

# **Macedonia: Books, Genocide, Homeland, Villages**

By Victor Bivell

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Thank you to Dan and to Virginia and Alex and all the members of the Canadian Macedonian Historical Society for this opportunity to speak about things that we all care about. I've titled the talk Macedonia - Books, Genocide, Homeland, Villages because these are four projects that I am currently working on. So the talk will just be some thoughts about each one, how they are going, and where I am up to.

Let's begin with books. I started Pollitecon Publications in 1992, and the pollitecon.com website in 1997. So 30 and 25 years ago respectively. I'm old enough to think that's a bit of a worry, but it also has some benefits.

I started the website to promote the books, but it quickly grew to have a life of its own. These days it's a reasonably big website and, importantly, the traffic continues to grow.

In the year to 31 August, the site had 167,000 visitors, of whom 96,000 were unique visitors. Of those 96,000, over 55,000 were new visits and 40,000 were return visits. The return visits are particularly heartening. As a magazine editor I see return visits a little like people renewing their subscription – it's confirmation that they find the product interesting or useful.

Total page views were 177,000. How many of these were genuine interest and how many were superficial? All websites get some accidental traffic so it's good to see that the traffic is mostly coming from the right places. Almost all are countries and cities with significant numbers of Macedonians. So in the past year the leading countries by visitors were: USA, Australia, Macedonia, Canada, China, Russia, Greece, UK, Germany, Bulgaria, Serbia, Netherlands, Turkey, France, and there is a long tail.

China doesn't have a large Macedonian population, and it has recently popped into the statistics. So I suspect it is a smaller number of people with an ongoing interest. Russia has always been in the stats but has recently climbed in the visitations.

The rest are logical, with the top countries being English speaking with large Macedonian diasporas, ie US, Canada and Australia. I'm particularly

pleased with having readers in Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey where we know there are very large numbers of Macedonians, and I'm also pleased with European countries like UK, Germany, Serbia and France where there are also many Macedonians. With the exception of the UK, all of these countries are not on the usual English-speaking radar.

On books, Pollitecon has published 15 books so far under its own brand. In 2009 I published Pollitecon's first ebook. That was For Sacred National Freedom: Portraits of Fallen Freedom Fighters. I thought the book was so important that it should be available for free. For me, the very much larger distribution and the immediate worldwide distribution compared to paper books was an instant winner. The lower cost also helped.

Many years before I'd already come to the conclusion that Macedonian political books in English were not a money maker, but it was a very worthy cause. So around that time, about 2010, I decided that from then on I would produce an ebook of every book and make it available for free. By the time of the next book, Lerin in Mourning, in 2014, I'd decided to give up producing paper books commercially and only do free ebooks. I initially did Lerin in Mourning as a free download. However, several Macedonian communities in Australia expressed a very strong interest in a paper version and they pre-ordered enough copies to justify a print run, which is why that book became available for sale. The last two Pollitecon books have been available only as free ebooks with a small private print run for the authors and their families.

Over the years I'd been asked to sell books by other writers and publishers, and my standard response was to decline. That was because, given the nature of authors, it was either do it for every one or do it for no one, and if I did it for everyone it would have changed Pollitecon from a publisher to a retailer. But the distribution success of Portraits of Fallen Freedom Fighters still had me thinking. I was committed to free ebooks, I knew there were many ebooks available from other publishers, and requests from authors kept coming in, so in 2014 I started the Pollitecon Free Ebooks Library.

This had an initial 50 ebooks from 12 authors and publishers. People liked it, and I quickly got a lot of positive feedback. Also, I could now say yes to authors who wanted help with distribution, and I was able to add ebooks I thought were suitable. So the elibrary has grown as fast as I could find the time to work on it, and it now has over 465 ebooks. When I say ebooks, the great majority are ebooks but there are also some reports, academic papers, and magazines. A good number of these ebooks are only available or were first available from the Pollitecon elibrary.

