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The Ottoman conquest of the Balkans

Proceedings of the session held at the 12th International Congress of South-East European Studies
(Bucharest, 2-6 September 2019)

Editor: OLIVER JENS SCHMITT

Editor's Note (1 p.)

OLIVER JENS SCHMITT, *The Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans and its Historical Arenas: on the Relationship between Regional and Supraregional History*

The article aims at interpreting the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans as a major historical process in a larger spatial context. It discusses the late Medieval Balkans as a space that was interrelated with surrounding political and cultural spaces from the Adriatic to Anatolia and from the Black Sea area to the Aegean basin with a special focus on migration and diaspora groups.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire; Late Medieval Balkans; spatial methods.

GRIGOR BOYKOV, *Conquered by Sword, Subdued by C? Geospatial and Quantitative Analysis of Land Waqfs in Ottoman Bulgaria*

The article focuses on the study of the landed estates of the Islamic pious endowments (waqfs) in Bulgaria by, on the one hand, building a complete database of the settlements under the control of the waqfs, and on the other by attributing a spatial reference to those villages whose precise locations were identified. Taking non-aggregated microdata from the Ottoman tax registers as a point of departure, the study aims at demonstrating a novelty approach towards the spatial analysis of data extracted from the Ottoman primary sources and at proposing a methodology that can be used in other parts of the Balkans. Focusing on a territory, which roughly constitutes 1/5 of the Balkan peninsula, the study regards Bulgaria as a sample that has the potential to shed light on the significance of the waqf institution in administering, revitalizing, repopulating, and maintaining the social order in the Ottoman Balkans. General conclusions about the spatial distributions of the landed possessions, the social stratification of the endowers, and quantitative analysis of the revenues and population under the control of the waqfs, presented in the article signal the necessity for more studies that can widen the territorial perspective and demonstrate the pivotal role of the Islamic endowments in establishing firm control over the newly conquered territories in the Balkans.

Keywords: Ottoman Balkans, Bulgaria, waqf, settlements, GIS, spatial analysis.

MARIYA KIPROVSKA, *Agents of Conquest: Frontier Lords' Extended Households as Actors in the Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans*

Throughout the period of the Ottoman territorial expansion in the Balkans, military commanders from the families of several frontier lords figured prominently during conquests and emerged as distinct frontier elites and sociopolitical entities in their own right. As hereditary leaders of the vanguard Ottoman forces the frontier lords were in an extremely advantageous position to staff their courts and armies with slaves acquired through conquests in non-Muslim territories. These captives were raised, trained, and acculturated as part of the military-administrative households of the frontier lords, and in turn contributed to conquest, becoming the spearhead of further military expeditions. This essay examines the composition of the extended military household of Mihaloğlu Mehmed Beg, a district governor of Niğbolu, as

presented in an Ottoman register from the second decade of the 16th century and argues that his personal retainers became a reservoir for the military and the administration of the marcher district under his governance. It further maintains that the frontier lords' households, which represent a distinct group of power holders outside the sultanic dynasty, emerged as true loci of power that managed manpower along the bordering regions and should be studied in regards not only to their regional authority, but to their place in the Ottoman political establishment as well. By establishing stable patron–client relations with the members of their extended households, the frontier lords found themselves at the apex of a large web of networks entwined within social, military, administrative, political, and cultural life along the borders of the Ottoman state and should be regarded as an indispensable part of the Ottoman socio-political order in the region as a whole.

Keywords: Ottoman conquest, Balkans, frontier elites, household, Mihaloğlu family.

