Byzantium and Migration: an introduction
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That emperor, the Great Constantine, the distinguished jewel and excellency of the Roman imperial power, considered with the help of God all these things, namely the advantages of the location, the geographic context and the beauty of the city, its accessibility by sea and its capacity to offer safe harbour, and that it bridged Europe and Asia, being located in the middle of the whole Roman realm. Based on this, he made the best decision and attributed to her pre-eminence and embellished her. And he removed the dominion from the old to the new Rome, as he named her. He brought holy relics and untold amounts of money and the most distinguished of the noble and brave Romans whom he made live in unison with the noblest of the Hellenes. And the people of this city became the purest, noblest and more honourable people of the whole human kind.[1]

This quotation from a sermon addressed to John VIII Palaiologos in early-fifteenth-century Constantinople sums up in an insightful manner the relationship of Byzantium and Byzantine history to the phenomenon of migration. Byzantium, the Roman Empire of Constantinople, represents in fact an imperial state and a society that emerged through migration. The migration of an imperial city and its political culture from Rome to Constantinople, the New Rome, as the author of the encomium lucidly put it. This could probably be reason enough for me to make use of a cliché expression at this point and assert that Byzantine history should be actually regarded as a history of migration. However, a similar cliché expression appears on the back-page of my book on Byzantine war ideology[2], where Byzantine history is presented as mainly a history of warfare, so I think it would be better to start avoiding such generalizing statements on the whole. Nonetheless, in most clichés there is some seed of truth to be found; therefore, even if Byzantine history is not a history of migration, mobility of people and groups was undoubtedly a major factor in the many centuries of the empire's existence.

To come back to the cited text-passage, I think that it provides a good pretext in order to comment on the phenomenon of migration as a human practice that marked the historical evolution of the empire, but also as a socio-political phenomenon of the present. For instance, if we accepted history's didactic role, the text-passage cited above could function as a good lesson for European leaders that are currently deciding for the future of thousands of migrants

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[1] *Panegyricus ad Manuelem et Joannem VIII Palaeologum*, in S.P. Lampros, Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά, vol. III, Athens 1926, 151-152.
[2] I. Stouraitis, *Krieg und Frieden in der politischen und ideologischen Wahrnehmung in Byzanz (7.-11. Jahrundert)*, Vienna 2009.

(especially refugees). The text's didactic message would be that migration does not destroy the purity of peoples and their societies, but may very well help them evolve and become better. Of course, I am well aware of the fact that learning from the past is not the strongest trait of politicians, whereas a historical text can always be interpreted in various ways when instrumentalized to serve current political and cultural concerns. In this respect, I will concentrate on what issues this late Byzantine view of the Roman past does raise regarding the historical role of migration in the Byzantine world.

The background of the peaceful migration of the imperial power and the Roman ruling élite from the old to the new capital in the early fourth century was set by the violent Roman migration to the Greek East in terms of military invasion and conquest some centuries earlier. This violent migration had brought about the colonization of the East with Romans and their political ideals and organization, but also the colonization of Rome with Greeks and their culture[3]. Moreover, as the author of the encomium explicitly states, migration from Rome to Constantinople was not just about people leaving their old residence for a new one; it was also about the things and the ideas those people carried with them from their place of residence, and how these got integrated into and merged with what already existed in their place of destination. In this respect, the text pinpoints the interrelation of the phenomenon of migration with identity and culture.

As A. Laiou and H. Arweihler have stated in the preface of a collective volume on internal diaspora in the Byzantine world, the Byzantine Empire should be seen as one of the most successful multi-ethnic states in history[4]. Nothing speaks against accepting this statement as basically correct, but one needs to take into account that it poses the question about the different ways the social role of ethnicity and culture should be approached in a pre-modern context. In other words, studying migration in the Byzantine world reveals a great deal about the fluid and malleable character of identities and cultures in the absence of nationalism and its reifying impact on both.