The ebooks are the work of many hundreds of authors. And I would like to say that I am very happy with the quality and the variety of the authors. The elibrary has many of the most well-known and prolific Macedonian authors as well as many hard-to-get and emerging writers. And the non-Macedonian authors include some of the world's major political organizations and leading scholars.

The elibrary is working. In the past year it had nearly 83,000 downloads. I have a large backlog of files to sort through so there are many more ebooks to come. That's good news for the elibrary, but bad news for my workload.

## **The Macedonian Genocide**

Another project I'm working on is a new section of the website called The Macedonian Genocide. This focuses on the period of modern Macedonian history from about 1850 to 1950, and in particular the period from 1900 to 1950, which I think for Macedonians is the most relevant part of Macedonian history. Yes, ancient history is interesting, but all of our current major problems stem from that 1900 to 1950 period.

The key event in that period was the Balkan Wars and the division of Macedonia. Among other things, the Balkan Wars were an act of genocide against the Macedonian people and there were large scale crimes against humanity and war crimes committed on the population of Macedonia and Rumelia. That population comprised many ethnic groups including Macedonians, Turks, Greeks, Bulgarians, Jews, Serbs, Albanians and others. Everyone suffered.

Despite this, over 100 years later we still don't have a comprehensive Macedonian perspective on the war and on the genocide. The other ethnic groups have researched and written copiously about the war from their perspective. But little is available from a Macedonian perspective, so significantly more research is needed on the Balkan Wars and on the Macedonian Genocide in particular.

For example, there is so much that we don't know about what happened to the civilians in the war – how many died, who killed them, what ethnic groups were they from, what were their names, what were their personal stories, and so on. A significant portion of these civilians were ethnic Macedonians. No one else is telling the stories of the Macedonian civilians – that is a job that Macedonians need to do.

Another problem is that the opportunity for a Macedonian point-of-view

is passing. Witnesses and those with living memory are all dead. Much of the evidence is gone. Those Macedonians who survived were largely illiterate and we are left few written accounts. There are forces with a vested interest in denying and suppressing the truth. Anti-Macedonian propaganda flourished and is still pervasive. For many decades Macedonians didn't have a government to support research. And now that we have a government, it is weak and not supportive.

There is so much that could be done, and so little that is being done.

We need to change that. And we can. We are not alone. Unfortunately, genocide is surprisingly common, perhaps shockingly common, both in the past and in the present as we speak. So much so that in recent years genocide has become a stand-alone academic subject, and documenting genocides is a growing academic activity. Documenting and memorializing genocide is also becoming digitized. As well as books, academic papers and museums, genocide now includes digital memorials and museums, and digital archives, libraries and resource centres.

There are many ethnic groups documenting a genocide against them, so there is a lot that Macedonians can learn from other genocides and how other cultures are documenting these.

A key learning is the crucial role of governments, universities, research centres, foundations and other organizations. There are many many such research and funding centres around the world. But, unfortunately, as far as I know, there are no such Macedonian centres, none that focus on the Macedonian Genocide or the Balkan Wars. I hope I am wrong about that, but so far I haven't found one.

That's not good enough. It's not good enough from the Macedonian government, and it's not good enough from Macedonian academia. But it is an opportunity for wealthy Macedonians and wealthy communities who can afford to sponsor the research.

Meanwhile, the good news is that there is still good work being done by individual academics, independent researchers and writers. The lack of support means their role is even more critical. But their work is nowhere near enough. A lot more needs to be done by the Macedonian Government, and by Macedonian universities and communities to encourage and support research and writing on the Balkan Wars and on a Macedonian perspective on the Macedonian genocide.

So what's my contribution? What am I doing about it? Recently, I started the Macedonian Genocide page on the Pollitecon website. It's early days so

I haven't gone public and promoted it yet. I'll do that when I have enough material for it to make a useful statement.

At this stage I am simply collecting, organizing and uploading material. However, due to other projects, the amount of time I can allocate to it is not nearly as much as I would like and as the subject deserves. So my approach has been opportunistic. When in my work I come across suitable material, I save it and upload it or upload the link to the web page. By suitable material I mean photos, documentaries, film clips, academic papers, media reports, web links, books, and so on. There is good material out there, but it is not collated and organized.

