

Agnieszka Aysen Kaim, Paulina Dominik

**From a partitioned Poland to the Ottoman Empire – Go-betweens throughout the nineteenth century as transcultural agents in the exchange of ideas between Europe and the Ottoman Empire**

The aim of this project is to examine the phenomenon of transculturality in the example of the lives and activities of the bicultural go-betweens who belonged to the second generation of Polish émigrés in the Ottoman Empire. The protagonists of this project were the Ottoman officials of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, who operated on the border of both Christian European and Islamic Ottoman-Turkish cultures. The hypothesis of this study is that the positioning of these players on the border of two cultures ultimately facilitated their professional career in the modernizing Ottoman state apparatus and later on in the newly-established Republic of Turkey. Their skills, resulting from a syncretic model of upbringing and education, allowed them to be competent enough to actively participate in reforms based on European models, and to strengthen the ideas of state, nationhood and national identification. Hence, one can refer to them as transcultural mediators, who mobilized the resources of both cultures. This project will complement those Western European studies which have so far focused on émigrés from Western Europe and will familiarize the reader with the selected biographies of the descendants of the Polish political émigrés of the Great Emigration: Karol Bonkowski (Bonkovski Pasha, 1841-1905, chemist, general and specialist in hygiene), son of Antoni Bońkowski (1788-1848); Władysław Czaykowski/Muzaffer Pasha (1843 – 1907, general and Ottoman statesman) - son of Michał Czaykowski/Mehmed Sadık Pasha; Alfred Bieliński/Ahmed Rüstem Bey (1862 – 1934, diplomat, politician and journalist), son of Seweryn Bieliński/Nihad Pasha (1815 – 95) and Hasan Enver Pasha (1857-1929, diplomat and general), son of Konstanty Borzęcki (1826-1876)/Mustafa Celâlettin Paşa. By using the above-mentioned case studies, the research, based on the micro historical method, will determine the individual factors which could have caused the development of the transcultural identity of these hybrid players. The existing research of the participants in the project, Agnieszka Aysen Kaim (PhD) and Paulina Dominik (M.A.), which constitutes the introductory research stage on these issues, has focused on such aspects as religious conversion, religious syncretism and the consequent social status of the first generation of émigrés as well as their political legacy, Polish Romantic nationalism and Ottoman Pan-Islamism. Both researchers have examined the ideological and political trajectories of Polish émigrés in the nineteenth century Ottoman Empire from various perspectives. This research will focus on the question of how various Ottoman religious groups co-existed with each other and how the boundaries of tolerance and intolerance moved among them at the turn of that century, under the influence of the ideology of nationalism. The following results will also be taken into account in relation to the analysis of another concept in the field of transculturality - the so-called “third space” that these figures occupied in Ottoman society, and which led to a double exclusion: firstly, from the community of their ancestors before their conversion and secondly, from those who had belonged to it since birth. The influences of Freemasonry will also be considered. This study will create a polyphonic portrait of the environment of the Ottoman Christians and converts of Polish origin in a period of reforms when European models were being transmitted to the Ottoman Empire and in which the protagonists of this study acted as competent intermediaries, thanks to their operating within multicultural zones of contact. Their services in this field will be examined according to their specializations, and with respect to their character predispositions. This study is also an attempt to revise the stereotypical descriptions used to define such figures, e.g. “an Ottoman subject of Polish origin” or a person “with a Polish soul”. Terms such as the “inherited memory” of their Polish fathers – the 19<sup>th</sup> century insurrectionists - will also be analyzed under the assumption that the outcome might have resulted from a willingness to cut themselves off from this inherited memory. This project will also probe whether, in these specific cases, the ideological radicalization characteristic for the second generation of émigrés occurred as a way of proving their loyalty to the new state. At the same time, the study will also seek to establish whether, behind their radical stance, there stood a fear of double statelessness – through their fathers, who had come from a partitioned Poland - and their own personal fear, as the Ottoman Empire – “the Sick Man of Europe” – was at risk of being territorially divided by the European Powers.

In order to reach the afore-mentioned results, this project intends to carry out research at a number of libraries and archives: the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kórnik and the Czartoryski Library in Cracow; in France: the Polish Library, the National Library and the Diplomatic Archives; in the United Kingdom at the Foreign Ministry Archives; in Turkey at the Ottoman and Republican Archives as well as in Lebanon at the Maronite Patriarchate Archive. The planned effect of the project will be manuscripts of 4 papers (two in English, one in Turkish and one in Polish) published in internationally approved scientific magazines, such as The Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association, Diyâr. The Journal of Ottoman, Turkish and Middle Eastern Studies, The International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi (OTAM).