Migration Histories of the Medieval Afroeurasian Transition Zone

Aspects of Mobility between Africa, Asia and Europe, 300–1500 C.E.

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CHAPTER 7

Migration and Ethnicity in the Venetian Territories of the Eastern Mediterranean (13th to 15th Century)

Charalambos Gasparis

Human geographic mobility is a diachronic phenomenon, the goal of which is the security and/or betterment of life for those on the move.[1] Following the major migrations in Europe in the early Middle Ages, those of the late medieval period were less massive and decisive, and stemmed from different causes. The group or individual population movements in the period and place under examination here may be assigned to two large categories: (a) movements owed to violence (e.g. wars, political persecutions, or natural phenomena and diseases), which aimed primarily to seek security in a new place, and (b) those owed to living conditions and the economic environment, which aimed at improving migrants' living conditions. While there is geographic mobility in both cases, that in the first category could be characterized in contemporary terms as "refugee movement" and as more or less massive, while that in the second may be characterized as "migration", and is normally by individuals.

Refugees leave their home voluntarily or involuntarily due to life-threatening political or military violence. The migrant, also compelled by specific (normally, economic) circumstances, voluntarily leaves his home in search of better living conditions and life prospects. However, those who move to further improve and enrich themselves, even though their living conditions are not as bad, are also characterized as migrants. One category of displaced persons included by contemporary scholars among migrants were prisoners of war and slaves

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1 The earlier belief that people in the Middle Ages did not easily migrate of their own accord has now been refuted by many studies and books on migration in medieval Europe. The 11th to 13th centuries, during which intensified transport on land as well as the major growth of maritime travel significantly favored human migration, were decisive for this phenomenon. See indicatively Kleinschmid, *People on the move. Attitudes toward and perception of migration in medieval and modern Europe*, with copious bibliography. For a summary of migration in the Italian peninsula, see Barbero, *Le migrazioni medievali.* For internal migration during the Late Middle Ages and its role in economic growth, particularly that of cities, see Goddard, *Lordship and medieval urbanization*, esp. the chapter *Patterns of migration 1250–1299*, pp. 137–155.

forced to abandon their homes unwillingly under threat of force, and who in most cases never returned to them. In both general categories of displaced persons (refugees, migrants), migration may be by group or individual, though density is the main criterion for whether one speaks of a significant refugee or migration phenomenon or not in a specific time period and geographic area. In addition to the usual political and economic reasons, there is also migration because of chance. This is the case of those who migrated temporarily to another place for various professional or personal reasons, and for various reasons ultimately up and permanently established in their new home.

Obviously, migration also involves the concept of "distance" from the place the migrant was leaving. As the time required to move from the old to the new place of residence increased, so did the sense of permanent abandonment or problematic return, therefore making it possible to speak of migration. This time is the result of many factors: the distance itself, technical means, geophysical characteristics, and political and economic conditions in a greater region at a specific time. Finally, we should note the important factor of the sea, which defines the idea of the "Mediterranean" as a historical place, and which has always linked the regions bordering its waters, facilitating all kinds of human movement.

As regards direction, movement could involve leaving the political territory in which the person lived (emigration), or a change of location within the same territory (immigration). In any case, the return of travelers to their original place of residence was possible under some conditions, though it was often difficult in the historical environment to which we refer. For methodological reasons we will retain the classification into forced and/or violent migration—voluntary migration, despite the fact that apart from certain cases, the reasons for migration cannot be distinguished with certainty, but rather are implied. Besides, displacement could be a result of life threatening (refugee) and economic conditions (migrant) at the same time. Therefore, having defined the concept of immigrant and of refugee, the study of the migration or refugee phenomenon proves particularly complex, since one must consider the many parameters which define it and which are connected with the time, place, and identity of the individuals involved.

The three centuries encompassed by this study are bookmarked by two crucial events in the history of the Eastern Mediterranean: the fall of Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire, first to the Crusaders (1204) and then two and a half centuries later to the Ottomans (1453). Both led either immediately or over time to chain reactions, first at the political and later at the social and economic levels. Many wars, political and economic conditions, as well as other, social and even natural phenomena triggered group as well as individual migration in this large region.

From this standpoint, each of the three centuries had its own characteristics. In the 13th century, political and economic changes greatly altered the human landscape of the Eastern Mediterranean. The Fourth Crusade and the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders at the dawn of the century was a catalyst for these changes. One of the big winners in this era at the political and economic levels was Venice. The end of this century also signified the final dissolution of the last bastions of the Crusaders in the Near East after three centuries of continuous presence there. The fall of Acre in Syria (1291) was another major milestone of the era.

The 14th century, although more politically stable for the same region, experienced significant wars with Venice as protagonist as well as a deadly epidemic which split the century in half, so that today we speak of the periods before and after the Black Death (1348). Parallel to this, the Ottomans made clear both their intentions and their momentum, chiefly towards the Byzantine Empire but towards the region's other states as well.

The 15th century is considered a landmark for European and Mediterranean history. The Renaissance began to blossom in Italy and the first seeds were sown for the new way of thinking which would lead to what we conventionally call the end of the Middle Ages. In the middle of the century, the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans was a watershed, which gradually turned the Eastern Mediterranean into an Ottoman lake in subsequent centuries. For Venice, the 15th century signified the apogee of its commercial and economic-political power. At the end of the 15th century, the discovery of America forever changed the sense of the world and gradually Venice's longstanding economic and political power.

Amid these major political, social, economic, and cultural developments and their consequences, also less significant (though not unrelated) events decisively influenced people's lives in the Eastern Mediterranean. Political changes, economic decline and growth, and of course wars were major factors in exacerbating collective and individual human mobility, whether migration or refugee. All three factors were present during the era and in the region under examination here.

The political space to which we are confining ourselves here was formed during the late medieval period. Venice as a city-state was boosted politically and financially in the early 13th century as the result of the Fourth Crusade, though strong foundations had already been laid in preceding centuries. During the three centuries under examination, the Venetian territory in the Eastern Mediterranean was consolidated, enlarged, and strengthened. The "maritime state" of Venice, however, was dispersed in space and time, and for this reason it is difficult to examine comprehensively, particularly to record generalized phenomena, since each acquisition was differently influenced by its

respective political circumstances. Venice's first territories (colonies), that is those under its direct control, were Crete (1211–1669), Methone, and Korone (1209–1500, both on the Peloponnese). During the 13th century and the first half of the 14th century, Kythera was ceded by Venice to the Venier family. In 1363, it passed to direct Venetian rule, under which it continued until 1797. In Euboea, Venetian presence long remained limited, confined to the city of Negroponte (nowadays Chalcis) and certain other points throughout the 13th and greater part of the 14th century, with the entire island coming under Venetian rule between 1390 and 1470. In the Peloponnese, in addition to Methone and Korone Venice acquired Nauplion (1389–1540) and Argos (1394–1463); in Central Greece, it acquired Naupactus (1407–1499); in the Ionian area it acquired Corfu (1386–1797), and in Macedonia it very briefly acquired Thessaloniki (1423–1430). Despite simultaneous losses, the Venetian state was strengthened in the second half of the 15th century by the acquisition of Monemvasia in the Peloponnese (1460–1540), Cyprus (1489–1571), Zakynthos (1484–1797), and Cephalonia (1500–1797). We may also situate within the Venetian sphere of influence (and not the Venetian territory) the Aegean islands, which were held by families or individuals of Venetian origin; from time to time, one or another of these islands came under the city's direct control. Irrespective of whether Venice controlled them or not, it considered them an area favorable to it, despite occasional disputes with island rulers.