On the other hand, if migration into the Byzantine world is largely about identities and cultures merging together – instead of bouncing off each other – this hardly means that we should regard the imperial state of New Rome as an ideal state that was built upon the principles of tolerance and co-existence. The study of a pre-modern state like the Byzantine, whose despotic power could hardly penetrate and logistically control the daily life of its subjects in the same way the infrastructural power of the modern buraucratic nation-state

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[3] R. Mellor, "Graecia Capta: The Confrontation between Greek and Roman Identity", in K. Zacharia (ed.), *Hellenisms. Culture, identity and ethnicity from antiquity to modernity*, Aldershot 2008, pp. 79-125.
[4] H. Ahrweiler & A.E. Laiou, *Studies on the Internal Diaspra of the Byzantine Empire*, Washington, D.C. 1998, p. vii.

does[5], makes two things evident: First, identities and cultures do not have a life of their own as natural phenomena that constitute by themselves materials of conflict; and second, migration's role in Byzantine history was for the most part constructive rather than destructive.

Within this framework, the role of migration both in giving shape to a medieval East Roman Empire as well as in contributing to its disappearance from the historical stage is distinct when it comes to framing in chronological and spatial terms what we conventionally call the Byzantine era and the Byzantine world. To begin with the former issue, if the aforementioned *translatio imperii* from Rome to Constantinople under Constantine the Great signalized a kick-off event of a long process of change in the late Roman Empire in historical terms, the establishment of the medieval Empire of Constantinople as the single imperial state under a Roman emperor in a radically changing world should rather be traced in the late-fifth century, that is, in a period when the impact of one of the largest movement of populations the world had known reached its culmination[6]. The view of the late-fifth century as a decisive turning-point regarding the consolidation of the medieval geopolitical and cultural image of a Byzantine world is not only a privilege of modern historical hindsight but finds support in the perceptions of Byzantine authors about the past.

In the writings of Constantine Porphyrogennetos, in particular his treatises DAI and De thematibus, the emperor explicitly refers to the ultimate crossing of the Roman *imperium* to Constantinople when Rome ceased to be governed by an emperor, that is, when the last emperor of Rome was dethroned by the Goths[7]. This view of the impact of the Germanic migration on the Roman world is best summarized in a passage from the historiographical account of John Kinnamos, written in the late-twelfth century, which I think is worth quoting:

> For the title of empire disappeared in Rome a long time back, since the attributes of power
> passed, after Augustus whom, alluding to the youthful age at which he assumed office, they call
> Augustulus, to Odoaker and then to Theodoric ruler of the Goths, who were both tyrants. ...
> From the time of Theodoric and a little earlier, until now, Rome existed in a state of revolt,
> although repeatedly recovered for the Romans by Belisarius and Narses, generals of the Romans

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[5] On the distinction between *despotic* and *infrastructural* state power, see M. Mann, The autonomous power of the state: its origins, mechanisms and results, *European Journal of Sociology* 25/2 (1984), 185-213.

[6] G. Halsall, *Barbarian migrations and the Roman West, 376–568*, Cambridge University Press 2008; T.F.X. Noble (ed.), *From Roman provinces to Medieval kingdoms*, London & New York 2006.

[7] *Costantino Porfirogenito. De thematibus*, ed. A. Pertusi (Studi e Testi 160), Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1952, 94, 10.1-7; *Constantine Porphyrogenitus. De administrando imperio*, ed. G. Moravcsik, 2nd edn. (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae 1), Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1967, 27, 1-12. On this see my forthcoming paper Y. Stouraitis, "*Scriptores post Theophanem*: Normative aspects of imperial historiography in tenth-century Byzantium", in W. Pohl & D. Mahoney (eds.), *Historiography and Identity around the Turn of the First Millennium – A Comparative Perspective*, Turnhout: Brepols Publishers.

in the period of Justinian; it was again rendered no less subservient to barbarian tyrants, who were entitled kings in emulation of Theodoric the first king and tyrant. … Now they (scil. the Latins) rashly declare that the empire in Byzantion is different from that in Rome. As I consider this, it has repeatedly caused me to weep. The rule of Rome has, like a piece of property, been sold to barbarians and really servile men. Therefore it has no right to a bishop nor, much more, to a ruler. For the one who ascends to the greatness of empire runs on foot in a fashion unworthy of himself alongside the mounted bishop and is like his groom. But the other titles him imperator, considering him on the same plane with the emperor (scil. the Byzantine *basileus*).[8]

