

*Koprishtitsa* (Avrat Alan), although one of the first villages to rebel, was one of the last to be attacked. Warned by the fate of Klussura and Panagurishta, the leading inhabitants themselves arrested the ringleaders of the insurrection, and sent to Philippopoli for regular troops. In spite of this the bearers of submission were fired on, and one, the priest Dorcho, was killed, the town was several times pillaged, many of the women were violated, and about 30 persons were killed. The town was not burnt, and a general massacre was avoided by large presents of money paid by the leading inhabitants to the Turkish Commanders. Three shots were, however, fired at the church, but did little damage. The villagers admit having killed 10 Turks and 40 gypsies, the latter being suspected of an intention to plunder the town. The Turks claim a total loss of 71.

*Panagurishta* (Otlut Keui) was attacked by a force of regular troops, together with Bashi-Bazouks, on the 11th of May. Apparently no message to surrender was sent. After a slight opposition on the part of the insurgents the town was taken. Many of the inhabitants fled, but about 3,000 were massacred, the most of them being women and children. Of these about 400 belonged to the town of Panagurishta, and the others to nine neighbouring villages, the inhabitants of which had taken refuge there. 400 buildings, including the bazaars and the largest and best houses, were burnt. Both churches were completely destroyed, and almost levelled to the ground. In one an old man was violated on the altar, and afterwards burnt alive. Two of the schools were burnt, the third, looking like a private house, escaped.

From the numerous statements made to me, hardly a woman in the town escaped violation and brutal treatment. The ruffians attacked children of eight and old women of eighty, sparing neither age nor sex. Old men had their eyes torn out and their limbs cut off, and were thus left to die, unless some more charitably-disposed man gave them the final thrust. Pregnant women were ripped open, and the unborn babes carried triumphantly on the points of bayonets and sabres, while little children were made to bear the dripping heads of their comrades.

This scene of rapine, lust, and murder was continued for three days, when the survivors were made to bury the bodies of the dead. The perpetrators of these atrocities were chiefly regular troops, commanded by Hafiz Pasha. The Turks claim, and the villagers admit, the death of fourteen Mussulmans, two of whom were women, who were killed with arms in their hands, during a conflict with a party that refused to surrender to the insurgents.

While pillage reigned supreme at Kuprishtitsa and lust at Panagurishta, at Batak, the Turks seemed to have no stronger passion than the thirst for blood. This village surrendered without firing a shot, after a promise of safety, to the Bashi-Bazouks under the command of Ahmed Aga, of Burutina, a Chief of the rural police. Despite his promise, the few arms once surrendered, Ahmed Aga ordered the destruction of the village and the indiscriminate slaughter of the inhabitants, about 100 of the young girls being reserved to satisfy the lusts of the conqueror before they too should be killed. I saw their bones, some with the flesh still clinging to them, in a hollow on the hill side, where the dogs were gnawing them. Not a house is now standing in the midst of this lovely valley; the saw-mills (for the town had a large trade in timber and sawn boards) which lined the rapid little river are all burnt, and of the 8,000 inhabitants not 2,000 are known to survive. Fully 5,000 persons—a very large proportion of them women and children—perished here, and their bones whiten the ruins, or their putrid bodies infect the air. The sight of Batak is enough to verify all that has been said about the acts of the Turks in repressing the Bulgarian insurrection, and yet I saw it three months after the massacre. On every side were human bones, skulls, ribs, and even complete skeletons, heads of girls still adorned with braids of long hair, bones of children, skeletons still encased in clothing. Here was a house the floor of which was white with the ashes and charred bones of thirty persons burnt alive there. Here was the spot where the village notable Trandafil was spitted on a pike and then roasted, and where he is now buried. Here was a foul hole full of decomposing bodies; here a mill-dam full of swollen corpses; here the school-house where 200 women and children, who had taken refuge there, were burnt alive; and here the church and churchyard where fully 1,000 half-decayed forms were still to be seen, filling the inclosures in a heap several feet high; arms, feet and heads protruding from the stones which had vainly been thrown there to hide them, and poisoning all the air.

Since my visit, by order of the Mutessarif, the Kaimakam of Tatar Bazardjik was sent to Batak with some lime to aid in the decomposition of the bodies and to prevent a pestilence.