As a major European political and economic powerhouse, Venice opened its territories for the reception of refugees and migrants. On the one hand, this was because it provided relative security in a difficult and dangerous period, and on the other, because it maintained a stable and explicit "immigration policy" aimed at drawing people to its possessions. This inevitably resulted in its becoming a pole of attraction for those who decided to migrate, whether of their own volition (migrants) or by reason of violence (refugees).

The period between the 13th and 15th century in the Eastern Mediterranean is primarily characterized by migration and less by refugees, although both phenomena are often difficult to distinguish on the basis of their qualitative characteristics, mainly due to the lack of relevant information. Thus, a few instances of forced, *en masse* and organized migration of population groups clearly fit the refugee phenomenon, while all the others—less massive movements and more of individuals, which comprise the overwhelming majority of cases, belong to the category of migration.

As in the modern era, so for the Middle Ages one may speak of *external* and *internal* migrants within the context of a state. However, living and mobility conditions in the Middle Ages may easily define as "internal" migration movement across a much smaller distance than that which would define the

corresponding phenomenon today. For example, movement with the goal of permanent or temporary settlement during the 13th and 14th centuries from one village to another within a relatively large island such as Crete or Euboea, or a mainland area like the Peloponnese, could be characterized as migration. In most cases, migrants could not easily remain in contact with the environment, which they had abandoned. This gives the following classification: (1) migration from other states to Venetian territories; (2) migration between scattered Venetian territories; (3) migration within a given Venetian territory, and (4) migration from Venetian territories to non-Venetian ones.

For the phenomenon of migration in the complex society of Venetian possessions in the Eastern Mediterranean during the late Middle Ages, one must take into account multiple features of migrants, whether individuals or groups. These characteristics are connected not only with the reasons for migration, but also with the prospects for each person in the reception area and the possibility of them being integrated into local society. These are: (1) origin and citizenship (Venetian, Latin, Greek, other); (2) religion (Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, other); (3) personal and social status (nobleman, freeman, dependent, slave, prisoner of war, cleric etc.), and (4) other characteristics such as the aim of migration (temporary or permanent settlement), personal financial situation (wealthy or poor), and personal qualifications (professionally specialized or unskilled).

All the above components of a person's identity played an important role in the manner of reception and integration of migrants in a Venetian possession. Thus, if the prospective immigrant was familiar with the socioeconomic conditions in Venetian possessions and possible prospects these held out to him, his identity could be a motive for, or, conversely, a deterrent to migration. However, the causes and needs that led to migration were—and remain—stronger than any possible prospects in reception areas.

Among the basic parameters, which one must also consider with regard to our topic, is the "immigration policy" of Venice itself, which was wholly favorable to receiving refugees and attracting immigrants. This policy was clear and targeted: boosting population, increasing the numbers of the workforce, and strengthening defense in its possessions. To this end, it offered powerful, primarily economic incentives to prospective immigrants to its colonies.

There were some cases of population groups unwelcome in Venetian possessions, each for a different reason. As a rule, those deemed unwelcome were Orthodox hierarchs and monks, and Genoese. On Crete, the former were considered as early as the 13th century to be instigators of revolts against Venetian rule and in favor of the Byzantine emperor, and for this reason were seen as undesirable migrants. The spread of even a small number of monks on the

island during the early decades of the 14th century worried Venice. In 1334 it took a special decision in accordance with which the Cretan authorities were obliged (using all possible discretion) to expel all Orthodox monks who had arrived as refugees on the island and were inciting locals against Latin Catholics. In the future, authorities were not to permit entry to any monks.[2] In later eras, all monks or church hierarchs who received entry and residence permits in Crete for a shorter or longer duration were under surveillance. Should any suspicious activity be found, they were deported immediately. On the other hand, the Genoese represented a rival power, which could potentially undermine key sectors of Venetian activity in their territories. For this reason, and despite the fact that a small number of Genoese merchants were always active in Venetian domains, the request by the Genoese families of Chios who had arrived in Methone in 1455 to settle there and enjoy the privileges of Venetian citizens found Venice diametrically opposed, and the city ordered their immediate expulsion.[3]

Local economic conditions, always in combination with political ones, played an important role in the flow of immigrants to Venetian possessions. A stable political environment with a developed economy or prospects for growth was always an ideal destination. Thus, in all Venetian territories these conditions were less favorable in the 13th than in the 14th century, which in turn lagged behind in relation to those offered in the 15th century. More specifically, if we take as a typical example Crete, Venice's largest and most important possession in the Eastern Mediterranean, we can easily recognize all the above-mentioned factors. The 13th century inaugurated new economic prospects for the island, but at the same time, the political environment was unfavorable. The slow conquest of the entire island over the course of around half a century, in conjunction with the constant and long-lasting revolts by local landowners against their new ruler made migration to the island more difficult, though it by no means prevented it. On the contrary, despite occasional disruptions Crete's more stable political environment and continuous economic growth during the 14th and 15th centuries created an ideal migrant destination. Something similar may easily be observed for other Venetian territories as well.

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2   According to the decision of the Venetian Senate: *Caloieri qui aliunde sunt profugi et in dictam nostram insulam advenerunt, malam doctrinam et voluntatem contra latinos in suis figmentis et hortationibus seminarunt…* (Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 1, no. 41; Theotokes, *Θεσπίσματα*, vol. 2/1, p. 142 no. 31).

3   As was characteristically noted, Venice found this request exceptionally "odd", and for this reason rejected it: Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 3, no. 3006.

Another parameter, which formed part of the identity of immigrants and affected their movement was professional specialization, which was a significant determinant of where immigrants went. For example, an unskilled farm worker who wanted —and was to a certain extent compelled— to continue farming could in actuality move almost exclusively to Crete and Euboea, where there were good (if not certain) prospects for finding land and settling in a village. Both small and large traders could easily settle even in the smaller Venetian possessions of Methone and Korone. Both these Peloponnesian ports, which formed important stopovers on commercial maritime routes, offered many opportunities in commerce and shipping. The islands of the Aegean, small and as a rule barren but strategically situated, were also poles of attraction for small traders who could look forward to play a vital role in regional commerce. There is no doubt that in the end, some of Venice's possessions like Crete and perhaps to a lesser degree Euboea had all the features to make them an attractive destination for migrants and refugees in relation to the city-state's other territories.

The ethnic categories migrating during this period in the area we are considering may be distinguished into three main groups: (1) Greeks, (2) Latins, and (3) various others. Of these, the Latins could be characterized primarily as immigrants in search of "better opportunities" and only partly as refugees, while the Greeks and others equally as immigrants and refugees. The third group, which included persons from other geographical regions with diverse ethnic characteristics, normally included slaves, refugees and prisoners of war forced to leave their place of residence.

Generally speaking, we observe migration flows of both Greeks and Latins to all the Venetian possessions with greater or lesser intensity and greater or lesser participation of each of the two groups, depending on era and place. Recording this phenomenon is not always easy in relation to either individual places or periods. Crete is the most favored from the standpoint of sources, followed in order by Methone, Korone, Euboea and the Aegean islands. The 13th century is certainly less favored with available information, while sources gradually increase for the next two centuries. As a rule information is indirect, although there are some direct references to both migration and refugee movements. We also have important information on Venice's policy regarding the reception or attraction of immigrants. However, this policy forms part of historical circumstances and trends, and ultimately we do not know whether it produced substantive results.

