire, it must naturally return to Greece together with the people who expressed their Orthodox religion in the Greek language. Bulgaria took advantage of the struggle of the Slavic people against the Greek Church and, when it obtained its own church in 1870, used it in the same way, as Greece had in the previous period through the liturgical language and the language of teaching in schools. Serbia also joined them with teaching in the northern parts of the country, using its modern Serbian language in its agitation. To prove their right to the territory of Macedonia, all three countries used statistics on the ethnicity of the population, in which they show that the majority of the population is of their ethnicity (Доклестик 1973, pp. 22–29).

Thus, there was a division of national consciousness according to one of the churches operating within the Ottoman Empire. The Greek-speaking Patriarchate of Constantinople (Rum Millet) obtained its contestant, Slavic-speaking Millet Bulgarian exarchate, in 1870 (Masters 2001, pp. 61–62). In this period, the Orthodox Churches played a major role in the denationalization of the nascent Macedonian consciousness, being strongly connected to the struggle of the newly formed Balkan states for the territories and people still under the Ottoman Empire, mostly Macedonia (ЈОНОВСКИ 2008, p. 5). All these influences very quickly rose to a higher level—the level of violent actions and insurgent activities. Military

companies were formed that began to roam Macedonia and carry out various atrocities aimed at bringing the people into their planned national program and territorial demands.

Amongst all of this, at the end of the 19th century, a revolutionary movement was created for the liberation of Macedonia and its formation as an independent national state. National ideas of independent Macedonia and the Macedonian people appeared among Macedonian students abroad, most often in countries that were far from neighboring propaganda, who formed their associations and published newspapers and other books, thus setting ideas and standards for the new Macedonian national language and identity (Ставови-Кавка 2007, p. 171).

According to the territorial division in the 1870s, the Prespa region was a *kaza* in the Bitola *vilayet* (Байрами 1937, pp. 981–88). The Prespa region was inhabited by Slavic-speaking Macedonians and most joined the Exarhy. The Greek Andartis (Αντάρτης members of a Greek guerilla paramilitary formation) were committing crimes against Slavic Macedonians at the end of the 19th century, and more so during the first two decades of the 20th century to “make them” Greek or to expel them.

During the failed Ilinden Uprising of 1903, the population supported the Uprising and, after the bloody extinguishing of it, the population suffered. With the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), the region of Prespa was divided by Serbia (Vardar Macedonia), Greece (Aegean Macedonia), and Albania (which formally on the ground was formed a little later). The conflicts practically continued into WWI (1914–1918) as the Macedonian front line passed through this region. This caused immense suffering for the people and a permanent migration took place (Jelavich 1983, pp. 89–99).

After WWI, the Greek government continued the Hellenization of the population by destroying Slavic records, documents, and artifacts, and changing people’s and place’s names to Greek ones. Therefore, Jonovski was changed to Joanidis, and the village name was changed from Orovo to Pyxos.

Also, the Greco–Italian War (1940) was fought in the region. This continued up to WWII (1941–1945), with Italians and Germans occupying the region, contributing even more to the suffering of the people. The population joined the communist-led Greek Peoples Liberating Army (ELAS), fighting against the occupiers Italy, Germany, and Bulgaria. In 1943, a Slavic–Macedonian Peoples Liberating Front (SNOF) was formed, which used the Macedonian language in the command, and opened schools in Macedonian in the liberated territories. After its decommission, many of its fighters joined the Partisan Units of Macedonia in Yugoslavia.

During the Greek Civil War (1946–1949) the local population took the side of the Communist Party and its Democratic Army of Greece (DAG), which again liberated the region. Schools were opened again in the Macedonian language. With the advancement of the Greek National Forces, the process of depopulation started (Jelavich 1983, pp. 306–13). First, in March 1948, the children were evacuated to Socialist countries, and then, after losing the battles at mounts Vitco and Gramos in September of 1949, the majority of the population retired with the defeated DAG soldiers to Albania and then to Socialist countries.