This wonderful piece of Byzantine political and historical thinking emerged in the context of the reaction of the Komnenian power élite to the so-called "Zweikaiser Problem"[9]. With regard to our subject though, it provides an insightful Byzantine approach to the chronological as well as the broader territorial frame of what one may conventionally call today a *Byzantine* era and a *Byzantine* geopolitical sphere respectively. For the high-medieval East Roman élite, the fall of western Rome as a result of a long process of interpenetration of migrating Germanic peoples was the starting-point of a Roman order under the centralized political authority of a single Roman emperor in the *Oecumene*, the emperor of Constantinople, whose limits of political authority demarcated the Empire in a medieval world of ethnic kingdoms. From that time on, the epicentre of the Roman world shifted toward the Eastern Mediterranean and its geopolitical sphere included the broader areas that were roughly circumscribed by the Italian peninsula in the West, the regions of Mesopotamia in the East, the shores of the eastern Mediterranean in the South and the Danube in the north[10].

It is within these broader geopolitical limits that the administrative boundaries of a united Roman polity of Constantinople up to 1204 and those of its successor polities afterwards continuously fluctuated until the ultimate disappearance of Roman political rule in the late-fifteenth century. Moreover, it was in these territories that a broader Eastern Christian commonwealth was at home, whose boundaries for most of the time superseded those of the Roman administrative ones but whose epicentre remained Constantinople with its Christian emperor and patriarch. Distinguishing between the Byzantine vision of a Roman Empire as a

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[8] John Kinnamos, *Epitome rerum ab Ioanne et Alexio Comnenis gestarum*, ed. A. Meineke (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae) Bonn, 1836, 218-219; cf. Ch.M. Brandes, D*eeds of John and Manuel Comnenus by John Kinnamos*, New York 1976, pp. 165-166.

[9] Cf. R.-J. Lilie, Das "Zweikaiserproblem" und sein Einfluß auf die Außenpolitik der Komnenen, *Byzantische Forschungen* 9 (1985), 219-243.

[10] J. Koder, *Der Lebensraum der Byzantiner: historisch-geographischer Abriß ihres mittelalterlichen Staates im östlichen Mittelmeerraum*, Vienna 2001 (reprint).

political community demarcated by the limits of enforceable centralized imperial authority and a religious-cultural commonwealth as a broader sphere of the Constantinopolitan culture's influence and resonance, is a central issue in our effort to understand the different role of identities as well as of cultural and political boundaries in the phenomena of mobility and migration in the Byzantine world.

Based on this, one may distinguish two generic types of migration: first, movement of peoples and groups from outside-in the aforementioned geopolitical sphere; and second, movement of peoples and groups within this geopolitical sphere and, in particular, within the – at any time – current boundaries of the Constantinopolitan emperor's political authority. The first type mainly refers to migration's role in shaping and re-shaping the Byzantine Empire in political-territorial terms. The second type refers to how the centralized imperial state made use of the movement of peoples and groups within its geopolitical boundaries for its own purposes, but also concerns the role of social mobility in the function of Byzantine society.

Beginning with outside-in migration, it is evident that the movement of larger groups towards Byzantine imperial territory had – with very few exceptions – a non-peaceful character. Even though from time to time groups, such as for instance the Mardaites in the seventh or the Banu Habib tribe in the tenth century, sought refuge in the empire and were settled there by the imperial power in exchange for service[11], migration towards Byzantium mainly took place in terms of invasion and conquest or interpenetration of imperial territory by various peoples, such as the Lombards, the Slavs, the Bulgars, the Muslim-Arabs, the Normans, the Latins and the Turks (to mention the most significant). This type of migration played a fundamental role in changing the limits of the empire as well as its demographic and ethnographic landscape between the sixth and the fifteenth centuries.