ALEKSANDAR KRSTIĆ /ADRIAN MAGINA, *The Belmužević Family . The fate of a noble family in South East Europe during the turbulent period of the Ottoman conquest (the 15th and first half of the 16th centuries)*

Voivode Miloš Belmužević was a significant figure in 15th century Serbian history. He was born to a noble family, whose members performed administrative duties in Zeta and northern Serbia during the reign of Despot Đurađ Branković (1427–1456). Shortly before the downfall of the Serbian medieval state, Belmužević supported the pro Ottoman faction of Michael Angelović. Due to this fact, he fell into disgrace at the court and was deprived of his property in 1458. After the fall of Smederevo (1459) he entered into Ottoman military service and became a sipahi. In 1476/7, he held the market place of Jagodina in the Morava valley as a timar. He moved to Hungary most probably during the great Hungarian offensives against the Ottomans in northern Serbia in 1480 and 1481, when tens of thousands of Serbs were taken across the Sava and the Danube and resettled in southern Hungary, including Banat. After moving to Hungary, Belmužević fought the Ottomans along the border, but also on other battlefields, as the commander of a large detachment of light cavalry – hussars. He was wounded serving King Matthias Corvinus in Silesia in 1488, and he distinguished himself during the wars of King Wladislas II Jagello against Maximilian Habsburg and Jan Albrecht in western and northern Hungary (1490–1491). For his loyal service and military merits, Belmužević was rewarded by King Matthias on several occasions, starting from 1483, with estates in Timiș, Cenad and Bač counties. It is after one of these estates in the vicinity of Timișoara that he was given the noble appellation “of Saswar“. In 1496, King Wladislas II confirmed to Miloš Belmužević and his sons Vuk and Marko the earlier donations of Matthias Corvinus. However, the voivode lost both of his sons in the next few years: Marko died under unknown circumstances before 1498, while Vuk was killed in battle against the Ottomans in 1499 or 1500, during an Ottoman incursion into southern Hungary. In this conflict voivode Miloš was also wounded. Later, in order to avenge his son, he ravaged the surroundings of Smederevo. Left without a male heir, Belmužević left his estate to his mother Olivera, his wife Veronica and his underage daughter Milica. King Wladislas II confirmed the will of Belmužević, written in the Serbian language and preserved to the present day, after his death in the autumn of 1500. Veronica, who came from the noble family Arka of Densuș from Hunedoara County, remarried after her husband's death to Stephen Bradacs of Lodormercz, a Hungarian nobleman of Croatian origin. With this marriage, the largest part of Belmužević's property was transferred to Bradacs (the voivode left some possessions to his familiars). Becoming of age, Milica Belmužević started a series of legal processes in order to regain estates that were rightfully hers. Milica was married to Nicholas Kendeffy of Râu de Mori. This marriage strengthened Milica's ties with the home region of her mother, the land of Hațeg in Hunedoara County. Her life can be traced Rev. Études Sud-Est Europ., LIX, p. 105–123, Bucarest, 2021 106 Aleksandar Krstić, Adrian Magina 2 through a series of documents that span a period of six decades, outliving both her husband and son, John Kendeffy.

Keywords: Voivode Miloš Belmužević, Milica Belmužević, Serb

NEVEN ISAILOVIĆ, *Croatian Noble Refugees in Late 15th and 16th Century Banat and Transylvania – Preliminary Findings*

Hungarian Realm became unbearable and many nobles decided to leave their native land and resettle in another part of the realm, where their status would be recognised and service to the ruler continued. The nobility of southern Croatia sought refuge in various parts of Hungary, among which were Banat and Transylvania. Their arrival to the easternmost part of the state mostly happened before the division between the Habsburgs and the Zápolyas and their loyalty after 1526 was usually dictated by the majority within the community they settled into. In Banatian and Transylvanian sources the Croats are identified by their conspicuous surnames and the epithet Croatus (Horváth) and, sometimes, by their noble predicates which specified their original main estate. Many of them acquired possessions in their new places of residence, married into local noble families and performed various duties, mostly as commanders of the cavalry or castellans of important fortresses. Even though they adapted to the new environment, it seems that the Croats kept close to each other, which can be observed through their documents, connections and family ties. Putting aside the most famous example of George Martinuzzi, this overview will include the short case studies of Martinuzzi's compatriots – Mark Mišljenović of Kamičac, the Kučićs of Razvađe, the Šušalićs of Lukarić, Nicholas Kolunić, the Benkovićs and Bojničićs of Plavno, and Cosma Petričević of Raduč.

