

Agents of Mobility: Migrant Smuggling Networks, Transhemispheric Migration, and Time-Space Compression in Ottoman Anatolia, 1888–1908¹

David Gutman

Introduction²

This article has as its backdrop a little known chapter of the great trans-hemispheric migrations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Between 1885 and 1915, more than seventy-five thousand mostly (though not exclusively) Armenian migrants departed the eastern provinces of Ottoman Anatolia for North America (Mirak 1983: 290; Willcox 1969: 432–436).³ Of these, nearly half left in the face of strict Ottoman state prohibitions on this migration, lifted only after the 1908 Young Turk Revolution. For the most part, these migrants were young men seeking work in a number of small factory towns that dotted the eastern United States and Canada. Similar to their contemporaries from migrant-

1 I would like to thank the Institute of Advanced Studies in Humanities for »providing critical support in allowing me to complete this article and my fellow IASH colleagues for providing helpful comments on an earlier presentation of this research.«

2 This article is based on a chapter from my dissertation project, »Sojourners, Smugglers, and the State: Transhemispheric Migration Flows and the Politics of Mobility in Eastern Anatolia, 1888-1908.«

3 These sources provide definitive information only about rates of Armenian migration during this period (numbering about 28,000). Quantifying non-Armenian migration from the region is much more difficult, but it numbered at least over 2,000 persons.

sending regions throughout the globe, migration to North America was often intended to be temporary.

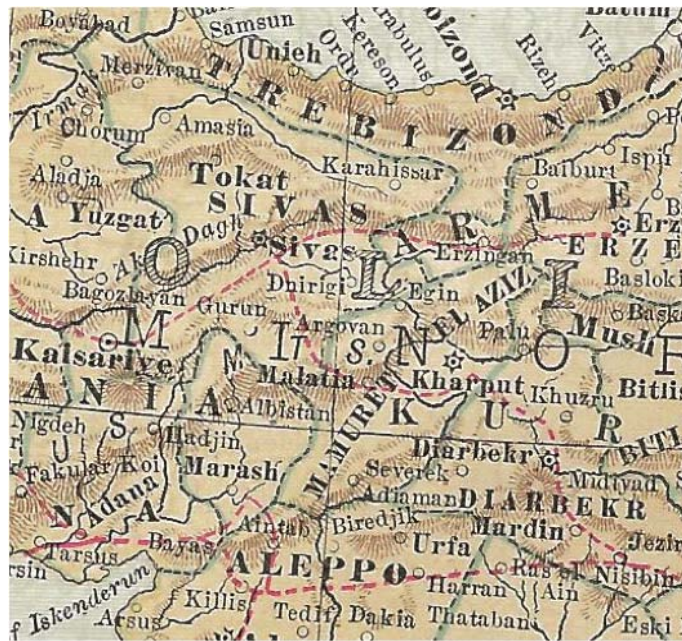


Map 1: Ottoman Empire: Anatolia and Northern Arabia, 1907⁴

Despite numerous challenges, many of these migrants did return home before the Armenian genocide that resulted in the destruction of most migrant-sending communities in the region. Areas within the provinces of Mamuretülaziz, Diyarbakir, and Erzurum, located in the rocky foothills and fertile alluvial plains within a 100-kilometer radius of the eastern Anatolian city of Harput (modern-day Elaziğ, Turkey), served as the epicenter of this migration, especially in the period before 1908 (see Map 1).⁵ The manifold and interrelated forces that drove this migration are

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- 4 William Patten and JE Homens: *New Encyclopedic Atlas and Gazetteer*, New York: 94 (Date of publication unknown.).
- 5 The city of Harput was part of a broader conurbation that included the lowland city of Mezra'a. Mezra'a was made the provincial center of Mamuretülaziz province in the mid-1860s while the older, elevated neighborhoods comprising the city of Harput remained a prominent cultural, educational, and trade center for the region's population. To minimize

too difficult to list within the confines of this short article. The presence of American missionaries, increased economic and political pressures on settled agricultural populations, and outbreaks of violence against Armenians in the mid-1890s, however, were among the chief factors.⁶



Map 2: Migrant-Sending Region-Harput (Kharput) at center right

Shortly following the advent of large-scale migration to North America in the late 1880s, the Ottoman state began aggressive attempts at interdiction. Unlike more lightly enforced prohibitions against overseas migration from the Levant and the Balkans, other major sources of Ottoman migration to the New World, bans against migration from eastern Anatolia were motivated by the Ottoman state's firm belief in the existence of a close relationship between migration to North America and

confusion, this article refers to the entire Mezra'a/Harput conurbation as Harput.

6 For a more detailed discussion of the historical context that gave rise to this migration, as well as the question of return migration, see my forthcoming doctoral dissertation (Gutman 2012).

the budding transnational Armenian revolutionary movement.⁷ In addition, whereas restrictions against Levantine migration were for the most part lifted after 1898, prohibitions targeting especially Armenian migration to North America would remain in place until the toppling of the regime of Sultan Abdülhamit II (1876–1909) in 1908 (Akarlı 1992: 124).⁸ In response to these prohibitions, dense networks of intermediaries emerged to smuggle migrants seeking passage to North America from sending communities in the Anatolian interior on to foreign steamers leaving out of Ottoman port cities on the Black and Mediterranean Sea coasts.

Using a diverse set of sources ranging from heretofore unexamined Ottoman archival documents, United States consular reports, and the memoirs of migrants, this article unpacks and analyzes the various factors that gave rise to these networks and transformed them over both space and time. Furthermore, because of their intricate coordination and profitability, I argue that these networks together comprised an industry dedicated to facilitating migration in the face of Ottoman state prohibitions.

The acceleration and geographic expansion of large-scale transhemispheric migrations during the second half of the nineteenth century was part of a radical transformation in the temporal and spatial horizons of

7 Order of the Imperial Palace: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA).I.DH 1075 84332 (18 Recep 1305/30 March 1888).

8 Although migration to the Balkans was also proscribed by Ottoman law throughout the period under review, in stark contrast to attempts at rigid enforcement of migration prohibitions in the eastern Anatolian case, as late as 1907 various provincial officials in the Balkans appear to have lacked any clear strategy to prevent outlawed travel to North America. (See for example: BOA DH.MKT 2595 70, Ministry of Interior to Ministry of Police (20 Zilkade 1319/05 March 1902); BOA.DH.MKT 1178 28 (27 Mayıs 1323/09 June 1907)). The Ottoman state's very different responses regarding overseas migration from eastern Anatolia, Lebanon, and the Balkans suggests the extent to which its policies were based on the political and social situation prevailing in each region (for more on this issue, see my dissertation).

the global capitalist economy. As noted geographer David Harvey characterized it, »...(Capitalism) became embroiled in an incredible phase of massive long-term investment in the conquest of space. The expansion of the railway network, accompanied by the advent of the telegraph, the growth of steam shipping, and the building of the Suez Canal...all changed the sense of time and space in radical ways.« (Harvey 1991: 263). The »time-space compression« facilitated by these developments radically transformed the pace at which both capital and labor circulated on a global scale (Hobsbawm 1975: 48–68). Yet even with these innovations, transcending the vast barriers of time and space separating migrants from their final destinations half a world away would have been impossible without the many networks of job recruiters, shipping agents, and human smugglers embedded in the migration process that helped to facilitate their mobility. Depending on the context, these intermediaries arranged transportation and employment, aided migrants in skirting state restrictions, and served as important (if often exploitative) links between sending communities and migrant colonies abroad.