Although it was much smaller, the opposite movement—migration from Venetian possessions, specifically from regions like Crete which were a premier reception site for immigrants—to other, non-Venetian regions occurred

for a variety of reasons. These were normally (a) professional, for example to larger economic centers in the Byzantine Empire and Italy, or places offering specific prospects, or (b) related with a conviction to exile outside Venetian territory as a whole, with avoiding punishment following an illegal act, or finally due to debts.[4]

1   War Refugees and Migrants

Over the course of the three centuries under consideration, small and large-scale migrations are observed in the Eastern Mediterranean, which could be characterized as refugee movements, given that they were the result of warfare or conquests.

In Crete, ongoing and frequently lengthy revolts by local Byzantine lords during the 13th century and the first decades of the 14th led to group migrations both within and beyond the island. These were composed either of Greek landowners who challenged the new regime and rebelled against Venice, or of dependent farmers who followed and supported the rebels in return for their freedom, or even of newly-arrived Venetian feudal landlords. The case of Greek landowners who migrated involved only those who had been defeated and were forced to abandon the island. Of the revolts in the 13th century, only two (those of 1213 and 1272–78) failed to achieve their goal, with the result that small groups of local Greek families who had sided with the rebels abandoned Crete willingly or unwillingly for other destinations. The accord of 1213 between the duke of Crete and the "rebel" Marco Sanudo provided the opportunity for twenty Greek lords to leave the island along with Sanudo "of their own volition and without force".[5] In contrast, following the end of the revolt of the Chortatzis family in 1278, a group of Greek lords who had contributed to the revolt was compelled to leave Crete, and we know that they ended up in Byzantine Asia Minor.[6]

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4   As a large city and major port, Constantinople continued to attract merchants until the 15th century both from the West and from the former lands of the Byzantine Empire now under Venetian rule. These included Crete, since it offered significant financial opportunities. A typical example is that of the Cretan traders Nikolaos and Georgios Polos, who in the 15th century left Crete and settled in Byzantine Constantinople. See Ganchou, "La *fraterna societas* des Crétois Nikolaos et Géôrgios Pôlos (Polo)".

5   According to the document containing the agreement: ...*et xx arcontes de insula cretensi, et debeant habere potestatem exire de insula cum suis bonis de voluntate ipsorum, et non violenter*... (Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden*, vol. 2, p. 163). We do not know if in fact these twenty Greek lords left Crete, or where they ended up (assuming they did leave).

6   Zachariadou, "Cortazzi and not Corsari".

The 13th-century revolts as a rule caused temporary—though occasionally, permanent—migrations of groups or individuals within Crete. For the dependent farmers, these revolts provided the chance to obtain their freedom. Thus at the first opportunity they abandoned the land and their master and followed the rebels. The normally successful outcome of revolts and subsequent treaties between the rebels and the Venetian authorities sometimes resulted in the freeing of these dependent peasants and therefore, the chance to settle where they wished. At other times, it resulted in their forced return to their place of origin and their master. These same revolts also resulted in the migration of Venetian as well as Greek feudal lords, who were forced to abandon their lands and place of residence either because the rebels controlled these or because their land was granted to the rebels in the final agreement.[7] Another serious effect of the Cretan revolts was the compulsory abandonment and desolation of large areas that encompass many villages. In those areas, revolutionary movements were a usual phenomenon. This preventive measure by the Venetian authorities of Crete had as a result the displacement of a large number of local peasants.[8]

At the end of the 13th century, the fall of Acre in Syria (1291), the last bastion of the western Crusaders in the region to the Mamluks led to a mass exodus of "Westerners" from the city, including the Venetian community. Some, perhaps many Venetians established there found refuge in the Venetian territories of the Eastern Mediterranean or in Byzantine port cities where Venetian communities existed.[9] The presence of refugees from Acre is documented in Crete during the 14th century. Some continued their commercial or other urban activities in the developing island, while others acquired property and became landowners, though perhaps without entirely abandoning commercial activity.[10]

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7   For example, during the last revolt by Greek landowners against Venice in 1342, the Venetian Senate confronted the problem of Greek landowners who remaining faithful to Venice had fled for reasons of safety to Chania, where according to the related document they had no place to live (*de facto Grecorum qui se reduxerunt Caneam ad fidelitatem dominii et non habent unde vivant*). The authorities asked the local rector to provide assistance (*Venezia-Senato*, vol. 7, no. 503, p. 255, no. 504 pp. 256–257).

8   About the measure of the compulsive desolation and the desolated areas in Crete see Gaspares, *Φυσικό και αγροτικό τοπίο*, pp. 30–33.

9   Most of the refugees from Acre fled to Cyprus, primarily to Famagusta. See Jacoby, "Refugees from Acre in Famagusta around 1300"; Edbury, "Reflections on the Mamluk destruction of Acre".

10 In 1304, *dama Margarita olim de Suria nunc habitatrix Candide* sold one of her slaves to Matteo Campanario (*Pietro Pizolo*, no. 815). In 1315, Rugiero Contarini, who declared himself a *specialis* by profession and former resident of Acre now resident in Crete, received

The unstable political situation and changes in sovereigns even during the first half of the 14th century on the Greek mainland resulted in migrations by individuals of Western origin. This was the case after the conquest of Thebes by the Catalans (1311), which brought about the departure of its Latin residents for the Venetian territories in Euboea.[11]

One of the earliest and lengthiest refugee migrations was that of the Armenians. The occupation of Armenia first by the Byzantines (1045) and subsequently by the Seljuks (1064) inaugurated a large migratory wave by its inhabitants, which continued unabated in ensuing centuries (12th–15th). This migration also resulted in the founding of the kingdom of Lesser Armenia in Cilicia in southeast Asia Minor (1198). Another emigration probably ensued after the conquest of Lesser Armenia by the Mamluks in 1375. In Venetian Crete, an Armenian presence is already attested in the late 13th century, though we do not know exactly whence they had come, that is, directly from regions around the Black Sea, or from Lesser Armenia, with which Crete maintained trade relations. In any event, the fact that an Armenian "quarter" is attested on the outskirts of Candia in 1271 indicates that their numbers were noteworthy, and that the migration was in all likelihood relatively *en masse*.[12] This is further confirmed not only by persons bearing the characteristic nickname (the) "Armenian", but also by names of villages and other micro-toponyms related to Armenians, which are attested since the first decades of the 14th century at various points in Crete.[13] Indeed, one cannot exclude the arrival of Armenians

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from the duke of Crete a fief in the Chania region equivalent to one *serventaria* (*Catasticum Chanee*, no. 44).

11   In 1340, Nicoletto Tibertino, a resident of Negroponte (Chalcis, Euboea), requested of the Venetian Senate the renewal of the *cittadinanza* which his father Domenico had received from Venice, and which he had lost upon leaving Thebes after it was taken by the Catalans (*Venezia-Senato*, vol. 6, no. 155).

12   In 1271, the Orthodox priest *Minna Arminiensis* in a notarial act declared he was a resident of the "Armenian village" in the suburb of Candia (*Pietro Scardon*, no. 196). We have no further details, but the information is clear and probably refers to a refugee settlement on the outskirts of the suburb of the Cretan capital. In 1304, thirty-three years later, land was rented in the village of Armenochorio (i.e. village of Armenians) (*Pietro Pizolo*, no. 923). Since the village is referred to as public (*casale comunis*), this means it was near Candia, and it may be the same one referred to in the 1271 document.