If Justinian I's (527-565) very short-lived reconquista represents the last effort of the Roman imperial power to reclaim the West – or at least a significant part of it – from the Germanic settlers, the period that started with the end of that emperor's reign in the late-sixth century was meant to have a major impact on Constantinople's empire insofar as the movement of new peoples towards it caused a new large contraction of territory under Roman authority. The settlement of the Lombards on important parts of the Italian territories has received less attention compared to the Slavic settlement in the Balkans or the Muslim conquest in the East. This is due to the fact that the latter two events brought about the temporary or permanent loss of core territories that had been under Constantinople's

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[11] W. Treadgold, *Byzantium and Its Army 284–1081*, Stanford Univ. Press 1998, pp. 72 & 78.

unbroken direct rule for many centuries, whereas these migrations posed a direct threat to the medieval Empire's imperial center[12]. One needs only to consider that in the early-seventh century a few kilometres outside the long wall in Thrace it was not anymore Roman land, that is, land controlled by imperial governors and garrisons, since Byzantine presence on the Balkan Peninsula had been reduced to a few major cities and strongholds mainly on the coastal areas. On the other hand the Arabs organized three attacks on Constantinople within a period of less than a century, thus representing a new neighbour that had not simply settled on former imperial territory, like the Slavs, but was claiming the role of a new superpower by seeking to subjugate and dismantle the Empire of Constantinople.

A comparison of the empire's territorial extension at the end of Justinian's reign and in the early-8th century makes the impact of this mobility towards the Byzantine world evident (see map 1 & 2). The result of the major territorial contraction of the seventh century was a mini-empire, whose orientation was not anymore maritime with the Mediterranean at the epicentre, but rather continental with its focus on Asia Minor and the East. A significant part of the indigenous Roman populations was obliged to abandon the southern Balkans and move mainly towards south Italy, thus strengthening the Byzantine element in the Italian provinces that remained under imperial rule. In the eastern provinces and northern Africa the Muslim invasion was also connected with the movement of Christian populations, in particular members of the Roman élite, monks and soldiers, towards the empire's Anatolian core as well as towards south Italy[13].

The Slavic and the Muslim settlements on imperial soil provide good examples of the different role that violent migration, either in the form of interpenetration or of invasion and conquest, can play in a pre-modern imperial state's development – the difference depending on whether the migrating agents were under centralized political rule or not. The infiltration of the politically fragmented Slavic tribes in the Balkans created a potential for co-existence and assimilation of a large part of those populations by the empire. The main exception here was the emergence of the Bulgar kingdom in the northern Balkans in the late-seventh century, where the political organization of the Slavs under centralized Bulgar rule gave birth to a strong independent state which became an important political rival of the Constantinopolitan imperial power. On the other hand, the Muslim invasion under the leadership of a new

[12] F. Curta, *The Edinburgh History of the Greeks, c. 500 to 1050: The Early Middle Ages*, Edinburgh Univ. Press 2010, pp. 48-96; J. Haldon, *The Empire That Would Not Die: The Paradox of Eastern Roman Survival, 640–740*, Cambridge Univ Press 2016.

[13] M. McCormick, "The imperial Edge: Italo-Byzantine Identity, Movement and Integration, A.D. 650–950", in H. Ahrweiler & A.E. Laiou, *Studies on the Internal Diaspora of the Byzantine Empire*, Washington, D.C. 1998, pp. 17-52; H. Ditten, *Ethnische Verschiebungen zwischen der Balkanhalbinsel und Kleinasien vom Ende des 6. bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 9. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1993, pp. 54-67.

centralized imperial power, that of the Caliphs, created the conditions for a protracted conflict between two imperial systems whose political discourse created a reified image of two opposing dominant cultures, the Christian-Roman and the Muslim-Arab.

Thus, the gradual restoration of imperial rule in the Balkans from the eighth century on was marked by a process of integration of the Slavs as a new producing and tax-paying population into the empire. This process was interrelated with the imperial state's policies of population transfer within its borders, as I shall mention later, and was underpinned by the missionary work of the Byzantine Church that culminated in the late-ninth century with the Christianization of the Bulgars. Conversely, the protracted war with the Caliphate was conducive for galvanizing the identity of the medieval East Roman state as the empire of the Christians, whose main claim to the traditional Roman prerogative of world-supremacy could be now reinterpreted through the Roman power's propagated role as the main defender of a Christian *Oecumene* from the infidel Muslims[14]. In this respect, it is evident that, despite the obvious threat posed to the Empire due to the penetration of its borders by large hostile or less hostile groups from the late sixth century onwards, these population movements rather contributed to its gradual regeneration as a super-power in the Eastern Mediterranean by the late-tenth century.