Historians and sociologists of migration have long been aware of the importance of these networks of intermediaries in the migration process. Only recently, however, have they begun to emerge as a serious focus of historical inquiry (Peck 2000; McKeown 2001; Lee 2003: 189–222). Despite this recent interest, we are only beginning to understand how these networks emerged and operated in specific historical contexts and the factors that drove their transformation over both space and time. By placing the eastern Anatolian migration industry at the center of analysis, this article demonstrates the key role played by various local (and regional) socioeconomic and political dynamics and actors in facilitating transhemispheric migration, a quintessentially *global* phenomenon. In doing so, it argues that our understanding of the forces that brought about the emergence of a new regime of time-space in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can no longer exclude dynamics and agents operating in historically and geographically »peripheral« contexts.

Migration Agents in the Eastern Anatolian Interior

In late June 1893, shipping company officials in Liverpool, England brought six North America-bound Anatolian Armenian migrants who had recently arrived in the city to the local Ottoman consulate. Unable to speak English, the six migrants, all natives of the Harput region, could not resolve problems regarding their tickets for their upcoming transatlantic passage. Incapable of communicating with the migrants, shipping officials decided to seek the assistance of the Ottoman consul. In his report on the encounter for the Ottoman Foreign Minister in Istanbul, the consul averred that the six were but the latest group of Anatolian migrants on their way to North America to be brought before him under similar circumstances. His inquiries into how the six managed, in the face of strict prohibitions against migration to North America, to get from their hometown in the Anatolian interior to the grimy seaport on the west coast of England elicited a familiar response. Like other migrants the consul had encountered, they had contracted with one of the many »merchants« located in and around Harput who, for a price, aided those seeking to migrate to North America in defiance of these restrictions. After enduring the long overland trip to the Mediterranean port city of Mersin, the six were met by contacts of their Harput-based migration agent, who proceeded to arrange their passage to Liverpool and on to North America. Finally, one night, under the cover of darkness, the six were shuttled by boatmen to a Liverpool-bound ship where their trans-hemispheric journey began hidden deep in the ship's bowels to avoid detection by Ottoman port authorities.⁹

The Liverpool consul's report hints at the rapidity with which the networks comprising the eastern Anatolian migration industry emerged. Written in 1893, it shows that within a mere half-decade following the advent of large-scale migrations from this region to North America, these intricate, geographically expansive networks of intermediaries were

9 Copy of the Liverpool Consul's report to the Foreign Ministry: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA).DH.MKT 99 40 (26 Haziran 1309/09 July 1893).

already heavily involved in the business of smuggling migrants from sending communities in the Anatolian interior to Ottoman port cities. Migration agents, such as the »merchant« with whom the six Liverpool migrants contracted, served as the gateway to these networks. Migration agents operating in communities in eastern Anatolia likely did not actively seek out potential migrants as did, for example, labor recruiters and contractors in Italy, China, Mexico, and elsewhere during the same period (Gabaccia 1988: 84–97; Peck 2000: 91–96; McKeown 2001: 67–69). As labor migration, whether to Istanbul or elsewhere in the empire, was already an important component of the household economy long before the emergence of migration to North America, the decision regarding when to go, and who would undertake the long transatlantic journey was likely made within the household (Kaprielian 1984; 122–124). Thus, the potential migrant sought after the services of the migration agent, rather than the other way around.

Because the migration agent waited for clients to come to him, he necessarily possessed a degree of visibility within the community in which he operated. Providing a composite profile of the average migration agent based in communities on the Harput plain and elsewhere in eastern Anatolia is a difficult task owing to significant gaps in the historical record. Their relative absence in the documentation for this project testifies to their ability to conceal their migrant smuggling activities from the gaze of the central state. The two migration agents who receive the most significant attention were probably exceptions in terms of the scale of their respective operations. Yet their experiences provide useful hints to the types of economic means and social and political connections necessary to smuggle migrants from the interior to the coast.

As early as 1891, a migration agent named Gaspar Nahikiyan ran a sophisticated migration network out of the village of Hüseyin, located eight kilometers outside of the city of Harput.¹⁰ Little information is

10 Report of the Ottoman Ambassador in Washington, Mavroyeni Bey to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry: BEO.HR.SYS 2735 29 (06 February 1891).

given regarding how Nahikiyan conveyed his clients from the interior to Ottoman port cities and on to the New World. Nevertheless, a July 1892 report by officials in the province of Mamuretülaziz identified Gaspar Nahikiyan as a known merchant and moneylender who lent money at high interest rates for use of his services.¹¹ A report from the Ottoman Embassy in Washington, DC claimed a »son« of Nahikiyan's, Mardiros, based in Worcester, Massachusetts, collected on the debts of Gaspar's migrant clients after their arrival in the United States.¹² In the early 1890s, the eastern Anatolian migrant community in the United States numbered no more than a couple of thousand people. Nearly all of these migrants hailed from a handful of communities near Harput, and clustered in small colonies located in Worcester and other small factory towns in the northeastern United States. Thus, it may not have been difficult for a well-organized migration agent to collect from debtors living half a world away, especially if he had a reliable contact—such as a close relative—embedded in these small colonies to ensure that his clients paid up. After collecting the money owed, Mardiros would forward a check to a contact in Istanbul, who subsequently had it processed. The money was then sent to Gaspar in Hüseyin through an associate based in Harput, a banker identified only by his family name, Harputliyan.¹³

Nahikiyan's migrant smuggling operations are visible in the documentation as late as December 1894, when a report from the Ottoman Consulate in New York suggested that Nahikiyan's operation was a primary method by which both Armenians and Muslims (*Müslimanlar*) from the Harput region avoided prohibitions on migration to North America. The date of the consul's report suggests that Gaspar Nahikiyan's network continued smuggling migrants from the Harput region nearly four years

11 Office of the Grand Vizier to Ministry of Police: BOA.BEO 45 3317 (6 Muharrem 1310/31 July 1892).

12 Office of the Grand Vizier to Mamuretülaziz Province: BOA.BEO 83 6197 (10 Rabiulevvel 1310/01 October 1892).

13 Office of the Grand Vizier to Mamuretülaziz Province: BOA.BEO 83 6197 (10 Rabiulevvel 1310/01 October 1892).

after initially raising the attention of the Ottoman state.¹⁴ In addition, a January 1895 spy report from the infamous Pinkerton Detective Agency, which had been hired by Ottoman diplomatic officials to keep watch on the political activities of Armenians residing in the northeastern United States, cited a lawyer with close ties to the Armenian community in Worcester who accused Mardiros Nahikiyan of exploiting members of the local Armenian migrant colony.¹⁵ Nahikiyan's sophisticated operation, in addition to providing his clients the means to migrate to North America, readily made use of the same technologies that made large-scale trans-hemispheric migration from the Anatolian interior possible to reproduce local relationships of inequality in migrant colonies located half a world away.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, Gaspar Nahikiyan's banker contact in Harput, whose full name and title was Harputliyan Artin Efendi,¹⁶ was deeply involved in the business of smuggling migrants. In September 1905, between twenty and thirty North America-bound migrants from Harput were arrested along with a guide, identified as an »agent« (*simsar*), accompanying the group to the coast. According to a report from the governor of Mamuretülaziz province to the Grand Vizier, the agent was a well-known human smuggler with a string of arrests related to his illicit work. In addition to the migrant caravan he was accompanying at the time of his arrest, the guide was found to be in pos-

14 Copy of report sent to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry: BOA.HR.SYS 54 1 (16 December 1894). The consul's report also raised concerns that Muslims from eastern Anatolia who worked alongside their Armenian compatriots while in the United States could be susceptible to falling under the influence of »Armenian anti-Ottoman agitation.« (»Amerika'ya giderek Ermenilerle birlikte fabrikalarda çalışmakta olan Müslimanların Ermeniler tarafından Hükümet-i Seniyye'ye aleyhine işgal olunabilmeleri.«)