### **The Macedonian Genocide**

The key event in the Macedonian Genocide was the invasion of Ottoman Macedonia by the Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian and Montenegrin armies in 1912-13. The historical consequences continue to this day as the Macedonian Cultural Genocide and the denial of Macedonian ethnic identity by Greece and Bulgaria. These links explore the Macedonian Genocide and Macedonian Cultural Genocide by key historical periods.

Overview

Before 1903

The Ilinden Uprising

The Period of Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian Terrorism from 1903 to 1912

The First and Second Balkan Wars

The First World War

The Greek Invasion of Turkey and the Colonization of Macedonia

Interwar Repression in Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia

The Second World War and the Republic of Macedonia

The Fight for Macedonian Autonomy or Independence in the Greek Civil War

The Post Greek Civil War Period

Temporary Freedom in Bulgaria

The Denial of Macedonian Ethnic Identity

The Modern Battle to End the Cultural Genocide Against the Macedonians

As you can see, I'm organizing the material by key events and time periods, such as the Ilinden Uprising, the terror gangs, the Balkan Wars, Greek colonization, the Republic of Macedonia, the Greek Civil War, and so on.

And here are a few examples of the type of material I am looking for.

| Battles of the First Balkan War |                    |   |            |                                    |                     |   |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---|------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Name                            | Attacking          | Commander                                       | Defending  | Commander                          | Date                | Winner                                  |
| Battle of Kardzhali             | Bulgarians         | Col. Vasil Delov                                | Ottomans   | Mehmed Yaver Pasha                 | 21 Oct 1912         | Bulgarians                              |
| Battle of Sarantaporo           | Greeks             | Crown Prince Constantine                        | Ottomans   | Lt. Gen. Hasan Tahsin Pasha        | 22 Oct 1912         | Greeks                                  |
| Battle of Yenidje               | Greeks             | Crown Prince Constantine                        | Ottomans   | Lt. Gen. Hasan Tahsin Pasha        | 1 Nov 1912          | Greeks                                  |
| Battle of Kumanovo              | Serbs              | Gen. Radomir Putnik                             | Ottomans   | Gen. Zeki Pasha                    | 23 Oct 1912         | Serbs                                   |
| Battle of Kirk Kilisse          | Bulgarians         | Lt. Gen. Radko Dimitriev, Maj. Gen. Ivan Fichev | Ottomans   | Mahmut Muhtar Pasha                | 24 Oct 1912         | Bulgarians                              |
| Battle of Pente Pigadia         | Ottomans           | Maj. Gen. Esat Pasha                            | Greeks     | Lt. Gen. Konstantinos Sapountzakis | 6–12 Nov 1912       | Greeks                                  |
| Battle of Prilep                | Serbs              | Gen. Petar Bojović                              | Ottomans   | Gen. Zeki Pasha                    | 3 Nov 1912          | Serbs                                   |
| Battle of Lule Burgas           | Bulgarians         | Lt. Gen. Radko Dimitriev, Maj. Gen. Ivan Fichev | Ottomans   | Abdullah Pasha                     | 28–31 Oct 1912      | Bulgarians                              |
| Battle of Merhamil              | Bulgarians         | Gen. Nikola Genev, Col. Aleksandar Tanev        | Ottomans   | Mehmed Yaver Pasha (POW)           | 26 Nov 1912         | Bulgarians                              |
| Battle of Sorovich              | Greeks             | Col. Dimitrios Matthalopoulos                   | Ottomans   |                                    | 15 Nov 1912         | Ottomans                                |
| Battle of Bitola                | Serbs              | Gen. Petar Bojović                              | Ottomans   | Gen. Zeki Pasha                    | 16–19 Nov 1912      | Serbs                                   |
| First Battle of Çatalca         | Bulgarians         | Lt. Gen. Radko Dimitriev                        | Ottomans   | Nazim Pasha                        | 17–18 Nov 1912      | Ottomans                                |
| Naval Battle of Kaliakra        | Bulgarians         | Cpt. Dimitar Dobrev                             | Ottomans   | Cpt. Hüseyin Rauf Bey              | 21 Nov 1912         | Bulgarians                              |
| Battle of Elli                  | Ottomans           | Adm. Remzi Bey                                  | Greeks     | Rear Adm. Pavlos Kountouriotis     | 16 Dec 1912         | Greeks                                  |
| Battle of Bulair                | Ottomans           | Fethi Bey                                       | Bulgarians | Gen. Georgi Todorov                | 26 Jan 1913         | Bulgarians                              |
| Battle of Şarköy                | Ottomans           | Enver Bey                                       | Bulgarians | Gen. Stilyan Kovachev              | 26–28 Jan 1913      | Bulgarians                              |
| Battle of Lemnos                | Ottomans           |   | Greeks     | Rear Adm. Pavlos Kountouriotis     | 18 Jan 1913         | Greeks                                  |
| Battle of Bizani                | Greeks             | Crown Prince Constantine                        | Ottomans   | Maj. Gen. Esat Pasha               | 5–6 Mar 1913        | Greeks                                  |
| Siege of Adrianople             | Bulgarians & Serbs | Gen. Georgi Vazov, Gen. Stepa Stepanovic        | Ottomans   | Gen. Gazi Şükrü Pasha              | 11–13 Mar 1913      | Bulgarians & Serbs                      |
| Second Battle of Çatalca        | Bulgarians         | Gen. Vasil Kutinchev                            | Ottomans   | Gen. Ahmet Izzet Pasha             | 3 Feb – 30 May 1913 | Ottomans (but strategically Bulgarians) |

