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Migration and mobility in a Transottoman context

Recent research in historical migration studies has the potential to revise our understanding of Early Modern societies and states. The research program Transottomanica focuses on the historical entanglement between the Middle East and Eastern Europe by examining migration processes from a transregional and transimperial perspective. In the Early Modern period, various types of migration, especially from and across inter-imperial buffer zones such as the northern Black Sea region, the Caucasus, and the Balkans, connected the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Merchants, refugees and slaves not only created an overarching migration society, especially in the cosmopolitan cities, for transregional migration was also visible in the self-description and identities of imperial elites. The effects of inter-imperial migration, which was ingrained in societal and identitarian structures, can be followed until the early 20th century.

In both the media and academic writing, migration processes in the recent wave of globalization have been depicted as an entirely new phenomenon that is producing unprecedented consequences for local societies.[1] By contrast, historical migration studies have demonstrated that the current situation is not an exception, but rather that migration as a universal condition is central to the composition of any society. Since the 1980s, this has been shown by studies with a global historical focus,[2] as well as those with a focus on specific historical periods[3] or with a regional approach.[4] At the same time, the thematic range of migration studies, which began to look beyond the classical case of long-term migrations between states, now includes all types, even short-term and circular acts of human mobility.[5] Moreover, migration studies have expanded their focus by perceiving migration not as primarily an economic, but also as a cultural practice that has effects beyond the societies of emigration and immigration.[6] From this thematic expansion, scholars interested in diasporas and transnational migrant communi-

1 WHITE 2016.

2 MCNEILL & ADAMS 1987, MANNING 2007.

3 BORGOLTE 2009, 2012, BADE 2010, OLTMER 2010.

4 BRUNNBAUER 2009, BRUNNBAUER, NOVINŠĆAK & VOSS 2011.

5 DROZ & SOTTAS 1997: 70.

6 HAHN & KLUTE 2007: 10.

ties have begun to fundamentally question the bounded nature of territories or social groups. Their aim was to overcome 'methodological nationalism' with 'methodological transnationalism'.[7]

In this article, we want to outline how these recent approaches to migration and mobility have inspired new perspectives on shared and transcontinental Middle Eastern and Eastern European history. The research program "Transottomanica"[8] is a pertinent example of how new empirical research inspired by such approaches helps to transcend disciplinary boundaries and compartmentalized area studies. The focus of this research program encompasses interactions and networks—be they social, economic, martial or cultural—across the Ottoman Empire, Poland-Lithuania, Russia and Persia from the Early Modern period to the 20th century. Such interactions involved various forms of mobility and migration, which were constitutive for a context that we label "Transottoman," because, beginning in the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire played a central role in organizing such mobilities. Thus, "Transottomanica" is not conceptualized as a "historical region"[9] with fixed borders, but as a set of multiple relational, socially constituted spaces[10] that varied considerably in their extent, from the local to the trans-regional, and in density. These ever-changing and fluid contexts of interactions and social networks were constituted by the mobilities of concrete actors, by the circulation of ideas and exchanges of goods. In the form of historical case studies, the research program reconstructs several such contexts and maps the long-term patterns of Transottoman interaction that can be followed until the beginning of the 20th century.[11]

Migration as a universal human activity played a pivotal role in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. The following section will offer a broad overview how recent approaches in migration studies have been applied to societies in our focus area. Today, the myth of a local immobile society is no longer tenable, but we have to acknowledge the centrality of migration for the constitution of Early Modern empires and their societies. Even if only small parts of any population were migrating, all of the others were affected by mobility of local or transcontinental migration. This happened either directly or, as seen from a systemic perspective, as a result of the general relational impact of mobility. Overall, we seek to stress networks of short, long-term or structural durability that were indicative of a larger, Transottoman, migration society as it was constituted by flows in transimperial contexts.[12]

7 FORTIER 2014.

8 Running from 2017 to 2023, www.transottomanica.de.

9 BRUNNBAUER 2011: 83.

10 BOURDIEU 1991.

11 ROHDEWALD, CONERMANN & FUESS 2019.

12 This contribution builds on and accentuates a text in German: ROHDEWALD 2019.

Empires as Migration Societies

Research in the recent years has clearly established the central role of migration in the establishment, expansion, functioning and cultural identity of empires. The emigration of white settlers is the classical theme in British imperial history that has been expanded to other non-white groups that moved inside the British Empire and to Britain after the dissipation of its empire. Thematically, classical migration history that was interested mainly in social questions now also includes processes of culture and identity formation.[13]

