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# Migration History of the Afro-Eurasian Transition Zone, c. 300–1500: An Introduction (with a Chronological Table of Selected Events of Political and Migration History)

*Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, Lucian Reinfandt and Yannis Stouraitis*

When the process of compilation of this volume started in 2014, migration was without doubt already a “hot” topic. Yet, it were only the events of 2015,<sup>1</sup> which put migration on top of the discussion about the Euro and the economic crisis in the agenda of politicians, the wider public and the media. In this heated debate, the events of past migrations have been employed in a biased manner as arguments against a new “Völkerwanderung” destined to disintegrate Europe as it did with the (Western) Roman Empire. Thus, the present volume could be seen, among other things, also as an effort to provide a corrective to such oversimplifying recourses to the ancient and medieval period.<sup>2</sup> It should be noted, however, that it was planned and drafted before the events.

The volume emerged from a series of papers given at the European Social Science History Conference in Vienna in April 2014 in two sessions on “Early Medieval Migrations” organized by Professors Dirk Hoerder and Johannes Koder. Their aim was to integrate the migration history of the medieval period into the wider discourse of migration studies and to include recent research. The three editors have added contributions by specialists for other periods and regions in order to cover as wide an area and a spectrum of forms of migration as possible. Still, it was not possible to cover all regions, periods and migration movements with the same weight; as one of the anonymous reviewers properly pointed out, the “work’s centre of gravity is (...) between the Eastern Mediterranean region and the Tigris/Euphrates”, with Africa not included in a similar way as Asia or Europe. Therefore, the following sections of the introduction aim first to provide some methodological considerations and then

1 Now even on Wikipedia called the “European migrant crisis”, cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_migrant\\_crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_migrant_crisis). For a short overview, see Luft, *Die Flüchtlingskrise*.

2 Cf. also Pohl, *Die Völkerwanderung*.

to contextualise the individual chapters within an overview on the wider migration history of the “Afro-Eurasian Transition Zone” during the centuries between 300 and 1500 A.D., in Western European historiographical tradition called the “medieval” ones.<sup>3</sup>

## 1 Medieval Migration History and its Study

Migration can be defined as permanent or long-term dislocation of the place of residence, both by individuals and by groups of any size.<sup>4</sup> Earlier research on the medieval period focused on the upper end of this scale, such as the assumed mass migration of peoples during the “Völkerwanderung” of the 4th–6th centuries A.D. and its impact on the Late Roman Empire and its territorial and “cultural” integrity.<sup>5</sup> This approach found its basis in the Latin and Greek historiography of late antiquity, which actually described a “landslide” of “barbarians” affecting the Imperium Romanum, especially starting with the “arrival” of the Huns in 375.<sup>6</sup> This culminated in a first shocking defeat of the Roman imperial army at Adrianople (modern-day Edirne in Turkey) in 378.<sup>7</sup> However, scholars of the 18th–20th centuries were equally interested in these migrating peoples as potential founding fathers of various “modern” nation-states such as France or Germany. These efforts in historiographical “nation-building” spread from Western Europe into Eastern Europe and beyond, creating similar discourses onto other early medieval migrations such as the one of the Slavs (in the 6th–9th centuries) or of the Magyars/Hungarians (in the 9th–10th centuries).<sup>8</sup> Written evidence was increasingly enriched with archaeological findings, which, however, were also primarily interpreted within the framework of ancient and medieval historiography, trying to identify ethnic groups named in the sources with specific material cultures. Thereby, it was attempted to trace migration routes back beyond the horizon of the Latin and Greek sources to Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia or – in the case of the Huns – even to East Asia, where connections were sought with ethnic labels

3 On the issue of periodization, see now Le Goff, *Faut-il vraiment découper l'histoire en tranches?*

4 Harzig/Hoerder, *Migration History*.

5 Demandt, *Der Fall Roms*, pp. 467–490; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, pp. 10–25; Aberth, *Contesting the Middle Ages*, pp. 1–34.

6 Cited after Stickler, *Hunnen*, p. 47.

7 Stickler, *Die Hunnen*, p. 49.

8 Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages*, pp. 28–38.

from Chinese sources (such as the “Xiongnu”, for the first time by Joseph de Guignes in 1756).<sup>9</sup>

These attempts at grand linear narratives, aiming at “histories of origin” of modern-day peoples and their entitlements to “nation-hood” within specific geographical borders, obscured the actual complexity of archaeological and written evidence and its inconsistencies and obstreperousness against simple interpretations. When the massacres of World War II at least partly de-legitimised the nationalist history writing of the previous decades, more nuanced interpretative models gained currency. It became evident that there is almost never a one-to-one equivalence of archaeological findings and historiography, and that the latter implied a high flexibility of ethnic identities. Ethnic labels as well as individuals and groups could move from one social formation to another, and some groups not only became visible for the first time in Roman, Persian or Chinese historiography but they actually took shape on the frontiers of these imperial spheres or even on their soil. Assumptions on a fixed composition and ethnicity of these “peoples” over centuries, symbolised through colourful balls or arrows moving across maps in historical atlases, were thus rejected. Migration as such was identified as decisive for group and identity formation. Furthermore, the settlement of these groups on new territories and their interaction with long-established populations and elites were now interpreted less as the results of conquest and subjugation but of negotiations and processes of accommodation and assimilation. As Walter Pohl has summed up: “Unfortunately, we do not know much about the ethnic identities beyond the borders of the empire. (...) It is not a people (...) who wandered, but various groups that re-formed themselves after multiple breaks, and which in doing so attached themselves to (ethnic) traditions. (...) The struggles for power in the Empire required large groups whose success strengthened their ethnic cohesion”.<sup>10</sup> Similar models have then been adopted from the Late Roman case for other migration processes of the period, from 4th–7th century China to the Arab conquest of the 7th–8th centuries or the Seljuq invasion into Byzantine Anatolia in the 11th century.<sup>11</sup>

The earlier research focus on early medieval phenomena of mass migration has been complemented with an attention on the mobility of smaller groups or even individuals and its potential impact on cultural change.<sup>12</sup> Migrations

9 Kim, *The Huns*; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, pp. 10–15; Curta, *Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages*, pp. 21–28.

10 Pohl, *Die Völkerwanderung*, pp. 20–39; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations*, pp. 15–19.

11 Lewis, *China between Empires*; Tannous, *The Making of the Medieval Middle East*; Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia*.

12 Borgolte, “Einführung”, pp. 17–18.

could be seasonal or circular and across smaller ranges, both in “sedentary” and in “nomadic” societies, such as cases of transhumance or recurrent labour migration. “Trade diasporas” have become a special field of research. These refer to “communities of merchants living in interconnected networks among strangers”, such as the Sogdians between Iran and China in the 4th–9th centuries, and diasporas in general, such as Jewish or Armenian communities or other ethnic/religious minorities.<sup>13</sup> The impact of individual travellers such as missionaries (as in the prominent cases of Christian Irish monks migrating to mainland Europe in the 6th to 8th centuries) or members of elites (cases of marriages to foreign courts, for instance) equally has to be taken into consideration.<sup>14</sup>

Already in the 1880s, E.G. Ravenstein classified mobile individuals by distance and time into local migrants, short-journey migrants, long-journey migrants, migrants by stages and temporary migrants. His “Laws of Migration” identified economic factors as main causes of migration within a framework of “push and pull”, where socio-economic or political conditions in the place of origin motivate mobility while the character of these conditions in the place of destination attracts mobility. Of course, this framework underwent several modifications since then, but core concepts are still applied today, especially within economic theories of mobility.<sup>15</sup>

A “global perspective” on mobility was developed based on the “World-System Theory” as established by Immanuel Wallerstein and as adapted by Janet Abu-Lughod for the “late medieval World System”. A “world system” is characterised by a differentiation between highly developed core areas, less developed peripheries and semi-peripheries in between, connected via “labour supply systems”, within which mobility takes place. Especially for “core centres” such as Venice, attracting work force from nearby and far away “peripheries” across the Eastern Mediterranean, the value of such an approach can be illustrated for the late medieval period (see especially the chapter of Charalampos Gasparis).<sup>16</sup>

Such a macro-perspective, however, pays little attention to the agency of individuals, while recent research on migration has very much focused on the

13 Cohen, *Global Diasporas*.

14 Padberg, *Christianisierung im Mittelalter*; Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 59–91.

15 Cf. Hahn, *Historische Migrationsforschung*, pp. 27, 30–32, and Schwenken, *Globale Migration*, pp. 70–73, with further references.

16 Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*; Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 28–30; Schwenken, *Globale Migration*, pp. 82–97. For a world-system approach to earlier periods, see Beaujard, *Les mondes de l’océan indien*.

interplay between “structure” and individual “agency”. These concepts have been described by Robert A. McLeman as follows: “The terms structure and agency are inherently linked, but their precise definitions can vary according to the context in which they are used. In simplest terms, agency refers to the degree of freedom an individual has in choosing his or her actions, while structure refers to the societal norms, obligations, and institutions that shape and set limits on the individual’s actions”.<sup>17</sup> Structure and agency are also core concepts within the “systems approach” towards migration phenomena as developed recently.<sup>18</sup> It focuses on the interplay between socio-economic, political and spatial structures both in the “society of departure”<sup>19</sup> and in the “receiving societies”,<sup>20</sup> which very much defined the scope of action and the actual agency of individuals and groups. Equally, it highlights the significance of social networks established and/or used by individuals to effect mobility as well as integration within the socio-economic framework in the places of destination (for such an approach see the chapter of Johannes Preiser-Kapeller).<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Charles Tilly analysed the relevance of “solidarity networks” which “provide a setting for life at the destination, a basis for solidarity and mutual aid as well as for division and conflict” for the mobility of individuals. He emphasised, however, the potentially constraining effects of such networks through which “members of immigrant groups often exploited one another as they would not have dared to exploit the native-born”; he also made clear that “every inclusion also constitutes an exclusion”.<sup>22</sup> On the whole, migration systems have been defined as “a set of delicately balanced social and economic processes that emerged gradually over many years” in order to allow for “population movements” that had a “characteristic form, and over time (...) acquired relatively stable structure and a well-defined geographic organization” following “predictable paths”.<sup>23</sup> Among the examples discussed in the present volume, especially the various imperial formations (Roman/Byzantine, Sasanian, Arab, Mongol, Venetian, etc.) could be identified as migration systems. For their expansion and maintenance of imperial rule across Afro-Eurasia, they depended on the

17 McLeman, *Climate and Human Migration*, p. 27.

18 Harzig/Hoerder, *Migration History*, pp. 78–114; Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 15–21; Hahn, *Historische Migrationsforschung*, pp. 21–36; Schwenken, *Globale Migration*, pp. 87–91.