15 Cornish to Iasigi: BOA.HR.SYS 2739 22 (24 January 1895). See also: Karents 2004: 31.

16 Ottoman documents and United States consular records both refer to him with his family name (Harputliyan) at the beginning, a practice not uncommon in an era where the use of family names was rare.

session of numerous promissory notes from migrants that he had already helped smuggle to the coast. The notes amounted to a value of over four hundred lira for which some payment had already been received.¹⁷ The report identified the guide as a probable associate of Harputliyan Artin, who by 1905 was not only one of Mamuretülaziz Province's most prominent bankers, but also a leading member of the Provincial Executive Council.¹⁸ It claims, furthermore, that Harputliyan Artin's migrant smuggling operations involved the close cooperation of several high-ranking provincial officials. Finally, the report charges that some of the money earned from the ring was being funneled into the construction of a hospital (*bastane*) in the region, along with other unspecified projects. Artin's operations are described in greater detail below. This 1905 report, however, hints at the extent to which the migration industry in the eastern Anatolian interior involved some of the region's most economically and politically powerful people.¹⁹

The level of visibility of these two cases suggests that they were to some degree exceptional. The sophistication of Gaspar Nahikiyan's operation may have been unrivaled in its complexity at a time when migration from eastern Anatolia to North America was in its relative infancy. Artin Efendi's prominence in the region as a powerful banker and member of the Provincial Administrative Council, with close connections to high-ranking members within the local officialdom, suggests he had access to resources beyond those of an average migration agent.²⁰ As suggested by the report describing the arrest of the smuggler cited above, however, it

17 Office of the Grand Vizier to the Ministry of Interior: BOA.MKT.MHM 659 52 (11 Şaban 323/10 October 1905).

18 Ibid., Young to Smith-Lyle Esquire, American Vice Consul in Constantinople. Harput (June 14, 1907).

19 Letter of the Governor of Mamuretülaziz Province to Ministry of Police: BOA.ZB 108 29 (Recep 325/16 August 1907).

20 Interestingly, Harputliyan Artin was not the only member of the Mamuretülaziz Provincial Administrative Council suspected of engaging in human smuggling. See: Anonymous informant to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.MKT 1075 19 (24 Mart 1322/14 April 1906).

is likely that both Gaspar Nahikiyan and Harputliyan Artin operated in conjunction with other less prominent migration agents and intermediaries in the region. In addition, both cases provide useful insight into the types of connections, resources, and background a successful migration agent operating in the interior likely possessed. For one, smuggling people from the interior to the coast and then onto ships heading abroad probably required that a migration agent have access to a wide range of powerful local contacts—not unlike those possessed by Harputliyan Artin. For example, connections to local state officials could facilitate the procurement of critical documents that could ease the migration process. More importantly, these officials could also help to ensure that a migration agent's operations remained free from interference by the Ottoman state. If a migration agent lacked such contacts, then he was probably connected to someone such as Harputliyan Artin who did possess them.

Like Gaspar Nahikiyan, however, migration agents necessarily held connections that extended far beyond the confines of the eastern Anatolian interior. In the consul's report on his encounter with the six migrants in Liverpool, he noted that migration agents in the interior possessed contacts in at least one Ottoman port city. As will become clearer below, access to port-city networks was key to ensuring that a migration agent's clients would be able to continue their transhemispheric journeys after arriving at the Ottoman coast. Despite the distances that separated migrant-sending communities in the Anatolian interior from cities on the Black and Mediterranean Sea coasts, developing such connections may not have been particularly difficult. Many migration agents no doubt spent at least some time as labor migrants or merchants in one of the burgeoning Ottoman port cities that drew heavily from labor pools in the Anatolian interior. If not, they certainly had close relatives or friends who had. The level of mobility between communities in eastern Anatolia and port cities on both the Black Sea and Mediterranean coasts meant that migration agents and others involved in the migration industry could build upon already firmly established connections that linked their communities with social and economic networks in these port cities. As Gaspar Nahikiyan's operation suggests, however, the reach of successful

migrant smuggling operations extended beyond the borders of the Ottoman Empire connecting—across vast stretches of space—sending communities in the Anatolian interior to migrant colonies sprouting up throughout North America.

Finally, migration agents, especially those running the largest operations, were men of means. Both Gaspar Nahikiyan and Artin Efendi clearly possessed a high social status in their respective communities and in the broader region. Another prominent migration agent, one Agaviyan Kivork, a native of Harput operating out of the interior metropolis of Aleppo, was identifiable by the sumptuous and conspicuous blue-gemmed gold ring he wore on his finger, hinting not only at his wealth, but his desire to flaunt it.²¹ Considering the wealth and connections that these individuals possessed, it is likely that most prominent agents were merchants, a point reinforced by the Ottoman consul in Liverpool's use of the term to describe the migration intermediaries that operated in the vicinity of Harput. Certainly, merchants would have possessed the status and visibility to forge the local, regional, and even global connections needed to engage in smuggling migrants. Furthermore, successful merchants would have been among the few people in these communities with access to the economic capital necessary for this type of enterprise. Indeed, as will become clearer below, many of those affiliated with port-city migration networks were themselves merchants and artisans native to sending communities in the Anatolian interior. However, smuggling migrants was certainly not solely the domain of merchants. For example, an investigation conducted by local officials in Mamuretülaziz Province in December 1902 revealed that wealthy Muslim landlords working in conjunction with skilled muleteers guides were also in the business of smuggling North America-bound migrants from the interior to the coast.²² Like their merchant counterparts, wealthy landlords and highly

21 Copy of telegram from the Pier Commission of Iskenderun: BOA.ZB 709 29 (12 Mayıs 1323/25 May 1907).

22 Copy of telegram from the governor of Mamuretülaziz: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 134 13 (29 Teşrinievvel 1318/19 December 1902).

mobile muleteer guides doubtless also possessed the necessary connections and access to port-city networks to facilitate unlawful migration.

Regardless of the social and class status of an interior migration agent, the business of migrant smuggling allowed these actors to convert their accumulated social and political capital into economic capital. According to several sources, a migration agent's services did not come cheaply, and the monetary returns were indeed significant. In January 1901, the United States consul in Harput reported that North America-bound migrants were paying local migration agents on average eighteen American dollars to travel from the Harput region to the coast, a price he claimed did not include the cost of an internal passport or food along the way.²³ Meanwhile, separate Ottoman documents written within months of one another mention prices of nineteen and twenty liras respectively for travel from the interior to the coast. Considering that the Ottoman gold lira was worth approximately four to five times the value of the United States dollar (Pamuk 2000: 209), these prices are much higher than those given by the American consul. The Ottoman sources, however, give no indication of what »services« were provided at these rates, or the reasons for the significant discrepancies in price between the American and Ottoman sources.²⁴ Twenty liras, if this was indeed representative of what most migrants could expect to pay, would have been a steep price for most prospective migrants.²⁵ Furthermore, sums paid to interior migration agents covered expenses for a portion of a migrant's journey

23 United States Department of State Diplomatic Despatches (USDSD): United States Consul in Harput Thomas H. Norton to Department of State (January 22, 1901).

24 Copy of Telegram from Governor of Mamuretülaziz Province: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 134 13 (16 Tesrinievvel 1318/29 October 1902); Port Commission of Iskenderun to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 121 23 (02 Nisan 1318/13 April 1902).

25 According to Donald Quataert, maximum daily wages of little more than one piastre per day (100 piastre = 1 Ottoman lira) were common throughout the empire in its final decades (İnalçık and Quataert 1994: 916).

to North America—namely travel from the Anatolian interior to the coast—and thus did not represent the entire cost of migration.