13   See for example villeins with the following names: *Niketas Armenis Sivriteo* and *Armenopoulos* (ASV = Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Duca di Candia*, b. 19, q. 11, fol. 52r). On Crete the following locations are also recorded in the 14th century: the village Armenoi in the district of Chania (1314) (*Catasticum Chanee*, no. 16), the site Armenokampos (1322) and Armenochorio in the region of Kisamos (1332) (ibid., no. 69, 118).

on Crete even in the 12th century or earlier, when the island was still part of the Byzantine Empire.[14]

A second wave of Armenian emigration, which has left clearer traces, is recorded for the second half of the 14th century. According to available documents, this time the Armenians came from the Black Sea, probably due to the Mongol conquest of Kaffa (nowadays Feodosia, Crimea) (1346), where a significant number of Armenians had previously found refuge. Their desire to flee to Venetian-controlled regions met with a positive response, since Venice demonstrated a particular interest in these people. In 1363, the Venetian Senate notified the Cretan authorities of its decision, and encouraged them to accept Armenians in both Crete and Methone to boost their populations.[15] We do not know whether the Armenians who had requested acceptance actually reached Crete or Methone, as their continuous documented presence on Crete does not assist us in determining precisely when they arrived. Furthermore, a few years before this decision (1361), it is attested that Armenians had "recently" arrived in Candia who were settled in the city's suburb (*burgo*), perhaps in the already-existing Armenian quarter, where they had actually been harassed by locals, and an assault on an Armenian had already been noted.[16]

Armenian interest in finding refuge within the secure environment of Venetian-ruled regions continued, and thus in 1414 another group of around 80 families who were living in the Venetian quarter of Trebizond, as well as in Sebasteia (Sivas) and "Turkey" due to the imminent Ottoman threat requested permission to settle on Crete. The Venetian Senate once again granted the request, this time however proposing that they settle not only in Crete but also in Euboea.[17] While this migration probably took place, once again we do not know whether they all ended up on Crete or were distributed between the two Venetian islands. In short, Armenian refugee flows to Venetian possessions in the Greek region were continuous from the 13th to early 15th century. While they probably found refuge in various Venetian territories, the sources allow us

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14 Armenian troops took part in the Byzantine re-conquest of Crete from the Arabs in 961 and some were also settles on the island afterwards, see Garsoïan, "The Problem of Armenian Integration into the Byzantine Empire", pp. 56 and 63.

15 Topping, "Armenian and Greek Refugees in Crete and the Aegean World". In addition to interest by Venice, an interest was shown in 1365 by the Knights of Rhodes in settling Armenian refugees on the island of Kos. They also counted on receiving around 50 of the families already on the island of Mytilene. See Topping, "Armenian and Greek refugees in Crete and the Aegean World", pp. 373–374.

16 ASV, *Duca di Candia*, b. 15, fols. 82v–83r.

17 ASV, *Senato Misti*, reg. 50, fol. 75v. Sathas, *Documents inédits*, vol. 3, p. 30; Topping, "Armenian and Greek refugees in Crete and the Aegean World", pp. 366–367.

to speak with confidence of a significant presence only on Crete, where most likely the largest number settled.

The migration of the inhabitants of Tenedos is a special case, since this was the result of a war, which ended with diplomatic agreement. According to the Peace of Torino (1381) between Venice and Genoa, the island of Tenedos was to be abandoned. In practice, this meant that not only the soldiers billeted there would leave, but also its residents, whose houses would be destroyed. According to a decision of the Venetian Senate, the Tenedans would be transferred at Venetian expense to three of its possessions, namely Crete, Euboea, and Kythera, where they would be compensated with land and homes comparable to those they had lost in their homeland. The transport operation was carried out during the final months of 1383 and early 1384. Most of the immigrants chose Crete, with fewer choosing Euboea, while presumably in the end no one was transferred to Kythera. On Euboea, they were settled near Karystos, which was controlled by Venice. There, however, conditions were not ideal, which resulted in Venice itself proposing their transfer to sites near the capital of Negroponte or to Crete, presuming the Tenedans themselves wished this. It is certain that some of them ultimately left Euboea on their own accord and fled to the Duchy of Athens or nearby islands like Tinos. In contrast, it appears that on Crete things went better for those who ended up there from the beginning. To avoid creating a cohesive community within the colony, the Tenedans were scattered throughout the entire island, where most of them received land in fertile regions. It is estimated that 1.200 Tenedans were transported to Crete and Euboea. During the 1390s around 400–500 returned to Tenedos, and during the early decades of the 15th century the island gradually regained most of its population.[18]

In the late 14th and the first half of the 15th century especially, the Ottoman advance in the Balkans and the peninsula of Greece in particular was the leading cause of forced population movements, as the result of either conquest or continuous destructive attacks. Those displaced went in search of safe—or at least, safer—regions, primarily in Venetian possessions, although these too were suffering from Turkish attacks. However, the political, economic, and military might of Venice, which was then steadily rising, created a sense of security in populations confronting the Turkish threat. For the Greek populations of conquered or threatened regions, the Venetian possessions in the

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18   Thiriet, "A propos des personnes 'deplacées' au XIVe siècle", pp. 521–530 and especially pp. 526–529.

Greek region constituted a refuge where they found not only a safe but also a familiar environment (Greek language, Orthodox religion).[19]

In the 15th century, the Turks had become the sole powerful enemy to Venice and its territories in the Greek region. Turkish raids, whether by the army in mainland regions, by its central fleet, or by small pirate fleets supported by the sultan in the islands and coastal zones undermined Venetian possessions, causing material damage and above all, human casualties. This situation triggered migrations even within Venice's own possessions, that is both from vulnerable possessions to other, safer ones as well as from weak points in specific possessions to more secure ones within the same dominion. In the late 14th century, for example, the residents of Argos were suffering Turkish invasions. In 1397, the Turks abducted residents of the city and the countryside, and in 1399, the authorities found that many residents had abandoned the city due to Turkish attacks. These individuals found refuge in neighboring regions like the Despotate of Morea, the Duchy of Athens, and the *castellania* of Corinth. The Venetian Senate normally offered financial incentives to persuade them to return home.[20]

The Mongols' advance in Asia Minor after the battle of Ankara (1402) formed a brief parenthesis in the Ottomans' forward movement. This caused small, temporary migrations by Turkish populations due to fear of the new enemy. Thus, a significant number of prosperous Turks from the Emirates of Aydin and Menteshe crossed over to the nearly deserted island of Samos, where they sought permission to settle under Venetian protection. Venice acceded to their request and gave the relevant orders to the duke of Crete to take appropriate actions. We do not know exactly how events unfolded, but it is likely that after the definitive elimination of the Mongol threat a few years later, the Turkish refugees on Samos returned to their homeland.[21]

Upon the Mongols' retreat and recovery by the Ottomans, attacks at various points in mainland and island Greece began again, triggering population movements by all classes to safer regions. In 1412, for example, the Marquis of Bodonitsa asked the Euboean authorities to see to the return of the villeins in his territory, which had fled to the island because of Turkish attacks.[22] Although the Venetian Senate granted his request, it is not certain whether these villeins

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19   For the migration of Greek populations towards the Venetian regions due to the Turkish advance see Vacalopoulos, "The flight of the inhabitants of Greece to the Aegean islands, Crete and Mane".