#### 4. The Village of Orovo

The oldest known member of the family is Joshe (Jovan) Jonovski, born around 1766. The family, for the majority of the time, lived in the village of Orovo. According to the family tradition, the Turkish Bey of Monastir (Bitola), the titled owner of the land, requested the villagers buy out the land that they were using. This might have happened in 1860 when similar processes were unveiled in the neighboring village of Grazhdeno (Ристовски and Дробицки 2001, p. 62). Jonovski could not pay, and they were expelled from the land. They moved to the nearby island of St. Ahil on small Prespa Lake until they earned enough money working as stone masons in Alexandroupoli to pay for the land. Eventually, they managed to save a major portion of the price, and the Bey agreed to sell them the land at the offered price. Then, they moved back to Orovo (Jonovski 2000). The last members of the Jonovski family left Orovo at the end of the Greek Civil War, after the defeat of the



Democratic Army of Greece in September 1949. The last male direct line descendant is Marko Jovan Jonovski, born in Skopje, Macedonia in 2011 (Figure 1) (Jonovski 2023, p. 57).



**Figure 1.** Coat of arms of the Jonovski family.

The village of Orovo is located in the Prespa region in Macedonia, now the most north-western part of modern Greece, at the tripoint with Macedonia to the north and Albania to the west. Orovo is a mountain village located between the two Prespa lakes in the western part of the small (lake) Prespa region (Figure 2). After the first Balkan war and partition of Macedonia in 1912, the border between Serbia and Greece was established some 15 km north of Orovo on the big Prespa lake, leaving the village in Greece. Later, when the Greek–Albanian border was established in 1925, it passed less than 1 km west of the village. Orovo lies in the Glambokodolsko Pole (valley) at 1080 m above sea level (ASL), surrounded by mounts Priso (1120 m ASL) to the east, Grado (1122 m ASL) to the north, and Kiska (1254 m ASL) to the west. In the same valley, 3 km south, is the village of Grazhdeno. The village of Cerje in the same valley ended up in Albania (Miovski 2006, p. 5).



**Figure 2.** Map of Prespa region.

According to the King's Order on 12 December 1918 (VI. v/I No. 259/21.12.1918), the village was purely a Macedonian settlement with the status of an independent district. It covered 45 km<sup>2</sup>, a large part of mountainous forest including unapproachable rocky hills, with only a third of fields, meadows, slopes, and part of the small Prespa Lake.

The village of Orovo was settled somewhere in the 16th century. The name is derived from the word "Oreh" or "orev"—walnut. The Orovo People called it Oro-o. The first time the village is mentioned as Orehoovo was twice in the 17th century and once in the 18th century in Slepche Codic. In Yanko Miovski's passport, issued in 1887 in Aydin (Asia Minor), the name of the village is Rahovo. Verkovic and Kanchov wrote of Orehoovo. The name Orovo is written on Risto Miovski's passport issued on 23 December 1918, from the Royal Consulate of Serbia in New York. The last known document issued by the

Greek government with the name Orovon is from 30 June 1928 on a tax document of Lazo Miovski. In July 1928, the name of the village was changed to Pyxos (Πυξός). Grazhdeno was renamed Vrontero (Βροντερό) (Miovski 2006, p. 7).

In 1940, Orovo had 489 inhabitants in 71 households (Figure 3). During the Greek Civil War (1946–1949), the village was destroyed, with the majority of Orovo inhabitants leaving for Eastern European countries. Those who stayed moved to the neighboring villages. In 1957, Orovo was erased from the register, and its territory was transferred to the Vrontero district (Miovski 2006, p. 6).



**Figure 3.** Orovo before the Greek Civil War, Jonovski Dimitar.

Most people from Orovo built their own houses out of stone and many continued using these skills to earn money building houses, walls, etc., in Anatolia and Walachia. The houses typically had two floors of which the lower one was used for cattle and other animals. Their main occupation was farming, and sheep and cattle keeping, but they practiced forestry, from which they produced charcoal. Later, the majority of Orovo migrant workers went to earn money in the USA and Australia, and a small group went to Europe (Miovski 2006, p. 10).

Due to the remote position of the village, there was a small number of literate people who taught themselves while working in larger cities in Asia Minor. The first more organized form of school was established in 1904 by the village priests Ilia Popovski (serving 1850–1890) and Naum Bosilkovski (1904–1912) from the nearby village of German. In 1920, the first Greek teacher, Nikolaos Gunaris, arrived and two years later was replaced by Yanis Kostandinou, a Vlach who also spoke Macedonian. In 1927, a new floor was built at the school and a second teacher was appointed, and from 1938, a third teacher was added (Miovski 2006, p. 20).