The next major wave of migration towards the Byzantine imperial state, which had reached its medieval territorial peak after the subjugation of the Bulgar kingdom in 1018, took place in the second half of the eleventh century. The southward movement of the Normans gave an end to Constantinopolitan rule over Italian regions, which was sealed by the fall of Bari in 1071. The Norman effort to cross the Adriatic and expand into imperial territories in the Balkans, aiming at the conquest of Constantinople itself, was successfully repulsed by emperor Alexios I Komnenos. However, the Byzantines were not equally successful in dealing with the westward migration of Seljuks and other Turkish groups from the mid-eleventh century onwards. These groups managed to swiftly occupy the largest part of Byzantine Anatolia after the battle of Mantzikert in 1071, thus causing a major blow to the empire that was deprived of an important part of its territorial core. When Alexios I Komnenos ascended the throne in 1081, the empire was only a shadow of its former medieval self in territorial terms (see map 3).

For a better understanding of the impact of the Turkish settlement on the empire, one may attempt a comparison of the developments in late-eleventh century Anatolia with those in the early-fifth century Western Roman Empire. Contrary to the Muslim-Arabs who in the seventh

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[14] Stouraitis, *Krieg und Frieden*, pp. 197-260.

century had unsuccessfully attempted to knock-down the empire, the Turkish groups –
similarly to the Germanic groups in the early-medieval West – were able to undermine the
Roman order by interpenetrating it and fragmenting its eastern provincial periphery[15]. The
process of interpenetration was facilitated both by the practice of the Byzantine élite to use
Turkish forces in its internal affairs before and after the defeat in Mantzikert as well as by the
lesser degree of centralized political organization of the Turks – especially of those pastoral
Turcoman groups who where in search of a new land for settlement. Thus, the emergence of
various minor Turkish polities on Byzantine soil created a new status quo of co-existence
both with the weakened imperial state of Constantinople as well as with semi-autonomous
provincial Byzantine lords and indigenous populations in Asia Minor, insofar as no one
possessed the necessary military muscle to subjugate the other.

In light of this, one may plausibly assert that the Turkish settlement in Anatolia during
the late-eleventh century set in motion a process of the Byzantine Empire's transformation
into a medieval social formation. If one takes a closer look at Alexios Komnenos' effort to
change everything in order for things to stay the same, it is evident that, for the empire to
continue to exist as a centralized state, it could not anymore function as a typical late-antique
social formation, as it had done for centuries against the stream of radical change in the
medieval post-Roman West. Thus, the reformed Komnenian world, as a response to the
geopolitical status quo created by the Turkish settlement and the crusading movement, was
marked by the consolidation of a nobility of birth, the appearance of 'feudal' elements in the
empire's economy alongside the rise of a merchant class, and the emergence of an ethnic
vision of community in the shadow of the traditional imperial-geopolitical image[16]. It follows
that Byzantium in this period demonstrates many of the typical features that characterized the
medieval social formations in the West. Therefore, if one was willing to adopt a schematic
approach, the 'long' twelfth century could be regarded as the actual beginning of the
Byzantine Middle Ages in a manner analogous to the process that took place in the West in
the 'long' fifth century.

Be that as it may, the major historical consequence of the Turkish settlement remains the
instigation of another wave of migration, namely the movement of armies and people from
the Latin West to the East through the Crusades. Contrary to the Slavic settlers whose

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[15] Cl. Cahen, *The Formation of Turkey. The Seljukid Sultanate of Rum: Eleventh to Fourteenth Century*, London
2001, pp. 7-14 ; J.-Cl. Cheynet, "La résistance aux Turcs en Asie Mineure entre Matnzikert et la première
Croisade", in *EYΨYXIA – Mélanges offerts à Hélène Ahrweiler*, Paris 1998, pp. 131-147;
[16] M. Angold, *The Byzantine Empire, 1025-1204*, London & new York 1984, pp. 114-135; A.P. Kazhdan & A.W
Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, University of California Press
1985, pp. 24-73.