20   Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 1, no. 967; Jacoby, "Peasant mobility", p. 535; Koumanoude, "Η κατάσταση του αγροτικού πληθυσμού του Άργους", pp. 130–133.

21   *Ducali e lettere ricevute*, no. 40. See also Zachariadou, *Trade and crusade*, pp. 81–82.

22   Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 2, no. 1451.

ever returned to their homeland, given that Bodonitsa fell into Ottoman hands two years later (1414).

The Fall of Constantinople (1453) was a catalytic political event. The Turks, having now achieved their main objective—the dissolution of the diminished Byzantine Empire, advanced unimpeded into the Greek peninsula. Venice did not abandon its established policy of receiving refugees and immigrants into its possessions, not only for economic reasons as in the past, but also now for reasons related to the security of its maritime state. Refugees would increase population in its territories and among other things form a recruitment source for operating the galleys and maintaining the defensive system. Within this framework, and of its own initiative Venice urged local authorities in its territories to attract population and ethnic groups under pressure from the Ottomans, for example the Albanians dispersed at many points on the mainland.[23] In the past, mercenaries had come from this ethnic group, and later they were permanent residents prepared for military service. In 1398, the *podestà* of Nauplion informed the Venetian authorities that he had already settled Albanians and "others" outside Argos, granting them state lands for cultivation with the aim of reinforcing local defense with their arms and horses. The same official requested approval for others to settle under the same conditions, and the Venetian Senate approved his request.[24] The Venetian authorities tried to apply the same tactics during the following decades in other regions: in Euboea (1402) and in even more difficult and threatening circumstances in Methone and Korone (1455). In both cases, Venice asked local officials to attract "wandering" Albanians, who would be used as soldiers to defend these ports.[25]

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23   There are however exceptions to Venice's normal stance towards refugees and migrants, since in some cases there was an issue of political equilibrium. During the first half of the 15th century, as the Ottomans advanced towards Epirus, Albanian populations belonging to all social classes fled to Venetian Corfu. Venice did not officially favor this move, given that it was unwilling to disturb its good relations with the region's Ottomans. At the same time, it did not actually compel these populations to leave Corfu. See Asonitis, "The regimen of Corphoy and the Albanians", pp. 289–290.

24   *Monumenta Peloponnesiaca*, no. 200; Koumanoude, "Η κατάσταση του αγροτικού πληθυσμού", pp. 131–132.

25   In 1402, the Venetian Senate informed the *Bailo* of Euboea that all those Albanians and "others" dwelling on the opposite mainland, who desired, could settle in the vicinity of Negroponte, receiving state lands and exempted from any form of drudgery (Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 2, no. 1051). Similarly, in 1455 following the request of the castellans of Korone and Methone, Venice gave permission to the settlement of all the Albanians desirous of doing so in the two Venetian possessions, with the explicitly-stated object of their being employed for the defense of the two cities (Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 3, no. 2987). On the Albanian element in Methone and Korone see Major, "Étrangers et minorités ethniques en Messenie vénitienne", pp. 361–381 and especially pp. 363–365.

The rivalry between the Ottoman Empire and Venice, with the Venetian possessions as the main stakes, entered a new phase in the second half of the 15th century with the outbreak of a series of lengthy wars between the two states. During this period, two of the so-called Ottoman-Venetian wars were waged, namely the first (1463–1479) and second (1499–1503) out of a total of seven over the course of a century and a half. The result of these two wars was a loss of territories, including such important ones of Euboea (during the first war) and Methone-Korone (during the second). Residents of these regions were displaced to the nearest still-remaining Venetian holdings or to Venice itself.[26] However, during the intervals preceding or following these wars Venetian possessions suffered severe attacks which also caused minor or major population displacements within the borders of possessions and even beyond. For example, ongoing Turkish attacks on Crete as early as the 14th century intensified during the 15th, as was to be expected, especially during its second half. The most vulnerable region was the administrative district of Siteia in the northeastern part of the island. In continuing reports by the Venetian authorities during the first Ottoman-Venetian war it is noted that the region and its residents were in straitened circumstances financially, resulting in their leaving it permanently or temporarily for safer regions like that of the island's capital Candia and other fortified sites.[27] In addition, the Turkish siege of Lesbos in the same year (1462) prompted a small exit of 150 residents from the island, who took refuge with the Venetian fleet; some of them at least were transported to Crete.[28]

2   Prisoners of War and Slaves

The population movements discussed above were forced by dint of war, but they were also voluntary to some extent. On the contrary, captivity and slavery,

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26 Doumerc, "Les vénitiens confrontés au retour des rapatriés".

27 A related document of 1462 notes that: …*magna pars villanorum, tam ascriptium quam liberorum, derelictis villis Scithie, se suasque familias traduxerunt et in districtu et in burgis Candide*… (Noiret, *Documents inédits*, p. 474). A similar document of 1471 records the desertion of villages in the same region: *Cum sit quod cavalarie districtus Sitie a principio huius belli sint graviter percusse a Teucris hostibus nostris, ita quod multe ville sint depredate, et multe totaliter destructe et dishabitate*… (Noiret, *Documents inédits*, p. 520).

28 In 1478, Ioannis from Mytilene was appointed a salaried surgeon in the city of Rethymnon. In the document of his appointment, we read: …*tempore obisidionis Mithilini non solum confugit ad classem nostrum cum personis CLta, relictis nonnullis eius filiis in minibus illius Teucri cum multis aliis*… (Noiret, *Documents inédits*, p. 541).

resulting from either war or abduction, while also forced, entailed involuntary displacements. Such individuals were transported and sold in regions normally distant from their homeland, so that flight was difficult and daunting. Continual Venetian-Turkish rivalry in the Eastern Mediterranean resulted in the periodic transfer of Turkish prisoners of war to Venetian possessions. These individuals were taken prisoner both during wars as well as during skirmishes with pirate ships or flotillas. There is not much information available on Turkish prisoners of war, especially regarding their exact fates. With the exception of some who were probably exchanged or returned within the framework of some agreement, the rest ended up as slaves. Venice was already taking measures related to the fate of Turkish prisoners in its possessions during the 14th century. In 1341, the Venetian Senate decided that Turkish prisoners of war henceforth transported to Crete could not remain on the island more than six months, and when evacuated they were to be sent perforce to the West.[29] From the same document, it would appear that prisoners of war were sold or given to private individuals—in other words, they now became slaves. Accordingly, in case the owners of Turkish captives already on the island desired to transport them, they were obliged to send them only to the West. Venice did not dare to increase the number of Turkish prisoners and their concentration within a possession, probably because there was always the fear of their passing along information should they manage to escape. Of course, there were also cases in which Turkish prisoners still in the hands of the state were used as work force for public works. In 1357, the Venetian Senate, despite the relevant ban noted above, gave permission to the Cretan authorities to keep as many Turkish prisoners on the island as they deemed necessary to employ on building projects then being carried out in the port of Candia.[30]

Modern scholars consider slavery to be "conflict migration", and as such, it presupposes force and compulsion.[31] It is also considered a form of forced labor migration from regions with abundant work force to those in need of it.[32]

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29   *Venezia-Senato*, vol. 6, no. 441. Despite the measures taken by the authorities, the number of Turkish slaves in Crete continued to increase, because according to Venice some of them were sold as Greeks. That is why a new severe ban was issued in 1363 (Theotokes, *Θεσπίσματα*, vol. 2/2, p. 110).