Regarding the multi-ethnic empires that are in the focus of the Transottomanica research program—Poland-Lithuania, Russia, Persia and the Ottoman Empire—research has explored the link between empire and migration. In a recent monograph, Reşat Kasaba has characterized the Ottoman state as a "movable empire" due to its close interaction with mobile groups, most importantly with nomads.[14] In the Ottoman case, in the 13th century a group of nomads established a small state (*beylik*) in the Byzantine-Seljuk border zone in north-western Anatolia that would later become one of the world's major empires. We see similar cooperation in the case of Safavid Persia, where a Sufi sheikh, later Shah Ismail, mobilized his nomadic followers to establish a dynasty that ruled Persia from 1501 to 1722. Even after these states had become bureaucratic empires, nomadic groups remained an important element in their political structure: frequently tribes were settled in the imperial peripheries, such as the Balkans and Eastern Anatolia, to protect the borders.[15] That such areas are not only crucial from the perspective of inner-imperial, center-periphery relations, but also figure prominently in trans-imperial exchanges will be examined in greater detail in the next section.

In the movable empire concept, non-nomadic groups were also central to mobility and migration. The policy of forced settlement (*sürgün*) of the Ottoman central government could affect both nomadic tribes that were, e.g., transported from Anatolia to the Balkans, and urban populations and vocational groups. In particular, specialized craftsmen and members of the Jewish community had to populate the new Ottoman capital Istanbul.[16] Another famous group of migrants in the spatial and social sense were the forced recruits into the Ottoman central administration. In the institution known as *devşirme*, young boys from the Balkans were "collected" from Christian families to serve as Janissaries and administrators after their cultural and religious conversion. In the Safavid Empire, a similar system was adopted at the end of the 16th century, when slaves (*ghulam*) captured

[13] FEDOROWICH & THOMSON 2013, HARPER & CONSTANTINE 2014.

[14] KASABA 2009.

[15] ÁGOSTON 2003, VEINSTEIN 2014, TAPPER 1997.

[16] HACKER 1992.

in the Caucasus were educated in the palace to fill the highest post in the state and army. They were explicitly recruited to stand in for the nomadic tribes on which the power of the Safavid dynasty had rested previously.[17]

The Phanariots are another group that can serve as an example for the Ottoman Empire as a migration society entailing social as well as spatial mobility at the same time. This Greek-speaking Orthodox elite, which was based in the Istanbul quarter of Fener and served vital functions in the Ottoman state apparatus since the late 17th century, was a composite group of various regional backgrounds from within the empire. Like many other such groups, it also had trans-imperial ties, which will be discussed later.[18]

Scholars of the social and urban history of the Ottoman Empire who pay special attention to the experience of non-elite groups have singled out migration as an important factor. The multi-ethnic character of Ottoman cities was a consequence of multiple processes of migration that engendered specific solutions of governance.[19] Big cities such as the capital Istanbul were economically dependent on migrant seasonal laborers who often came from the minority communities of the imperial periphery such as, e.g. the East Anatolian Armenians. Their example not only shows how spatial and social mobility were entwined. It also offers a glimpse at the trans-cultural cooperation of different migration communities from the same regional contexts. For example, a shared regional identity and culinary as well as cultural practices united Armenian and Kurdish migrants in the Ottoman capital across religious boundaries.[20]

The idea of a "movable empire" demonstrates the importance of migration and mobility by putting interactions between state bureaucracies and mobile groups such as nomads at the forefront. However, migration and mobility cannot be reduced to an inner-imperial affair, but should be conceptualized from a trans-imperial perspective. To refer to a very popular systematization by Manning,[21] it is cross-community migration and exchange that can be observed in the cases of the Early Modern Ottoman Empire, Poland-Lithuania, Russia and Persia. The peripheries, border zones and vassal states between these empires were particularly high-mobility zones, often consisting of more than two imperial contexts. Groups such as Tatars, Circassians, Georgians, the inhabitants of Moldavia or Wallachia, Poles, Ukrainians, Kurds, Armenians or Greeks were not only part of the Ottoman world, but formed migrant communities or diasporas in many of the empires in our focus area. These groups moved from one imperial context to the other, but at the

17 BABAIE, BABAYAN, BAGHDIANTZ MCCABE & FARHAD 2004.

18 PHILLIOU 2011: 24-40.

19 FAROQHI 2014, FREITAG, FUHRMANN, LAFI & RIEDLER 2011.

20 RIEDLER 2009.

21 MANNING 2007.

same time remained inside their trans-imperial migration networks. On the local level, cross-community networks became the trademark of empires, e.g. in their multi-ethnic cities. Here, even groups that did not move came into contact with these networks and as a consequence were affected by trans-imperial circulation.