Source: [https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/First\\_Balkan\\_War](https://military-history.fandom.com/wiki/First_Balkan_War)

This is a table of the battles of the First Balkan War. It gives the name of the battle, the attacker, the defender and the winner. It's there because each one of those battles needs to be thoroughly investigated to find out if it has any Macedonian angles, if they involved any Macedonian villages, and if there were any civilian deaths, and any Macedonian civilian deaths.



This next example is a simple map of Greek military operations in the First Balkan War. As you can see, the Greek army entered Macedonia from Thessaly with one section aiming to capture Salonica and another section aiming to capture Bitola. They beat the Bulgarians to Salonica, but the Ottomans beat them at the Battle of Sorovich and the Serbs got Bitola. The Bulgarian army was caught up in Thrace and eastern Macedonia. It's not on this map but the Serbian army was active in Kosovo, Albania and northern Macedonia. These operations help to explain why Greece got the lion's share of Macedonia. It's a basic map, but it helps to give a picture of the movements of the armies. The next step is to fill in the gaps about which towns and villages they went through and what happened to those settlements and those civilians.

The next example is a photograph of the participants at the Bucharest Conference. They say that if you are not at the table you are on the menu. That was certainly the case here. There were no Macedonian delegates at the Conference and Macedonia was the main course on the menu. These are the political leaders behind the Balkan Wars, the Macedonian genocide, and the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, if not more.



Bucharest Peace Conference delegates (1913). Among those pictured: Eleftherios Venizelos; Titu Maiorescu; Nikola Pašić (sitting in the center); Dimitar Tonchev; Constantin Dissescu; Nikolaos Politis; Alexandru Marghiloman; Danilo Kalafatović; Constantin Coandă; Constantin Cristescu; Take Ionescu; Miroslav Spalajkovic; and "T. Vukotich" (Janko Vukotić?).

Source [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Participants\\_in\\_the\\_Bucharest\\_Peace\\_Treaty\\_negotiations\\_1913.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Participants_in_the_Bucharest_Peace_Treaty_negotiations_1913.jpg)

Moving forward in time, the next photo shows a napalm bomb of the type used in the Greek Civil War and that was dropped on the communist forces including Macedonians and Macedonian villages. The photo is from the Hellenic War Museum in Athens. I included this because I have been interested in the napalm bombings for a long time, but this was the first photo I saw of the type of napalm bombs used in the war. Why did it take so long to



Photo by Tilemahos Efthimiadis, Hellenic War Museum (Athens, Greece)

see it? Again, the napalm bombing is another seriously under-reached aspect of the Greek Civil War from a Macedonian perspective.