Payment of such seemingly prohibitive sums in order to migrate abroad was not unique to this region or to this period in migration history. Indeed, contemporary transnational migrants from throughout the Global South continue to pay exorbitant fees for the services of middlemen and human smugglers, the cost of which continues to grow in price as states implement harsher legal and physical barriers to stem the flow (Andreas 2001: 116). The documents consulted for this project only provide incomplete clues as to the ways payment was rendered to migration agents. Money lending and debt played a major role from the early years of migration, as evidenced by Gaspar Nahikiyan's operations. The 1905 case cited above in which a migrant agent/guide was discovered to be in possession of 400 lira worth of promissory notes suggests that many of these migrants continued to borrow from these agents. As increasing numbers of migrants laboring in North America remitted wages back to their families, however, it is probable that at least some migrants paid these sums upfront from the remittances they received from family members or even close friends (Mirak 1983: 116).

The relationship between interior migration agents and their migrant clients, though certainly unequal, was not purely exploitative. At least some degree of mutual understanding frequently existed between agents and clients. For example, according to the American consul at Harput, agents guaranteed full refunds when migrants were not successfully smuggled out of the Empire.²⁶ In a similar vein, officials in Mamuretülaziz Province also noted that agreements between migration agents and their clients explicitly stipulated that payment was tied to the successful boarding of migrants onto a ship headed for a foreign port.²⁷ Despite the unequal power relationships existing between migration agents and their

26 USDSDD United States Consul in Harput Thomas Norton to Department of State (January 22, 1901).

27 Copy of telegram from Mamuretülaziz Province to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 134 13 (16 Teşrinievvel 1318/29 October 1902).

clients, it was likely in the best interests of most migration agents to honor such guarantees. Information about flagrantly abusive practices could easily spread within the relatively small communities in which most migration agents operated, thus threatening a migration agent's reputation and, in turn, a very lucrative source of income (Kaprielian 1987: 34–35). Thus, unlike elsewhere on the long journey to North America, it seems a certain »moral economy« may have provided some degree of protection to migrants from the worst forms of exploitation at the hands of these migration agents.

From the Interior to the Coast: The Shifting Geography of the Migration Industry

After contracting with a local migration agent, migrants were confronted with a long, often arduous, overland journey to a port city. The journey from the interior to the coast was a process more complicated than simply heading for whichever port city happened to be the closest. Rather, factors ranging from the port-city connections of interior migrant agents to shifting state regulations on mobility and improved surveillance measures in port cities meant that throughout the period under investigation the geography of migration remained in constant flux. When migration from eastern Anatolia to North America began to catch the eye of Ottoman officials in the late 1880s, the most common method of exit involved acquiring an internal passport—required for anyone seeking to travel within the empire²⁸—that allowed the prospective migration passage to the imperial capital of Istanbul. After arriving in Istanbul (usually accessed by sea from a port city on the Black Sea), local boatmen helped migrants to clandestinely board foreign steamers bound for Marseilles or other ports of transit.²⁹ Often, those possessing internal passports for

28 The document's Ottoman Turkish name is *mürur tezkeresi* the more direct translation of which is »document of passage.«

29 See for example: Copy of telegram from the Province of Mamuretülaziz to the Ministry of Interior, BOA.Y.PRK.DH 2 86 (14 Temmuz 304/27 July 1888); Ministry of Police to Coastal Provinces, BOA ZB 588 1 (5 Rabiulahir 1310/27 October 1892).

Istanbul left Black Sea ports such as Samsun or Trabzon aboard foreign ships headed for the imperial capital. Rather than disembarking when the ship reached Istanbul, they instead stowed away on the ship until it landed at its homeport.³⁰

In the late 1880s and early 1890s, travelling through Istanbul was probably the most convenient route to begin the prohibited journey to North America. Generations of young men from communities throughout the eastern provinces of Anatolia had migrated to Istanbul for work in order to provide needed economic support for their families back home. As a result, it was not difficult for a North America-bound migrant to procure an internal passport for Istanbul under the auspices of going for trade or work.³¹ Beginning in the early 1890s, growing political and labor unrest among Armenians in Istanbul, coupled with the growing visibility of Armenian revolutionary movements both within and outside the empire, led the Ottoman state to begin curtailing Armenian migration to the imperial capital (Riedler 2011: 163–166). Finally in 1896, after the storming of the Ottoman Bank by associates of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Dashnaktsutium*) and the subsequent outbreak of deadly riots targeting Armenian workers in Istanbul, the Ottoman state reacted by expelling most Armenian migrant laborers from the city. This action was followed by an order calling for the nearly complete interdiction of future Armenian migration to the city (Quataert 1993: 69–69). With travel becoming increasingly difficult by the early 1890s, Istanbul relatively quickly ceased to be an important exit point for North America-bound migrants.

These developments in the early 1890s laid the ground for a significant shift in the geography of the migration industry. Black Sea port cities, such as Samsun, that had long served as transit points for Istanbul-bound migrants would remain important points of embarkation

30 Circular report from Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.MKT 1554 16 (8 Safer 1306/14 October 1888).

31 Ministry of Police to Coastal Provinces: BOA ZB 588 1 (5 Rabiulahir 1310/27 October 1892).

throughout the period in question. In addition to having been popular transit points for eastern Anatolian migrants bound for Istanbul, these cities possessed close economic and trade ties with communities throughout the Anatolian interior. As a result, they had the requisite socioeconomic networks needed to facilitate clandestine migration. By the early 1890s, however, migrants increasingly travelled south to the burgeoning port city of Mersin. The emergence of Mersin as an exit point paralleled the city's meteoric rise as the major seaport serving the nearby inland metropolis of Adana and its cotton-rich hinterlands (Toksöz 2000). Beginning in the early 1890s, several major European shipping lines such as the French Messageries Maritimes and the Austrian Lloyd offered regular service out of the new port (*ibid.* 169). In addition, Adana's rapidly growing population of migrant laborers and merchants with ties to communities in the Anatolian interior provided the requisite social infrastructure for the emergence of local networks aiding incoming North America-bound migrants. As early as 1892, a report from officials in Mamuretülaziz complained of the large numbers of migrants from the Harput region travelling to the city of Adana under the pretense of searching for work but leaving instead for North America on ships departing out of Mersin.³² The port city of Iskenderun—also located on the Mediterranean coast roughly two hundred kilometers south and east of Mersin—emerged during this time as an important exit point for North America-bound migrants. Like Mersin, Iskenderun was the primary port for a major inland metropolis, Aleppo, with long-standing economic ties to eastern Anatolia.

Evidence suggests that by the late 1890s, these two Mediterranean port cities supplanted Black Sea ports as departure points for North America-bound migrants. For example, in January 1901, the American consul in Harput reported that the large volume of America-bound migrants covertly leaving through Samsun had strained the ability of Samsun-based middlemen to safely and discreetly convey their clients to foreign ships.

32 Ministry of Interior to Governor of Adana Province: BOA.DH.MKT 1931 29 (10 Şaban 1309/10 March 1892).

As a result, local migration agents in the vicinity of Harput were increasingly sending their migrant clients through Iskenderun.³³ In addition to the reason given by the consul, coastal geography may have also played a major role in the increasing prominence of the Mediterranean in the geography of the eastern Anatolian migration industry. The expansive, relatively protected and shallow coastline flanking both Iskenderun and Mersin provided ideal conditions for boatmen/smugglers to establish informal »piers« (*iskeleler*) well outside of the two cities. From these improvised launch sites, boatmen/smugglers could ferry migrant passengers to waiting foreign ships, avoiding surveillance in the central ports.³⁴ Similar methods of bypassing port-city surveillance would have been impossible in Black Sea ports like Samsun and Trabzon, as both cities are hemmed in on three sides by steep rises in elevation, and on the fourth by the choppy and storm-prone waters of the Black Sea. Unlike those leaving through Mersin or Iskenderun, most North America-bound migrants travelling via Samsun or Trabzon would have been forced to take their chances leaving through the central port.