Keywords: nobility, migrations, Croats, Banat, Transylvania, 15th century, 16th century.

EMIR O. FILIPOVIĆ, *Force Majeure, Act of God or Natural Disaster? Ottoman Military Threat as a Cause for Exemption from Contractual Liability During the Conquest of the Balkans* (18 p.)

By the late fourteenth century unpredictable Ottoman raids on the territories of Albania, Serbia and Bosnia became a regular occurrence and precautions were usually taken in order to avert or limit potential damage of any kind. This was often expressed in written contracts in which the Ottoman threat, “fear of the Turks”, or even news about their imminent arrival were used as justification to look for shelter where people and goods could be safe until the danger passed. In certain cases, these unavoidable and inevitable incidences essentially released the interested parties from contractual liability and obligation. This paper examines such instances in which Ottoman military threat was presented as a “higher force”, a punishment from God and even as something resembling a “natural disaster”, essentially serving as an effective exemption clause which excluded coverage for the caused damage.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia, Ragusa (Dubrovnik), caravan trade, contractual liability.

Papers presented at the 12th International Congress of South-East European Studies (Bucharest, 2-6 September 2019)

LUSINE SARGSYAN, *Armenian Gospel of Surxat' (Crimea) at the Armenian Catholic Parish of Gheorgheni*

The Armenian Catholic parish of Gheorgheni holds a collection of Armenian manuscripts and old printed books as evidence of the Armenian community, having more than 300 years of history. I had the opportunity to study this library during my research trip to Romania in May–June 2017. The importance of each manuscript in this collection is beyond doubt, however, first I directed my attention to this Gospel (new inv. no. 85, old inv. no. 245) for two reasons: it is the most valuable sample from the artistic point of view and also is the earliest dated manuscript of the collection. There is no information when and how this Gospel appeared in this collection. Only the first folio of the principal colophon has been preserved (fol. 287v, ill. 5): it provides information about the date and place of writing of the Gospel: it was copied in 1354 in Surxat' (Crimea).

Keywords: Armenian Gospel, Gheorgheni, manuscript, codicology, paleography, iconography, style, Crimea, Title page, portrait of evangelist, miniature, colophon, medieval art.

PENKA DANOVA, *La fortune des écrits du marchand écrivain Giovanni Sercambi: extraits et conclusions balkaniques*

The article studies the distribution of the manuscript *Chronicles*, self-written by Giovanni Sercambi from Luca, Italy, and its subsequent printing. Special emphasis is placed on five chapters of this urban chronicle. They describe the crusade of Nicopolis (1396) in accordance with the oral account of Giglio Sercambi, who was not only the chronicler's uncle but also an eyewitness to the events. Danova furthermore deals with the illustrations to these chapters and more precisely with the images of both bombard and flags in the Turkish camp. On the flags there were a profile of a talking black head on a white background and black scorpion on a yellow background. Assumptions are made about the sources of these images and their symbolic meaning.

Keywords: Italian medieval chronicles, Giovanni Sercambi, sources on Balkan history, Battle of Nicopolis (1396), vexillology

GERASSIMOS G. PAGRATIS, *Greek Subjects of Venice in Eastern Mediterranean Maritime Business: Some Sixteenth-Century Case Studies*

Studies on the maritime activities of Greeks in the sixteenth century, published in the last decades, have renewed research interest in this field, leading to the revision of the views of earlier researchers who describe Greek merchant shipping in the sixteenth century as an economic activity supported by a few boats, with which Greeks served local fishing and transporting activities, fearful of venturing beyond the safety of the coasts. Thanks to new bibliography it is documented the more active presence of subjects of Venice and foreigners in the maritime life of the State. The present study is part of a personal research project by the undersigned, aimed at compiling a typology of the participation of Greek subjects of Venice in maritime trade. As I see it, prerequisite for achieving this goal is the existence of a series of specific case studies. Some of these are proposed, in general outline, in this paper, referring to the years after the third Venetian-Ottoman war.