19 Harzig/Hoerder, *Migration History*, pp. 92–98.

20 Harzig/Hoerder, *Migration History*, pp. 102–110.

21 Harzig/Hoerder, *Migration History*, pp. 78–80.

22 Tilly, “Transplanted Networks”, pp. 90 and 92; Hahn, *Historische Migrationsforschung*, p. 29.

23 Cited after Schwenken, *Globale Migration*, p. 89.

“occupational” mobility and migration of elites, troops and other populations at large, established enduring axes of mobility within their sphere of influence and thus have been described as “regimes of entanglements”.<sup>24</sup>

To what extent such theoretical approaches in general can be applied on the periods and regions under consideration in the present volume of course depends on the amount and character of source evidence.<sup>25</sup> Across all centuries, we have to deal with “the disadvantages of scanty information and virtual non-existence of worthwhile statistics”, as one of the anonymous reviewers pointed out. We are of course informed best on individuals of an elite background, “cosmopolitan nobles and their households”, as Dirk Hoerder has called them, but sometimes we also encounter “itinerant administrators” and other office holders or military commanders in the service of one of the empires or polities dealt with in the following pages. The same is true for “pilgrims and clerics”, not least because of the often close connection of religious function and “writtenness”. The later was also relevant for “merchants and traders” who were mobile as “economically informed actors”, although with some exceptions – such as the Cairo Genizah documents starting already in the late 9th century – the bulk of our evidence in this regard comes from the 13th–15th centuries. During this period, we sometimes encounter individual representatives (and individual agency) of the “rural people, labourers and servants”, while before that time they are often aggregated under ethnic or socio-economic umbrella terms in the sources, and their mobility is frequently described as coerced by the state or forced due to warfare or other catastrophes. The extreme form of forced mobility is of course slavery, which will also feature prominently in some of the chapters of the present volume. Nevertheless, Dirk Hoerder has suggested keeping at least at the back of one’s mind the probably often-considerable degree of “agency” of individuals within non-elite strata of societies also in those cases when it does not become visible in our sources.<sup>26</sup> The longitudinal perspective on more than a millennium of migration history in the present volume should therefore also help to explore possibilities for individual agencies when comparing different periods and regions within the so-called “Middle Ages”.

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24 Schuppert, *Verflochtene Staatlichkeit*.

25 On this issue, see also Baker/Takeyuki, *Migration and Disruptions*.

26 Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 59–91.

## 2 An Overview of Migration History in the Afro-Eurasian Transition Zone (4th–15th Century)

Already the original selection of papers had focused on what we called “Afro-Eurasian Transition Zone”, the vast area between the Arctic Sea and the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean and Central Asia, where the three continents of the “Old World” meet. The high density of overlapping routes (of commerce, pilgrimage or other forms of mobility), of imperial as well as religious and cultural spheres, made it a most promising area for the exploration of past migration.<sup>27</sup> In what follows, we will present a short chronological overview of the history of these migration processes from the 4th to the 15th century A.D., addressed to non-specialist readers in particular.<sup>28</sup> Such a macro-perspective of necessity prioritises larger-scale migration movements and often resorts to the (especially ethnic) “umbrella terms”, which often hide the actual complexity of the emergence, composition and cohesion of these groups, as discussed above. Nevertheless, the following pages allow for a glimpse at the multiplicity of mobilities across various spatial ranges within the selected period and area and provide a historical embedding of the chapters in this volume.

The two centuries after the year 375 A.D. (the “arrival” of the Huns in Eastern Europe) have been identified as the period of “Barbarian invasions” into the Roman sphere. It transformed the Western Roman Empire into a mosaic of “Germanic” kingdoms from Anglo-Saxon England via the Frankish Merovingian realms and the Visigoths in Spain to the Ostrogoths in Italy and the Vandals in North Africa.<sup>29</sup> The latter two polities, however, were “re-conquered” in the 530s to 550s by the Eastern Roman Empire, which continued the imperial tradition from Constantinople, the “New Rome”. Yet, large parts of Italy were again lost after 568 to the invasion of the Lombards, which was interpreted as the “last” of the Germanic migrations of Late Antiquity.<sup>30</sup> Around the same time (and originally as allies of the Lombards), the Avars established themselves as heirs of the 5th century Steppe Empire of the Huns in the Carpathian Basin. Their arrival in the steppes to the north of the Black Sea in 557, however, indicates more far-reaching political upheavals beyond Europe. Most probably (although this identification is still contested), a core element of the people

27 See also Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*; Kulke, *Das europäische Mittelalter*.

28 For a systematic survey, see also Borgolte, *Migrationen im Mittelalter*. Very useful (with many illustrative maps) are equally Cunliffe, *By Steppe, Desert, and Ocean*, and Cunliffe, *On the Ocean*.

29 Pohl, *Die Völkerwanderung*.

30 Christie, *The Lombards*.



now emerging as the Avars was constituted by groups of the Rouran, whose empire in the steppes north of China had been crashed in 552 by a new alliance of tribes under the leadership of the Gök-Turks.<sup>31</sup> The Turks in turn achieved dominance in the vast areas between China and the Caspian Sea, allying themselves with the Persian Empire of the Sasanians in 560 in order to conquer the realms of the Hephthalites, the last empire of the so-called “Iranian Huns”. These various groups had migrated into the regions between Iran, Central Asia and India since the mid-4th century and had troubled the neighbouring Sasanians and the Gupta Empire in Northern India, whose collapse around 500 was accelerated by invasions of the “Hunas”.<sup>32</sup>

In the west, the Sasanian Empire was competing with the Roman Empire across the Afro-Eurasian transition zone from the Caucasus via the Middle East to South Arabia and East Africa, also through proxy wars between regional powers allied with the one or the other imperial centre. One of these conflict zones emerged between the Kingdom of Aksum in modern-day Ethiopia and Eritrea and the Kingdom of Himyar in modern-day Yemen, especially after the former became Christianised and therefore got into closer contact with Constantinople from the 330s onwards. As George Hatke, however, demonstrates in his chapter, already the previous centuries had been characterised by intensive mobility across the Red Sea, in particular with groups from Aksum migrating to Southwest Arabia and intervening into the wars between the competing polities of the region before Himyar achieved hegemony. Warfare and migration got especially intensive again in the 6th century, with Himyar becoming a client state of Aksum for some time before Sasanian Persia intervened with an army around 570 – an intervention which led to the settlement of Iranian troops and workers in that area.<sup>33</sup>

The two predominant empires of Western Afro-Eurasia, (Eastern) Rome and (Sasanian) Persia mutually undermined their power with long and devastating wars (especially in the years 571–590 and 602–628) before they were shattered by the newly emerged community (“umma”) of Islam. Under its banner, the now unified Arab tribes occupied the richest Roman provinces in Syria, Palestine and Egypt between 632 and 642 and conquered the Persian Empire up to Central Asia in its entirety by 652. These campaigns included also large-scale movements of people into the new territories (see below).

31 Pohl, *The Avars*; Pohl, *Die Völkerwanderung*.

32 Ferrier, *L'Inde des Gupta*, pp. 180–206; Kulke/Rothermund, *Geschichte Indiens*, pp. 120–122; Baumer, *The Age of the Silk Road*, pp. 94–96; Alram, *Das Antlitz des Fremden*, pp. 89–96; Rezakhani, *ReOrienting the Sasanians*, pp. 97–99, 104–124; Schmiedchen, “Indien”, pp. 67–69.

33 See also Hatke, *Aksum and Nubia*; Avanzini, *By Land and by Sea*; Power, *The Red Sea from Byzantium to the Caliphate*; Beaujard, *Les mondes de l'océan indien* 1, pp. 506–524.

Moreover, in the European provinces of Eastern Rome, since the 6th century, groups of Slavs had migrated across the entire Balkans as well as into eastern Central Europe. This process intensified with the establishment of Avar power in the Carpathian Basin after 568 (see above), which additionally weakened Constantinople's control over the Danube frontier.<sup>34</sup> Johannes Koder discusses in his chapter the Slavic immigration in the Balkans as “the most relevant population movement for the present ethnic composition of south eastern Europe”, extending to the southernmost parts of the Peloponnesian peninsula. Koder mostly follows a “traditional” approach based on written and onomastic evidence, which has been used to favour an interpretation of large-scale Slavic migration into the Balkans since the second half of the 6th century. In contrast, Florin Curta provides a more critical analysis of the current state of debate of migrations in the archaeology of Eastern and Southeastern Europe during the Early Middle Ages, which casts doubt on the thesis that Slavic migrations across the Danube took place at large already in the 6th century.<sup>35</sup> Most problematic in his view is the relation between written and archaeological sources and their attempted combination in unsuitable models.<sup>36</sup> This also extends to a field, which has become even more prominent in the last years: the use of ancient DNA and other natural scientific indicators.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the chapters of Koder and Curta can be read as illustrative case studies for these possible tensions between historiography and archaeology.

The situation on the Balkans was further complicated for Byzantium with the establishment of the polity of the Bulgars. Some of the steppe formations under this name making up a (short-living) empire north of the Black Sea from ca. 680 onwards occupied territories at both banks of the Lower Danube to the north of the Balkan Mountains, integrating Slavic groups into their realm.<sup>38</sup> Since the 660s (after the collapse of the Western Turkic Khanate), the steppes to the north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea were dominated by a federation of various ethnic groups under the hegemony of the Khazars, whose political centre was first located to the northeast of the Caucasus in modern-day

34 Pohl, *The Avars*; Kardaras, *Byzantium and the Avars*; Gandila, *Cultural Encounters*; Hardt, “Slawen”, pp. 171–180.

35 Cf. also Curta, *The Making of the Slavs*.

36 On this issue, see also Härke, “Archaeologists and Migrations”; Burmeister, “Archaeology and Migration”.

37 See also Bösl, *Doing Ancient DNA*; Feuchter, “Über die Herausforderung der Geschichtswissenschaft durch die Genetik”; Pohl, *The Genetic Challenge to Medieval History and Archaeology*. For a popular introduction into this research see now Krause, *Die Reise unserer Gene*.