## **Homeland**

Another project I am working on reflects the importance of preserving Macedonia, including the Republic of Macedonia, as a homeland for the Macedonian people. All peoples deserve a homeland, but unfortunately we can't take Macedonia for granted. The future existence of an independent Macedonia, and of a continued Macedonian presence in Greek Macedonia, are not assured.

There are several key political and economic reasons for that. Among them is the historical net outflow of Macedonians from Macedonia, which continues to this day.

We all know the historical reasons for the migration – pechalba, occupation, division, colonization, oppression, ethnic cleansing, economic underdevelopment, war in Aegean Macedonia and so on. We also know the current reasons for migration, especially from the Republic. Although the Republic is the only independent homeland of the Macedonians, we are in danger of losing it through political weakness, lack of economic opportunities for young people and their migration to more developed economies.

There has been a population decline and brain drain of Macedonians from Macedonia for nearly 150 years. That's a lot of people for a small nation, and it was and still is a cause of many of Macedonia's most serious problems.

The angle that concerns me is raising awareness of what Macedonians can do about this. There is a solution. The solution is to reverse the trend of Macedonians leaving Macedonia, and to create a new trend where more Macedonians move back to Macedonia than leave it. It can be done, especially if the government were to get behind it. And other governments, such as Ireland and Italy, have shown that it can be done. But the Macedonian government is not up to the job. It's had decades and done nothing. So it's up to the people to do it. It's harder without the government, but I believe it can be done.

The first step is raising awareness and spreading the idea. The essential idea is that more Macedonians will help Macedonia to survive and to grow, to be economically stronger, and to be more politically stable.

The good news is that Macedonia has everything it needs to do this – the diaspora has the extra people, the extra skills and talent, and the extra capital. And modern technologies such as telecommunications and the media mean that we can reach these people and spread the message. And, unlike the old days where migration and ethnic cleansing were forever, modern transport means they can return.

Now, clearly, moving back permanently is not for everyone. But there are people it may suit. Those who:

- want a new start in life,
- left the Republic but now want to return,
- have family and other connections in Macedonia,
- see a business or professional opportunity in returning,
- want a base to travel Europe and the northern hemisphere,
- are retired or who want their retirement savings to go further,
- are financially independent and can do what they like.

For those who don't want to or can't return permanently, there are the options of long stay, part time or seasonal return. For example, they may have a family home, a holiday home or an investment property in Macedonia that they can utilize. Many people have such properties and do this.

Those who cannot or do not want to return can still help by supporting the Macedonian economy and culture, for example by tourism, maintaining family links, buying Made in Macedonia, and through the language and other cultural activities.

Tourism is a good example of what the diaspora can do, and how having more Macedonians in Macedonia helps the economy and employment. Tourists add to demand for food, accommodation, transport, entertainment and many other goods and services. Permanent return makes those increases in demand permanent, and the employment they create permanent. The message for Macedonians is Go to Macedonia – Go Short, Go Long, Go Regularly, Go Permanently – Just Go.

And of course, if and when Macedonians gain or regain citizenship, they are able to vote; and voting becomes easier for existing citizens who return to the Republic.

Apart from writing about it, my main contribution to raising awareness is the Macedonia Needs Macedonians Facebook group.

The content of the group is varied: politics, economics, culture, diaspora, successful Macedonians, tourism, towns and villages, and so on. Posts need admin approval to go up, and as the admin I only approve posts that are relevant and high quality.