Transimperial Migration

The formation of the empires in the focus of the Transottomanica research program offers many examples for the trans-regional and trans-cultural character of the migration processes involved. In the Ottoman case, the nomads who successfully expanded the early beylik were joined by other mobile fighters who were present in the Byzantine-Seljuk border zone. During the expansion into the Balkans in particular, a leading role was played by the Great Catalan Company, mercenaries already employed by the Byzantines who were operating in the entire Mediterranean region. Together with fighters from Muslim backgrounds, they formed raiding communities (*akıncı*) that were the vanguard of Ottoman expansion in the Balkans.[22]

A very similar mechanism was already in place when Kievan Rus', a medieval state formation in Eastern Europe, was established in the 10th century. As Omeljan Pritsak has demonstrated, this realm was founded by cooperation between two nomadic groups: the mobile fighters/merchants of Viking origin, the Varangian "nomads of the sea," on the one hand, and the Khazar "nomads of the steppes" on the other.[23] This cooperation is known not only from the Rus' chronicles and Scandinavian sagas, but also from Arab sources that attest to long-distance trade networks between the Varangians and Bagdad.[24]

In the Middle Ages, the Lithuanian[25] and the Muscovite[26] principalities similarly thrived based on their competitive or tributary relations with the nomadic empire of the Golden Horde and its successors. The rapid expansion of the Duchy of Lithuania to the Black Sea was not least due to cooperation with Tatars who had fled Tamerlane. As a result, several thousand Muslim Tatars were incorporated into the Polish-Lithuanian nobility. In 1552, Moscow conquered the Golden Horde's successor state, the Khanate of Kazan, but its southern borders remained an arena of ongoing military conflict with mobile groups such as the Crimean Tatars and Cossacks. From the 15th century onward, the northern Black Sea area integrated

22 GHEORGHE 2015.

23 PRITSAK 1977: 268-271.

24 JONSSON HRAUNDAL 2013.

25 ROWELL 1994.

26 PRITSAK 1967.

many different Transottoman networks. Even as Ottoman vassals, the Crimean Tatar khans retained their political independence; in a similar manner, the different Cossack groups were able to exploit the rivalry between the Ottoman Empire, Poland-Lithuania and the Muscovite state. As an inter-imperial buffer zone, the northern Black Sea region was similar to the Ottoman-Safavid border where Kurdish but also Azeri, Turkmen or Assyrian tribes played a parallel role, or to Hungary, which was partitioned into Austrian and Ottoman parts and autonomous Transylvania under Ottoman suzerainty.

Increasingly anthropologically oriented historical migration research has begun to consider such inter-imperial border zones with mobile populations less as a "problematic area" between or within states,[27] but rather attempts to understand them from the perspective of their own socio-economic environments. Geographical features such as alternating mountains and valleys or the steppe promoted the transitional lifestyle with its specific social formations such as patriarchal families or a clan structure.[28] The development of specific legal norms was often closely linked to a retreat into areas that were only affected by mechanisms of imperial or state rule to a limited extent. The emergence of the Kanun (a set of traditional Albanian laws) in the area of the Albanian tribes and clans is an example of this. Thus, trans-territorial social systems were established, whose norms and value systems could be transferred through voluntary and forced migration into other regional contexts.[29] Trans-territorial and therefore cross-border social systems, which not only originated from tribes and clans, were not only essential to the multiple area configurations within the greater region, but also proved to be stabilizing elements for trade.[30]

Inter-imperial buffer zones such as the northern Black Sea or the Caucasus were not only ruled by mobile groups – they also generated a special type of migrants: slaves. In the slave raids organized by the Tatars in southern Ukraine and Russia, as well as Moldavia and Circassia, between 1500 and 1800, millions of persons of Slavic and Circassian origin were sold to the Ottoman Empire. A much smaller number of Muslims was captured by Cossacks and transported mainly to Muscovy. Jews were involved in the slave trade as merchants but also as "live merchandise." Often enslavement involved the conversion of the captives.[31]

