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Military Diasporas and Diasporic Regimes in East Central Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean 500-1800

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Abstracts



Panel I: Incorporating soldiers

Patrick Sanger (Heidelberg): Military Diasporas in and their Impact on Hellenistic Egypt (late 4th century–30 BCE)

Because of the finds of Greek papyri, in Egypt historians encounter the richest documentary evidence of migration movements and its related impacts on the ancient world. The sources provide various ethnic labels derived from foreign (non-Egyptian) cities or regions and, therefore, document individuals coming to Egypt from abroad as well as their descendants. This evidence attests to the fact that immigration into Egypt after its conquest by Alexander the Great in the year 332 BCE reached dimensions unknown before. Alongside the leading ethnic group (belonging to the Greek ethnic group from the Greek home country, Macedonia or Asia Minor or alternatively from Greek towns in other regions), several other groups arrived, e.g. Thracians from the East of the Balkan Peninsula, as well as Jewish, Persian, and Arabic immigrants. This process did not only alter the population of Egypt but brought also new administrative challenges and changes on social, cultural, and religious levels.

This paper intends to outline the patterns and characteristics of military immigration – certainly the most important factor of migration in Hellenistic times – to Egypt and the formation of military diaspora groups. Furthermore, the following aspects will be discussed: the importance of immigrants for the military policy of the reigning regime, the usage of ethnic categories for grouping the population, and the specific structural features of the diaspora groups. In conclusion, this paper will show that the source material of Hellenistic Egypt provides a sound basis for a revealing case study on migration and integration policies in Antiquity.

Luka poljarić (Budapest/Zagreb): *I, Domina, Illyrico deserto litore Romam*. Ottoman Wars and the Illyrian Diaspora of Renaissance Rome

The early history of the Slavic, or rather ‘Illyrian’ national community in Rome was thus far treated exclusively through the focus on the hospice for pilgrims. However, after the Ottoman conquest of the Bosnian kingdom in 1463, two high profile political exiles found their way to Rome: Bosnian queen Catherine and Nicholas bishop of Modruš, Croatia, two exiles that, as I intend to show in my talk, immediately established themselves as their representatives. What was the relationship between these two figures, what was their role in the community and in the political and military plans of the Curia in general, are some of the questions that I plan to answer.

Roman Shlyakhtin (Budapest): Princes and Archers. Seljuk mercenaries in twelfth-century Byzantium

Jozsef Laszlovszky (Budapest): From the Varangian body-guards of the Byzantine Emperor to the Russian door-keepers of the Hungarian king

Panel II: In Between - military diasporas and diverging religions

Lajos Berkes (Heidelberg): The Persian and Islamic occupation of Egypt in the seventh century: similarities and differences

Egypt was mostly spared by the violent events of Late Roman history. It was only in the 7th century that Egypt became a seat of war again. In 619, the Sassanid Persian armies took the country and occupied it. Only ten years later, they had to leave Egypt according to a treaty with the Byzantine emperor Heraclius, who was able to crush the archenemy of the Late Roman state once and for all. However, only a couple of years after his tremendous success, the armies of the new-born Islam rose and defeated the Byzantine troops in devastating battles. In 639, the Arabs reached Egypt as well and took the country around 642. There was a Byzantine attempt to reconquer their former province in 646, but it failed and the Islamic rule remained unquestionable. The ten years of Sassanid occupation can be compared in many ways with the early period of Islamic rule in Egypt, but differences are also apparent. The present paper tries to compare these two decisive historical periods of the country with a focus on the occupying troops and their relationship with the indigenous population.

Cristian-Nicolae Daniel (Budapest): Greek-Slavonic rite men fighting for Latin rite lords and their entangled religious options

The paper will briefly look at the religious options pursued by the Greek-Slavonic rite (mostly military) elite in medieval Transylvania and Banat during the fifteenth century. The particular reactions of this elite towards the court, other fellow nobles or the Latin Church prove a diversification of the social possibilities available to this group. These should always be placed in the bigger picture of the historical context and examples from other regions which experienced such shifts will also be given. The fact that some of the Romanian nobles seem to have a bipolar approach to religion, being acknowledged as “Catholics” in the official documents, but then recognized as “Orthodox” in Slavonic inscriptions seems to be rather the norm than the exception.