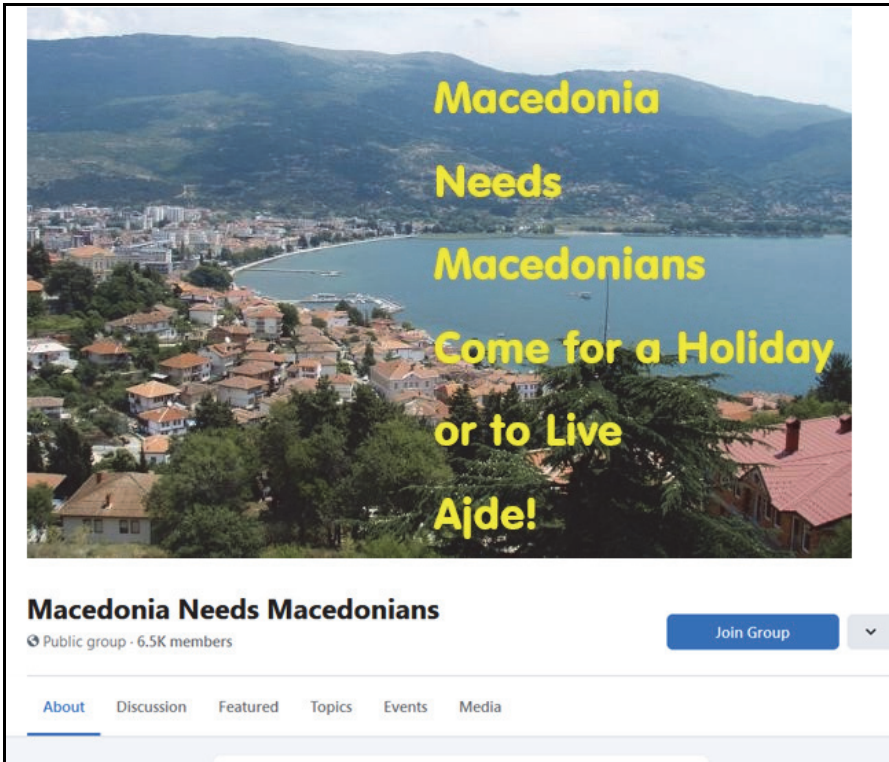
I started the group in December 2017 and by September 2022 it had over 6,500 members, and is growing organically without needing promotion.

So, who are the members?

39 per cent are female and 61 per cent male, and most are in the 35 to 65+ age group. The top 10 countries are:

- Macedonia 3,281
- Australia 1,658
- United States 323
- Canada 232
- Germany 169
- United Kingdom 107
- Sweden 68
- Switzerland 67
- Italy 49
- Bulgaria 47

It's interesting that half the members are from Macedonia. Of the other countries, there is an English language bias but all have significant Macedonian diasporas – the people I want to reach.



The content is lively. There are 25 to 40 submissions per day by members, plus my own posts and shares on relevant topics.

And the members are engaged. In the 28 days to 1 Sep 2022 – 53,633 people viewed the group and 1,108 people posted and or commented. There were 504 posts, 1,680 comments, and 12,139 reactions.

So the group is doing well. How much effect it will have in promoting Macedonia, tourism, and long and permanent returns to Macedonia I'll likely never know. But I know that promoting the idea is the right thing to do.

## Villages

Closely related to promoting Macedonia as a homeland are Macedonia's thousands of villages. Macedonians love their villages. No one should doubt that. But the truth is that many villages are slowly dying, and many are already

dead. Like Macedonia as a whole, the villages need people and economic activity to survive and grow. We need to save our villages.

So returning to Macedonia includes returning to the villages. Whether it's for holidays, or for long or permanent stays, we need more Macedonians to strengthen their connections with their village, or if they have lost contact to reconnect with them.

They can do that in several ways. They can maintain or re-establish their links with family and friends in the village or from the village, rekindle their memories and interest, take overseas-born children to visit the village, look at investment and business opportunities, and a lot of other ways. As I mentioned, Macedonians really do love their villages, and these activities are already happening every day. So all we need do is encourage them more widely and strengthen them.

Fortunately that is not hard. We can see the love, the interest, and the goodwill for Macedonian villages in the growing popularity of village internet sites and village Facebook groups. That snowball is well on its way and will keep getting bigger for a long time to come.