In the Ottoman Empire, slaves were served many purposes in the urban and rural economies; women and men were recruited into the harem and other central state organizations. In the 17th century, regular slaves replaced the *devşirme*

27 ATEŞ 2013, SCHLINGEMANN 2001.

28 KASER 1992, KHODARKOVSKY 2002.

29 BRUNNBAUER 2009.

30 BAGHDIANTZ MCCABE 1999.

31 KIZILOV 2007.

recruits. Those originating from the Caucasus in particular often became a part of the networks inside Ottoman state administration that formed on account of their former regional identity, which was not entirely lost with their forced migration to the empire.[32] In general, slaves were integrated into Ottoman society to a high degree and they could expect to be manumitted after a certain period of service or after the death of their master. That is why despite the attempts of ransoming slaves that became a central political ideology of the Muscovite state in the latter half of the 16th century, only very few of them re-migrated. Return and a fresh start only offered an advantage to those who did not manage to secure a bearable position in Ottoman society.[33]

Apart from the slave trade, trans-regional processes of forced migration also included refugees who often came from the same zones of inter-imperial conflict from which slaves originated. As of the late 18th century, many Muslims whose homelands were incorporated into the Russian Empire, Crimean Tatars, Circassians and other peoples from the Caucasus and Central Asia, established refugee communities in the Ottoman Empire. These communities of "trans-imperial Muslims"[34] did not lose contact with their former homelands. In the late 19th century, intellectuals from these communities who propagated reformist and Pan-Turk ideas transformed both Russian Muslim communities as well as Ottoman society.

Another example of a Transottoman migration community formed in Ottoman Palestine. Ashkenazi Jews were immigrating from Poland-Lithuania already since the beginning of the Early Modern period. In Palestine, they integrated into the existing local society of Arabic Muslims and Christians. However, long-term and long-distance mobility did not mean the end of communication between the regions of origin and arrival respectively, but, as a rule, constituted a social relational space encompassing both. In the 1770s, Menakhem Mendl from Vitebsk residing in Palestine communicated to the Jews in Russia, i.e. in the former Polish-Lithuanian territories, not to take part in the municipal elections together with the Christians, as this would be too close to their (Christian) customs.[35]

The transregional character of imperial migration societies was particularly apparent in the urban centers of the different empires, beginning with their capitals. Merchant communities, which organized long-distance trade, linked several of these centers. Armenians played a very pronounced role in such mobility networks, which organized the East–West trade since the late Middle Ages. As of the mid-13th century, when long-distance trade in Oriental goods flourished under the *pax*

[32] KUNT 1974.

[33] WITZENRATH 2015.

[34] MEYER 2014.

[35] FISHMAN 1995: 116.

mongolica, Armenian merchants established trade colonies in the Crimea. When the Ottomans conquered the Crimea in 1475, many merchants were forcibly resettled in Istanbul, whence they began to trade with Eastern Europe on the overland route along the Black Sea coast.[36] Then they successively moved into Moldavia, Lithuania and Poland to cities such as Iași, Lviv and Warsaw,[37] where they had played a constitutive role in urban and transregional societies in cities such as Lviv already in the Middle Ages.[38]

The most famous of these competing and connecting Armenian merchant networks was New Julfa, a part of Isfahan. At the beginning of the 17th century, they were forcefully resettled by Shah Abbas to the Persian capital and granted the monopoly over the Persian silk trade. Eventually, their trade network, which diversified to other products as well, stretched from India in the east to the Mediterranean and Western Europe in the west and to Russia in the north. The reach of these networks and the different environments they encompassed made these merchants a special type of "transimperial cosmopolitans."[39]

Another case were Orthodox merchants who used Greek as a *lingua franca* and expanded from their home regions in the Balkans beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire.[40] They organized trade between the Ottoman Empire and Western, Central and Eastern Europe by forming trade diasporas in Odessa, Trieste, Marseille, Amsterdam, London, Lviv, Brașov or along the Danube. In Vienna, these Orthodox merchants, who were generally called "Greeks" by the Austrian authorities, could also acquire a Russian identity. From the mid-17th century onward, Nežin (Ukr. Nižin), a town north-east of Kiev, played a major role as an exchange hub between Poland, Russia, Venice and the Ottoman Empire.[41] These Orthodox merchants also settled in ports and inland trading cities such as Alexandria and Cairo under Ali Pasha.