In 1947, after the liberation of the village by the Greek Democratic Army, teaching in the Macedonian language began with the teachers Tanas Bosilkovski (from the village of Shtrkovo) and Kostadinka Pajkovska (from the village of German) until March 1948, when the children were evacuated to the Eastern Bloc countries and Yugoslavia (Miovski 2006, p. 21).

The village church, St. Nicola, was built in the 17th century. In 1900, the Orovo people decided to erect a new church at the same location. The building was postponed with the Ilinden Uprising of 1903 and the funds for the church were given to the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization. Construction was commended to Mitre Jonovski and the work was undertaken using renowned stone masons from the village of Progun, in the Bilishta region. The church was 25 × 10 m with 13 windows and could fit 150 chairs (Figure 4). The church was finally finished at the end of 1911 and consecrated on 26 July 1912, on the saint day of St. Petka (Agia Paraskevi). During the summer of 1923, the interior was frescoed by Sokrat, and the Iconostas were completed by Georgi from Yanina in Epirus. Soon, the liturgy had to be carried out in Greek and all inscriptions from the icons and the frescoes were rewritten in Greek (Miovski 2006, p. 24).



**Figure 4.** The church, St. Nicolas (St. Paraskevi), the only remaining building in Orovo, 18 May 1997.

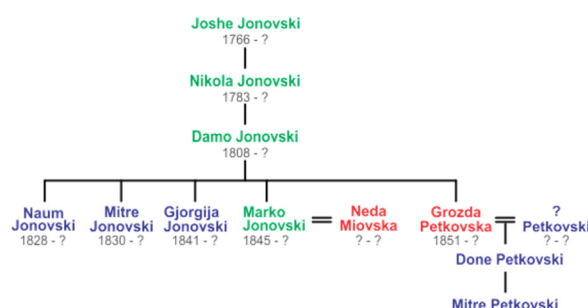
The cemetery was on the west side of the church and the graves were without grave-stones with inscriptions but were marked by stones set differently. People knew whose grave belonged to whom from the traditions passed through the generations. The church also had land that was rented to the villagers to acquire the necessary funds for its operation (Jonovski 2023, p. 62).

As the village was depopulated, the houses suffered in the Greek Civil War and the only building left in Orovo was the Church. The church was renovated in 2005 and a special commemorative service was held on the same day as its original consecration, 93 years later. Today the church is known as St. Petka (Agias Paraskevi) according to the feast day on which it was consecrated (Miovski 2006, p. 26).

The limited natural resources, economic crises, as well as violence in the wider region sparked migration, first temporarily and later permanently.

## 5. The Jonovski Family

The first generations of the Jonovski were involved in agriculture, forestry, and animal husbandry and stayed in the village. The oldest known member is Joshe (Jovan) Jonovski, born around 1766 in the village of Orovo. His son, Nikola, was born around 1783 and his grandson, Damo, was born around 1808. Damo had four sons, Naum (1828), Mitre (1830), Gjorgija (1841), and Marko (1845), and a daughter called Grozda (1851) (Figure 5).

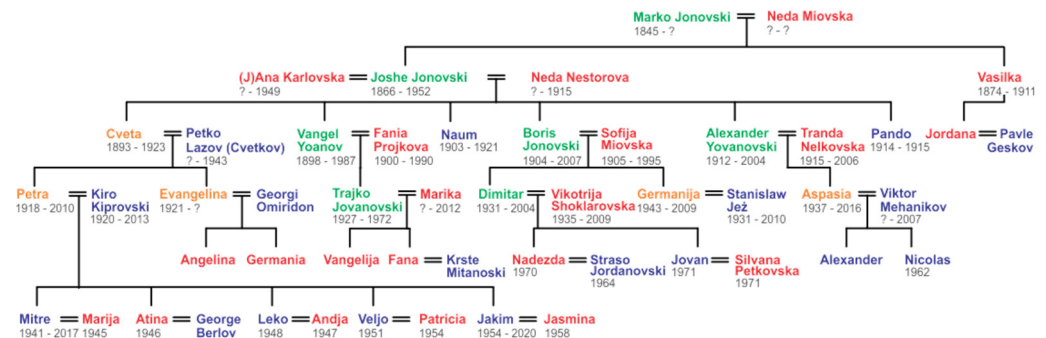


**Figure 5.** Three of the first generations of the Jonovski family (Blue: men, green: men mentioned in the article, red: women, orange: women mentioned in the article).

