Vjeran Kursar

Guest Editor's Introduction

Between Europe and Middle East: Migrations and Their Consequences in Southeast Europe and Anatolia in Transimperial andIntercultural Context

Scholars from the fields of humanities and social sciences, historians included, have felt the need to offer their contribution to the study of migration, which is one of the main trending topics and burning issues in contemporary Europe. The starting points differ remarkably. While some perceive migrations as a stain on the conscience of the European Union and "Europeanness," others, defining "Europeanness" in a completely different, exclusivist and elitist way, see them as a threat to their own value system and identity. This is confirmed by the growing number of scientific conferences and projects dedicated to migrations in recent times. For instance in Croatia, numerous conferences thematizing migrations from different perspectives, including a historical one, were held in the last four years. The sheer number is telling, as well as the organizing institutions: (1) "Migrations and Identity: Culture, Economy, State" organized by the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMIN) and the Research Institute of Faculty of Croatian Studies of the University of Zagreb (Zagreb, 6-12 December 2018); (2) "Population Migration – the Phenomenon of Refugees" organized by the Bosnian National Union for Zagreb and the County of Zagreb, the Foundation Mulla Sadra Sarajevo and the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, and co-organized by the Croatian Heritage Foundation and the Majlis of the Zagreb Islamic Community (Zagreb, 18-19 November 2016); (3) "National Minorities, Migrations and Security in Democratic Societies", organized by the Council for National Minorities in cooperation with the Center for International and Security Studies of the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Zagreb, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and the Academic Network for Cooperation in South East Europe (Brijuni, 9-12 May 2019); (4) "Migration Voices: Mediterranean Unity in Diversity" organized by the Croatian P.E.N. Center and the University of Zadar (Zadar, 10-13 October 2019); (5) "Migration Processes between Croatia and South America. History, Culture and Society" organized by the Research Institute of Faculty of Croatian Studies in cooperation with the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies and the Institute for Social and Political Studies of Patagonia at the National University of Patagonia "San Juan Bosco" (Zagreb, 11 December 2019); or (6) the student

conference "Migrations through History – Peoples, Intellectuals and Cultural Transmission" organized by the "Homo volans" History Students Club at the Catholic University of Croatia (26 April 2019, Zagreb). Another conference took place in Sisak and Hrvatska Dubica on 15 November 2019, organized by Bishoprice of Sisak, Catholic University of Croatia and Faculty of Croatian Studies. Although not directly addressing the topic of migrations, but dedicated to the dramatic question of Ottoman conquest of Croatian lands, it indirectly implicated one-sided and single dimensional answer on the phenomenon of migrations in early modern Croatian context. Judging from the emblematic title of the conference - "Antemurale Christianitatis - Church and Society in the Region of Central Croatia at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries," as well as the topics of the presentations, the organizers appear to have uncritically accepted and promoted the Croatian early modern anti-Turkish narrative as a conceptual framework. This does not leave much room for nuanced analyses of delicate historiographical questions of the early modern period such as migration.[1]

Seizing the tide of interest of academic and general public, the editorial board of the Journal of the Institute of Croatian History have decided to dedicate this issue to the phenomenon of migrations in history. The idea was to approach migrations diachronically, from the ancient migrations to the modern era and the end of the 19th century. The starting point is the assumption that major patterns, as well as social function of migration, did not change substantially over time, despite significant alterations of external factors, technological progress, quantitative volume, as well as changes and acceleration of the rhythm.[2] Spatially, the focus is on migrations between the Middle East, the Balkans, and East- and Central Europe, extending over an area that represents an "intercontinental bridge" between not only geographic units, but specific cultural, historic, political, religious, societal, ethnic, and even civilizational entities. The aim of the present issue is not only to determine the directions of migrant movement (origin and final destinations), but to analyze the nature of migration, its causes and effects it had on migrants, as well as their original and host communities (and/or states). Various types of migration are taken into consideration: external and internal (inside and outside

---

[1] On polemical and ideological-propagandist character of the so-called anti-Turkish speeches of Croatian early modern authors, where the motive of the "bulwark of Christianity" (*antemurale Christianitatis*) plays an important role, see: KURSAR 2004. More information on the congress is available on the web page of the Bishoprice of Sisak: Znanstveni skup „Antemurale Christianitatis – Crkva i društvo na području Središnje Hrvatske krajem 15. i početkom 16. stoljeća" <https://www.biskupija-sisak.hr/index.php/arhiv/5400-znanstveni-skup-antemurale-christianitatis--crkva-i-drutvo-na-podruju-sredinje-hrvatske-krajem-15-i-poetkom-16-stoljea> (accessed 18 February 2020).