Similar and even more successful and geographically expansive in comparison to these inland trade networks were the merchants from Chios. In the 18th century, they began to establish themselves as conveyors of the burgeoning trade on the Mediterranean between the Ottoman Empire and Italy, Austria/Trieste, France and Britain; Black Sea trade was added in the late 18th century. Greek diaspora colonies were established in all major cities of the northern Black Sea coast, such as Odessa, Taganrog and Rostov.[42]

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36 OSIPIAN 2015.

37 STOPKA 2012.

38 ROHDEWALD, FRICK & WIEDERKEHR 2007.

39 ASLANIAN, also cf. BAGHDIANTZ MCCABE 1999.

40 STOIANOVICH 1960.

41 KATSIARDI-HERING 2008: 175, KATSIARDI-HERING 2012.

42 HARLAFTIS 2005.

Since the late 19th century, this network formed an illustrative example of how Transottoman networks were transformed by the new technological and political developments and were inserted increasingly into global networks. This was particularly visible in the economically prospering zone of the Danube and Black Sea or the oil regions of the Caucasus.

Migration, Identity and Tales of Origin

Transregional mobility left an imprint on the identity construction of individuals, groups and particularly the elite of the movable empires. Using the concept of "trans-imperial subjects," Natalie Rothman[43] attempts to define the identities and political loyalties of mobile groups such as brokers, converts and translators who were engaged in a constant process of defining boundaries and transgressing them. Rothman's study focuses on exchanges in the Early Modern Mediterranean, more exactly, between Venice and the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth and 17th centuries. She was part of a wider group of scholars who shifted the emphasis in mobility research, from a reconstruction of networks in the economic[44] or religious milieu,[45] toward a focus on interaction between multiple identities, upon which merchants or pilgrims relied in the respective socio-cultural context.[46]

Moreover, the political identity of elite groups and the resulting legitimacy were in many cases not tied to autochthony but sustained by narratives that included elements of mobility and reflected, but also recombined, the real historical processes of migration. In the Middle Ages as well as the Early Modern period, this was typical regarding narratives of the origins of dynasties (*origio gentis*) and "nations" (*origo nationis*).[47]

One very obvious case is the self-description of the Polish nobility that they descended from the Sarmatians, an ancient nomadic warrior people of the steppes. This idea, very widespread since the 17th century, was supported by a material culture that used luxury objects imported from Persia and the Ottoman Empire such as carpets, weapons, clothing and horses for the purpose of representation.[48] At the same time, this culture ran parallel to the political ideology of the *antemurale christianitatis* as an expression of the imperial rivalry with the Ottoman Empire.[49]

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43 ROTHMAN 2012.

44 FAROQHI 2004.

45 REICHMUTH 2009.

46 FAROQHI & VEINSTEIN 2008, FAROQHI 2014, FAROQHI & DEGUILHEM 2005, FAROQHI 1990.

47 KERSKEN 1995, BÖMELBURG 2006.

48 UFFELMANN 2016.

49 ROHDEWALD 2016, HÖFERT 2010.

Legends about the origins of dynasties were known by the Ottomans and the Safavids as well, who associated their dynasties with the Oghuz and Mongols—with Ottoman historiography receiving and transforming older Persian historical imaginings in the fifteenth and 16th centuries.[50] Likewise, the Tatars in Poland-Lithuania endowed themselves with a Genghisid/Seljukid origin, thus directly making a connection to the forefathers of the Ottoman dynasty.[51] From Arabia to Central Asia, the origins of local ruling dynasties were frequently connected to the tribe of the Prophet, the Quraish.[52] Regarding the Ottoman Balkans, one such narrative had a strong element of migration and therefore will be presented here in detail.

Evliya Çelebi, the 17th century Ottoman traveller and travel writer, explained the origin (*ibtidā*) of the Albanians as the result of transregional and transimperial migration. According to Evliya,[53] the Albanians originally were part of the tribe of the Prophet, the Quraish, "the Arab tribe who lives in Mecca." One of its sheikhs, Jabal-i Alhama, fled with three thousand followers, because he was afraid to be punished for an attack on his kin, and he sought refuge in Antioch with the East Roman King Herakles (Ḫırqīl qirala), i.e., the Byzantine Emperor Herakleios (610–641). Later, these Arab migrants split into three groups. When the Abbasid Empire disintegrated in 1258, one group was forced to settle "in the oak forests of the Kipchak Steppe" and became the ancestors of the Circassians. In the 17th century, when Evliya wrote this, Circassia had become contested between Russia and the Ottoman Empire. By making it a part of an imagined relational social space, the narrative of migration integrated the area into the Ottoman mental map.