Marko, born in 1845 in Orovo, married in 1867 to Neda Miovska. Marko had a son, Joshe (Jovan), born in 1866 (Wyciąg 1952) or 1868 (Yovanovski 1990), and a daughter, Vasilka, born in 1874, who passed away in 1911 (Jonovski 2023, pp. 63–65). Marko was the first that was recorded as a migrant worker. He worked in Asia Minor, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire, now Türkiye, as a stonemason. The next generations would see all types of migrations. We will follow this branch of the Jonovski family to discover the different types of migration. We will cover Marko's son Joshe, who experienced three types of migration—first internal economic migration, then external temporary, and finally permanent migration as a war refuge. We will cover his daughter, sons, and grandchildren and their migrations (eight people) in greater detail and mention many of his great-grandchildren.

### 5.1. Joshe

Joshe became an internal migrant worker in Asia Minor at the age of 12, alongside his father Marko. He came back in 1890 and married Nada Nestorova from the village of Grazdeno. They had a daughter, Cveta, and five boys: Vangel, Naum, Boris, Alexander, and Pando (Figure 6). Joshe worked in Türkiye over several three-year periods, returning home in between these periods to visit his family (Yovanovski 1990).



**Figure 6.** Marko branch of Jonovski family (Blue: men, green: men mentioned in the article, red: women, orange: women mentioned in the article).

In 1914, due to the division of the Ottoman Empire and wartime, and being unable to go to his previous destination, Joshe went to America for four years and came back in 1918. During his years away in America, his wife Nada passed away in 1915 along with his youngest son Pando, who was 18 months old. Joshe remarried in 1920 (J) to Ana Carlovksa, from the village of German. They did not have any children together but she had a son from a previous marriage, Peter Keratzis. The oldest family photo kept in the family is of Joshe with his oldest grandson in Orovo, Trajko, taken in 1927 (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Joshe Jonovski with his grandson Trajko, Greece 1927.

Naum was born in 1903 in the same village of Orovo and passed away in 1921. All of Joshe's surviving sons become economic migrants, Vangel in the US, Boris in France, and Alexander in Australia. During this time, Joshe took care of his three daughters-in-law and his three grandchildren. His name was changed by the Greek authorities to Joanis Joanidis. His second wife, Jana, passed away in 1949 just before the evacuation at the end of the Greek Civil War. Joshe and his two daughters-in-law were evacuated to Wroclaw, Poland (Figure 8).





**Figure 8.** Joshe Jonovski sitting, with his daughters-in-law, Sofia (left) and Tranda (right), Wrocław, Poland, 1950.

Joshe was already visually impaired due to old age before he passed away on 15 January 1952, in Wrocław, Poland ([Wyciąg 1952](#)). He was buried in Wrocław under the name Janowski Janis (Figure 9).



**Figure 9.** Joshe's death certificate.

## 5.2. Cveta

Joshe's only daughter, Cveta, was born in May 1893 and she married Petko Cvetkovski from the next village of Cerie, Albania in 1914. She had two daughters, Petra and Angelina. Cveta passed away in 1923 and her husband Petko died 20 years later. Angelina was born in 1921 in the village of Cerie. She was married to George Omiridon of Grazdeno, and they had a daughter, Gerka. Angelina moved with her daughter to Athens, Greece ([Yovanovski 1990](#)).

Cveta's daughter, Perta, was born in Cerje on 17 November 1918 and married Kiro Kiprovski who was born in Globochani, Albania on 15 May 1940. After WWII, together with other Macedonian families, they migrated to Plandishte, Voivodina, Serbia, Yugoslavia. They raised four sons: Mitre (1941–2017), Leko (1948), Veljo (1951), Jakim (Kime) (1954–2020), and a daughter Atina (1946) ([Kiprovski 2020](#)).