38 Ziemann, *Vom Wandervolk zur Großmacht*.

Dagestan and since the 730s at the lower Volga river (with the until today unlocated capital of Itil).<sup>39</sup>

One factor intensifying these various crises in the late 6th and 7th century may have been climate change. The “Late Antique Little Ice Age” between 536 and 660 brought about significantly cooler and more adverse climatic conditions across Afro-Eurasia. These also promoted the outbreak and diffusion of a major global plague epidemic that returned in waves between 542 and 750 especially in the west of Afro-Eurasia and possibly led to demographic depression in various areas.<sup>40</sup> Around the time when the plague disappeared, an Arab army and Chinese troops of the Tang dynasty clashed in the Battle of Talas (in modern-day Kyrgyzstan) in July 751, thus also symbolising the new geopolitical framework of Afro-Eurasia of the 8th–9th centuries.<sup>41</sup>

The expansion and maintenance of imperial rule across Afro-Eurasia included the “occupational” mobility and migration of elites at large.<sup>42</sup> The rapid expansion of the caliphate from the Mediterranean to North Africa and Spain as well as to Iran, Central Asia and the borders of India in the 7th and 8th centuries, for instance, was accompanied by large migrations of elites and their followers from the Arabian Peninsula to these areas, which also allowed for the spatial diffusion of Islam. The new arrivals did not represent a homogeneous mass, but consisted of different, even competing groups, mostly linked by tribal loyalties, who by no means always acted according to central planning.<sup>43</sup> The Islamic expansion set also other ethnic groups in motion, such as the Berbers from North Africa who played a decisive role in the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 711 where they settled alongside the Arabs.<sup>44</sup> The new Abbasid dynasty in the mid-8th century found supporters among regional elites in Eastern Iran and Central Asia. In the following century, several members of these groups migrated in waves as retainers of the Abbasids to Iraq and their newly founded capital of Baghdad in 762 as well as into other regions of the Caliphate.<sup>45</sup> For the case of Iranians in 9th century Egypt, Lucian Reinfandt

39 Golden/Ben-Shammai/Róna-Tas, *The World of the Khazars*; Zhivkov, *Khazaria*.

40 Büntgen et al., “Cooling and societal change during the Late Antique Little Ice Age”; McCormick et al., “Climate Change during and after the Roman Empire”.

41 See also Preiser-Kapeller, *Jenseits von Rom und Karl dem Großen*, pp. 38–62.

42 See also Schuppert, *Verflochtene Staatlichkeit*.

43 Orthmann, *Stamm und Macht*; Preiser-Kapeller, “Complex Processes of Migration”; Berger, “Muslimische Welt”, pp. 131–135.

44 Marboe, *Von Burgos nach Cuzco*, pp. 57–70; Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome*, pp. 338–341; Sénac, *Charlemagne et Mahomet*, pp. 113–127; di Branco/Wolf, “Berber und Araber im Maghreb und Europa”, pp. 149–159.

45 Preiser-Kapeller, “Complex Processes of Migration”; Preiser-Kapeller, *Jenseits von Rom und Karl dem Großen*. For the westernmost extent of this migration, see now Dold-Ghadar, *Pers-Andalus*.

demonstrates how even the migration of smaller groups of administrative elites could affect local conditions and “adjacent social milieus” in the area of destination. In addition, Myriam Wissa deals with Islamic Egypt, using the Christian-Egyptian’s revolt of 831/832 as case study for the interaction between “indigenous” population and “newcomers” after the Arab conquest. These migrations from Central Asia, however, also had an involuntary aspect. Lutz Berger surveys the case of military slavery in the medieval Islamic world up to the 13th century. He demonstrates that “far from being an extraordinary institution”, it was “just one instance of military work being left to people from the margin (socially or geographically) of a society”; during the period under consideration, especially the northern peripheries of the Islamic World from Central Asia to Caucasia served as sources of “mamlūks”.<sup>46</sup>

Yet, besides the military sector, slave trade mobilized at large individuals and communities across western Afro-Eurasia. Slavic-speaking groups from Eastern and Southeastern Europe now became an important “source” of unfree labour from the 7th century onwards. Latin texts called these groups “slavi”, Greek ones “sklaviniai” and Arabic authors “saqaliba”. The modern word “slave” derives most likely from these terms. The Slavs became the victims of military campaigns and slave hunts by the Frankish kingdom, the Italian maritime cities, the Bulgarian Empire, Byzantium, the Vikings, and the Khazars, as well as by competing Slavic neighbours who sold prisoners to traders from these realms. Trade routes ran in the west from the Frankish Kingdom and Italy to Spain and North Africa, in the eastern Mediterranean from the Balkans to Egypt and Syria, in the Caucasus from the Khazar Empire to Armenia and Mesopotamia and across Central Asia from Eastern Europe to eastern Iran and to Iraq. This trade over the centuries probably “mobilized” tens of thousands of people against their will over long distances, given the number of Arab silver coins partly traded in return for slaves to Eastern and Northern Europe.<sup>47</sup> Another main source of slaves was (East) Africa, whose coastal cities since the 9th century in general became focal points of mercantile and missionary activity from the Islamic world, leading to the emergence of the later so-called “Swahili”. In a similar way, Islamic mobility also affected the kingdoms of West Africa to the south of the Sahara.<sup>48</sup> The slaves becoming one of the commodities

46 See also Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords*.

47 Rotman, *Byzantine Slavery*, pp. 59–76; McCormick, “New Light on the Dark Ages”; Lombard, *Blütezeit des Islam*, pp. 198–202; Hardt, “Slawen”, pp. 177–180; Schiel, “Sklaven”, pp. 255–256; Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 40–42.

48 Middleton, *World of Swahili*; Horton/Middleton, *The Swahili*; Hawkes/Wynne-Jones, “India in Africa”; Beaujard, *Les mondes de l’océan indien* 1, pp. 101–126. On medieval Muslim merchant communities across the Indian Ocean, see also now Beaujard, *Les mondes de l’océan indien* II, pp. 48–71; Prange, *Monsoon Islam*, and Chaffee, *The Muslim merchants of*

exchanged in these newly emerging networks were called “Zanj” in the Arabic sources (the origin of the term is unclear). In various texts, they are described as esteemed workers, especially in agriculture, but also characterized with “racist” prejudice.<sup>49</sup> The growing number of Zanj can be derived from their mobilization in the context of various uprisings from the later 7th century onwards. In the 9th century, many slaves from Africa worked in southern Iraq and neighbouring Khuzestan (now southwest Iran) in agriculture, especially on sugar cane plantations, or in the drainage of larger wetlands. These swamps also served as a refuge for rebels, robbers and religious deviants, and from this combination emerged a major uprising of the Zanj, who even established their own state in the years 869 to 883, contributing to the further destabilization of Abbasid rule and thus the transformation of the geo-political world order of the 7th–9th centuries.<sup>50</sup>

Youval Rotman in his chapter examines how the Byzantines resorted to “forced migration and slavery”, which “were (...) two sides of the same coin”. He equally demonstrates how shifting religious borders became decisive for the (re)location of areas of provenance of slaves. The Byzantine Empire, in turn, attracted the movement of Syrian and Palestinian populations from these regions after the Arab conquest of the 630s–640s, as Panagiotis Theodoropoulos surveys in his chapter in comparison with other migrations within the Caliphate.<sup>51</sup> A similar pattern of migration can be equally observed for the Armenians, who had contributed especially to the military work force of the Eastern Roman Empire already before the Arab conquest, as Johannes Preiser-Kapeller explores in his chapter. Besides elite and military mobility, also (deliberate, coerced and forced) migrations of Armenians at large as well as commercial, occupational and religious mobility can be observed between the 5th and the 11th century.<sup>52</sup> For the same period, Yannis Stouraitis establishes in his chapter

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*Premodern China*. For Muslim migrations across the Sahara, cf. Bechhaus-Gerst, “Afrika”; Fauvelle, *Das Goldene Rhinoceros*, pp. 60–90; Fauvelle, *L’Afrique ancienne*; Gomez, *African Dominion*.

49 Popovic, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq*, pp. 14–22; Power, *The Red Sea*, pp. 92–95, 141–143; Heers, *Les négriers en terres d’islam*, pp. 27–33; Lombard, *Blütezeit des Islam*, pp. 202–204; Schiel, “Sklaven”, pp. 253–255.

50 Popovic, *The Revolt of African Slaves*, pp. 22–23, 33–43; Heers, *Les négriers en terres d’islam*, pp. 231–240; Lombard, *Blütezeit des Islam*, pp. 33–34, 160–162.

51 Cf. also now Tannous, *The Making of the Medieval Middle East*.

52 The chapter also discusses the problem of earlier research identifying individuals as “Armenian” even generations after the migration of their forefathers and –mothers despite clear indications of their assimilation into the Byzantine elite, a phenomenon recently called by Anthony Kaldellis “The Armenian fallacy”, cf. Kaldellis, *Romanland*, pp. 155–195.

a typology of forced migration of groups in the geopolitical sphere of the East Roman Empire, which was mainly a consequence of war or state coercion, and he seeks to scrutinize the conditions and realities of such movements for their participants.<sup>53</sup>

With the Varangians, a new group of migrants arrived in Byzantium in various capacities (merchants, mercenaries, but also looters) from the early 9th century onwards. They came from Scandinavia via the rivers of Eastern Europe and the Black Sea to the Bosphorus. Together with Slavic groups, they founded the principedom(s) of the “Rus” in Eastern Europe that were Christianised from Constantinople after 988.<sup>54</sup> Alongside new steppe groups, emerging in the sources as “Magyars” (in Byzantine Greek texts actually first called “Tourkoi”) and as “Pechenegs” (in Byzantine Greek “Patzinakitai”) and migrating along the north of the Black Sea from East to West, the Varangians contributed to a de-stabilisation of the Khazar Empire as well (whose elite in the early 9th century converted to Judaism, probably under the influence of itinerant Jewish merchants as described in Arab sources under the term *ar-Rādhāniyya*). The Khazar Empire eventually collapsed due to attacks by the Rus in the 960s. By that time, the Magyars had established themselves in the Carpathian Basin (since the 890s) and the Pechenegs to the north of the Black Sea.<sup>55</sup> In his introductory essay, Dirk Hoerder discusses various facets and motives of mobility between Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and Byzantium from the 9th to the 15th century such as “migration”, “travel”, “commerce”, or “cultural transfer”. His methodological considerations on the enduring effects of human mobility in the long term as well as on the short-term dynamics of the networks and spatial axes of migration set the tone for the entire volume.