Beginning in the first years of the twentieth century, the geography of the eastern Anatolian migration industry expanded further down the Mediterranean coast as migrants began increasingly to travel through Levantine port cities such as Latakia, Tripoli, and Beirut.³⁵ This development is surprising at first glance considering the vast geographical distances separating the Anatolian interior from these port cities. Furthermore, unlike other ports on the Black and Mediterranean Sea coasts, Levantine cities historically did not have significant social and economic ties with migrant-sending communities in eastern Anatolia. Thus, Levantine ports lacked the same social infrastructure that had given rise to networks involved in smuggling migrants through other port cities.

33 Norten (Harput) to Department of State (January 22, 1901).

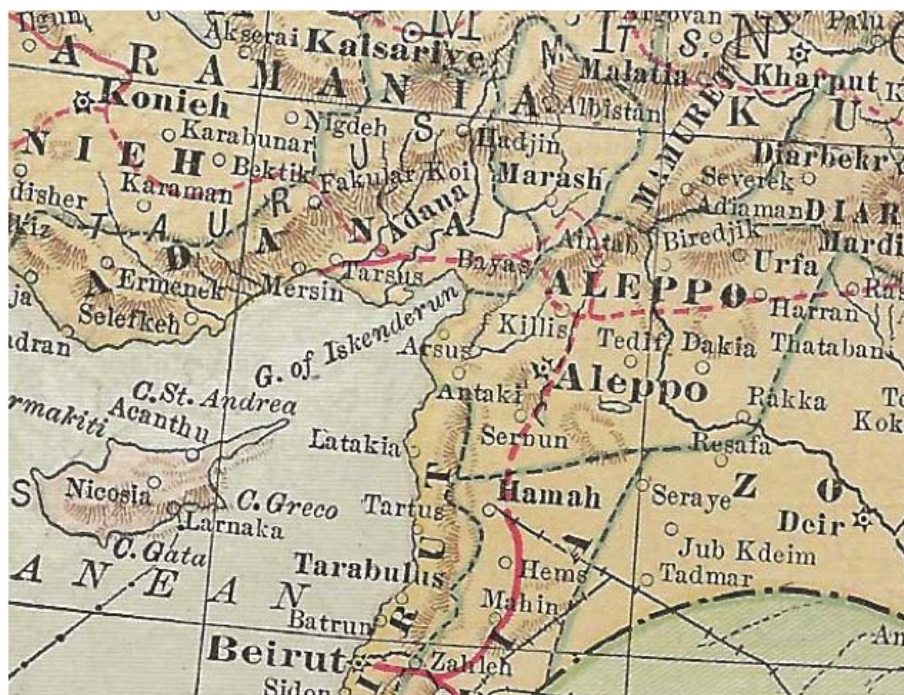
34 Mersin Pier Commission to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.MKT 139 19 (13 Şevval 1320/12 January 1903). For more on the operations of boatmen, see below.

35 BOA.Y.PRK.AZN 24 35 (2 Cemazeyilahir 1323/04 October 1905).

Several important developments, however, help shed light on the emergence of the Levant as a critical part of the geography of the eastern Anatolian migration industry. Beginning in the first years of the twentieth century, a marked increase in reports regarding the arrest of groups of North America-bound migrants in the vicinities of Mersin and Iskenderun suggests that local officials in these two cities were at least partially successful in implementing measures to prevent migrant smuggling.³⁶ The increase in migrant traffic through Levantine ports may have been in part a response to greater challenges facing migrants leaving through Mersin and Iskenderun.³⁷ The completion of railway networks linking Beirut to Aleppo and Adana in 1906 certainly added further to the volume of eastern Anatolian migrants leaving through Levantine ports, as these migrants could now travel to ports as distant as Beirut without adding significantly more time to the long journey from the eastern Anatolian interior (İnalçık and Quataert 1994: 802–815).

36 See for example: Governor of Adana Province to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 89 55 (7 Rabiulahir 1318/04 July 1900); Copy of telegram from District Governor of Mersin to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 126 20 (14 Haziran 1318/27 June 1902).

37 Copy of telegram from Mamuretülaziz Province to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 134 13 (17 Şubat 1319/01 March 1903).



Map 3: Mediterranean Coast: Mersin/Adana, Iskenderun, Latakia, Beirut

The fact that these cities were sites of a parallel migration industry that similarly emerged in the late-1880s to facilitate the migration of thousands of Levantine migrants to the New World, however, is perhaps the most important factor explaining their incorporation into the geography of eastern Anatolian migration (Akarlı 1992: 113–114; Khater 2001: 54–55). With the lifting of most prohibitions on Levantine migration abroad in December 1898, those from the region seeking to migrate to the New World no longer had to rely as heavily upon smugglers and other intermediaries (Akarlı 1993: 123–124). A November 1901 report from the Ministry of Interior described how migrant smugglers in the Levant had, as a result of the lifting of these prohibitions, lost a significant and stable stream of revenue. The report went on to surmise that these smugglers were devising strategies to continue luring migrants to their services.³⁸

38 Ministry of Interior to District Governor of Mount Lebanon: BOA.DH.MKT 2562 38 (17 Şevval 1319/28 November 1901).

Indeed, for some of these now struggling smugglers, the continued prohibition on migration from eastern Anatolia to North America provided an opportunity to regain at least some of their lost business. This conclusion is bolstered by a 1907 report out of Beirut that claimed that the clientele of most Beirut-based migrant smugglers consisted either of local military deserters or Anatolian Armenians.³⁹ Although those involved in the Levantine migration industry may not have possessed the same historical connections to migrant-sending communities in eastern Anatolia as did Mersin or Iskenderun, the economic and transportation linkages that connected these Mediterranean port cities probably helped facilitate some degree of coordination between smugglers in the different locations.

Paralleling the growing importance of the Levant in the geography of migration, the Russian Black Sea port of Batumi also emerged as a major exit point in the first years of the twentieth century.⁴⁰ Migrants from the district of Kiğı in northeastern Anatolia, an important source of North America-bound migration, were among those most likely to depart via Batumi. This port city, located at the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains, was perhaps the most difficult to reach of all those ports of exit used by migrants. Migrant caravans travelled there on foot over rough terrain and were required to cross the notoriously dangerous Russian-Ottoman frontier. Yet the city had the benefit of being under Russian control, affording North America-bound migrants the chance to avoid the challenges of migrating clandestinely through an Ottoman port city. In addition, Batumi, like many Ottoman port cities, was also connected to various eastern Anatolian communities through labor migration and trade, allowing for the emergence of an infrastructure catering to North America bound-migrants.⁴¹

39 Copy of report of Beirut Pier Commission: BOA ZB 709 29 (21 Mayıs 1323/03 June 1907).

40 See the documents in BOA.ZB 607 & 608 focusing mainly on the departures of North America-bound migrants from Batumi.

41 See below.

This constantly shifting and expanding geography of migration testifies to the ease with which the underground networks that facilitated migration from eastern Anatolia to North America could be reworked or even formed anew across vast distances. Considering the many difficulties involved in smuggling migrants from the eastern Anatolian interior, this spatial flexibility was essential to maintaining high levels of migration to North America in the face of strict prohibitions by the Ottoman state. Furthermore, as mentioned in the introduction to this article, the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries witnessed developments (technological and otherwise) that facilitated the rapid compression of time and space, allowing the transhemispheric migrants of that era to travel great distances at heretofore unthinkable speed. As this section has shown, however, the space migrants traversed was neither inert nor neutral. In addition, their journeys were not merely determined by factors such as the availability of roads, railroads, or steam travel. Rather, the geography of migration was in constant flux and susceptible to change as the result of a variety of less tangible and easily overlooked political, social, and economic dynamics.