[2] See e.g.: MANNING 2006.

the boundaries of a community/state), permanent and temporary (nomadic and semi-nomadic pastoralists, traveling merchants and artists, seasonal workers, etc.), internal and external colonization (peaceful and violent - conquest and foreign invasion), cross-cultural or cross-community migrations (individuals or groups leaving their own cultural community to join a new one), etc.

The special issue starts with the article by Jasmina Osterman entitled "Amorite Identity: Symbol MAR in protocuneiform sources," covering migrations in ancient times. The author analyzes the question of identity and migration of Amorites, famed as main bearers of change in Mesopotamia and Levant in the 2nd millennium BCE. Osterman connected the Sumerian MAR.TU symbol with the cart, and maintains that it originally designated "migrants," without indication of geographical or ethnic origin. The name evolved from the signifier of inimical barbarians on the northeastern border of Mesopotamia to the title of new rulers of old Sumer 700 years later. Former barbarians were transformed from a disruptive element to a stabilizing one, and, taking the opportunity in a moment of crisis, eventually came to power. Despite being the only article on ancient history, the Jasmina Osterman's text does relate to the other articles covering later periods. It is relevant in multiple ways, especially for the early modern times. Evolution of Amorites from "barbarians" to rulers could be compared to the Ottoman example, as well. At the beginning of the 14th century, the founder of the dynasty, Osman, son of a migrant to Asia Minor and the leader of a Turkish belligerent nomadic tribe, in the eyes of the Byzantines looked like another barbarian on the border. A century and a half later, however, one of his successors, Sultan Mehmed II (the Conqueror, r. 1444-1446, 1451-1481) conquered Constantinople, "the second Rome," a long-desired "golden apple" in Islamic and Ottoman tradition (Ott. Tur. *kızıl elma*, literary "red apple"). He added the Roman title of *caesar* (Ott. Tur. *kayser*) to his royal titles. Following the earlier Arabo-Persian tradition, the Ottomans named the former territory of the Eastern Roman Empire / Byzantium in Asia Minor the "land of Romans" (Ott. Tur. *bilad-i Rum* or *diyar-i Rum*). Later on, that name in another form was given to the Ottoman territories in Europe - *Rumelia* (Ott. Tur. *Rum ili*). Moreover, the name *Rumi* acquired a cultural meaning, too, and began to signify the inhabitants of those lands, and, in a narrower sense, bearers of Ottoman high culture.[3] As *kayser*, Mehmed presented himself as heir to the Roman Emperors with the throne in "the second Rome." Furthermore, 27 seven years later the sultan started a campaign on the south of the Apennine Peninsula, aiming at the original "golden apple," "the first" Rome. The sultan's death brought to an end the successful conquests in south Italy, and, perhaps, saved Rome from the Ottoman rule. The successful pacification of the newly conquered lands in

---

[3]   See: KAFADAR 2007.

the Balkans might bear witness that the self-presentation of the Ottoman Sultan as the successor to the Byzantine (Roman) emperors was accepted by the non-Muslims, as well, at least to a certain extent. The collaboration of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, whose patriarch was enthroned by the Sultan Mehmed II in the manner of the Byzantine emperor, significantly contributed to that phenomenon.[4] On the symbolic level, the continuity of the Slavonic naming the Constantine's city supports the thesis: *Carigrad* (Tsarigrad), the town where the tsar is residing (the variant "Stambol" is significantly rarely used).[5] In the Bosnian Franciscan tradition the Ottoman ruler is called "tsar," and less frequently so "sultan." This likely indicates a certain level of accommodation and familiarization. On the other hand, for the Habsburg emperor the title of "cesar" was reserved.[6] In short, the Ottomans did, similar to the Amorites, advance from barbarian nomads on the frontier to the very throne of the emperor, promoting an image of imperial continuity.

The central section of the issue, thematizing migrations in the Ottoman context, opens with Nikolay Antov's article "Demographic and Ethno-Religious Change in 15th and 16th Century Ottoman Dobrudja (NE Balkans) and the Related Impact of Migrations." Antov shows that, after initial negative demographic trends, originating in pre-Ottoman times, and caused by armed conflicts and correlated external migrations, late 15th century witnessed a reversal in demography following the stabilization of Ottoman rule and the pacification of the conquered area. In this context Antov recognizes Ottoman administration and centralizing policy as a stabilizing factor that instigated positive demographic trends. This was done through the administration's settling Turcomans from Anatolia and Thrace, the immigration of Tatars from the Crimean Khanate, the arrival of substantial number of prisoners of war, often freed following conversion to Islam, and the influx of a considerable number of Balkan Christians, originating probably from north and central Bulgaria. According to the author, this picture of increased population, which was facilitated by a beneficial effects of centralizing policy, is typical of the demographic history of the Ottoman Balkans in general. Furthermore, Antov emphasizes the important role of the institution of waqf ("endowment"), which provided conditions for the settling of Turcomans and Tatars, but attracted other Muslim and non-Muslim settlers, as well.