Another part of the group, Evliya continues, found refuge in Gaza and founded the Hashemite people. The third group, led by Jabal-i Alhama himself, renounced Islam and therefore had to flee from an Arab military expedition; they resettled on an Aegean island. Jabal-i Alhama's three sons, ʿAbaza, Lāziqa and Migrāl, who had also become Christians, were given land on the Black Sea coast "by the Genoese king" in Galata or "Macedonia, i.e. Istanbul". There, they formed the Abkhaz, Laz and Migrelian/Georgian peoples. This part of Evliya's narration stresses the integration of the north-eastern Black Sea region into the Ottoman world. King Jabal-i Alhama himself fled to the "king of Spain," who gave him the land in today's Albania to settle. The Albanians are his descendants, but they began to speak "a different language." As in the other examples, for Evliya lan-

[50] e.g., OGASAWARA 2018.

[51] POŁCZYŃSKI 2015: 415-416.

[52] TOLMACHEVA 2013.

[53] EVLIYA 2000: 64–67.

guage was not a determining factor of group identity, but an accidental result of unknown circumstances.

This very complex—if not confused—narrative explains the origin of the Albanians by associating them with other ethnic groups such as the Georgians, Circassians, and Abkhazians who originated from the same process of imagined migration. Moreover, it shows the political cooperation across imperial and religious boundaries with the Byzantine, Genoese or Spanish kings. In this way, the narrative binds together the whole of the Ottoman Empire from the Arab south to the Balkans with the world beyond such as the northern Caucasus and the western Mediterranean into one relational space. This space emerges in a decentralised process of tribal migration, which Evliya's narrative acknowledges as central to the ethnic landscape of the empire. At the same time, its results are not unambiguous: from their very distinguished beginning as part of the tribe of the Prophet, the prestige of the Albanians constantly diminished, ending with their conversion to Christianity. Here, as in other passages, Evliya commented negatively on this Albanian religious ambiguity.[54]

The Ottoman elite and other groups employed such narratives of migration and mobility not only for the transimperial peripheries, but also for the center and its identity. A very interesting case is the explanation of the 16th century historian Mustafa Ali (1541–1600) about the origin of the Ottoman elite and their appropriation of a "Rum" identity. Rum was the Arabic name for Anatolia, the territory of the Roman Empire, which, from the 11th century onward, was settled by Turkic tribes who founded the Sultanate of Rum with its center in Konya. Mustafa Ali explained the emergence of a new group in this territory:

> "Those varied peoples and different types of Rumis living in the glorious days of the Ottoman dynasty, who are not [generically] separate from those tribes of Turks and Tatars dealt with in the third Pillar, are a select community and pure, pleasing people who, just as they are distinguished in the origins of their state, are singled out for their piety [*diyanet*], cleanliness [*nazafet*] and faith [*akidet*]. Apart from this, most of the inhabitants of Rum are of confused ethnic origins. Among its notables there are few whose lineage does not go back to a convert to Islam ... either on their paternal or their maternal side, the genealogy is traced to a filthy infidel. It is as if two different species of fruit-bearing tree mingled and mated, with leaves and fruits; and the fruit of this union was large and filled with liquid, like a princely pearl."[55]

Mustafa Ali continued to show how migrating Tatar and Turkic tribes intermingled with local ulema, Arabs and Persians, as well as with other converted

[54] ROHDEWALD 2017.

[55] MUSTAFA ALI: Künh ül-ahbar, I, 16, quoted acc. to FLEISCHER 1986: 254, cf. KRSTIĆ 2011: 3-6, ÖZBARAN 2004: 105-106.

Christians, namely Serbs, and adopted the Rum identity of the local Anatolian elites.[56]

To foreign observers—as well as later translators—this was confusing, as shown by the example of a late 16th century Moroccan emissary to Istanbul, who tried to describe the adoption of the imperial Roman identity by the Ottomans after the conquest of Istanbul.