After the crisis of the 7th–8th century, the Byzantine Empire recovered economically, demographically and finally also territorially in the 9th–11th century. This process attracted also merchants from the growing Italian cities of Amalfi, Venice, Genoa and Pisa in increasing numbers<sup>56</sup> as well as migrants of Syrian and Armenian backgrounds. On the other hand, Syriac- and Armenian-speaking population became subjects of Constantinople with the expansion in

53 On populations transfers in the Byzantine Empire, see also Ditten, *Ethnische Verschiebungen*.

54 Scheel, *Skandinavien und Byzanz*; Raffensperger, *Reimagining Europe*.

55 Zhivkov, *Khazaria*; Bowlus, *The Battle of Lechfeld*; Pálóczi-Horváth, *Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians*; Róna-Tas, *Hungarians and Europe*; Spinei, *The Romanians and the Turkic Nomads*; Gil, “The Radhanite Merchants”.

56 See for instance Skinner, *Medieval Amalfi*; Lilie, *Handel und Politik*.

the East from the 960s to the 1060s, as did Slavic-speaking people after the conquest of the Bulgarian Empire in the Balkans between the 970s and 1020s.<sup>57</sup> The enlarged Byzantine Empire of the 11th century became more exposed to new large-scale migration movements, which turned into invasions of Byzantine territories.<sup>58</sup> The remaining provinces in Southern Italy were lost to the Normans by 1071. These had originally moved as mercenaries from Normandy to the region and between 1061 and 1091, they conquered Arab-ruled Sicily which had become the target of migration from the Islamic world since the 9th century. The emerging Norman Kingdom remained a threat for Byzantine territories to the east of the Adriatic until the late 12th century.<sup>59</sup> North of the Black Sea, the nomadic confederacy of the Pechenegs disintegrated due to the advance of the Oghuz and then Cumans (or Kipchaks) which in turn mobilised Pecheneg groups against the Byzantine Danube frontier. Some of these came to an agreement with Constantinople and were settled on imperial soil (or did the same in the Kingdom of Hungary).<sup>60</sup> The greatest threat for the Byzantine core provinces in Asia Minor, however, emerged from the East with the migration of new Turkish groups. They, partly under the leadership of the Seljuq dynasty, had been able to take over control over the former provinces of the Abbasid Caliphate in Central Asia and Eastern Iran since 1040 before capturing Baghdad itself in 1055.<sup>61</sup> The decisive moment for their advance into Anatolia is traditionally connected with the defeat of the Byzantine army at Manzikert in summer 1071. As Alexander Beihammer demonstrates in his chapter, however, the Byzantine frontier organisation had already been weakened long before that, whereas conflicts within the Byzantine elite after 1071 allowed for the establishment of various not only Turkish, but also Norman and Armenian power structures. In any case, Beihammer's critical review of the sources highlights the actual complex dynamics of the "loss of Anatolia", which cannot be described as one coherent process of Turkish "Landnahme".<sup>62</sup> The resulting vulnerable situation of Byzantium contributed to the mobilisation of thousands of warriors and other migrants in Western Europe in the context of the

57 Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*; Preiser-Kapeller, "Byzantinische Geschichte, 1025–1204".

58 Kaldellis, *Streams of Gold, Rivers of Blood*.

59 Theotokis, *The Norman Campaigns*.

60 Meško, "Pecheneg groups in the Balkans", with further literature; Pálóczi-Horváth, *Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians*; Spinei, *The Romanians and the Turkic Nomads*.

61 Peacock, *The Great Seljuq Empire*. For possible climatic factors in these migrations from the steppe cf. Ellenblum, *The Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean*, and (for a more critical view) Preiser-Kapeller, "A Collapse of the Eastern Mediterranean?".

62 See also Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia*.

Crusading movement, initiated by the Papacy in 1095. From the beginning, Constantinople viewed the arrivals from the West as potential allies but also as a threat, especially due to the participation of the Normans from Southern Italy in the First Crusade. This first “armed pilgrimage” was conducive for the Byzantine recovery of territories in the western and southern coastline of Asia Minor, but the breach of agreement between the Byzantine emperor and the Crusaders resulted in the latter establishing a series of independent principalities along the Levantine coast after the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099. The so-called Crusader States attracted the merchants of the Italian cities and settlers from Western Europe. They followed a similar pattern of “conquest and colonisation”, as Robert Bartlett has called it, along the fringes of “Latin Europe” from the Iberian Peninsula to the Elbe (including the “German” settlement in Central and Eastern Europe) and from Ireland to Sicily between the 11th and 13th century. In contrast, Muslim populations from these regions were forced to abandon them and migrate to other parts of the Islamic world.<sup>63</sup> Overall, the 12th century was characterised by a significant increase of “Latin” presence in former and current Byzantine territories and the Eastern Mediterranean. Domestic political turmoil, alongside a series of military campaigns which either caused damage to Byzantine territories (for instance the Third Crusade, 1189/1190) or were aimed at conquering them (for instance the Norman conquest of Thessaloniki, 1185), resulted in “anti-Latin” assaults especially in Constantinople in 1170 and 1182. Against this background, inner-dynastic conflicts in 1203 caused the diversion of the Fourth Crusade towards Constantinople, which ended with the conquest and looting of the city by the Venetians and the Crusaders in April 1204.<sup>64</sup>

The year 1204 (despite the Byzantine “re-conquest” of Constantinople in 1261) marked the end of the politically united and centralized East Roman world. The same period saw the end of the (competing) Islamic Caliphates of the Abbasids (with the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258) and the Fatimids in Egypt and Syria (with the downfall of the dynasty in Cairo in 1171). Instead, the Mongol expansion during the 13th century resulted in the establishment of the new large-scale imperial formations of the Golden Horde in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and the Ilkhanids in Iran, Iraq and Anatolia. The complete conquest of all core regions of the Eastern Islamic World by the Ilkhanids was prevented by the Mamlūk Sultanate. The latter was a regime of warrior-slaves mostly stemming from the Black Sea and the Caucasus regions, who

63 Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*; Ellenblum, *Frankish Rural Settlement*; Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives*; Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 45–48.

64 Preiser-Kapeller, “Byzantinische Geschichte, 1025–1204”.



took over power in Egypt and Syria in 1250/1252. The increased influx of these slaves into Egypt in the decades before Ayyubid rule was partly caused by the turmoil created in their regions of origins (especially the areas of the Kipchaks) due to the Mongol invasions. Cuman/Kipchak groups also settled in Hungary as well as in the Balkans and in (at that time still Byzantine) Western Asia Minor after agreements with the rulers of these areas in the 1230s and 1240s. Some of them, as other speakers of Turkish languages before and after, were even integrated into the Byzantine elite through baptism.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, even before their more permanent conquests in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, the campaigns of Genghis Khan and his successors provoked large-scale movements of displaced populations and troops within these areas. A telling example is the last Shāh of the Khwārazm-Empire in Eastern Iran and Central Asia, Jalāl al-Dīn, who after his defeat against the Mongols in 1221 plagued the Middle East and Caucasia with the remains of his original retinue and new followers in the search for a new realm until his death in 1231. The Ayyubid Sultan of Egypt, who used them to reconquer Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1244, later hired parts of his troops. Around that time, the Mongols had already conquered larger parts of Eastern Europe and advanced into the core provinces of the former Abbasid Caliphate, where they captured Baghdad in 1258.<sup>66</sup> Besides the displacements caused by their wars, the Mongols like other empires before them resorted to the relocation of troops recruited in the conquered areas and the resettlement of population at large, which acquired a new “trans-Eurasian” dimension due the immense extent of their realm. Thousands of soldiers from Russia and the Alans, who had lived north of the Caucasus and of the Black Sea, took part in the Mongol conquest of China and served in the armies of the Yuan dynasty there until the end of Mongol rule in 1368. In addition, Russian peasants and skilled workers from Eastern Europe (including German miners from Transylvania, for instance) were transferred into the Steppes of Central Asia.<sup>67</sup> In the other direction, thousands of Oirats warriors with the families from the upper Yenissei region (together with Chinese artillerymen) took part in the Mongol conquest of Persia and Iraq and settled there. In 1296, reportedly 10,000 of them defected to the Mamlūks in the aftermath of domestic struggles in the Ilkhanate. They were settled as a welcome reinforcement at the Mediterranean coast of the Palestinian province. As Thomas T. Allsen summed up, the Mongol rulers as “herders of human beings” brought

65 Korobeinikov, “A broken mirror”; Halperin, “The Kipchak connection”; Loiseau, *Les Mamelouks*; Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars*; Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks*.