30   *Venezia-Senato*, vol. 15, no. 60.

31   On slavery from medieval times to the 19th century, with full bibliography, see Brettell/ Hollifield (eds), *Migration theory. Talking across disciplines*; Lovejoy, *Transformations in slavery. A history of slavery in Africa*; Meissner/Mücke/Weber, *Schwarzes Amerika: Eine Geschichte der Sklaverei*; Patterson, *Slavery and social death. A comparative study.*

32   From this standpoint, the Venetian Senate's 1393 decision by which the Venetian authorities provided a 3.000 Cretan *yperpera* subsidy to traders to transport slaves under the age of fifty to the island of Crete is representative (Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 1, no. 828). The lack of

The active involvement of Venetian merchants in the flourishing slave trade resulted in many slaves arriving in Venetian territories. There they were sold either to locals and remained in the region, or to traders for transport and sale elsewhere. There is a great deal of information on the presence of slaves in Venetian possessions. Many remained there permanently, mostly in cities and to a lesser extent in the countryside. Yet, a fair number were also set free at some point during their life, either through purchase or the last will of their master.

In sales contracts for slaves, their ethnic origin (*natio* or *genus*) is usually noted, which offers us interesting evidence about the composition of this group. According to information provided by contracts from Crete, a major slave trade center and a place which also absorbed slaves, their ethnic origins (in descending order) were: Bulgarians, Greeks, Tatars, Russians, Circassians, Albanians, Serbs, Vlachs, Saracens, Turks, Hungarians, Mongols and Alans. The first three groups, i.e., Bulgarians, Greeks, and Tatars, were by far the most numerous.[33] Slaves are also divided into two major categories: (1) Orthodox Christians and (2) all other non-Christians, who were always baptized by their masters as either Orthodox or Catholic. In any case, all slaves, regardless of ethnic or religious identity, were necessarily absorbed by the environment where they remained permanently.

Greek slaves, whose place of origin is usually more specifically noted, came from many regions in the Greek area, primarily the islands and coastal regions.[34] A number of them who arrived and remained in Venetian possessions due to the relatively small distance from their place of origin were found by their relatives, purchased, and returned back to their homeland. The rest continued their lives in their new homeland. In contrast, all the non-Greek slaves, who came from regions far more distant, remained permanently where their masters lived.

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labor hands in the island was the main reason because of which the slaves were imported.

33 Verlinden, *L'esclavage*, pp. 802–884 and especially p. 870; Moschonas, "Η αγορά των δούλων". About the slaves of Slavic origin see Charalampakes, *Σλάβοι στην Κρήτη*, pp. 37–46.

34 From the evidence of sales contracts for slaves, it may be seen that often, the place of origin of Greek slaves is not identical with their place of descent, but with that where they were sold. A typical example is the large number of slaves listed as coming from Samos, in an era in which the island was nearly deserted of permanent residents. There is no question that a small slave trading center had sprung up on the island. For this reason, "place of origin" (particularly of Greek slaves) should always be viewed with reservations.

3   Immigrants Due to Plagues

A special factor in this era, which resulted in the displacement of some population groups, was the outbreak of lethal contagious diseases. Both the great plague of 1348, known as the Black Death, which caused enormous demographic problems, as well as plagues of lesser extent and duration which occasionally erupted in many regions compelled individuals and small groups of both urban and rural populations to leave their homes to save their lives. Some probably returned to their homes after the plague had ended, in contrast to others who may never have returned. As regards Venetian territories, migration was bi-directional: from these possessions to other regions, and from other regions to Venetian possessions. At the same time, migration within a possession was important, chiefly from unhealthy cities to the countryside. If migration was within a possession, then there was no great problem. In contrast, leaving a possession for that of another ruler represented a significant loss for Venice. In either case, the Venetian authorities were interested in the return of these individuals to their original residence, since permanent departure created demographic deficits and by extension, a loss of work force. In 1457, the Venetian Senate pointed out that many villeins had left Methone due to a plague, while in 1459 the Euboean authorities asked that Venice permit the return of the Jews who had fled to Constantinople due to a plague.[35] Other rulers whose own subjects had found refuge in Venetian possessions were equally interested. In 1357, Venice granted the request of the prince of Achaea for the return of the villeins who had fled to Venetian Methone and Korone during the time of the Black Death.[36] At the same time, sizable human losses due to plagues compelled Venetian authorities to offer significant financial incentives to all those who would be transported for settlement in their territories. These incentives doubtless attracted immigrants, although it is not always easy to document this or of course, to estimate the numbers involved.

4   Economic Migrants

The last large category of migrants were economic ones, who can be divided into two broad categories: (1) wealthy migrants in search of "even better opportunities" to enrich themselves (betterment migration) and (2) poor migrants simply in search of "opportunities" for a better life in relation to the

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35   Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 3, nos. 3036, 3088.

36   *Venezia-Senato*, vol. 15, no. 154. See also Jacoby, "Peasant mobility", p. 533.

harsh conditions under which they were already living. In departing from their place of residence for another, members of both categories assumed the risk of failure, though of course each started from an entirely different base and with wholly different prospects, related to their existing financial prospects, ethnic origins, and of course personal status (freedom or lack thereof).

The earliest organized movement of persons, who could be characterized as affluent, was the colonization mission from Venice to Crete. This migration encompassed the first half of the 13th century in three group undertakings (1211, 1222, 1253) with a total of 249 participants who acquired land—in other words, they formed the local feudal class—with the overwhelming majority remained permanently on the island. We do not know if they were accompanied by other family members upon initial arrival, but it is certain that subsequently, wives, prospective wives, or migrants' children came to Crete. These individuals not only conquered Crete *de facto*, but also formed the core around which the Venetian, and in some extent Italian, ethnic element developed on the island through continuous individual arrivals throughout the rest of the 13th and the 14th century. In the other Venetian possessions of this age, there was no comparable organized Venetian movement of people, only individual migrations, which in some cases were systematic and substantially supported Venetian domination.[37]

All the Latin traders and investors who arrived in Venetian dominions and settled there permanently, or at least for long periods, belong to the same category, that of affluent immigrants. Most were Venetian, but their numbers included other Italians, such as Genoese and Florentines, and Catalans. All became established in the urban area of port cities like those of Crete, Methone and Korone, Negroponte and Nauplion, or in the countryside when their investments involved agricultural production.[38] Some Westerners even settled on the small islands of the Aegean Sea, becoming active in small-medium commerce in the region; they did not hesitate to change their place of residence

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[37] The first attempt of an organized settlement of Venetian colonists in the new possessions was in 1207, when the island of Corfu was granted by Venice to ten Venetian noblemen for its occupation and exploitation (Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden,* vol. 2, pp. 54–59). We do not know whether these ten Venetians ever arrived on Corfu, since the island passed to the Byzantines a few years later. In Euboea, the Venetians granted incentives in the 13th and especially the 14th century to Venetians, other Italians, and even Franks from the middle and upper economic classes to settle in the Venetian quarter of Negroponte, thus strengthening the Venetian presence and serving its long-term plans for full control of the island (See Jacoby, "Demographic Euboea", pp. 140–148).