Keywords: Venetian maritime state – Shipping history – Maritime History – sixt

ROXANA COMAN, *Ottoman Residential Architecture of the 18th and 19th Centuries and the Romanian Provinces. From Cosmopolitanism to Nationalism*

What do Kastoria, Siatista, Thessaloniki, Gjirokastra, Ohrid, Sozopol, Nessebar, Plovdiv, Bucharest, Ploiești, Istanbul, and so on, have in common? Apart from being cities in different Balkan countries, they share a common Ottoman influence, especially when it comes to architecture. In Greece the manors are called *archontika*, αρχοντικά, and considered to be representative for the Macedonian architectural style, in Romania, they are simply called merchant homes and sometimes considered Oriental in style, in Bulgaria they are seen as Bulgarian architectural heritage. The manors still preserved in one form or another throughout the Balkans, have been mostly built in the 18th, 19th centuries and beginning of the 20th centuries. The majority of the owners were merchants or members of the local economic and political elite. Whether we call them Balkan or Ottoman architectural heritage, these houses have witnessed an interesting process – their meaning and symbolism have shifted from representatives of local identity (especially in the cases of Bulgaria and Greece) to national, and, to some extent, Ottoman. Their affiliations to various architectural styles depict what was going on in the Balkans at a certain point. For example, some *archontika* in Kastoria follow the stylistic traits of Art Nouveau and even Art Deco.

Keywords: Ottoman architecture, merchant house, 18th century merchants, Bucharest, Ploiești, acculturation, boyars, Wallachia, Moldavia, Phanariots

VIRGINIA BLÎNDA, *La migration des livres dans le sud-est de l'Europe (milieu du XIX^e siècle)*

Our paper explores some aspects of the dissemination of printed books in Southeast Europe, using as framework the existing legislative context. To this end, our research performs a general analysis of the book regime in the Romanian Principalities (especially in Wallachia), the printing of books for Southeast European communities in the North Danube territories, and the regulations on book circulation in the Ottoman Empire (mid-century nineteenth century and in

the decades that followed). Mobility of the print in Southeast Europe led to the emergence and evolution of some cultural, political and legal practices, and they all contributed to the impact that access to knowledge had on these communities.

Keywords: Books; Romanian Principalities; Southeast European communities; Mid of the 19th Century.

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CĂTĂLINA VĂTĂȘESCU, Termes concernant la propriété dans le *Kanun i Lekë Dukagjinit*

The inventory of words relating to property and heritage, possession, right of ownership and inheritance in the Albanian customary legal norms included in the so-called Kanun i Lekë Dukagjinit is rich and stable. Most of the words are ancient (autochthonous or borrowed from Latin, but also from Greek and Italian) and correspond to definite realities. There are even terms which do not go beyond the limits of the Gheg dialect. With a few exceptions, these are the words in the common vocabulary that gain legal meanings. Fixed and sometimes rhymed synonymic formulas and series facilitate oral transmission from generation to generation.

Keywords: Albanian customary law, property vocabulary.

ALESSANDRO FLAVIO DUMITRAȘCU, *Un tardo riferimento all' alleanza dinastica tra i Paleologi e i Malatesta*

Our discovery of the privilege of Andreas Palaiologos for Malatesta de' Malatesti allows us not only to add new information to the last years of the Byzantine despot's biography and to identify the beneficiary of these diplomas but also to discover the continuation of a dynastical alliance, that, until now, was considered by most historians to have ended after the wedding of Zoe with Ivan III of Moscow. Most of all, this document tends to confirm the thesis of Jonathan Harris according to which Andreas Palaiologos continues to follow the politics of crusade of his father, Thomas.

Keywords: Privilege; Palaiologos; Malatesta; dynastical alliance; crusade.

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