Christianization had facilitated their assimilation or integration through peaceful or violent means into the Roman order, the Muslim identity of the Turkish settlers made their military expulsion from Anatolia the only means for the Empire to recover control over its territorial core. The Byzantines' need to deal with the urgent problem of the Turkish advancement as far as the Asiatic hinterland of Constantinople gave birth to the Crusading movement in the 1090s, which caused the largest migration of people from the West to the East that had taken place for centuries. Irrespective of Alexios Komnenos' initial aims when he called for Latin-Christian help[17], the outcome of his diplomatic efforts was a major Latin settlement on former Roman territory in the East, which the Byzantine power élite hadn't wished for and which was meant to have an enduring impact on the empire's future.

The Latin-Christian polities in the Holy Land, the armies and the people that moved there from Latin Europe as well as the ideas and beliefs that they carried, in particular the idea of a 'holy war' for Christendom, undermined Constantinople's position as the single most important center of Christian political power in the Eastern Mediterranean, that is, within the traditional geopolitical sphere of the Byzantine emperor's predominance. This diverted the attention of the Komnenian warrior-emperor's to a struggle over Christian supremacy in the East, which second-ranked the goal of expulsing the Turks from Anatolia. The Fourth Crusade and the sack of Constantinople in 1204 are generally regarded as the culmination of a Christian controversy that was building up thought the twelfth century[18]. The Latin conquest of the imperial city is an event of major historical significance mainly because it signalized the end of imperial Romanness as an operative political ideology that for many centuries had underpinned the political unity of the Eastern Roman world under the centralized rule of a single emperor and a single imperial city-state. Moreover, it triggered a new wave of Latin settlement in the southern Balkans and the Aegean, which determined the political fragmentation of the Byzantine world in the last two and a half centuries of its existence.

With the benefit of historical hindsight it seems fairly ironic that from all the major waves of violent migration into the East Roman geopolitical sphere the one that caused the empire's political disintegration was that of fellow Christians instigated by the Byzantine power élite itself. If we want to understand how migration ultimately turned from a constructive into a destructive factor for the empire's existence, a qualitative comparison between the crisis of the 'long' seventh and the 'long' twelfth century will do. The main difference in the latter period was that warfare against the infidel intruders did not anymore

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[17] J. Shepard, "Cross-purposes: Alexius Comnenus and the First Crusade", in J. Philips (ed.), *The First Crusade: Origins and impact*, Manchester & New York 1997, pp. 107–29, esp. pp. 113–22.

[18] A.E. Laiou, "Byzantium and the Crusades in the Twelfth Century: Why Was the Fourth Crusade Late in Coming?", in A.E. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta: The Fourth Crusade and Its Consequences*, Paris 2005, pp. 17–40.

function as a cohesive factor that enhanced loyalty to the Roman order in the Anatolian provinces, whereas the Christian identity of the Latin settlers in the East hardly facilitated their political subordination to Constantinople. After 1204, the enduring political fragmentation of the Byzantine world was marked both by practices of co-existence of new and old populations in the territories of the former empire (such as Latins, Turks, Serbs, Bulgars, Albanians and, of course, *Rhomaioi*) as well as by the military-political antagonism between the ruling élites of the various polities that emerged there. The disappearance of the remains of Roman rule was concluded when one group of Turkish settlers, the Ottomans, managed to centralize political control over the others and direct Turkish expansion towards the Balkans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Based on this short overview of the impact of outside-in migration on the Byzantine world, which of course can hardly do justice to the complex character of these multi-faceted historical events, the main conclusion that can be drawn concerns migration's changing role in the empire's history. This could be schematically described as a transition from a foundational to a regenerating and, finally, to a degenerating role which was interrelated with internal changes in the Byzantine socio-political order and its capacity to deal with migrating groups in different periods – be it in the form of whole peoples or of large armies. The latter issue is interrelated with the issue of movement of peoples and groups within the Byzantine world, in particular within the – at any time – current boundaries of imperial authority, to which the last part of this paper will be devoted.