Migration Networks in the Port City

After difficult overland journeys that could easily exceed two weeks, migrants arrived at one of the bustling ports on the Black or Mediterranean Sea coasts. These cities were the endpoint of both the domestic smuggling networks that comprised the migration industry, and it was here where, through whatever means necessary, arrangements were made for the continuation of these road-weary migrants' long transhemispheric voyages. The available documentation reveals only partial glimpses of these port-city migrant smuggling networks. Yet these snippets of information hint at the existence of impressively coordinated systems linking numerous actors across diverse ethno-religious, national, and class lines.

Israel Safarian, who in 1907 migrated from his home village in the northeastern Anatolian district of Kiğı to the city of Brantford, Ontario, wrote decades later of his travel to and subsequent experiences awaiting

departure in the port city of Batumi. After a harrowing journey over mountainous terrain that involved crossing the ever-dangerous Russian-Ottoman frontier, Safarian along with the others in his migrant caravan arrived at a boarding house in Batumi owned by fellow natives of Kiğı. His account details the long wait, poor conditions, and the financial exploitation he and his fellow migrants suffered at the hands of their boardinghouse proprietor compatriots. Safarian's experiences in Batumi did not end the moment he boarded a steamer to begin his transhemispheric voyage (Safarian 2002: 2–17). Over a year following his arrival in Canada, Safarian received a letter from his father stating that an associate of the innkeepers had presented the family with a bill for debts he had accumulated while in Batumi, further demonstrating the degree of power those involved in the migration industry could wield over both space and time.⁴²

In the absence of similarly detailed accounts, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which Safarian's experiences are representative of the many thousands of migrants that travelled from eastern Anatolia to North America through similar migration networks. Furthermore, his account, penned decades after the events it describes and exposed to the additional filter of translation, is a compelling but problematic source. Yet much of what Safarian discussed regarding the inner workings of the migration industry is echoed in the Ottoman source material consulted for this project. For example, these documents reinforce the important role played by port-city innkeepers, such as the two described by Safarian, in the functioning of the eastern Anatolian migration industry. In January 1898, an innkeeper, Agop, based in Iskenderun, was accused of paying bribes to local police officials and a prominent member of the Iskenderun Pier Commission to allow migrants bound for North America to pass through the port.⁴³ Nearly three years later, in November 1900, authorities in Iskenderun expelled another local innkeeper,

42 Garabed Safarian to Israel Safarian (April 4, 1909). In: Safarian 2002: 32.

43 Letter of Informant to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 49 75 (7 Kanunisani 1313/20 January 1898).

Osep, a native of Arapkir in Mamuretülaziz Province, after local officials intercepted documents revealing his involvement in smuggling migrants.⁴⁴ In a January 1904 report to the Ministry of Interior, officials in the Black Sea port of Trabzon complained that local »Armenian innkeepers« were illegally procuring internal passports and steamer tickets for North America-bound migrants, and proposed a series of measures be enacted to prevent such activities.⁴⁵ A year later, in July 1905, the Ministry of Police reported that migrants headed for the New World were illegally procuring internal passports with the help an innkeeper based in Samsun.⁴⁶

As both Safarian's account and these documents demonstrate, boarding houses and inns were convenient locations to house migrants as they waited for further travel arrangements to be made. Yet innkeepers and boarding house owners did not act alone in aiding migrants upon their arrival in the port city. Rather, they were components of broader networks of intermediaries involved in the business of migrant smuggling. Not surprisingly, among those who played vital roles in the operation of these networks were port-city merchants and tradesmen, who, like many of the innkeepers mentioned above, were natives of migrant-sending communities in the Anatolian interior. Merchants, especially those deeply rooted in the daily social and economic life of the city in which they operated, were well situated to access the social and political connections necessary to the continued discrete functioning of port-city migration networks.⁴⁷

44 Monthly Report of Iskenderun Pier Commission Teşrinisani 1316: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 99 17 (23 Ramazan 1318/14 January 1901).

45 Province of Trabzon to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 123 26 (11 Zilkade 1321/29 January 1904).

46 Ministry of Police to the Province of Aydin and District of Canik: BOA.ZB401 102 (6 Temmuz 1321/19 July 1905).

47 Governor of Adana Province to Ministry of Interior: BOA.TMIK.M 120 37 (9 Zilhicce 1319/19 March 1902).

This article has so far demonstrated the vitally important role played by the ties of compatriotism in defining the inner workings and shifting spatial contours of the eastern Anatolian migration industry. The Batumi-based innkeepers discussed in Safarian's account, both natives of his home district in Kiğı, or the various tradesmen and merchants from migrant-sending communities such as Harput, Malatya, or Diyarbakir who served as critical components to the operation of port-city migration networks, vividly illustrate the importance of these compatriot (*hemşehri*) networks. Their connections to migration agents in the interior provided the conduit for smuggling North America-bound migrants from their communities in the interior to these port cities. Such networks had long allowed merchants and migrant laborers from eastern Anatolia and throughout the Ottoman Empire to sustain close social and economic ties to their home communities despite the distances separating them. Certainly, their presence and rootedness in these communities helps to explain the emergence of such coordinated methods of migrant smuggling so quickly and over such vast distances after the emergence of large-scale migrations from eastern Anatolia to North America in the late 1880s.

In the face of Ottoman prohibitions against migration to North America, successfully and discreetly smuggling migrants through these port cities and eventually out of the Empire meant that port-city migration networks extended well beyond the bounds of compatriotism and incorporated other elements of port-city society. In his 1901 report on migration to North America, the United States consul in Harput discussed the important role of foreign consular employees in port-city migration networks.⁴⁸ Foreign missions linked to the trade concerns of numerous countries figured prominently in the political and economic life of Ottoman port cities. Foreign consulates regularly hired Ottoman subjects—most often Christians—to serve as intermediaries, translators, and guards. As a result, these consular employees possessed close ties to

48 United States Department of State Diplomatic Despatches (USDSDD): United States Consul in Harput Thomas H Norton to Department of State (January 22, 1901).

both the local and foreign populations in these port cities. The unique connections possessed by these individuals were, in turn, invaluable to those involved in migrant smuggling. Indeed, the Harput consul's report suggested that consular employees played critical roles in arranging migrants' passage on foreign ships. The consul's assertion is hardly surprising considering that consular employees, as a result of their positions, likely had easy access to the representatives of foreign shipping lines based in these port cities.