Verena Schenk zu Schweinsberg (Heidelberg): Military Orders and the Encounter with the Heathen in Thirteenth-century Livonia

The christianisation and conquest of the Baltic in the 12th and 13th centuries was a complex process, in which many different, indigenous and foreign, religious and secular groups were involved. The Order of the Sword Brethren (*Schwertbrüderorden*), specially founded for the Livonian Crusade in 1202 and later incorporated into the Teutonic Order, did not only play a central role in the conquest, but was also entangled in multiple ways of cooperation and conflict with the indigenous population. To what extent was the fight against the heathen constitutive of the brothers' identity, of a military, but also religious group, garrisoned in a foreign, forbidding land? What forms of interaction in addition to and besides military conflict were possible in the encounter with the heathen “other”?

To give some answers to these questions, I will concentrate on the “Livonian Rhymed Chronicle” (*Livländische Reimchronik*) as an extensive contemporary, vernacular source from within the order, giving valuable insight to the brothers' perception of themselves as well as their heathen adversaries

and allies. Especially in terms of religion, remarkable tendencies of acceptance and mutual transfer can be traced alongside with ruthless fighting. But also in battle the lines between friend and foe, christian and heathen do not appear as clear as one would maybe expect. In order to interpret these findings the constituents of the brothers' identity, originating from their special situation in Livonia should be taken into consideration.

László Veszprémy (Budapest): Hungarians beyond Hungary in the thirteenth century: soldiers and missionaries

The Hungarian military history of the 13th century is not only intriguing because the greatest military defeat of its medieval history (1241) happened during this period, but also because of the most remarkable events of Hungarian expansionist politics. It was one of the innovations of the century that conquest did not consist of campaigns only, but also of inviting foreign military help, first of all the crusading orders (Teutonic knights, Hospitallers), or establishing – at least for some years - Diaspora like outposts, in some cases combined with missionary bishoprics, beyond the frontiers (Severin, Wallachia, Galacia, Styria, Macva). The Cumans were subjugated and partly converted in the first part of the century, and soon used as an auxiliary force in campaigns beyond Hungary. The 13th-14th century attempts for creating a buffer zone, so called *banatus* and vassal principalities around the borders of the country played an important role in the strategy of the Hungarian kings, if they had any at all. The Teutonic knights' achievement was the most spectacular, as they paved the way for Prince Béla's Cuman mission and a permanent Hungarian ethnical and political presence in the future Wallachia and Moldavia. On the other hand the Hungarian presence in Styria during their fight for the Babenberg heritage became a disaster, partly because the uncontrolled use of Cuman military forces, partly because the inability of establishing permanent Hungarian settlements there. The main motif for the Hungarian military going abroad could have been cash money, which was seldom ready to hand, or fiefs of land, that were granted inside the country. The Italian campaigns of the Hungarian king Louis I. from the 1340's may be esteemed as a radical change, when the Italian cities discovered the Hungarians as very suitable mercenaries, and for long decades several companies with a rotating personal earned a good fame in the war market.

Panel III: Backbones of the empire - military diasporas and centers of power

Mariana Bodnaruk (Budapest): Participants in the Emperor's Glory: The Late-antique Statues for Military Honorands in Rome

In his recent book *Living in the End Times*, philosopher and social theorist Slavoj Žižek offers a perspicuous critico-ideological reading of Bryan Ward-Perkins' *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization*. While praising the author for a lucid demonstration of 'the breathtaking decline of economic and social complexity' in the Roman West proposed against the liberal doxa of a gradual transformation and 'the emphasis on the economy as a welcome correction to Foucauldian analyses focusing on spiritual shifts in late antiquity,' Žižek proceeds to denounce British historian as a conservative who 'echoes of the notion of a developed secular West threatened by new fundamentalism' of barbarian migrants: 'Ward-Perkins nonetheless presents a series of theses which (even if historically accurate, as they mostly are) sustain the contemporary vision of the need to defend the secular and civilized West against the barbarian Third World onslaught, and warns against harboring any illusions about their peaceful integration.' (Žižek 2010: 88-91)