Atina was married to George Berlov and they moved to New York where they had a textile factory. Her father and siblings traveled to New York on many different occasions to work at the factory and eventually migrated to the USA. Petra and Kiro lived with their youngest son Jakim in Plandiste, Serbia. After Petra's death on 17 February 2010, Kiro joined his son Jakim in New York where he died on 15 December 2013. Jakim also died there on 13 December 2020 ([Kiprovski 2020](#)) (Figure 10).





**Figure 10.** Kiproviski family: Leko, his wife Andja, Kime, his wife Jasmina, Petra, Atinka, his husband George, Kiro, (lower) and Igor, 1988 USA ([FamilySearch Database n.d.](#)).

### 5.3. Vangel

Joshe's oldest son, Vangel (Gele), was born on 15 April 1898 ([Yoanou and Burial n.d.](#)). He married Fania Proikova, who was born on 11 October 1900 in the village of Grazdeno. Vangel went to America in 1920 looking for work. His surname was recorded as Yoanou. He worked at the same steel factory that his father Joshe had worked at several years earlier. Vangel had a son, Trajko, who was born in 1927. At the end of June of the same year, Vangel went back to the USA to Massillon, Ohio, where he started working at his previous job. In 1937, he applied to the US government to bring his wife Fania and son to America. When these documents arrived in Greece, the Greek authorities rejected the initial request and by the time the new documents had been prepared, WWII had started. His son, Trajko, joined Tito's Partisan army in Vardar, Macedonia (Yugoslavia); therefore, Fania was sent to prison in Athens, Greece for five-six years. In the meantime, Vangel hired a lawyer in America who contacted one of the best lawyers in Athens, and he was able to arrange his wife's release from prison in 1950, meaning she could join Vangel in Massillon, Ohio.

Then, in 1970, they sold their house in America and went to Skopje, Macedonia, to join their son's family (Figure 11). Shortly after settling into their two-story home, Trajko was killed in a car accident in 1972. They were deeply hurt by his death and returned to America. They came to Skopje only for the three-year memorial, and after the commemoration service in the church (panahyda) they returned to America ([Yovanovski 1990](#)).



**Figure 11.** Family of Vangel Yoanou (top left unidentified, Marika, Trajko Jovanovski, Bt. Fania, Fanka, Vangel, and Angelina) Skopje, 1971.

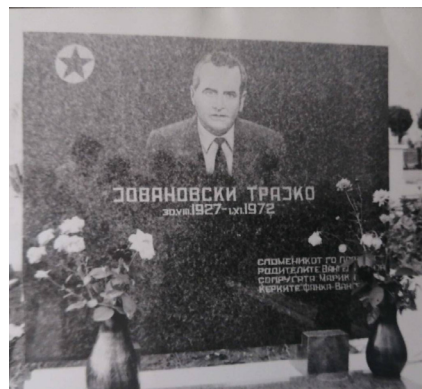
Vangel passed away on 12 December 1987 and his wife Fania passed away on 25 May 1990, both in Massillon, Ohio (Figure 12: gravestone).



**Figure 12.** Yoanou gravestone, Massillon, Ohio, USA.

#### 5.4. Trajko

Vangel's son Trajko was born on 20 July 1927 and helped his grandfather Joshe by working at their mixed farm from 1943–1944. He then left with several other boys to join Tito's Partisans. His surname was recorded as Jovanovski. There he met Maria, his wife-to-be. Maria was from the city of Veles and shortly before the war ended, they decided to marry and live in Skopje where they had two daughters Fania and Vangelia. Fania married Krste Mitanski and they had two daughters, Maja and Elena, and a son named Aleksandar (Yovanovski 1990). Trajko died in a traffic accident on 1 November 1972 and Maria passed away in 2012 (Figure 13).



**Figure 13.** Trajko's grave.

#### 5.5. Boris

Joshe's middle son, Boris, was born on 4 April 1904. As a young man, he and Sofia Miovska fell in love and, as was the custom, he went to ask her father for her hand in marriage. In response, her father demanded a price that Boris could not afford. He soon married another girl (whom he could afford), and Sofia was given to another man. Soon, their respective spouses died, and after the traditional period of mourning, they married each other on 12 May 1928, this time without financial compensation to her father. Boris's name was changed to Paris Ioannidis. In 1928, he was drafted into the Greek army and served in Athens. He returned home in 1930, and three months later, he departed for the United States via France, looking for work. However, he could not continue to the US, so stayed in France. His son Dimitar was born in October 1931. In France, Boris started to work as a shepherd and then moved to a wheat farm in Lille, where he worked until 1937 at which point when he returned home.