So let's look at village internet sites and village Facebook groups. What are the pros and cons of each? Is one better than the other? In my view, it should not be either or, as they are complementary. Ideally, you would have both.

The strengths of the Facebook groups are that they attract members from around the world, they strengthen contacts with other villagers, they re-establish contacts with lost family and friends, there is live interaction, and they are very good for collecting stories, photos, videos, links and other material.

The key strengths of village internet sites are that they offer search engine convenience, they are easily found by people around the world, and they are very good for organizing material, for example, by history, geography, families, books, articles, costumes and so on.

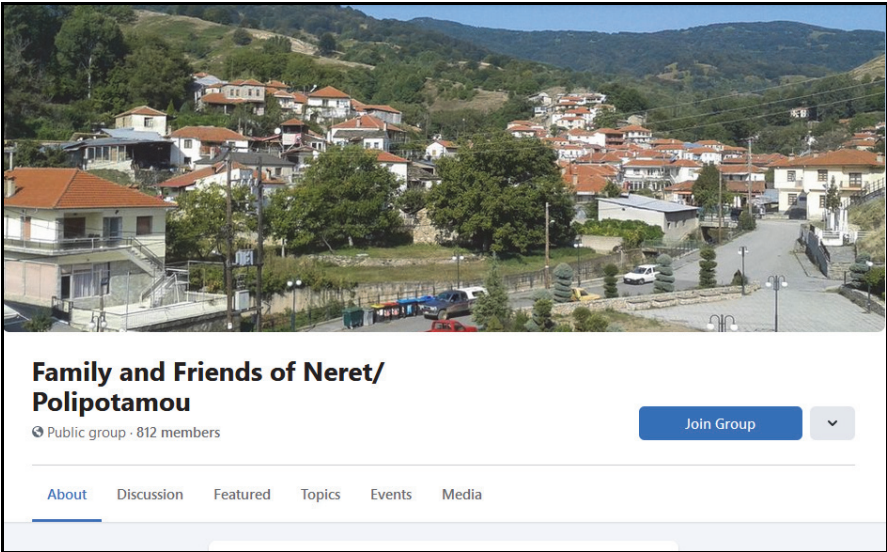
So, ideally a village would have both a Facebook group and an internet site.

How do these work in practice? Let me give an example with my own village. I have a village Facebook group and although I don't have a village internet site I do have a large internet page that focuses on the people from our village.

In March 2018 I started the Family and Friends of Neret/ Polipotamou Facebook group. The photo is one I took from sred selo (village square) with the main church behind and looking towards some of houses and hills. It's a

beautiful village.

I was asked to start the Facebook group as the village is slowly dying. It's gone from around 3,000 people over a century ago to only about 250 now. Fortunately, the Facebook group has grown strongly and at 29 September 2022 it had 839 members. So there are many more people in the group than in the village.



Facebook’s statistics on the group tell us where the Neretci now live.

If we look at the top 10 countries, Australia has over half the members, and I believe that is because that’s where most Neretci migrated to.

I’m particularly pleased with the 171 for Greece. These are mostly in the village and in the nearby city of Lerin, which is only 15 kilometres away. There are also some other places around Greece.

The Republic of Macedonia has 48, Canada 44 and the United States 29, mostly in the mid-West. The rest of the members are mostly scattered around Europe.

The top 10 cities also make sense. Melbourne has a huge number of Neretci, and Perth also has a lot. I know the statistics reflect the reality as I have many relatives and friends in both Melbourne and Perth.

The 107 for Lerin/ Florina includes both the village and the city. Perasma

is a village very near Neret and Lerin, so I don't know why Facebook lists it separately. Ptolemaide is about 50 kilometres from Florina. I know that historically some Neretci moved to Skopje, and it's good to see that Toronto has some Neretci and friends of Neret. From my knowledge, Sydney, Adelaide, Newcastle and Manjimup all make sense.

53 per cent of the members are female and 47 per cent male, so there is a good balance. And members are mostly older – in the 35 to 65 plus age group. But there is good representation in the 25 to 34 and 18 to 24 age brackets.