I therefore start with parenthesizing Ward-Perkins' striking statement that the Roman West fell for strictly external reasons, namely, the barbarian invasions, as it substitutes itself for analysis of antagonisms and contradictions within the governing class and in the social structure of the late Roman empire. I turn for this reason to senior military officers of the western empire who obtained heights of glory and power in the service of the ruling régimes in order to examine their exclusive acquisition of the rare type of the capital derived from the military authority of the proven general secured further by personal loyalty of the Roman army and barbarian federates alike. Late Roman *magistri militum* Stilicho, Flavius Constantius, and Aetius thus supply three case studies.

I shall first explore epigraphic evidence of the statue bases for the high ranked military commanders in the Roman Forum of the last decade of the fourth and the first half of the fifth century. Dedicatory inscriptions articulate a private possession of military power as delegated to generals by the emperor and converted by them into a capital which is symbolically communicated by the sculpted representation and honorific language of the monuments. Second, I shall investigate the changing relationship between the emperor and military high command and the social capital – capital made of proximity to the imperial family – monopolized by the senior military officers that allow re-examining innovations in the late imperial government. Third, I shall briefly relate and compare senatorial and military power in the form of symbolic capital exhibited in representational art of the period under discussion. Apprehended symbolically these different types of capital appropriated by late Roman army commanders on an exclusive basis as ultimately relying on their deployment of the military diasporas, i.e., forces recruited and mobilized beyond imperial control, provide a fairly accurate image of the social world in the late Roman west.

Stefan Burkhardt (Heidelberg): Soldiers between East and West around 1200

During the late Middle Ages, Southeastern Europe was deeply influenced by the strong Byzantine-Hungarian-Venetian rivalry about political and territorial hegemony. Certainly, the Fourth Crusade can be considered as the culmination of that conflict, as it was triggered off by the fight between Venice and the Hungarian king for supremacy over the city of Zara.

My contribution to the first workshop of this series (“Migrations of Knowledge”) has already dealt with the political struggles of the house of Montferrat, “the Greeks” and the Hungarian kings for the Kingdom of Thessaloniki.

I will now focus on the role of soldiers between East and West and their impact on political, economic and cultural structures. The paper will discuss three events of the Aegean world in the 13th and 14th century: the capture of Constantinople 1204, the following conquest of the Morea and the expedition of the Catalan Company to the East.

Christopher Mielke (Budapest): Soldiers of the Queens

Halil Evren Sünnetcioglu (Budapest): Diasporas within the Center of Power? The Clan of the Ottoman Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha as a Case Study

This paper problematizes the concept of diaspora as it applies to the modalities of solidarity among the Ottoman military/administrative elite. I address the emergence and exercise of the faction of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha’s clan within the network of military/administrative apparatus of the Porte in the late-sixteenth century. The focus of the paper is the question whether it would make sense to consider the factions established by a group of people uprooted from the same region (through the practice of *değişirme*) and acculturated by the Ottoman institutions like Sokollu clan as “diasporas within the Empire” or even more precisely, “diasporas with the center of power.” Mostly by posing questions and thinking through the literature, I will investigate the ties between the nodes in which the networks of the Sokollu clan and the Porte were intertwined or disentangled at the local, imperial, and trans-imperial scale. Among the members of the Sokollu clan, I will pay particular attention to Mehmed Pasha (the Grand Vizier), Ferhad Pasha (the governor of Klis), and Mustafa Pasha (the governor-general of Buda). Dimensions of solidarity that I will explore include family, language, ethnicity, and region.

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