His daughter, Germanija, was born on 10 June 1943. In 1945, Boris joined the Greek Democratic Army and was sent with the Partisans just behind the Albanian border. He was wounded near his heart on 4 August 1948 and almost died from the injury. They took him first to Katlanovo Hospital near Skopje, Yugoslavia, but he was later transferred

to Sofia, Bulgaria so specialist surgeons could operate on him. It took him a long time to recuperate, after which he was sent to a sanatorium in Czechoslovakia. In 1951, he discovered that Spasa (his brother Alexandar's daughter) and his daughter Gera had been living in Czechoslovakia and that his father with his wife Sofia and sister-in-law Tranda were in Wroclaw, Poland. There they reunited (Figure 14) (Jonovski 2000). They all worked at a textile factory in Wroclaw for a period before moving to Legnica, Poland, where they lived collectively with another Polish family in a single apartment. Then, in 1959, Tranda and Spasa went to Australia to reunite with Alexander.



**Figure 14.** Jonovski in Wroclaw, Poland ~1955, t. Spasa, Tranda, Germanija, b. Sofija, and Boris.

Their wish was to return to their birthland. However, the Greek government forbade the Macedonians born in Greece to enter Greece at all. With the formation of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, where Macedonians lived free to be Macedonian and to speak Macedonian, many of the immigrants from Aegean Macedonia migrated to Macedonia in Yugoslavia. Thus, Boris along with his wife Sofia went to Skopje, Macedonia in 1969 to join his son Dimitar's family, who had moved to Skopje a year earlier (Yovanovski 1990). He changed his name back to Boris Jonovski. In Skopje, he spent his time taking care of a small garden and playing dominos with his neighbors, all of whom were also from Aegean Macedonia.

In 1981, Boris and Sofia moved away and, in 1983, received an apartment in the building next to his son Dimitar. His wife, Sofia, passed away on 10 January 1995. Boris survived his son Dimitar and lived with his grandson Jovan and his family until he passed away on 6 January 2007, in Skopje (Jonovski 2023, p. 73).

#### 5.6. Dimitar

Boris's son, Dimitar Jonovski (Joanidis Dimitrios), was born on 13 October 1931 in Orovo. He joined the Democratic Army of Greece on 20 November 1946 as a 15-year-old teenager. During the Greek Civil War, he fought in 82 battles and on 22 July 1948 was wounded and spent two months in a hospital, before returning to the battlefield. In September 1949, the defeated Democratic Army retreated through Albania, and he ended up in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, USSR, where he undertook and completed 4 years at a military academy for mountain artillery from 20 December 1949 to 1 December 1953 (Figure 15) (Jonovski 1947).

As the initial idea of returning the new officers to fight in Greece was not an option, Dimitar, now 22, had to complete his missed education at the night school while working in Tashkent. Up until 23 August 1958, he worked as a general hand and eventually became a truck driver. In July 1959, he finished his final school examinations and wanted to continue to study literature but this was not an option for him. Out of the two options offered, he chose Avtoinstitut in Kyiv, Ukraine. This option was a mechanical engineering course for motor vehicles, which he undertook from 1959–1963 (Figure 16).