Migration from a place of residence to another area within the frames of the Byzantine commonwealth is a question closely connected with issues, such as the intention and capacity of the Byzantine state to re-assert military control over lost regions, the often debated character of the medieval East Roman political entity as an empire, and the role of identity and ideology in maintaining the assimilative aspect of Roman political culture. The extensive territorial contraction of the seventh century left a large part of Christian and formerly Roman populations outside the borders of imperial authority in the East, thus consolidating the image of an eastern Christian commonwealth that superseded the limits of the empire as a political community. On the Balkans, the Slavic settlement interrupted Roman political authority, but at the same time inflated those areas with a new producing population that was docile in both political and religious terms. Restoration of Roman political authority there went hand in hand with the Christianization of the Slavs, as the main means for their cultural Romanization. These developments created new opportunities for the imperial state of

Constantinople, which employed well-directed policies of population-transfer in order to renew human resources within its borders up to the tenth century.

A look at the map (map 4) provides a rough image of the basic directions of the movement of large groups of population within the Empire, which mainly had the character of forced transfers organized by the imperial power of Constantinople in order to serve the imperial raison d'etat. The main groups involved in those transfers were Christian populations of various ethnicities and doctrines, such as Miaphysite Armenians, Monophysite Syrians, Paulicians, as well as populations that were recently Christianized, such as the Slavs. According to Hans Ditten, whose monograph has focussed on the transfer of groups in Byzantium in the period between the late-sixth and the mid-ninth centuries[19], the imperial government's policy transplanted large numbers of Armenians, Syrians and Paulicians from the eastern provinces to the Balkans, mostly as a result of deportation in the aftermath of Byzantine military operations in those areas. Movement in the opposite direction, namely from the Balkans to Asia Minor, mainly concerned Slavic populations as a result of the gradual restoration of imperial control over the Balkan provinces. Native Greek-speaking populations of Anatolia were also affected by these policies, as the well known case of their forced transfer to Balkan provinces under Nikephoros I in the early-ninth century demonstrates, which seems to be interrelated with the emergence of the theme-system in this period[20].

Even if the numbers given by the sources should always be considered with great caution, since in many cases they may be exceeding reality by far, it remains a fact that we are dealing with significant portions of ethno-culturally diverse populations that were obliged to change their place of residence and settle in another part of the empire between the seventh and the ninth centuries. In this respect, it seems plausible to assert that the policy of population transfer is probably the best evidence that in the aftermath of the seventh-century crisis Byzantium, albeit a mini empire in territorial size, maintained the character of an imperial state with a demonstrated intention and capacity to coercively integrate and redistribute culturally diverse populations in its territorial core.

The loss of large parts of territory did not bring about a regression of the Roman imperial mentality of Constantinople – as has been argued in the past[21] – but rather favoured its revitalization on two levels: First, it reinstated military expansion in terms of reconquest as a political necessity in the agenda of the imperial city-state of Constantinople. Second, it urged

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[19] Ditten, *Ethnische Verschiebungen*, pp. 123f.
[20] L. Brubaker & J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era, c. 680-850. A History*, Cambridge 2011, pp. 723–755, esp. 744f.
[21] H. Ahrweiler, *L'ideologie politique de l'empire byzantin*, Paris 1975, pp. 25–36.

the imperial power to seek to integrate new human resources irrespective of their ethnic or doctrinal affiliation in order to better serve the state's economic and military needs. Due to Constantinople's consistent political practice to marginalize issues of cultural or, for that matter, ethnic homogeneity in the imperial realm, Byzantine society remained culturally much more diverse and inhomogeneous at the level of subject populations than some modern scholars are willing to accept as a result of their focus on the dominant Roman culture of the educated élite. In this context, religious identity remained the main means for a basic process of Romanization of newly immigrated populations.

Even though a systematic study of the period after the mid-ninth century is lacking, there is little doubt that a similar disposition continued to underline the policies of the united imperial state up to 1204. One needs only to consider some pre-eminent examples, such as the colonization of Crete with Greek-speaking Chalcedonian Christians and Armenians in the aftermath of the island's reconquest by Nikephoros II Phocas (963-969)[22] or Basil II's (976-1025) consistent policy of deportation of local populations from conquered cities in the Bulgar kingdom, whom he transplanted to other parts of the empire only to put Armenians and Greeks in their place[23]. The same emperor settled Armenian lords with their retinues in Anatolia after the annexation of Armenia[24], while Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118) settled the defeated Pechenegs on imperial soil in the late eleventh century with the prospect to integrate them into the Roman order as a new population that could contribute to the state's army and of course to taxation[25].