Ottoman documents also provide insight into the role played by foreign consular employees in port city-based migration networks. As early as April 1892, officials in Adana complained that the consular representative of Iran was involved in aiding the migration of Armenians bound for North America.⁴⁹ In September 1900, officials in Mersin uncovered the involvement of several employees of foreign consulates in human smuggling. Their investigation showed that employees of the city's Russian and German consulates had led migrants to a waterfront villa located outside of the central city that belonged to an American doctor working in Mersin. From there, migrants were rowed out to waiting foreign ships late at night under the cover of darkness. Three years later in June 1903, an employee of the Russian consulate in Mersin, a certain Anton, who was one of those implicated in the document cited above for his involvement in human smuggling, was again accused of facilitating the migration of North America-bound Armenians in participation with an employee of the city's British consulate. The two consular employees were paid handsomely for their work assisting migrants seeking to go abroad, commanding fees of upwards of seven lira per migrant for their services.⁵⁰ In November 1903, Anton's long-running involvement in human smuggling—along with concerns that the unlimited access to foreign ships granted him by his position was also providing him the

49 Interior Ministry to the Province of Adana: BOA.DH.MKT 1958 51 (25 Mayıs 1308/7 June 1892).

50 Mersin Pier Commission to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 139 19 (14 Şevval 1320/12 January 1903).

ability to smuggle weapons into the empire—motivated Ottoman authorities to seek his removal from the employ of the Russian Consulate, a request tersely rebuffed by the Russian ambassador.⁵¹

The involvement of foreign consular staff in human smuggling was not unique to Mersin. For example, in December 1903, Ottoman officials in Iskenderun accused two translators and a guard employed with the American consulate of aiding North America-bound migrants in gaining access to foreign ships docked in the port with the help of local boatmen.⁵² Indeed, boatmen, like consular employees, were also components of the port-city urban milieu that played a critical role in the migration industry. After migrants had been conveyed from the interior to the coast and preparations for their transhemispheric journey made, boatmen often served as the final link in port-city migration networks. As early as July 1890, the governor of Trabzon province reported that North America-bound migrants leaving through Samsun were being shuttled late at night to waiting foreign ships by local boatmen. Because the burgeoning port still lacked a proper pier for the loading and unloading of passengers, boatmen stationed at various locations along the city's waterfront remained the primary means of accessing ships. This situation made it difficult for local officials to monitor passenger traffic and prevent the further escalation of migrant smuggling. As a result, the governor called both for the construction of a passenger pier in Samsun and the enacting of much stricter regulations targeting the operations of the city's boatmen.⁵³

It was in port cities of the Mediterranean, however, where boatmen assumed an especially important role in migration networks during the period. As mentioned above, boatmen in both Mersin and Iskenderun

51 Copy of report from Adana Province to Ottoman Foreign Ministry: BOA.HR.SYS 2795 64 (22 Teşrinievvel 1319/04 November 1903).

52 Office of the Grand Vizier to the Ottoman Foreign Ministry: BOA.BEO 2234 167477 (20 Ramazan 1321/12 December 1903).

53 Governor of Trabzon Province to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.MKT 1743 81 (30 Zilkade 1307/17 July 1890).

readily exploited favorable coastal geography and placid waters to construct informal »piers« (*iskeleler*) from which migrants could be smuggled onto foreign ships. Such piers were generally set up in the vicinity of small villages usually located no more than twenty kilometers from the central port of either city. At this distance they were close enough to be readily accessible from the center of town but far enough away to avoid the reach of lighthouses monitoring the main harbor. Under the cover of darkness, migrants in groups of up to forty were rowed to ships waiting far enough offshore to also avoid detection from coastal lighthouses.⁵⁴ Testimony given by three Ottoman officials who witnessed such an event outside of Iskenderun in June 1899 provides a detailed picture of one of these late night rendezvous. The three men, identified as two military scribes and a Jerusalem-based police official, were passengers aboard the French steamer *Congo* as it sailed between Iskenderun and Mersin on the night of June 9, 1899. The district governor of Mersin summarized their statements as follows:

The night before last around 3:30 in the morning, the Messageries ship *Congo*, on its way from Iskenderun with scheduled arrival in Mersin early yesterday morning (here meaning daybreak, a few hours after 3:30), stopped about five or six miles outside of central Iskenderun. Thirty Armenians, each about twenty to twenty-five years in age, were loaded one by one onto the backside of the ship from two white rowboats. They were quickly spirited away to some place reserved for them in the ship without being given any opportunity to mix with or speak to the other passengers on board.⁵⁵

54 See: Report of the Ministry of Interior Reform Commission: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 93 32 (13 Cemaziyelevvel 1318/08 September 1900); BOA.DH.TMIK.M 121 23, Iskenderun Pier Commission to Ministry of Interior (02 Nisan 1318/13 April 1902); BOA.Y.PRK.AZN 24 35.

55 Ministry of Police to Province of Mamuretülaziz: BOA.MKT.MHM 545 7 (10 Haziran 1315/23 June 1899).

The details provided in the testimony of these three men hint at the impressive degree of coordination that existed between local migration intermediaries, agents of foreign shipping lines, boatmen, and the crews of these ships. The regularity with which carefully orchestrated late-night rendezvous took place reinforces the extent to which the port-city migration networks relied on the involvement of a diverse cross section of local and non-local actors. The relative visibility of these events in the documentary evidence, however, suggests the parties involved were not always successful in evading the authorities, and arrests of boatmen involved in smuggling migrants were not infrequent.⁵⁶ Despite the risks involved, participation in the migration industry was a lucrative business for boatmen. In a report from June 1900, officials at Iskenderun estimated that some local boatmen were making up to fifty lira a day conveying migrants bound for North America to waiting foreign ships. The report went on to raise concerns that the legally mandated two lira fine and short prison sentence meted out to boatmen arrested on suspicion of human smuggling was not proving an effective disincentive against such operations.⁵⁷

Boatmen in Mersin and Iskenderun clearly ran impressive operations, evidenced by their high degree of coordination and their ability to smuggle large numbers of migrants at a time. Their counterparts based in Levantine port cities, however, appear to have operated on an even larger scale. Whereas boatmen operating in Mersin and Iskenderun appear generally to have ferried their clients to ships waiting just offshore, boatmen in the Levant regularly smuggled migrants as far as Cyprus, located nearly two hundred kilometers off the coast of the Ottoman mainland.⁵⁸

56 See for example: Iskenderun Pier Commission to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 90 26 (30 Mayıs 1316/12 June 1900); Governor of Halep Province to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M (4 Rabiulevvel 1320/10 June 1902).

57 Copy of response from Iskenderun Pier Commission to Halep Province: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 92 41 (6 Safer 1318/12 June 1900).

58 Ministry of Interior to Beirut Province: BOA.DH.MKT 277 47, pg. 1 (24 Safer 1312/26 August 1894).

Because Cyprus was under de facto British rule, migrants smuggled there could easily gain access to foreign ships without fear of detection by Ottoman authorities. The two hundred kilometer trip from the Levantine coast to Cyprus, however, required large vessels capable of travel on the open water. The vessel of one Latakia-based boatman, for example, was reported to have a carrying capacity of over twenty tons, suggesting the capital-intensive nature of these enterprises.⁵⁹ Some of these boatmen appear to have operated out of more than one port city.⁶⁰ Although not explicitly mentioned in the documentation, it is not unlikely that he planned to pick up more North America-bound migrant passengers from Iskenderun or even Mersin before travelling back to his home port.

The available information regarding the ethnic and social origins of these boatmen is spotty but hints at a great degree of diversity. One notable boatman/smuggler, Kiryako, who smuggled migrants from an informal port just north of Iskenderun, was a Greek Orthodox fisherman originally from the Aegean port town of Çeşme, located over one thousand kilometers from Iskenderun.⁶¹ Kiryako was the owner of numerous small boats and his human smuggling operation was apparently large enough for him to employ other local boatmen.⁶² Meanwhile, the aforementioned Trablus-based boatman, Mustafa Vaki, appears to have been a native of that city and, judging from his name, a Muslim. As shown above, his involvement in smuggling migrants may have complemented his work importing goods from Cyprus for sale in various towns along the Mediterranean coast.⁶³ Finally Muhammad Çek, who ran a notorious

59 BOA.Y.PRK.AZN 24 35 (12 Mart 1320/25 March 1904).

60 Iskenderun Pier Commission to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 121 23 (02 Nisan 1318/13 April 1902).

61 Monthly Report of the Iskenderun Pier Commission Ağustos 1315: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 76 43 (10 Cemaziyelahir 1317/16 September 1899).