---

[4]   On the attitude of Mehmed II towards the Greek population of Istanbul see: İNALCIK 1969-70. On relations with the Patriarchate of Constantinople see: İNALCIK 1998.

[5]   Cf. İNALCIK 1993: 19.

[6]   See, e.g., the 18th century chronicle of the monastery of Fojnica by Nikola Lašvanin: LAŠVANIN 2003.

The important role of waqfs in urban and economic life in the Ottoman Empire in general, as well as the effects of migrations on waqfs, is the focus of Kayhan Orbay's article "'They Left Behind Institutions in Financial Jeopardy': Central Anatolian Waqfs in the Wake of Great Flight." Economic and social crisis that was shaking the Ottoman Empire escalated during the so-called *celali* rebellions at the end of the 16th century. Celali ranks were filled by the members of demobilized irregular troops such as *levend*s and *sekban*s, *sipahi*s (fief-holding cavalrymen) dismissed from service, *softa*s (graduates of madrasa schools) unable to find a job, joined by dissatisfied peasants. Following the crossing of several thousands of rebels from the European part of the Ottoman Empire into Anatolia, this Ottoman province fell into insecurity and anarchy the central Ottoman troops were unable to suppress. Unbearable conditions instigated mass migrations of Anatolian people, known as "the Great Flight" (Ott. Tur. *Büyük kaçgunluk*). Populations was leaving villages and towns, seeking refuge in fortified places, mountain villages, as well as outside of Anatolia, especially in Istanbul and the European provinces of the Empire. Departure of population fit for work and tax payers further aggravated the crisis. In the circumstances of predominantly rural economy, institutions like waqfs, which are dependent on village population and agricultural production, were particularly severely hit. The decaying of waqfs as charitable foundations with an important public role threatened the quality of urban life. Functioning of essential religious, educational, social and health-care institutions, such as mosques, *mekteb*s and madrasas (lower and higher schools), *imaret*s (soup kitchens), hospitals, *hamam*s (public baths), water supply systems and fountains, would be hardly sustainable without waqf support.

In the article "Interreligious Relations in 17th Century Istanbul in the Light of Immigration and Demographic Change" Eunjeong Yi analyzes the effect of migrations from various parts of the Ottoman Empire and its surrounding countries on the Ottoman capital, which was a megapolis of the early modern times —the biggest city in Europe and one of the largest in the world. The significant increase in the number of Christians in Istanbul due to an influx of migrants instigated a backlash of local population, which seriously destabilized interconfessional relations in the city. According to Yi, reasons of interconfessional tensions and clashes in 17th century Istanbul are to be sought in the demographic changes caused by immigration, and not the ideological confrontation and rivalries among religions, as maintained by the theory of the so-called Ottoman confesionalization..[7]

Silvana Rachieru examines *Fin de siècle* Istanbul and the status of Romanian immigrants in the cosmopolitan Ottoman capital during the period of reforms,

---

[7]   See: KRSTIĆ 2011.

liberalization and modernization in her article "Between the King and the Sultan: the Romanian Colony in Constantinople at the End of the 19th Century." Romanian authorities in Bucharest and diplomatic representatives in Istanbul restrictively redefined the right of citizenship of the new Romanian state. Excluded as ill-suited were members of non-Christian faiths, that is Muslims and Jews, ethnic non-Romanians, i.e., non-speakers of Romanian, which included Greeks, as well as inhabitants of Dobruja, a province with a large Muslim minority. Ottoman authorities, on the other hand, officially recognized a privileged status for Romanian citizens, which was equal to that of foreign nationals whose parent countries were granted capitulations guaranteeing extraterritoriality. Nevertheless, the Ottoman side tended to assimilate individuals settled in the Ottoman Empire and treat them as its own citizens subjected to payment of taxes and military service. This contradiction was the occasional source of conflict over the issue of citizenship of individuals claiming Romanian identity. The fact that Wallachia and Moldavia, before their unification and independence under the Romanian name, were vassal principalities of the Ottoman Empire with their citizens having accordingly defined rights, further complicated the position of this small but expanding immigrant community in Istanbul.