66 Jackson, *The Mongols and the Islamic World*; Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*.

67 Reichert, *Begegnungen mit China*.

“East Asian colonists to the west to repair the damage caused by their own military operations, while European and Muslim colonists were taken east as human booty to produce specialty industrial and agricultural goods”, thus initiating a new “Völkerwanderung” of the 13th–14th centuries.<sup>68</sup>

At the fringes of the Mongol empires, however, large areas of Eastern Europe, Asia Minor and the Balkans were characterised by political fragmentation. At the same time, especially the Venetians and Genoese integrated the cities of the Eastern Mediterranean as hubs and nodes into their commercial networks and into the Mediterranean subsystem of the late medieval “World System”.<sup>69</sup> This contributed to the emergence of a multitude of overlapping zones of power and commerce as well as of various religious, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Between the 13th and the 15th century, “no other region of Europe or the Mediterranean became a cynosure of so many ethnicities in such a small place”.<sup>70</sup> The Eastern Mediterranean was the stage of intensive contacts between Mongols, Byzantines, Armenians, Turks, Persians and Arabs, Slavonic-, Albanian- and Vlach-speaking people, “Latins” or “Franks”, and a large number of further ethnicities, members of which were of course also mobile across political borders;<sup>71</sup> moreover, between Orthodox, Oriental and Western Christian Churches as well as Islam (in its various denominations) and (within the Mongol Sphere) also Buddhism.<sup>72</sup> During that period, the first groups of people later known as “Gypsies” also appear in the records of South-eastern Europe, whom modern research since the 18th century tentatively has tried to connect with various groups originating in India.<sup>73</sup> Beyond traditional supra-regional contacts of members of medieval religious elites and nobilities which always had crossed borders within and beyond cultural-religious frontiers,<sup>74</sup> the increase in the number of contact zones, especially on the basis

68 Allsen, “Population Movements in Mongol Eurasia”; Beaujard, *Les mondes de l’océan indien* II, pp. 145–159. On the consequences of Mongol conquest see also the contributions in Krämer/Schmidt/Singer, *Historicing the “Beyond”*. For an illustrative individual female life story during this period, see Eastmond, *Tamta’s World*.

69 Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*; Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade*, pp. 1–12; Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, 28–30.

70 Epstein, *Purity Lost*, pp. 110–111.

71 For some examples, cf. the contributions in Balard/Ducellier, *Migrations et diasporas méditerranéennes*, and Malamut/Ouerfelli, *Les échanges en Méditerranée médiévale*.

72 Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*; Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade*, pp. 1–12; Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 28–30.

73 Fraser, *The Gypsies*.

74 Cf. Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 60–62; Preiser-Kapeller, “Networks of border zones”, and for the example of the Seljuq-Byzantine border in Anatolia Yıldız, “Reconceptualizing the Seljuk-Cilician Frontier”, and Yıldız, “Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes”.

of commerce, opened paths to border-crossing also for non-aristocratic members of society.<sup>75</sup> Commercial interests and occupational mobility contributed to the establishment of a “middle ground” beyond religious or ethnic antagonisms. As Kate Fleet stated in her study of Genoese and Ottoman trade: “money largely formed the basis of the relationship between the Genoese and the Turks and this, rather than any religious scruple, dictated relations”.<sup>76</sup> One illustrative aspect of these relations, also pertaining to labour mobility, is the use of eastern-style textiles in Europe and of western-style textiles in the Islamic world.<sup>77</sup> “Networks of affinities” were created based on profession and know how, for instance. One most impressive result of entangled phenomena in this regard is the emergence of the *Lingua franca* of Mediterranean seafaring in the late medieval and early modern period.<sup>78</sup> The possibilities for (both deliberate and forced) migration that emerged in the Aegean imperial sphere of Venice after the Fourth Crusade in 1204, which involved individuals and groups of various ethno-linguistic, religious and cultural backgrounds with different chances of (upwards) social mobility, are analysed in the chapter of Charalampos Gasparis. He also demonstrates what kind of information on motives and modes of mobility can be retrieved from the more detailed (especially documentary) source evidence for this period, which we lack for earlier centuries (see also the discussion above).<sup>79</sup>

The medieval “World System” emerging from the Mongol expansion, however, also created the pre-conditions for its demise; the increased connectivity and mobility across Afro-Eurasia allowed for the diffusion of the plague epidemic of the Black Death from East and Central Asia into Western Eurasia in the 1340s, with all its devastating effects. Even before the outbreak of the epidemic, political instability and internecine wars had contributed to the decline of the Mongol imperial formations and their eventual downfall or fragmentation.<sup>80</sup> The epidemic of the Black Death also motivated another wave of pogroms against the Jews. This intensified the already on-going shift of the core

75 See now Preiser-Kapeller/Mitsiou, “Mercantile and religious mobility”.

76 Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade*, p. 141. For examples of labour mobility in this period, see Mitsiou/Preiser-Kapeller, “Moving Hands”.

77 Flood, *Objects of Translation*, pp. 11, 61–85; Wardwell, “Panni Tartarici”; Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza*; Jacoby, “Silk Economics and Cross-Cultural Artistic Interaction”; Burns, *Sea of Silk*.

78 Kahane/Kahane/Tietze, *The Lingua Franca of the Levant*; Makris, *Studien zur spätbyzantinischen Schifffahrt*, pp. 112–117.

79 On migration into the city of Venice itself, see Ravid, “Venice and its Minorities”.

80 Campbell, *The Great Transition*; Ciocîltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade*; Jackson, *The Mongols and the Islamic World*; Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*; Aberth, *Contesting the Middle Ages*, pp. 243–315.

areas of Jewish settlement of the so-called Ashkenazim from Western and Central Europe – where there had been a significant growth in the number of Jewish communities between the 10th and the 13th century – to Eastern Central and Eastern Europe in the 14th–15th century. These regions finally became the homelands of the majority of all Jewish population until the *Shoa* during World War II.<sup>81</sup>

The 14th century saw equally the rise of a new imperial project with the establishment of the Ottoman dynasty, originally one of several Turkish groups who had started to conquer and migrate into Byzantine territories in Western Asia Minor due to Mongol pressure from the East since the second half of the 13th century.<sup>82</sup> From 1352 onwards, Ottoman armies expanded into Southeastern Europe. Some of the indigenous nobilities resisted but others joined the Ottoman elite, which remained open for various ethnic and religious backgrounds. In addition, non-Muslim populations were integrated into the service of the Ottoman state since the 1360s by force via the so-called *devşirme*, the collection of Christian boys from conquered territories as tax who were converted to Islam and later served as Janissaries in the army or administration.<sup>83</sup> By 1400, the Ottomans had become the pre-dominant power in Southeastern Europe and Anatolia and already laid siege to Constantinople. The city was only saved by a last outbreak of Mongol expansionism under Timur Leng. From his basis in Samarkand, he afflicted since the 1360s large parts of Central Asia, Eastern Europe, India, Iran, Iraq and Anatolia, where he defeated the Ottomans near Ankara in 1402. Timur's military campaigns caused large-scale displacements of populations across the entire region from Eastern Europe to India and from Central Asia to the Aegean.<sup>84</sup> The Ottomans, however, were able to re-establish their empire, to conquer Constantinople in 1453, and within the next 100 years to integrate all territories from the Black Sea to Egypt and from Northwest Iran to Algeria into a new Islamic Empire. This provided the framework for a new chapter of intensified migration and mobility (including the immigration of many Jews expelled from Spain in 1492) which is beyond the scope of the present volume.<sup>85</sup>

81 Toth, *The economic history of European Jews*; Ben-Sasson, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, pp. 687–701; Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 42–44; Aberth, *Contesting the Middle Ages*, pp. 101–140.

82 Korobeinikov, *Byzantium and the Turks*.

83 Werner, *Die Geburt einer Großmacht*; Barkey, *Empire of Difference*; Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*; Imber, *The Ottoman Empire*.

84 Nagel, *Timur der Eroberer*.

85 Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact*, pp. 108–117; Faroqhi, *Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire*; Bossong, *Die Sepharden*.

Despite the impressive number of forced or voluntary migrations described in the papers of this volume, we have to be aware that many extensive population movements remained below the “radar” of state authorities or the interest of official historiography.<sup>86</sup> As an example, we may mention the long-distance migrating movements of nomadic groups who appear in various combinations and with different names in the records of neighbouring empires, such as the Chinese, then disappear from them and eventually re-appear in new composition and with new names, for instance in Roman historiography. The exact connections between these “peoples”, such as the Xiongnu and the Huns in the 4th century or the Rouran and the Avars in the 6th century, as well as the “pre-history” of the Magyars before they “emerged” in Byzantine and Latin sources in the late 9th century, remain unclear. A further example of “hidden” migrations are the movements of Bantu-speaking groups across most of Sub-Saharan Africa in the first millennia B.C.E and A.D.<sup>87</sup> Yet, as one of the anonymous reviewers pointed out, we have to reckon not only “with the possibility of sizable movements occurring without being mentioned in our literary sources”. On the other hand, “there is the possibility of migrations recorded in medieval sources which did not actually occur!” For the latter case, one may reference the medieval “stories of origin” of peoples (in Latin “origo gentis”). They were often composed centuries after the “arrival” of groups in their “predetermined homelands” and traced their emergence and migrations across long distances many centuries back to biblical or “mythical” times, when totem animals such as a hind led the Huns or later the Bulgars across the Sea of Azov, for instance. Earlier research has attempted to “extract” remnants of the “actual” events and to draw these supposed routes of migration on maps. For present-day scholars, these texts hint rather at the significance of (actual or imagined) migrations for identity-constructions now and then.<sup>88</sup>

### 3 Conclusion

All papers in this volume point to the heterogeneity and complexity of the phenomenon of migration. They thus caution against simplistic approaches to migration processes in pre-modern times, which tend to draw moving blocks of people on historical maps (as, for instance, in the case of the “Völkerwanderung”)

86 See also Borgolte, “Migrationen im Mittelalter. Ein Überblick”.

87 Eggert, “The Bantu Problem”; Bechhaus-Gerst, “Afrika”; Fauvelle, *Das Goldene Rhinoceros*, pp. 60–90; Fauvelle, *LAfrique ancienne*.

88 Plassmann, *Origo gentis*.

with allegedly distinct homogenous collective identities such as “Slavs”, “Muslims” etc. (even though we have unavoidably made use of such conventional “umbrella terms” in the historical outline above).

Against this background, the present volume hopes to contribute to and to motivate further research in the field of migration history beyond the modern era, by focussing on the medieval period and redirecting attention from Western Europe and the Atlantic towards the core transition zone between Africa, Asia and Europe. Moreover, it argues for an intensive and critical dialogue, in terms of both topics as well as methods, between historians, archaeologists, sociologists and natural scientists. Our aim was to avoid a recurrence of simplistic models, which only differ in the technical refinement of the underlying analytical tools or the novelty of terminology from earlier misconceptions.

TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
300	303 Start of persecution of Christians under Diocletian	226 Foundation of the Sasanian empire in Iran and the Iraq on a more centralized basis than the preceding Parthian Empire	241 Sasanians annex the Kingdom of the Hatrans; 270–330 Rise of the Kingdom of Himyar in Southwestern Arabia
	313 Toleration of Christianity in the Roman Empire (Edict of Milan)	311 Conquest of the Chinese capital Luoyang by troops of the Xiongnu, collapse of imperial rule in the north of China	Between 200 and 500 migration of Austronesian groups from Southeast Asia to Madagascar
		309–379 Reign of Great King Shapur II in Sasanian Persia, frequent wars with the Roman Empire	
	330 Inauguration of Constantinople as (one) capital of the Roman Empire	320–335 Reign of Chandragupta I, rise of the Gupta dynasty in North India	330 Advance of troops of the Kingdom of Aksum (modern-day Ethiopia and Eritrea) into Nubia (modern-day Sudan)

TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history (*cont.*)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
			340 Conversion of King Ezana of Aksum to Christianity, establishment of ecclesiastical contacts with Roman Egypt
		350 Migration of the so-called "Iranian Huns" into Western Central Asia, establishment of the Kidarites as first dynasty, wars with the Sasanian Persian Empire	
		359–363 War between Rome and Sasanian Persia	
375	Migration of the Huns into Eastern Europe north of the Caucasus and Black Sea, attacks on the Alans and the Goths	370 Sasanian Persia loses control over Bactria to the Kidarites	370–375 revolt of Firmus in North Africa against the Roman Emperor Valentinian I
378	Defeat of the Roman Emperor Valens against Gothic troops in the Battle of Adrianople; 382 Emperor Theodosius I makes Thervingian Goths settle as foederati in Thrace along the Danube	386–534 Northern Wei dynasty, patrons of Buddhism in north China; 390 Replacement of the Kidarite dynasty by the Alkhonites of the "Iranian Huns"	
388 and 394	Hunnic troops in the service of the Roman Emperor Theodosius I; after his death 395	395–398 Hunnic invasions across the Caucasus into Roman and Sasanian Persian territories	398 Defeat of Gildo's revolt in North Africa

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	rules of his sons Honorius in the West and Arcadius in the East (in Constantinople)		
400	404/405 and 408 Hunnic raids into Roman territories south of the Danube	399–420 Reign of the Sasanian Great King Yazdegerd I, good relations with the Roman Empire	
	410 Plunder of Rome by the troops of the Visigothic King Alaric	413/415 Death of Chandragupta II, apex of the power of the Gupta in North India	
	422–434 Reign of Ruga over the Huns, exerting of tributes from the Roman Empire	421–422 War between Rome and Sasanian Persia	429–439 Migration of the Vandals into North Africa, establishment of their kingdom
	434–453 Reign of Attila over the Huns, exerting of increasing tributes from the Roman Empire	439–442 War between Rome and Sasanian Persia	430 Augustine dies during the siege of Hippo by the Vandals
	454 Collapse of the Hunnic Empire after the death of Attila (in 453)	450–451 Rebellion in Armenia against Sasanian rule	
	455 Plunder of Rome by the Vandals	460 First reference to a westwards advance of the “Avars”, which causes further migrations of Sabirs and Oghurs towards the Black Sea Steppes	468 Failure of a large-scale Roman offensive against the Vandals



TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history (*cont.*)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	476 Deposition of the last Western Roman Emperor in Italy by the Germanic general Odoacer	458–528 Migrations of “Hunas” into Northern India, contributing to the fragmentation of the Gupta Empire	
	488 Migration of the Ostrogoths from the Balkans into Italy under King Theodoric	484 Defeat of the Sasanian Great King Peroz I against the Hephthalites (“White Huns”) in the Battle of Herat	
		499 Great King Kavadh I returns on the Sasanian throne with support of the Hephthalites	
500		502–506 War between Rome and Sasanian Persia	500 Bantu speaking groups, who have migrated across entire Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1500 year before, reach modern-day South Africa
		485–531 In the reign of Great King Kavadh, Zoroastrianism and the Sasanian aristocracy are torn by Mazdak’s attempted “egalitarian reform”	520–525 Reign of King Yusuf As’ar Yath’ar in Himyar, who converts to Judaism
	Ca. 520 First migrations of Slavic groups towards the Roman Danube border	526–532 War between Rome and Sasanian Persia	523–525 Invasion of troops from Aksum in the Kingdom of Himyar; 524 martyrdom of Christians of Najran

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	535 Start of the (Eastern) Roman campaigns for the conquest of Italy from the Ostrogoths (until 552/553); 537 Dedication of Hagia Sophia	540–562 War between Rome and Sasanian Persia	533–534 Conquest of the Vandal Kingdom in North Africa by (Eastern) Roman troops
	541/542 Outbreak of the so-called Justinianic Plague	541/542 Outbreak of the so-called Justinianic Plague	541/542 Outbreak of the so-called Justinianic Plague
	557 Arrival of the Avars north of the Caucasus	552 Collapse of the Rouran Empire in Mongolia, establishment of the Gök Turkic Empire across the Asian Steppes	Ca. 550 Final break of the Ma'rib dam in the Yemen, symbolizing the decline of the south Arabian agricultural society and the predominance of pagan Bedouin patterns in the Arabian peninsula; after 550 Christianisation of the Kingdoms of Makuria, Nobatia and Alwa in Nubia
	568 Establishment of the Avar Khanate in the Carpathian Basin; Lombard migration into Italy	560 Alliance between Sasanian and Turks, collapse of the Hephthalite Empire	Before 570 Aksumites control Himyar and attempt to invade Mecca
	582 Avar conquest of the important Roman frontier fortress of Sirmium	571–590 War between Sasanian Persia and Rome, which allies with the Turks in Central Asia	570 Sasanians occupy the Yemen, expelling the Aksumites, migrations from Iran into Southwest Arabia

TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history (*cont.*)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	586 Attack of Slavic groups on Thessalonike	588/589 Unification of China by Emperor Wendi of the Sui Dynasty	580 Ghassanids, Byzantine-sponsored Arabs, burn Hirah, capital of Sasanid-sponsored Lakhmid Arab kingdom in the Iraq desert
	590–602 Campaigns of the (Eastern) Romans against the Avars; they end with a rebellion of the army against Emperor Maurice in 602	590–610 Rise of the Armenian general Smbat Bagratuni at the court of the Sasanian Great King Xusro II	582 Ghassanids dismissed from Byzantine service; 594 Conversion of the Lakhmids to Christianity
600	590–604 Gregory the Great, pope at Rome (still under imperial rule from Constantinople)	602–628 War between Rome and Sasanian Persia	611 Day of Dhu Qar: an Arab tribal group defeats a Sasanian force near Hirah in the Iraq desert
	615/616 and 617/618 Attacks of Slavic and Avar groups on Thessalonike	614 Conquest of Jerusalem by Sasanian Persian troops	616/619–630 Occupation of Egypt by Sasanian Persian troops
	626 Avar siege of Constantinople	622–628 Heraclius invades the Sasanian realm via the Armenian highlands 629 Heraclius restores the True Cross to Jerusalem; 630 Conquest of the Eastern Turkic Khanate in the Mongol Steppes by troops of the Chinese Tang Dynasty	622 Migration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina (the Hijra) 632 Integration of Himyar into the emerging Arab Islamic Empire; Muhammad's "farewell" pilgrimage, Musaylimah appears as prophet in Yamanah in central Arabia; Muhammad's death

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
649–650	Arabs raid Cyprus	632–652 Arab conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt from Rome and of Sasanian Persia; the last Sasanian princes find refuge at the Chinese court	641/642 Arab conquest of Egypt; migrations from the Arabic peninsula into Egypt and other newly conquered regions; 646 Byzantines briefly recapture Alexandria
658	Campaign of Emperor Konstans II against Slavic groups on the Balkans	657–659 Chinese conquest of the Western Turkic Khanate in Central Asia	652 Failed Arab expedition into Nubia; peace treaty between the Arabs and the Kingdom of Makura in Nubia
Ca. 660	Emergence of the Khazar Empire, collapse of the Great Bulgarian Empire north of the Black Sea; 667–669 Arab naval attacks on Constantinople	Ca. 660 Emergence of the Khazar Empire north of the Black and Caspian Sea	656–661 First Civil War (fitnah) in the Islamic Empire
677	Siege of Thessalonike by Slavic groups	670–690 Expansion of the Tibetan Empire into Central Asia at the cost of Chinese influence	Uqba ibn Nafi' conquers Northwest Africa; 670 foundation of Kairouan
680	Migration of parts of the Bulgars to the Lower Danube, establishment of the Bulgar Khanate	685 First Khazar raids into the Arab provinces south of the Caucasus	After 680 Relocation of the political centre from Aksum to the city of Kubar; 680–692 Second Civil War (fitnah) in the Islamic Empire
695	Exile of Emperor Justinian II in the Khazar Empire	693 Defeat of Emperor Justinian II against the Arabs at Sebastoupolis in Asia Minor	697–698 Arab conquest of Carthage and further conquests in North Africa

TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history (*cont.*)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
700	705 Emperor Justinian II returns to the throne in Constantinople with the help of the Bulgars	706/707 Artisans sent from the Byzantine Empire work at the building of the Great Mosque in Medina	700 Embassy from Ethiopia to Patriarch Simon I of Alexandria
	717/718 Arab siege of Constantinople; Bulgar help for the Byzantines	702–715 Establishment of Arab rule in Western Central Asia (Transoxania) and in Northwestern India (Sind)	711 Arab invasion of the Visigothic Kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula from North Africa; migrations of Arabs and Berbers
	720–729 Pilgrimage of Willibald from England to Rome, Jerusalem and Constantinople	720–737 Several successful campaigns of the Khazars against the Arab provinces south of the Caucasus	725 Uprising of Christian communities in Egypt against Arab rule and taxation
	732 Battle of Tours and Poitiers of Frankish troops against Arab troops coming from the Iberian Peninsula	737 Defeat of the Khazars against the Arabs, relocation of the centre of power to the Lower Volga	732–742 Arab attacks on the Kingdom of Makura in Nubia
	747/748 Last great outbreak of the “Justinianic Plague” in the Byzantine Empire	747–750 Third Civil War ( <i>fitnah</i> ) in the Islamic Empire, overthrow of the Caliphal dynasty of the Umayyads by the Abbasids, migration of their followers from Khurāsān to the western regions of the Caliphate	740–742 Berber rebellion in North Africa; 744 Baghawata Berber dynasty established at the Atlantic coast
	751 Conquest of Byzantine Ravenna by the Lombards; 756 Spain independent		750 Advance of troops from Makura up to the city of Fustat in Arab Egypt