The group is usually active and with a good post it can get quite busy. In the 28 days to 28 September there were 14 posts, while there were 24 posts in prior 28 days. There were 177 comments, an average of 13 per post, while in the previous 28 days there were 157 comments. And there were 664 reactions, ie likes, loves etc, an average of 47 per post, while in the previous 28 days there were 897 reactions, an average of 37 per post.

Let me say, the members, the people, are great. They are very positive, very supportive of each other, and it can be amazing what they sometimes post and the depth and insight of their comments.

One of the things I most love to see is when people reconnect after many decades, or they find an unknown or long lost family contact. The links can be astounding. For example, I recently introduced a new member and someone commented that her baba (grandmother) and the new member are second cousins, and that her great grandmother was a first cousin of their family. In another example, someone, who I believe is in their 70s, commented to a new member that she remembers her mother talking about the new member's father in 1951. If that isn't going back far enough, someone else remembered the new member's grandfather and said "your dedo made the best munja". You get the picture. The intricate connections and the living memory can go back 70, 80 or even 90 years. It's wonderful to see.

I mentioned that Facebook groups are good for collecting material and internet sites are good for organizing the material. Let me conclude this talk with an example.

When I did the family trees of my four grandparents I ended up with many photos of my relatives and their grave sites. The quickest way to distribute these was to put them on the web and send people the link. In my research and travels, I also took photos of grave sites of many other Neretci in Melbourne, Perth and Neret. It made sense to put them altogether, so in August 2020 I posted the Neret Families internet page on pollitecon.com. This had the names, photographs and other information on about 427 deceased people from

our village.

For about one or perhaps two seconds I thought that that was end of the job, and I could relax. Well, no sooner had I thought that than I realized I should do the right thing and add some of the photos of deceased Neretci that were being posted on the Neret Facebook group. So the Neret Families page has continued to grow, through my continued research as family trees are never completed, through contributions from interested family and villagers, and though posts from the village Facebook group.

**Family Names:**

Alebakov - Altis - Andoniov - Andrichin - Angelev - Atanasovich - Avraam - Bakarnis - Batskou - Bilchourov - Bivolchev - Bogoia - Bozanin - Bozinov - Chapkoun - Chilemanov - Christou - Deliopoulos - Dimitriadis - Dimitropoulos - Dimov - Divitcov - Evans - Evans/Kirkov - Filipov - Fotinos - Freehill - Gazolainof - Gellev - Georgiou - Germanchev - Germanoff - Glouftsis - Hack - Howell - Ilkou - Johnson - Jugrev - Kalin - Kapulitsas - Katin - Kezov - Kimev - Kirev - Kiriakov - Kirkov - Kizov - Kolichis - Kosta - Kostov - Krpesliov - Krstov - Lazarov - Malinas - Malkin - Milianku - Manolov - Marangov - Markov - Melichev - Mechkarov - Mialitsis - Michov - Morihovitis - Nakeff - Nastov - Naumcheff - Naumov - Neretlis - Nichov - Nottas - Ognenov - Pandoff - Panev - Pantou - Petrev - Petrov - Popov - Rimpas - Ristovichin - Rompis - Saliakov - Siderov - Slifkin - Sourli - Spiroff - Stamenov - Stanogias - Stoicheff - Stoinis - Strezov - Sultin - Tanasov - Tashov - Tolev - Topalchev - Trenov - Trpenov - Trpin - Vasilov - Velov - Vergov - Viltsov - Vlaov - Yanev - Yovanchev - Group Photos - Monuments - Honour Boards - Family Name Unknown

Currently Neret Families has 105 family names. This is how I have grouped them. I know there were at least about 140 family names so there is more work to be done.

The page currently has 401 photos and over 800 names of deceased Neretci. There are more photos to process on the Facebook group, which I hope to do as time becomes available.

I'll end my talk here, so thank you for listening.

*7 October 2022*

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*Source: [www.pollitecon.com](http://www.pollitecon.com)*