[38] Jacoby, "Migrations familiales et stratégies commerciales vénitiennes"; Idem, "The migration of merchants and craftsmen"; Stöckly, "Tentatives de migration individuelle dans les territoires sous domination vénitienne".

for the further expansion of their activities.[39] These immigrants were easily integrated into the new political, social, and economic environment of the Venetian possessions and contributed to boosting trade and the urban economy generally.

An intermediary category of immigrants was that composed of specific professionals in high demand in Venetian territories for their specialist knowledge. These professionals were either entirely lacking, or their level of specialization was superior to that of those already active in the possessions. They came from Venice or other regions in the Italian peninsula, and even from Constantinople and other large cities of the Byzantine Empire. As a rule, they ended up in large territories like Crete or Euboea, or busy ports like Methone and Korone. They included physicians, blacksmiths (mainly horseshoes makers), doctors for horses (*marescalcus*), engineers, weavers and many others, depending on circumstances and the needs in each territory. They were drawn either by high salaries if they were to be hired by the state or feudal lords, by prospects for assured work on public projects, or by employment in the private sector.[40] A special category of professionals who emigrated were scribes coming from large urban centers in the Byzantine Empire. Their flow to Venetian dominions, especially Crete, increased during the 15th century, particularly after the Fall of Constantinople. Distinguished scribes organized important local workshops for copying and producing manuscripts in a period when both local as well as Italian/European interest had begun to grow rapidly.

Diverse categories of individuals (from the West, the Byzantine Empire, or even from another Venetian possession) who ended up in a Venetian possession either purposely or randomly for professional or personal reasons could also be included among migrants. Among them were mercenaries, sailors, candidates for a post in the local bureaucracy, and even prospective brides from Venice or Italy. While most arrived in Venetian territories with the goal of

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39   This for example was the case of the Catalan George, who must have settled in the island of Astypalaia around the mid-13th century. He developed trading activity in the region, chiefly between Astypalaia and Crete, which was continued by his sons. One of them, Frangoulis, settled permanently in Candia, boosting his trading activity. Frangoulis's son Andreas acquired land in Crete and joined the middle stratum of the local feudal class. See Gaspares, "Ένας Καταλανός από την Αστυπάλαια".

40   In 1375, the Venetian Senate gave permission to the local governments of Crete, Euboea, Methone, and Korone to grant ten-year tax exemptions to master weavers (*magistri artis zanullotorum*) who would go and settle in these regions (Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 1, no. 555). In the same year, master builders and stonemasons (*magistri lapidicide*) were sent from Venice to work on projects involving the walls and other public buildings with a yearly salary and an allowance of grain (ibid., no. 559).

making money and eventually returning to their homeland, there were some who ultimately remained as permanent residents.[41]

A sizable and very interesting category of economic migrants to Venetian possessions was poor unskilled individuals looking for better chances of survival. Normally they were Greeks coming from various places, including the Byzantine Empire, Frankish-ruled regions, and even other Venetian possessions and islands belonging to a Venetian ruler. However, while there was no issue of personal status for Latin immigrants since they were in the position of "freemen" and were the masters of their fate, the same did not hold true for Greek immigrants. Upon entering a Venetian possession, the latter were obliged to declare their arrival and provide their personal information to avoid circulating illegally. The main purpose of this declaration was to identify dependent individuals who were recorded in special lists as "foreign villeins" (*villani forinseci/forenses*) and were at the state's disposal. Freemen could move about as they wished and choose whether to settle in the city or countryside. In contrast, all villeins were sent to the countryside as farm laborers on fiefs belonging to the state or private individuals.[42]

The identification of migrants in this category in the sources available today is normally done based on the surname they themselves declared, which indicates their place of origin. Cases in which they declared their surname as well as their previous place of residence are less common. The significant presence of such migrants in the countryside is also partly a result of available evidence. Most freemen who remained in cities as members of the lower working classes became lost in the crowd, normally leaving no traces in the written sources.[43]

41 A rather common phenomenon shown primarily by sources from Crete was the marriage of mercenary soldiers to local women, resulting in their remaining permanently in the place where they were serving. Such marriages were forbidden by Venice for defence reasons and normally led to the soldier's dismissal, as revealed by a related decision by the Venetian Senate in 1371 for Crete (*Venezia-Senato*, vol. 20, no. 672). This decision did not anticipate the phenomenon; it simply noted it and imposed some prohibitions. In 1391, on the other hand, Venice in promoting resettlement decided to grant tax exemptions to all the seamen (*marinarii*) who decided to settle permanently in villages near Korone (Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 1, no. 816). See also cases of migration for profession or personal reasons from one Venetian territory to another in Gaspares, "Κρήτη-Μεθώνη: ἕνα συνηθισμένο ταξίδι κατά τὸν 14ο αιώνα".

42 See Gaspares, *Η γη και οι αγρότες*, pp. 70–72; Gaspares, "Οι ξένοι του χωριού".

43 However, sometimes there is information about such individuals. In 1320, for example, rooms owned by the Orthodox church of Christ in Candia were rented out to various persons, many of them from the Aegean islands as is revealed by their names: *Georgius Rodhio* (i.e. from the island of Rhodes), *Leo Naxioti* (i.e. from the island of Naxos), *Nichiforus de Stimpalia* (i.e. from the island of Astypalaia), *Costa Amurgino* (i.e. from the island of Amorgos), *Sidorus de Chio* (i.e. from the island of Chios) (*Κατάστιχο εκκλησιών και*

In contrast, many of both the migrant freemen as well as villeins who ended up in the countryside left their traces in various sources connected with land ownership and cultivation, as well as with trade in agricultural products.

Most of the evidence confirming the migration of the lower social classes comes from Crete, thanks to sources surviving from the early 13th century. Even prior to the Venetians' arrival, the island was a place where migrants primarily coming from small neighboring barren islands in the southern Aegean ended up and became absorbed into the countryside as farmers. In the surviving land registries, villeins were recorded in the first half of the 13th century with names indicating their origin from regions outside Crete, and some may even have arrived there as early as the late 12th century.[44] Certainly, such a migratory trend towards the new Venetian colonies increased during the 13th century due to political instability in the Aegean and wider Byzantine Empire. This trend continued unabated during both the 14th and 15th centuries, not only to Crete but also to Euboea, Methone and Korone, and even to less-favored regions, e.g. Kythera due to specific incentives they provided.[45] This was owed among other things to Venice's consistent policy of attracting immigrants to its possessions, as well as to the better living conditions they offered.

Dependent status, whether of villein or slave, excluded movement without the permission or initiative of the individual's master. Abandoning one's place of residence and land with the main goal of obtaining freedom and better living conditions automatically made an individual a fugitive whom his master could pursue. However, being sought out and probably punished did not

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μοναστηριῶν τοῦ Κοινοῦ, no. 141.I). It cannot be ruled out that such complexes of rooms were usually rented out to migrants and transients arriving in the Cretan capital.

44   For example, in the land registry of the *sestiere* of Dorsoduro in Crete the following villeins were registered: *Petrus Carpathi* (i.e. from the island of Karpathos) and *Constantinus Nixioti* (i.e. from the island of Naxos) (1234); *Leo Carpathio* (i.e. from the island of Karpathos), *Leo Malvasiotis* (i.e. from the city of Monemvasia), and *Manuel Totradi Mothoneo* (i.e. from the city of Methone) (1259), and many others whose names indicate that they came from outside Crete (*Catasticum Dorsoduri*, nos. 42, 205, 243, 255, 945). The baptismal name *Xenos* (i.e. foreigner) is no accident, nor is the surname *Exomeritis* (i.e. coming from outside), which we frequently encounter in the Cretan countryside. For surnames as indicators of place of origin and migration see indicatively: Peter McClure, "Patterns of Migration in the Late Middle Ages"; Konte, "Τα εθνικά οικογενειακά ονόματα στην Κρήτη κατά τη βενετοκρατία"; Barke, "Migration in medieval Northumberland: The evidence of surnames".