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	from the Abbasid caliphate under an Umayyad prince		
	756–775 Several successful campaigns of Emperor Constantine v against the Bulgars	762 Foundation of Baghdad by the new Caliphal dynasty of the Abbasids	757 Midrarid dynasty (from Miknasa Berbers) established in Sijilmasa (modern Morocco)
	777 Baptism of the Bulgar Khan Telerig after his flight to Constantinople		775 Temporal disruption of the canal between the Nile and the Red Sea at the order of Caliph al-Mansūr
		785 Negotiations between the Chinese Tang Dynasty and the Abbasid Caliph on an alliance against Tibet	788–974 Shiite Idrisids independent, establish their capital at Fez
	792 Byzantine defeat against the Bulgars at Markellai	786–803 Rise of the (originally Buddhist) family of the Barmakids from Balkh in Afghanistan at the court of Caliph Hārūn ar-Rašīd	Since the late 8th century increasing trade and migration between the Islamic world and East Africa, transfer of Islam and emergence of the Swahili culture
800	802 Collapse of the Avar Empire after attacks by Frankish forces under Charlemagne	Ca. 800 Conversion of the elite of the Khazar Empire to Judaism	800–909 Reign of the Aghlabids as de facto independent governors for the caliphs in North Africa, launch attacks on Sicily, southern Italy; Islamization of Ifriqiyah (modern Tunisia)

TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history (*cont.*)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
811	Defeat of the Byzantine Emperor Nikephoros I against the Bulgars under Khan Krum	811–813 Fourth Civil War ( <i>fitnah</i> ) in the Islamic Empire; 813–833 Reign of Caliph al-Ma'mūn, arrival of new retainers from Eastern Iran and Central Asia in Baghdad and the western regions of the Caliphate, including warrior slaves ( <i>mamlūks</i> ) especially of Turkic origin	800 Trade contacts between Arab ruled North Africa and the Ghana Empire; migrations and transfer of Islam across the Sahara
822	Military support of the Bulgars for Emperor Michael II against the rebel army of Thomas the Slav	824/827 Conquest of Crete by Arab emigrants from Spain, who had spent some years in Alexandria in Egypt before	827 Beginning of the Arab conquest of and migration into Sicily from North Africa
839	First reference to the arrival of Varangian Rus from Scandinavia in Constantinople	834 Defection of several thousand Khurramites (adherents of a religious rebel movement in Azerbaijan) from the Caliphate to the Byzantine Empire	831/832 Christian revolt in Arab Egypt
847–871	Arab troops occupy the city of Bari in Southern Italy	847–861 Reign of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutawakkil; after his murder by Turkic guard troops in the new capital of Sāmarrā' increasing political fragmentation of the Arab Empire	847–997 Reign of the Yu'firid Dynasty in parts of Yemen
863	Mission of Cyril and Method to Great Moravia in the	869 to 883 Rebellion of the Zanj (slaves from Africa) in Abbasid Iraq	868–905 Reign of the Tulunids, a dynasty of Turkic origin, as de

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	Danube region; 864 Baptism of the Bulgar Khan Boris with the Byzantine Emperor Michael III as god-father		facto independent governors in Egypt
	878 Baptism of princes of the Serbs	872 Resettlement of members of the Paulician sect from Asia Minor to the Balkans after their defeat against Byzantine troops	
	881/882 Unification of the Rus princedoms in Novgorod and in Kiev by Oleg	874 Rise of the Iranian dynasty of the Samanids in Central Asia	
	896–900 Migration of the Magyars (Hungarians) into the Carpathian Basin under pressure from the Pechenegs	893–895 War of the Samanids against the Oghuz, who in turn attack the Pechenegs together with the Khazars; Pecheneg migrations towards the west, there exerting pressure on the Magyars	896 Emergence of the Sultanate of Showa as first Muslim state in Ethiopia
900	904 Arab raiders conquer Thessalonike	890–1001 Shiite Hamdanids in Aleppo, patronize famous Muslim poets, philosophers and scientists; Samanids become virtually independent in Transoxania, develop important administrative practices, patronize important Muslim poets, philosophers and scientists	909 Establishment of a Shiite Caliphate of the Fatimids in North Africa



TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history (*cont.*)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	907–955 Wide-ranging raids of the Magyars into Central and Western Europe and Italy	907 Collapse of the Tang Dynasty in China	914–915 First attempt of the Fatimids to conquer Egypt
	927 Recognition of the imperial title of the Bulgarian Tsar and of the establishment of a Bulgarian Patriarchate by the Byzantine Emperor	922 Journey of Ibn Fadlan from Baghdad to the Bulgars at the Volga, who have accepted Islam	919–921 Second attempt of the Fatimids to conquer Egypt
		929–991 The Shiite Hamdanids rule from Mosul; 936 Migration of parts of the Arab tribe of the Banu Habib to Byzantine territory	939–969 Reign of the Ikhshidids, a dynasty of Turkic origin, as de facto independent governors in Egypt, expand into Syria
	948 Baptism of the Hungarian Prince Bulscu in Constantinople	945 The Shiite Iranian dynasty of the Buyids becomes protector of the Abbasid Caliphs in Baghdad	
	955 Baptism of the Princess Olga of Kiev in Constantinople	Ca. 950 Seljuk Turks move into the Bukhara area and adopt Islam	
	963–965 Conquest of the Khazar cities of Sarkel and of Itil by Prince Sviatoslav of Kiev, collapse of the Khazar Empire	966–1045 Successive annexation of various Armenian principedoms and kingdoms by the Byzantine Empire, at the same time Armenian and also Syrian migrations into Byzantine Central and Eastern Anatolia	969 The Fatimids conquer Egypt and found Cairo as their new capital; relocation of their retinue of Arabs, Berbers and military slaves of Slavic and African origin to Egypt

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	970–997 Reign of Géza, establishment of the dynasty of the Arpads in Hungary	977–997 Rise of the Turkish dynasty of the Ghaznavids in Eastern Iran and Western Central Asia	975 Foundation of the port city of Kilwa Kisiwani in Tanzania by Muslim merchants from Shiraz in Iran
	988 Baptism of Great Prince Vladimir of Kiev, Christianisation of the Rus from Constantinople; the Rus mercenaries sent to Constantinople become the Varangian Guard	988 Peace treaty between the Byzantine Empire and the Fatimid Caliph, demarcation of spheres of influence in Syria; reference to the name of the Fatimid Caliph in the mosque in Constantinople	
		992–1124 Qarakhanids in Transoxania and Eastern Turkestan; 997–1030 Mahmud of Ghaznah, expands into India, Khurāsān, and Transoxania	996–1021 Reign of the Fatimid Caliph al-Hākīm in Egypt and Palestine, constraints for Christians and Jews
1000		1001 Renewed peace treaty between the Byzantine Empire and the Fatimid Caliph; Hamdanids in Syria collapse; Samanids in Transoxania collapse and their domains are divided between Mahmud of Ghaznah and the Qarakhanids	Ca. 1000–1270 Rule of the Zagwe dynasty in northern Ethiopia
	1014–1018 Byzantine conquest of the Bulgarian Empire		1017/18 Caliphate of Córdoba (Islamic Iberia along with a part of North Africa) collapses

TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history (*cont.*)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
		1027 Renewed peace treaty between the Byzantine Empire and the Fatimid Caliph	
	1030/1042 Emergence of the first principdoms of immigrant mercenaries from Normandy in Southern Italy	1036–1040 Conquest of the Eastern Iranian Province of Khorasan from the Ghaznavids by Turkish groups under command of the Seljuk dynasty	1031 End of Umayyad rule over Spain
	1048–1053 Migration of Pecheneg groups into the Byzantine Empire due to inner conflicts and pressure from the Oghuz and Cumans	1041/1042 Last raids of Varangians from Scandinavia into the Caspian Sea region	1047–1138 Reign of the Shiite Sulaihid Dynasty in parts of Yemen
	1055 Settlement of Pecheneg groups in Hungary	1055 Capture of Baghdad from the Buyids by the Seljuks	1046 Emergence of the Berber movement of the Almoravids in Western North Africa, expansion into the Iberian Peninsula and across the Sahara; 1050 migrations (“invasion”) of Banu Hilal Bedouins into North Africa
	1064 Raids of the Oghuz from the Steppes into the Byzantine Balkans	1064 Seljuk conquest of the Armenian capital of Ani (since 1045 under Byzantine control)	1060 Almoravids found Marrakesh
	1071 Loss of Bari as last Byzantine outpost in Southern Italy to the Normans	1071 Defeat of the Byzantines against the Seljuks in the Battle of Manzikert;	1074 Badr al-Ġamālī, a general of Armenian origin, becomes vizier and de facto-ruler in

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
		Turkish migrations into Anatolia	Fatimid Egypt (until his death in 1094); migrations of Armenians to Egypt
	1081–1085 Norman attacks from Southern Italy on the Byzantine Balkans, which are repelled with the help of Venice, which receives trade privileges in the Byzantine Empire; 1085 Toledo falls to Reconquista Christian forces	1072–1085 Establishment of an Armenian principedom in Cilicia after the collapse of Byzantine power in the region	1086 The Almoravids under Yusuf ibn Tashfin defeat an army of the Castilian king Alfonso VI in the battle of Sagrajas (Zallaqa)
	1090 Saint Mark's Cathedral built at Venice; 1091 Completion of the Norman conquest of Arab Sicily	Movement of the Nizari assassins formed; 1092 Death of the Seljuk Sultan Malik Shah, weakening of the central power	1094–1121 al-Afḍal Šāhanšāh, son of Badr al-Ġamālī, rules as vizier in Fatimid Egypt
1100	1091 Byzantine victory against the Pechenegs in the Battle of Levounion	1096–1099 First Crusade, establishment of four Frankish states in the Levant, migrations from Western Europe	1100 The documents in the Genizah of the Ben Ezra-Synagogue in Cairo hint at wide-ranging trade networks of the Jewish community between North Africa, the Red Sea and India in the 11th and 12th centuries
	1111 Trade privileges for the city of Pisa in the Byzantine Empire	After 1096 Establishment of the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum in central Anatolia	1107 Formation of the Almohad sect in North Africa

TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history (*cont.*)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	1122 Decisive victory of the Byzantine Emperor John II Komnenos against the Pechenegs	1118 Migration of reportedly 40,000 families of the Cumans across the Caucasus into Georgia	1118 Crusader attack on Egypt
	1125 Permanent political fragmentation of the realm of the Rus after the death of Vladimir II Monomakh	1125–1141 Establishment of the Kara Khitai in Central Asia after their emigration from Manchuria due to their defeat against the Jurchen/Jin	1130–1269 Almohads in North Africa and (until 1212) in Spain
	1147–1149 Norman attacks from Southern Italy on Byzantine Greece	1144 Conquest of the Crusader principedom of Edessa by Imad ad-Din Zengi; 1147–1149 Second Crusade	1147 Collapse of the Empire of the Almohads, rise of the Almohads
	1154 Death of Roger II of Sicily, patron of Islamic learning; 1155 Trade privileges for the city of Genoa in the Byzantine Empire	1157 Fragmentation of the Seljuk Empire in Iran after the death of Sultan Ahmad Sanjar	1163–1184 The Almohad Abu Ya'qub Yusuf unifies most parts of Spain under his rule
			1168/1169 Joint Byzantine-Crusader attack on Fatimid Egypt
	1171 Temporal eviction of the Venetians from the Byzantine Empire	1176 Byzantine defeat against the Seljuks of Anatolia at Myriokephalon	1171 Replacement of the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt by the Ayyubids (Sultan Saladin, of Kurdish origin)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	1185 Norman conquest of Thessalonike; rebellion in Bulgaria against Byzantine rule and foundation of the Second Bulgarian Empire	1187 Sultan Saladin defeats the Crusaders at Hattin and conquers Jerusalem; 1189–1192 Third Crusade	1173–1228 Reign of a branch of the Ayyubid Dynasty in Yemen
	1195 Byzantine embassy to the Scandinavian kingdoms in order to hire soldiers for the Varangian Guard	1190 Ghurids take Delhi; Khwarazm Shahs expand their power over western Central Asia	1196–1549 Marinids in Morocco
1200	1204 Fourth Crusade, conquest of Constantinople and establishment of a “Latin Empire” and further Crusader states in Greece	1205–1211 Seljuk expansion in Anatolia towards the Black Sea and the Mediterranean	1200 Rise of the Kingdom of Mali in Western Africa, first pilgrimage of a prince of the Mandinke to Mecca
	1204/1210 Venice secures the possession of the island of Crete and further colonies in the Aegean, migrations from Venice and other parts of Italy	1206 Proclamation of Temujin as Genghis Khan of the Mongols; the following Mongol conquests cause wide-ranging movements of troops, refugees, deportees and migrants across Eurasia	1218–1221 Fifth Crusade, attack on Egypt and temporal occupation of the city of Damiette
	1223 Victory of a Mongol army over Russian and Cuman troops in the Battle of Kalka	1221–1231 Devastating campaigns of the Sultan Jalal al-Din of Khwārazm in Western Iran, Caucasia and Mesopotamia after his defeat against the Mongols	1228–1454 Reign of the Rasulid Dynasty in Yemen

TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history (*cont.*)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	1237–1240 Mongol conquest of the Russian princedoms; 1230–1492 Nasrids rule from Granada in the remaining Islamic territories in the Iberian Peninsula	1237/1241 Cuman refugees from the Mongols are settled by Emperor John III Vatatzes in Byzantine Asia Minor	
	1241 Mongol invasions of Poland and of Hungary	1243 Defeat of the Seljuks in Anatolia by the Mongols at Köseadağ	1249–1254, Seventh Crusade of King Louis IX of France, attack on Egypt
	1254 Foundation of the City of Sarai at the Volga as capital of the Mongol Khanate in Eastern Europe (“Golden Horde”)	1258 Mongol conquest of Baghdad; establishment of the Mongol Ilkhanate in Iran, Iraq and Southern Caucasia	1250/1252 Takeover of power in Egypt by the Mamluks (warrior slaves, mostly from the Western Eurasian steppes)
	1261 Conquest of Constantinople by troops of the Byzantine “exile state” of Nicaea; establishment of a Genoese colony in Galata	1260 Defeat of the Mongols by the Mamluks at Ain Jalut in Palestine	1269 End of the Almohad dynasty in North Africa
	1270 Establishment of a Genoese colony in Kaffa on the Crimea	1267–1279 Mongol conquest of Southern China under Kublai Khan; migrations from across Central and Western Asia into China	1270 Eighth Crusade of King Louis IX of France, attack on Tunis
	1274–1282 Short lived Union of Churches between Rome and Constantinople	1271–1294 Marco Polo in the Mongol Empire of Kublai Khan	1270–1285, Reign of Yekuno Amlak, founder of the Solomonic dynasty in Ethiopia; diplomatic contacts with Mamluk Egypt

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	1294–1302 War between the Byzantine Empire and Venice	1291 Fall of Acre as last outpost of the Crusaders at the mainland Levantine coast to the Mamluks; 1296 Defections of thousands of Oirat warriors and their families (originally coming from Southern Siberia) from the Ilkhan Empire to the Mamluk Sultanate	1285 Emergence of the Sultanate of Ifat in Ethiopia
1300	1302 Migration of followers of the defeated Khan Nogai after a civil war in the Golden Horde to Byzantium	1302 First defeat of the Byzantines against the Ottomans at Bapheus; refugees from the conquered areas in Western Asia Minor come to Constantinople	1306 Embassy of King Wedem Arad of Ethiopia to the Papacy
	1311 First relocation of the see of the Metropolitan of Russia from Kiev to Moscow	1307/1318 Establishment of Catholic bishoprics in the Mongol capitals in China (Beijing) and Persia (Sultaniyya)	1310–1333 Apex of the Sultanate of Kilwa Kisiwani in Tanzania in the reign of al-Hasan ibn Sulaiman, who is also visited by the traveller Ibn Battuta
	1321–1328 Civil war in the Byzantine Empire	1326 Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine city of Bursa (Prusa) in North-west Asia Minor	1312 Mamluk invasion of the Nubian Kingdom of Makuria, a Muslim member of the royal dynasty is put on the throne
	1327 Acknowledgement of Prince Ivan I of Moscow as Grand Prince of Russia by the Golden Horde	1331 Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine city of Nikaia (Iznik) in Northwest Asia Minor	1324 Pilgrimage of King Mansa Musa I of Mali from West Africa to Mecca



TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history (*cont.*)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	1340 Expansion of the Kingdom of Poland and of the Grand Duke of Lithuania into Western Russian regions	1335 Fragmentation of the Mongol Ilkhanate after the death of Abū Saʿīd	
	1352 Ottoman capture of the fortress of Tzympe, start of their expansion into the Balkans	1346 Outbreak of the Plague epidemic of the “Black Death” across Western Afro-Eurasia	1346 Outbreak of the Plague epidemic of the “Black Death” across Western Afro-Eurasia
	1362 Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine city of Adrianople (Edirne)	1368 Overthrow of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty in China by the Ming	1365 Attack of a Crusader army from Cyprus on Alexandria in Egypt
	1371 Ottoman victory over an alliance of Serbian princes in the Battle at the river Maritza	1370–1405 Establishment of a new Mongol Empire in western Central Asia and Iran by Timur Leng	
	1389 Ottoman victory over an alliance of Christian princes in the Battle of Kosovo Polje	1381–1392 Ottoman conquest of most of the competing Turkish Emirates in Western Asia Minor	1382 Establishment of the Burji dynasty in the Mamluk Sultanate
	1395–1402 First Ottoman siege of Constantinople	1390–1399 Devastating campaigns of Timur Leng into India and against the Golden Horde	
1400	1402–1413 Civil war in the Ottoman Empire	1402 Ottoman defeat against Timur Leng in the Battle of Ankara	
	1410 Death of the famous Byzantine Icon painter Theophanes in Russia		1415 Emergence of the Adal Sultanate at the Horn of Africa

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
	1422 Second Ottoman siege of Constantinople		1415 Conquest of Ceuta in North Africa by Portugal
	1423–1432 First war between the Ottomans and Venice		1434 Portuguese seafarers reach Cape Bojador in West Africa
	1444 Defeat of King Vladislav III of Hungary and Poland against the Ottomans in the Battle of Varna	1447 Ultimate collapse of Timurid rule in Iran, rise of the Turkish federation of the Qara Qoyunlu	
	1453 The Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II conquers Constantinople		1456 Portuguese seafarers reach Cap Verde islands
	1460 Conquest of the Peloponnese by the Ottomans	1467 Defeat of the Qara Qoyunlu by the Aq Qoyunlu under Uzun Hasan	1465–1492 Rise of the Empire of Songhay in Western Africa under the rule of Sonni Ali
	1475 Conquest of the last Genoese colonies on the Crimea by an alliance of the Khanate of the Crimea and the Ottomans		
			1482 The Portuguese reach the mouth of the river Congo
	1492 Expulsion of Jews from Spain, many find refuge in the Ottoman Empire	Formation of several Muslim petty states in India; 1498 Vasco da Gama lands in Calicut	1487/1488 The Portuguese Bartolomeu Dias reaches the Cape of Good Hope
1500		1501–1507 Overthrow of the Aq Qoyunlu by the Shiite Safavid dynasty in Iran	1500 Collapse of the Christian Nubian Kingdom

TABLE 1.1 Chronological table of selected events of political and migration history (*cont.*)

Time	Eastern- and Southeastern Europe	Central and Western Asia	North and East Africa and (South) Arabia
		1509–1511 Revolts under the leadership of Shiite clergymen and dervishes in Ottoman Anatolia	1516/1517 Ottoman conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate in Syrian and Egypt
	1526 Ottoman defeat of the army of the Kingdom of Hungary in the Battle of Mohács		

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