In the article "Restoration, Reconstruction and the Union: Memories of Home in the Stratiot Poetry of Antonio Molino" Nada Zečević analyzes a fictional motif of diasporic Greek stratiots who fled their homeland in front of Ottoman conquerors. Molino knew well the real stratiots based on his own experience in Greece. Nevertheless, in his artistic work he was guided by the rules of the genre and the taste of the public, as well as political considerations of the Republic of Venice in the context of forthcoming war with the Ottoman Empire. In this example, migration appears as a motif in art, which could be used for propaganda purposes at the same time.

In the article "Ecological-geographical determination of colonization of Slavonia in the 18th century," Robert Skenderović surveys the issue of Habsburg resettling of Slavonia following the victory over the Ottoman Empire in the Great Turkish War (1683-1699). While Slavonia had become deserted during the war operations, the aftermath did not bring improvement either. Muslims in Slavonia were leaving their homes and seeking refuge in the territory of the Ottoman Empire. At the same time Slavonia was the final destination for the great wave of Christian Orthodox and Catholic migrants, who were refugees from the Ottoman territories in Bosnia and Serbia, including smaller groups of Catholics from Bulgarian Chiprovtsi, as well as Albanian Catholics. While migrations of Ottoman Christians into the Habsburg territories in Slavonia and Hungary are well researched, migrations of Muslim refugees in the opposite direction were

not systematically studied by historians before. Abandoned areas of Slavonia were taken over by nature, with woods and swamps spreading over areas that had once been cultivated by human activities, which caused diseases like malaria. Therefore the settler population had to anthropize nature around both the newly established and the abandoned settlements. The author analyzes the problems of colonization of forest and wetland areas through the example of the Đakovo Estate and the arrival of Germans to Osijek and Ruma. Since the Germans were especially popular colonists in newly conquered regions, Slavonian squires made efforts to attract and settle them on their estates. Numerous problems, from those of organizational nature to the spread of malaria, however, emerged as obstacles to the planned colonization.

The last article in the issue, "Migration and Mobility in a Transottoman Context" by Florian Riedler and Stefan Rohdewald, suggests a potential theoretical conceptualization of the problem of early modern migrations and mobility in wider transregional and transimperial perspective. It covers a wide area from Central and Eastern Europe to the Middle East, as well as states such as the Ottoman Empire, Persia and the Polish-Lithuanian union, with the Caucasus and the Balkans as inter-imperial tampon zones. The authors selected the terms "transottoman" and "Transottomanica" for their project due to the central role of the Ottoman Empire in the process. "Transottomanica," nevertheless, should not be understood as a historical region with fixed borders, but rather as a set of multiple relational, socially determined spaces. This perspective offers a key for reading other articles in this issue, be it Dobruja as an inter-imperial tampon zone, multicultural and multiconfessional relations in the imperial megapolis of Istanbul, or the colonization of Slavonia as a region in transition from Ottoman to Habsburg domain, accompanied by cultural, religious and demographic changes and implications.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

İNALCIK, Halil 1969-70. The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City. *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 23: 229-249

İNALCIK, Halil 1993. The Turks and the Balkans. *Turkish Review of Balkan Studies* 1: 9-42

İNALCIK, Halil 1998. The Status of Greek Orthodox Patriarch under the Ottomans, in: Halil İnalcık. *Essays in Ottoman History*. Istanbul: Eren, 195-223

KAFADAR, Cemal 2007. A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum. *Muqarnas* 24: 7-25

KRSTIĆ, Tijana 2011. *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*. Stanford: Stanford University Press

KURSAR, Vjeran 2004. Anti-muslimanski karakter protuturskih govora. *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu* 34-35-36: 29-46

LAŠVANIN, Nikola 2003. *Ljetopis*, 2nd ed. Sarajevo - Zagreb: Synopsis

MANNING, Patrick 2006. Cross-Community Migration: A Distinctive Human Pattern. *Social Evolution & History*, 5, 2: 24–54

Vjeran Kursar
Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu
Ivana Lučića 3
HR-10000 Zagreb
kursar@gmail.com

RADOVI
51
Broj 1

Poseban broj

Između Europe i Bliskog istoka: migracije i njihove posljedice na području Jugoistočne Europe i Anadolije u transimperijalnom i interkulturalnom kontekstu

Special issue

Between Europe and Middle East: Migrations and Their Consequences in Southeast Europe and Anatolia in Transimperial and Intercultural Context

RADOVI ZAVODA ZA HRVATSKU POVIJEST
FILOZOFSKOGA FAKULTETA SVEUČILIŠTA U ZAGREBU

Knjiga 51, broj 1