45   In the 14th century, for example, the Venier family invited freemen or freed villeins to be transported from Crete to Kythera, where they were offered farming land. It appears that some actually responded, perhaps because they were already living under bad conditions or even because they hoped to find better conditions in a new place. See Koumanoude, "Illi de ca Venier", p. 137; Tsiknakes, "Από την Κρήτη στα Κύθηρα. Η οικογένεια Κασιμάτη".

prevent the flight of villeins and slaves, and the phenomenon, even if never engaged in on a wide scale, occurred regularly and was naturally exacerbated by specific causes. Examples of the latter were the 13th-century revolts on Crete, excessive debts entailing the risk of imprisonment, and even insecurity in the region where they lived due to pirate raids or other hostile incursions. The initiative to seek them out belonged to their masters, though the Venetian authorities periodically issued relevant decrees to discourage the phenomenon or offered incentives for their return. The problem when small groups of villeins fled to one Venetian territory from another or to a Venetian territory from a foreign hegemony was more complex. The actions of the authorities in such instances normally followed the typical procedure, i.e. recognizing that the villeins were obliged to return home. For example, in 1356 the Euboean authorities requested the Cretan authorities to "facilitate" (in reality, to order) the villeins who had fled there in returning to their homes.[46] In this case, the fact that the Venetians had major interests in Euboea shortly before the island's inclusion in Venice's maritime state made immediate acceptance of the request easier.[47] Comparable requests by other rulers were also granted, but in some cases, the Venetian authorities imposed certain conditions such as the villeins' safety, chiefly from Turkish attacks, which were also frequently a cause of migration. In 1391, Venice accepted unconditionally the request by the Despot of Mystras for the return of the villeins who had fled to the Venetian possessions of Nauplion and Argos.[48] During the 1350s, the flight of villeins from the independent hegemonies of the Aegean islands to Crete, which was safer, was the result of Turkish attacks. Venice accepted their masters' request for the villeins' return, but in each case set as a condition the guarantee of their safety from the Turks.[49] This precondition, in combination with the fact that the

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46   Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 1, no. 284.

47   The case of the villeins who fled from Kythera to Crete in the 14th century was similar. In 1384, the service responsible for overseeing state villeins in Crete discovered that many villeins who had been recorded as "foreign" and had passed into public jurisdiction came from the fiefdoms of the Venier family on Kythera. Now that these fiefs had come into the possession of the Venetian state, the Cretan authorities wanted to send them back to Kythera to augment the island's rural population. See Koumanoude, "Illi de ca Venier", p. 135 note 34.

48   Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 1, no. 800.

49   When in 1358 the Duke of the Aegean Sea asked the Duke of Crete to return his territory's villeins, who had fled to Crete, the Venetian authorities ordered the latter to refuse. Their argument was that these villeins had fled to Crete due to Turkish attacks, and that if they expelled them they would prefer to flee to the Turks rather than return to their former home (*Venezia-Senato*, vol. 15, no. 354). In 1361, a similar request was addressed to the Cretan authorities by John and Thomas Ghisi, the rulers of the island of Amorgos. Venice

authorities would not evict any villeins, but would permit the departure of those wishing it concealed Venice's desire to keep farm laborers within its possessions.

On the other hand, villeins could migrate and settle in another region at their master's initiative, even if they themselves did not want to move. Such migrations occurred not only within but also between territories, due either to the joint interests of their owners in two different places or to political circumstances. In 1336, for example, the nobleman Marino Barozzi asked Venice to continue to hold the rights to his villeins, who had fled the island of Santorini (when it came into the possession of the Sanudo family) and had settled in Crete.[50] After Tinos and Mykonos were subsumed under Venetian sovereignty, the local Venetian rector abandoned his seat and settled in the island of Astypalaia, which was also Venetian during this period, followed by many villeins from both islands. In 1413, the Venetian Senate decided that all these villeins had to return to the islands they had left within a month, and simultaneously forbade any similar relocation of villeins from one island to another in future. To demonstrate that he was obeying the generally accepted rule, the rector explicitly forbade reception of villeins from other possessions in both islands.[51] After receiving permission from the authorities, the Venier family also carried out the transfer of villeins from its fiefs in Crete to ones it owned in Kythera.

Pronounced mobility (refugee or migration) of persons from all social classes and economic strata to and between Venetian territories resulted in the emergence of mixed societies dominated by the Greek and subsequently, the Venetian ethnic element, although other ethnic groups were not insignificant.[52] While in daily life this comingling of ethnic groups created no problems,

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allowed the return of their villeins though without compelling them to do so, and on condition that their safety—once again, against the Turks—would be guaranteed (Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 1, no. 379; Theotokes, *Θεσπίσματα*, vol. 2/2, pp. 90–91; Koumanoude, "Για ένα κομμάτι γης", p. 72; Saint-Guillain, "Amorgos au XIVe siècle", pp. 114–115).

50   *Venezia-Senato*, vol. 4, no. 568.

51   Thiriet, *Sénat*, vol. 2, no. 1483.

52   One of the most important ethnic elements in the Venetian territories was Jews, about which however there is no evidence of significant mass migration during the era and territory under consideration. Concerning ethnic elements in Venetian territories and the identities of their inhabitants see Herrin/Saint-Guillain (eds.), *Identities and allegiances*, especially the study of S. McKee, "Sailing from Byzantium: Byzantines and Greeks in the Venetian world", pp. 291–300. See also Christ et al. (eds.), *Union in separation. Diasporic groups and identities in the eastern Mediterranean (1100–1800)*, and especially the studies: G. Saint-Guillain, "Venetian archival documents and the prosopography of the thirteenth-century Byzantine world: Tracing individuals through the archives of a diaspora", pp. 37–80; A. Osipian, "Practices of integration and segregation: Armenian trading Diasporas in

differences between ethnic elements remained in key areas, including political rights and inclusion in specific upper-class strata. In possessions under long-standing and continuous Venetian sovereignty, there emerged together with others a "mixed" identity, the chief feature of which was locality. With the exception of the indigenous Greek element, which preserved nearly intact its identity given that it had not moved, over the course of generations the Venetian element, which also largely preserved its language and religion, together with a consciousness of its ancestry, gradually became identified with the place. The other populations, with different characteristics became comingled with local societies without leaving any traces in the sources, which does not help us to determine whether they retained some of the characteristics of their place of origin or were assimilated.

In conclusion, during the final centuries of the middle Ages, the Venetian possessions in the Eastern Mediterranean served as a reception place for both refugees and migrants due to the security and economic prospects they offered. Displaced persons (migrants), whether in groups or as individuals, came from various regions in the Eastern Mediterranean, from different social and economic strata, and displayed a variety of ethnic characteristics, although the Greek and Venetian elements remained dominant. Migration in the other direction, from one Venetian territory to another or even to Venice itself, as well as leaving a Venetian possession for a region outside Venetian territory is also observed, though to a lesser extent.

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