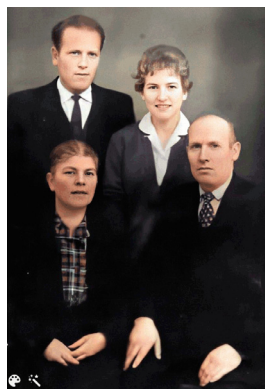


**Figure 15.** Dimitar (in the middle) at the Military Academy USSR ~1951.



**Figure 16.** Dimitar (right) in front of the Kyiv Avtoinstitut, early 1960s.

He managed to meet his family in 1960 for the first time in 14 years. After his third year at the Institute, in 1963, he moved to Poland to reunite with his family in Legnica (Figure 17). He completed his fourth and fifth years at the Politechnika in Wroclaw from 1963 to 1965. There he met Viktorija Shoklarovska, born on 25 December 1935 in the village of German. Both of their parents knew each other from Prespa. They married on 17 September 1964. Dimitar was writing poetry ([Лирика 1964](#)). He worked in the Legnica Public Transportation Company and later in the Milana factory, and Viktorija in ELWRO, an electronic factory in Wroclaw, and almost two years later moved to Legnica. In 1968, they moved to Butel, Skopje, Macedonia where they returned to their original surname, Jonovski. Boris, with his wife Sofija, joined them in 1969, living in a two-bedroom apartment in a building where all were from Aegean Macedonia and had returned to the Socialist countries.



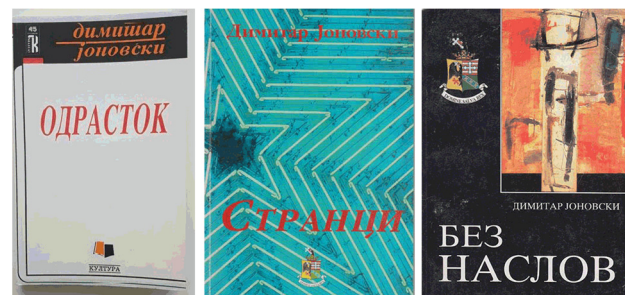
**Figure 17.** Jonovski in Legnica, Poland (~1960).



Dimitar started working as a mechanical engineer in the “Metalski Zavod-Tito” factory, designing pumps. Later, in 1977, he became a professor at “13 November” High School, teaching different mechanical subjects, and later in Gymnasium “Josip Broz Tito”, where he retired in 1988.

He continued to write fiction and poetry. In 1974, he published his poem “Without a Title” in the literary journal “*Sovremenost*”. His poem was considered Macedonian nationalistic and irredentist by the Federal Yugoslav Government, as well as by the socialist government in Skopje. Issue #3 of “*Sovremenost*” where the poem was published was banned, the secret police started to follow and interrogate him, and criminal charges were made against him. This shook him. Eventually, the charges were dropped. His dossier by the secret police was later declassified and transferred to the State Archive and then was published in 2016 (Црните 2016).

He continued to write fiction and poetry after the 1990s as well as political essays. His first two books “*Odrastok*” (appendix) (1990), and then “*Foreigners*” (2002) addressed themes from Aegean Macedonia, as well as the migrants from Greece to the USSR, Poland and Macedonia. His poetry book “*Without a Title*” published the Macedonian patriotic poetry for which he was accused in 1974 (2004) (Figure 18). There were three more unpublished books and many published articles in different magazines.



**Figure 18.** Cover pages of Dimitar Jonovski’s books.

Dimitar had two children. Nadezhda was born on 25 February 1970 in Macedonia, and married Strasho Jordanovski in 1993 in Skope, Macedonia, and had two children, Aleksandar and Elena. Jovan, born in Skopje on 7 August 1971, married Silvana Petkovska from Kumanovo and had two daughters, Neda and Viktorija, and a son Marko, the last direct male descendant of Joshe Jonovski. After Dimitar’s retirement, his main activities were taking care of a tiny vineyard and writing. He published letters and articles in many magazines and newspapers and left three unpublished fiction books. Dimitar died on 4 May 2004 and Viktorija died on 18 November 2009 (Jonovski 2023, p. 75).

### 5.7. Germanija

Boris’ daughter Germanija (Gera) was born on 10 June 1943 in Orovo. In March 1948 she left as a child refugee, together with 28,000 children, for Yugoslavia and other socialist countries. She ended up in Czechoslovakia. Her father, Boris, took Gera with him to Poland, where she joined the rest of the family. Gera was working as a bookkeeper and married a Pole, Stanislaw Jez. They did not have any children and enjoyed traveling and camping. She lived in Legnica, Poland until her death on 3 November 2009, and is buried in Skopje, together with her parents and her brother Dimitar and his wife Viktorija (Figure 19). At the grave, there is a stone that is considered to be a remnant of the Jonovski house in Orovo. Stanislaw died on 3 July 2010.