62 Iskenderun Pier Commission to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 90 26 (13 Rabiulahir 1316/11 August 1900).

63 Iskenderun Pier Commission to Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 121 23 (02 Nisan 1318/13 April 1902).

operation out of Beirut involving the smuggling of both migrants and weapons from the mid-1890s until well into the first years of the twentieth century, was of Algerian origin and received consular protection from the French government.⁶⁴ The profiles provided above are insufficient to provide a composite picture of the average boatman involved in the migration industry. However, they further demonstrate the ways in which migration networks in port cities went beyond links of compatriotism to include actors of various social, regional, ethnic, and national backgrounds. Without these networks and the specific knowledge and connections those involved in them possessed, travel from the interior to the coast, navigating the largely foreign world of the port city, avoiding detection by local authorities, and attempting to arrange passage aboard a foreign steamer would have been impossible for even the savviest of migrants.

Involvement of State Officials in the Migration Industry

The strict prohibitions in place against migration to North America motivated many state officials in the interior and in port cities to take advantage of their positions in order to benefit from the often lucrative business of facilitating unlawful migration. As a result, throughout the migration industry's geography and the time period in question, these officials were essential to the ability of these networks to operate smoothly and largely without interference.

For example, civil registrars, officials responsible for granting internal passports, sought early on to exploit the value of these documents in the migration process. There are numerous cases of registrars in communities throughout the Anatolian interior who regularly granted internal passports to North America-bound migrants or migration agents, often in return for substantial bribes.⁶⁵ Indeed, by the late 1890s, these officials

64 Ministry of Police to the Ministry of Interior: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 42 55 (26 Cemazeyilevvel 1315/23 October 1897).

65 Ministry of Interior to Province of Sivas: BOA.DH.MKT 1859 60 (10 Muharrem 1309/16 August 1891).

could expect to receive payments worth hundreds of times the legally stipulated price of an internal passport.⁶⁶ Although lower ranking civil registrars were frequently implicated in selling these documents, they were not the only ones involved in the business. In 1898, a petition written by a local merchant in Harput accused the province's chief civil registrar of charging North America-bound migrants between five and ten gold lira for internal passports.⁶⁷ In fact, the practice of selling internal passports was apparently so widespread that its importance to the migration process elicited comment by the United States consul in Harput. In a report to his superiors in Istanbul, the consul mentioned that for migrants seeking to travel to North America, the payment of bribes in order to obtain these documents was »requisite to lubricate the official machinery.«⁶⁸

Like civil registrars based in communities in the Anatolian interior, the involvement of port city-based police officials also played key roles in facilitating migration. In July 1892, and in the face of increased efforts on the part of the Ottoman state to interdict migration to North America, the Ministry of Interior issued a stern warning threatening to hold responsible police officials in coastal provinces found either turning a blind eye to or actively facilitating the departure of undocumented migrants.⁶⁹ The ministry's concerns about the involvement of these officials in port city migration networks were well founded. Port city police officials were implicated in activities ranging from aiding innkeepers in illegally procuring travel documents for their North America-bound cli-

66 Ministry of Interior to Province of Mamuretülaziz: BOA.DH.TMIK.M 50 21 (24 Şevval 1315/17 March 1898); Ministry of Police to Province of Mamuretülaziz: BOA.ZB 446 101 (08 Ağustos 1323/21 August 1907).

67 Ministry of Interior to Mamuretülaziz province: BOA.DH.MKT 2094 46 (4 Rabiulahir 1316/22 August 1898).

68 USDSDD United States Consul Harput to Thomas Leishman, US Plenipotentiary, Constantinople (05 November 1903).

69 Ministry of Interior to Coastal Provinces and the Ministry of Police: BOA.DH.MKT 1976 17 (27 Zilhicce 1309/22 July 1892).

ents, to serving as intermediaries between North America-bound migrants and those networks of agents making arrangements for their transhemispheric travel.⁷⁰ In a particularly noteworthy example, police officers in Beirut used their authority to collaborate with local migrant smugglers in shaking down North America-bound migrants passing through the port. The ability of police in Beirut to coordinate with local migration smugglers provided them with a cut of the lucrative migrant smuggling business while ensuring it remained free from state interference.

Given problems with chronic underpayment, the fact that rank-and-file civil registrars or port city police officials sought to benefit from involvement in the migration industry is not surprising. However, the participation of state officials in the migration industry was not limited to underpaid bureaucrats or those with prior existing connections to migrant-sending communities. In March 1907, Harputliyan Artin, the powerful migration agent mentioned earlier in this article, along with the police chief of Mamuretülaziz Province, a local gendarmerie commander, and several lesser ranking police officers were arrested in connection with their alleged role in an elaborate scheme to smuggle migrants.⁷¹ The plot, spearheaded by Harputliyan Artin and involving some of the most powerful officials in the province, occurred in plain sight and largely within the confines of the provincial government building. When the plot unraveled after a group of North America-bound migrants involved in it were arrested, the resulting arrests of prominent state officials shook the provincial bureaucracy to the core.

That high-ranking local officials in Mamuretülaziz were involved in the migration industry is not surprising in and of itself. As mentioned earlier in this article, the Ottoman state knew of Artin Efendi's connections to

70 BOA.Y.PRK.AZN 24 35 (30 Ağustos 1316/12 September 1900); Ministry of Police Council of Investigation to Vilayet of Trabzon: BOA.ZB 459 66 (30 Temmuz 1320/11 August 1904).

71 Province of Mamuretülaziz to Ministry of Police: BOA.ZB 108 29 (2 Ağustos 1323/15 August 1907).

high-ranking provincial officials since as early as 1905.⁷² Indeed, Artin Efendi was himself a member of the provincial executive council and thus also a part of the regional governing apparatus. The fact that the plot's architects, one of whom was the highest-ranking police official in the province, were so flagrant about their involvement suggests just how deep the ties ran between members of the provincial administration and the migration industry. In the face of strict migration prohibitions, however, the migrant smuggling networks that emerged during this period could not have operated for two decades and at high capacity without the direct involvement of powerful and well-connected state officials. Their participation in the migration industry should not be read as an indication of rampant corruption within Ottoman provincial administration. Rather, the actions of both high- and low-ranking officials further demonstrates the powerful but often ambiguous role that state power played in shaping the migration process.

Conclusion

Henri Lefebvre argues that social spaces—networks of communication and exchange embodied in local, regional, national, and international markets of capital, labor, signs etc.—necessarily incorporate and build on top of those of previous eras (Lefebvre 1991: 86). In the same vein, the new regimes of time and space that helped to facilitate the great trans-hemispheric migrations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were built upon and shaped by existing social relationships and regional networks that linked people across (often great) distances and facilitated the circulation of people, labor power, and goods. In addition, they were mediated through a variety of historically specific local and regional political, social, and economic dynamics.

By investigating and analyzing the emergence of the migration industry in eastern Anatolia, this article has strived to put these actors at the center of analysis. Because of the prohibitions on migration to North

72 Office of the Grand Vizier to Ministry of Interior: BOA.MKT.MHM 659 52 (11 Şaban 323/10 October 1905).

America, coupled with the difficult nature of the trip between the Anatolian interior and the coast, the volume of migration witnessed during this period would have been impossible without the involvement of the many underground networks that comprised this migration industry. Many of these were grafted onto preexisting compatriot networks that connected migrant laborers and merchants in various Ottoman port cities with their home communities in eastern Anatolia. The Ottoman state's prohibition of migration to North America coupled with the unique challenges of transoceanic migration, however, necessitated that those involved in the migration industry go well beyond such familiar linkages. As this article demonstrates, they built connections among a larger and more diverse set of social actors, creating a pastiche of new and old social relationships reminiscent of Lefebvre's description of social space.

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