> "That city was the capital of the lands of Rum [rendered "grecs" by the French translator], and the seat of the lands of Rum empire, the city of Caesars. The Muslims who live in that city now call themselves "Rum" [again rendered as "grecs" by the translator] and prefer that origin to their own. Among them, calligraphy, too, is called khatt rumi ["l'ecriture grecque"]."[57]

Similar to Anatolia, Istanbul was a city populated by migrants with multiple backgrounds, among them many converts, who contributed to the Ottoman elite.

For the Phanariots, the Greek-speaking Orthodox elite, who had served in important functions in the Ottoman state apparatus since the late 17th century, the Rum character of the Ottoman Empire was out of the question. Their own networks stretched beyond the Ottoman Empire, especially since they became hereditary princes of the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia. Here, they acted as trans-cultural brokers between the Ottoman Empire, Western and Eastern Europe, especially in the field of literature, science and printing.

There are many other examples that show how migration led to the construction of new individual or group identities among the migrants and locals that could be superimposed over older identities. In the realms and centuries in the focus herein, as a result of migrations, cities had populations that were very diverse regarding their religions, denominations or languages. Social practices overarching religious or other culturally constructed boundaries were necessary to constitute an urban or regional[58] or Transottoman society.

In the 19th century, Ottoman cities were important laboratories where new national identities formed. Bulgarians, Serbians, Armenians, Greeks, Crimean Tartars or Kurds living in Ottoman cities, most importantly in the capital Istanbul, formed national networks that also connected with similar networks in neighboring empires such as Austria or Russia. Similar to the case of East Central Europe,[59] older political group identities transformed into new "national" ones. A case in point

[56] FLEISCHER 1986: 254-255.

[57] 'ALI B. MUHAMMAD AL-TAMGHRŪTĪ 1929: 48, quoted acc. to KAFADAR 2007: 16.

[58] ROHDEWALD, FRICK & WIEDERKEHR 2007.

[59] TRENCSÉNYI & ZÁSZKALICZKY 2010.

are the Orthodox networks that split up and began to develop "Greek," "Serbian," or "Bulgarian" political loyalties.[60] But even these segregations should be seen in the larger context of mutual observation and competition, thus, as parts of one larger Transottoman framework. Many of them were building on older contexts of competition and cooperation between religious groups, constituting locally and in the large framework a Transottoman setting.

Conclusion

A focus on mobility and migration does more than merely deepen our understanding of Early Modern empires, their societies, politics and cultures. At the same time, the translocal, transregional and transimperial character calls for a larger contextualization of mobility. The aim of the research program Transottomanica is to map such networks and narratives of mobility and migration that go beyond a single political context within our focus area, which encompasses large areas of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Above, we have assembled some examples that suggest that mobility constituted a Transottoman migration society that, despite its dynamically changing character, nonetheless established a long-term structure, due to the repeated and constant nature of mobility. We are well-aware that networks and entanglements in many instances transcended our geographical focus, which was chosen for purely heuristic reasons and should not be understood as an attempt to create a new "area". In such instances the Transottoman focus should be seen as a new starting point to examine an even larger transcontinental or global shared history and make recognizable condensations or transregional hinge functions.

[60] EXERTZOGLOU 2008.

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MIGRACIJE I MOBILNOST U TRANSOSMANSKOM KONTEKSTU

Novija istraživanja u području proučavanja povijesnih migracija omogućuju nam da preispitamo svoje shvaćanje ranonovovjekovnih društava i država. Znanstveno-istraživački program Transottomanica usredotočen je na povijesnu isprepletenost Bliskog istoka i Istočne Europe, pri čemu se migracijski procesi razmatraju s transregionalnog i transimperijalnog motrišta. U ranom novom vijeku, raznovrsne migracije – osobito iz i preko inter-imperijalnih tampon-zona poput sjevernog crnomorske regije, Kavkaza i Balkana – povezivale su Bliski istok i Istočnu Europu. Trgovci, izbjeglice i robovi ne samo da su tvorili svojevrsno migracijsko naddruštvo, napose u kozmopolitskim gradovima, već su se transregionalne migracije ogledale i u samoopisima i identitetima imperijalnih elita. Učinci inter-imperijalnih migracija, koje su se usadile u društvene i identitetske strukture, mogu se pratiti sve do ranog 20. stoljeća.

Ključne riječi: migracije, rani novi vijek, Osmansko Carstvo, istočna srednja Europa, Rusija, Balkan, Perzija

Key words: migration, Early Modern period, Ottoman Empire, East Central Europe, Russia, Balkans, Persia

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