**Figure 19.** Jonovski grave, Butel graveyard, Skopje.

### 5.8. Alexander Yovanovski

Very Reverend Alexander (Leko to Macedonians or Alex to Australians) was born on 24 December 1912 in Orovo. When he was seven, he was sent to a Greek school and completed up to grade four, at the age of eleven. The teacher in the village did not have the right to teach any higher, so Alexander decided to complete one more year in the same class. During this time, he was sent off to tend the sheep and goats on the farm (Yovanovski 1990).

At the age of twenty, he became engaged to Tranda Nelkovska of the same village; then, he was drafted into the Greek army. He served for six months in the Florina, and then another eight months in the Greek capital of Athens. After being discharged, he came home and married Tranda on 16 June 1935, and on 17 May 1937, they had a daughter Aspasia (Spasa).

Alexander, by himself, left the village on 29 June 1939 for Australia. He arrived in Fremantle on a ship named the “Romold” on 11 August 1939. His surname was recorded as Yovanovski. On 14 August 1939, he started working in a garden in Wanneroo for 35 shillings per week. In May 1941, he left the garden and went to Boddington, southwest of Perth, and worked cutting Wandoo (a kind of Eucalyptus) for a mill “Industrial Extract”. Then, in January 1945, he went to Fremantle and bought a café business, which he ran with his partner Ilia Mioviski until 1975. His wife and daughter only joined him from Poland in 1959. Spasa married Viktor Mehanikov and had two sons, Alexander and Nikolai. Viktor died on 9 November 2007 and Spasa died on 26 September 2016.

In 1968, Macedonian Orthodox Saint Nikolas started in Perth where Alexander served as a priest (Yovanovski 1990) (Figure 20). Alexander died on 5 June 2004, and Tranda died on 7 August 2006.



**Figure 20.** Reverend Alex Yovanovski partaking in holy liturgy.

## 6. Conclusions

The Jonovski family shared the destiny of many families of the wider region. The phenomenon of the Pechalbari (migrant worker) is widespread in the passive parts of Macedonia in general. Furthermore, this occurred more frequently in the part of Macedonia that Greece occupied during the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) since the Greek government wanted to change the ethnic structure of the newly “liberated” territory. One of the tools

that was used was population exchanges between Greece and Bulgaria (1920) when more than 30,000 Macedonians were moved to Bulgaria. After the defeat of Greece in the Greko–Turkish war in 1923, around one million Christians from the Ottoman Empire were settled in Northern Greece, completely changing the ethnic structure. On the other side, a permanent emigration of the Macedonians was encouraged with different means.

Similar migrations were seen with the Bogov family from Konomlati (Kostur region), where part of the family emigrated to Australia, while others migrated to Czechoslovakia after the Greek Civil War and later to the Socialist Republic of Macedonia, Yugoslavia (Buzharovski 2021).

The Jonovski family from the village of Orovo in the small Prespa Lake Region in Macedonia has seen different types of migrations. Joshe (b. 1866) first went to Asia Minor (1880–1890) as a temporary internal migrant worker (within the Ottoman Empire) and then to the USA (1914–1918), still returning home to his family. All of his sons followed in his footsteps. His oldest son, Vangel (1920–1926), went to the USA, then Boris went to France (1931–1937), both returning home to their wives and children. But then Vangel permanently emigrated to the USA and Boris' youngest son, Alexandar, moved to Australia in 1939, both never to return.

At the end of the Greek Civil War (1946–1949), a different type of migration occurred. Joshe, with the remnants of his family, was forced as a war refugee to flee to Poland. His son, Boris, and his grandson, Dimitar, were fighting in the war and had different migration patterns. Furthermore, there were subsequent migrations.

We used the Jonovski family as a sample of the migration patterns of the Aegean Macedonians at the end of the 19th and first half of the 20th century. It only takes three generations to see the migrations of different types. Originally in the Ottoman Empire and then Greece, the life of the Jonovski family also spanned the USA, Australia, Albania, France, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the USSR, Yugoslavia, and the Republic of Macedonia.

This article contributes to the genealogy research of this wider region as the number of similar studies is very limited. It gives insight into the multiple migrations and the different socio-economic and political settings that contributed to several types of migration processes. We hope this will spark an interest in further research to enrich this subject for this region of the world. Furthermore, comparison with other contexts and regions can shed light on similarities and differences in family migrations of this period.

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