If state-coercion and warfare represented the main causes of impelled movement of populations within the Empire and the broader Byzantine commonwealth, one needs to consider the role of natural phenomena in forcing whole communities to migrate, which remains fairly understudied, as well as the distinct practice of voluntary migration within the imperial realm. The latter concerns persons or groups that voluntarily emigrated, permanently or less permanently, from their place of residence due to educational, professional and economic reasons. A large part of this kind of voluntary movement, both permanent and circular, was interrelated with the imperial state, in particular with service for the emperor or alternatively the Church; therefore it concerns the issues of social mobility and social advancement in the East Roman order.

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[22] Leon Diakonos, *Leonis diaconi Caloënsis historiae libri decem*, ed. K.B. Hase (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae), Bonn 1828, 28.

[23] John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae. Series Berolinensis 5), Berlin 1973, 344-345, 352.

[24] John Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum* 355.

[25] Anna Komnene, *Alexias*, ed. A. Kambylis & D.R. Reinsch (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae. Series Berolinensis XL/1) Berlin & New York 2001, 15-16.

There are many well-known cases in the sources that testify to the movement of members of the Byzantine élite from the provinces to Constantinople as a result of their own or their family's ambition for social advancement. The other way around, advancement in the élite of service in Constantinople, both civil and military, often meant that the person should move from the capital to a provincial town in order to take up an assigned post there. The case of the Choniates brothers – to name just one typical example – perfectly summarizes the aspects of voluntary migration within the empire. Born in Chonai, a small town in Anatolia, Niketas and Michael were sent in a young age to Constantinople to acquire a higher education as a means to a career in the imperial service and the Church respectively. Advancing to the position of bishop, Michael was obliged to migrate once again from his new place of residence, Constantinople, to his see in Athens. Niketas, on the other hand, acquired a position as imperial secretary in Constantinople before moving to Philippopolis after his appointment there as a governor. Later he returned once more to Constantinople where he acquired the higher post of *megas Logothetes* at the court.

Considering such indicative cases, what we are missing is a systematic study of voluntary migration that will seek to examine comparatively a large sample of persons of different social status and professional track in an effort to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon's role in the function of the East Roman order. Given the existence of very useful historical and methodological tools such as the recently completed prosopography of the middle Byzantine period or network analysis, voluntary movement of persons from the provinces to the capital and vice-versa or between the provinces can now be approached in statistical or typological terms, which would enable an in-depth exploration of the basic quantity- and quality-factors that determined the main trends of permanent or semi-permanent and circular migration within the empire. Such important factors were the relationship between the migrants' area of origin and area of destination, the intervening obstacles relating to gender and social position, ethnic or religious background, profession and educational status, and of course personal motives. Moreover, such an approach could also be useful for an in-depth examination of those non-élite groups of common people that were more prone to migration within the empire, such as soldiers and monks. Last but not least, let me mention that, even if Byzantine society was lacking the genre of migration literature as we know it today, research on migration as a literary motif in Byzantine written culture definitely deserves more attention.

To conclude, even though the study of migration in Byzantium has drawn a great deal of attention from Byzantinists, there is still a lot that remains to be done. Certainly, the

intensification of archaeological research is the most promising area wherefrom new material and insights can emerge in the future, thus improving our understanding of the phenomenon both in socio-historical and anthropological terms. I think we are all looking forward to that. Nonetheless, revisiting the written sources with new questions that may provide new syntheses and interpretations of known and less-known written evidence is also an important avenue of research, which needs to be further pursued. I am confident that this, as well as the following, conference on migration in the context of the Vienna Dialogues will make an important contribution in this direction.

Map 1: The Empire under Justinian I

Map 2: The Empire in the early-8th century

Map 3: The Empire in late-11th century

Map 4: Forced trasfer of populations within the Empire