

Elena SIUPIUR, *Emigrația: condiție umană și politică în Sud-Estul european* (The emigration: human and political condition in South-East Europe), Editura Academiei Române, București, 2009, 203 p. with 3 maps.

With this volume Elena Siupiur brings a conclusion to more than thirty years of her researches on the subject of migrations and population transfers in South-Eastern Europe. The result is an accurate and empathic explanation of the factors that determined these mass movements during the last two centuries. As a last word, after having scrutinized these wanderings through the Balkans, on the back cover we find the argument linked in a straight line with the biblical Exodus, a way of reminding us that this drama has been known at all times. In retelling these stories with enthusiasm and skill, Siupiur's approach is refreshingly direct, as she treats about a human experience that was lived several times by her own family.

The first of the five chapters places the concept of migration amidst the political conditions of South-Eastern Europe, beginning with the Ottoman conquest of the Balkan Peninsula at the end of the 14th century. While the Christian elites sought refuge from the invaders and slipped away northwards, the Muslims took their place to fill up the regions that had been deserted. Deportations or flights involved ethnic and confessional groups, or social categories as craftsmen or educated people (mostly clergymen).

The historical statistics invoked in the second chapter should show how the ethnic and religious structures of the Balkan society have changed. The shift of the figures over medieval and modern centuries complicates matters further and the reader may sometimes find the evidence inconclusive, though the references are collected from specialists like O. L. Barkan and N. Todorov. The demonstration is more convincing in the cases of Bessarabia and Bucovina, when the period explored is narrowed to the 19th century alone.

The third chapter provides a valuable contribution to the knowledge of the beginnings of the national minorities mixed with the Romanians. On the basis of a rich bibliography, Siupiur stresses the importance of these newcomers in the Danubian Principalities, the growth of their number in the 19th century and the output of their economic and cultural activities. A considerable attention is paid to the Romanian emigration from Habsburg lands (Transylvania and Bucovina).

With the fourth chapter we meet a topic which Elena Siupiur has thoroughly studied in her former works, the migration of the 'intellectuals'. The rise of the Balkan intelligentsia is described in the frame of the steady process of national emancipation. The relationship between political power and intellectuals could not be avoided, and the reader becomes a witness of the involvement of the intelligentsia in enlightening the people and preparing the conditions for national liberation. Some detailed and fascinating pages deal with the constant appeal to Europe made by those intellectuals. It is worth noting that their call, as late as the end of the 19th century, still used the argument of Christian faith.

The Bulgarian case, extensively investigated by Siupiur since her early works, is here used for displaying the institutions and solidarity networks which enabled the communities of emigrants to preserve their identity and unity: churches, schools, committees and more or less 'secret' associations, as well as the newspapers and the Diaspora's literary activity.

Elena Siupiur has boldly opened the way for a topic which should command the historian's attention. In this book, the methodology strives to be multidisciplinary, a quality which was only partially attained. A question that would perhaps need more caution is the character of the long-lasting Ottoman rule in the Balkans: it is viewed here as catastrophic, and this makes a partial truth sound like the whole and only truth, an opinion that is not shared nowadays by the Ottomanists. One more question may be asked about Bessarabia and Bucovina. Do they really belong to South-Eastern Europe? The limits of that space do not usually include these provinces the names of which can not be found anymore on a map where Moldova and Ukraine are set nowadays.

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