

Russian-Persian Entanglements in a Transottoman Context

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The Russian, Persian, and Ottoman Empires have been neighbouring states and societies for centuries and their borders had been extremely dynamic due to numerous military conflicts, interaction, and flow of people, ideas, and goods across the borderlands. The Black Sea region,¹ the Caucasus,² Eastern Anatolia, the Caspian Sea region, and Central Asia were important frontier regions that (inter)connected those empires and merged them into a unique interwoven Transottoman space.³

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Russian Empire became the strongest part within the triangular context and conquered the Crimean Khanate⁴, annexed the Georgian Kingdom, and defeated the Ottomans and Persians in several wars during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.⁵ These wars resulted in Golestan (1813), Turkmenchay (1828),⁶ and Adrianople (1829)⁷ Peace Treaties and cemented strong positions

- 1 G. C. Maior/M. Matei, The Black Sea Region in an Enlarged Europe: Changing Patterns, Changing Politics, in: *Mediterranean Quarterly* 16 (2005) 1, pp. 33–51; *Handbook on the History and Culture of the Black Sea Region*, ed. by N. Bumann, K. Jobst, S. Rohdewald, S. Troebst, Berlin: De Gruyter: Oldenbourg (in preparation for 2024).
- 2 Z. Gasimov, *Kaukasus*, in: *Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO)*, ed. by Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG), Mainz 2011-03-15, <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/gasimovz-2011-de>.
- 3 More on interconnections in the seventeenth century, see S. Troebst, *Isfahan – Moskau – Amsterdam. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des moskauischen Transitprivilegs für die Armenische Handelskompanie in Persien (1666–1676)*, in: *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 2 (1993), pp. 180–209.
- 4 A. W. Fisher, Şahin Girey, the Reformer Khan, and the Russian Annexation of the Crimea, in: *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 3 (1967), pp. 341–364.
- 5 M. Behrooz, *Revisiting the Second Russo-Iranian War (1826–28): Causes and Perceptions*, in: *Iranian Studies* 46 (2013) 3, pp. 359–381.
- 6 G. A. Bournoutian, *From the Kur to the Aras: A Military History of Russia's Move into the South Caucasus and the First Russo-Iranian War, 1801–1813*, Leiden/Boston 2021.
- 7 R. J. Kerner, *Russia's New Policy in the Near East after the Peace of Adrianople; Including the Text of the Protocol of 16 September 1829*, in: *Cambridge Historical Journal* 5 (1937) 3, pp. 280–290; N. Ciachir, *The Adrianople Treaty*

of St. Petersburg in the territories of traditional power projection of the Ottomans and Persians. These wars resulted either in large scale migration within the inter-imperial context. Hundreds of thousands of Sunni Muslims from the Crimea and the Caucasus moved to the Ottoman Empire and Persia.⁸ The centuries-long contacts between “then-Russian” Crimea and Caucasian Muslims with cultural and economic as well as religious centres of the Ottoman and Persian Empire were not cut. Azeri intellectuals in Russian service, like the historian and translator Abbas Qulu Ağa Bakıxanlı (1794–1847),⁹ wrote their historiographical pieces in Persian and the Armenian community of Tbilisi and other urban spaces of Russian Caucasus continued to maintain active bonds with Armenians in Persian Isfahan¹⁰ or in late Ottoman Constantinople. In the mid-nineteenth century, Persia fell into semi-colonial dependence of Russian Empire that not only annexed formerly Persia-dependent principalities in South Caucasia and obtained long coast on the western shore of the Caspian Sea but also large economic privileges on the Persian market.¹¹ The oil boom in Baku in the 1870–80s enforced on the one hand attempts at imperial securitization of the whole region by Russia¹² and at the same time attracted hundreds of thousands of impoverished Persians to the Russian Caucasus who became important intermediaries between two societies.¹³ The cultural production of Russian Armenians and Azeris, a product of an amazing synthesis of local traditions and Russian influence, was intensively perceived in Persian urban spaces at the turn of the century due to frequent touring of the troupes from Tbilisi and Baku,¹⁴ unintended

(1829) and Its European Implications, in: F. C. Schneid (ed.), *European Politics 1815–1848*, London 2011, pp. 95–113.

- 8 A. Akgündüz, Migration to and from Turkey, 1783–1960: Types, Numbers and Ethno-religious Dimensions, in: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 24 (1998) 1, pp. 97–120; J. H. Meyer, Immigration, Return, and the Politics of Citizenship: Russian Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, 1860–1914, in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39 (2007) 1, pp. 15–32; V. Hamed-Troyansky, Circassian Refugees and the Making of Amman, 1878–1914, in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49 (2017) 4, pp. 605–623; V. Tsibenko, The Lost Circassia and the Found Circassians: Caucasian Migration to the Ottoman Empire, in: *Journal of Turkology* 32 (2022) 1, pp. 405–431.
- 9 A. L. Altstadt, Azerbaijani Turks’ Response to Russian Conquest, in: *Studies in Comparative Communism* 19 (1986) 3–4, pp. 267–286.
- 10 E. Sykes, Isfahan, in: *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 33 (1946) 3–4, pp. 307–317.
- 11 R. Chenciner/M. Magomedkhanov, Persian Exports to Russia from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century, in: *Iran* 30 (1992) 1, pp. 123–130.
- 12 R. L. Hastings, *Oil Capital: Industry and Society in Baku, Azerbaijan, 1870 – Present*. PhD thesis, University of Oregon, 2020; S. Rohdewald, *Securing the Flows of Oil in a Transottoman Context: Baku’s Oil, Infrastructures of Transportation, and Mendeleev as an Imperial Expert of Securitization (1850–1918)*, in: W. Distler/H. Hein Kirchner (eds.), *The Mobility-Security Nexus and the Making of Order: An Interdisciplinary and Historicizing Intervention*, New York 2023, pp. 208–226.
- 13 T. Atabaki, Disgruntled Guests: Iranian Subaltern on the Margins of the Tsarist Empire, in: *International Review of Social History* 48 (2003) 3, pp. 401–426; T. Atabaki, From ‘Amaleh (labor) to Kargar (worker): Recruitment, Work Discipline and Making of the Working Class in the Persian/Iranian Oil Industry, in: *International Labor and Working-Class History* 84 (2013), pp. 159–175.
- 14 K. Rice, Emissaries of Enlightenment: Azeri Theater Troupes in Iran and Central Asia, 1906–44, in: *Iranian Studies* 54 (2021) 3–4, pp. 427–451.

“soft-power”-import in form of operettas and theatre pieces as well as satiric journals like the initially Tbilisi-based and 1906-founded journal “Molla Nasreddin”.¹⁵

The multidimensional bilateral context between Russian and Persian Empires took often place within a triangular context and had a strong Transottoman element in it. Istanbul became a prominent place of sojourn of Russian and Persian Turkic and Armenian intellectuals who designed various strategies for the region and the countries of their origin.¹⁶ In the twentieth century, these entanglements between post-Tsarist Russia, Caucasus, Persia, and post-Ottoman Turkey became even stronger bonding the interconnected geography of those formerly imperial geographies into one Transottoman space.¹⁷

This special issue of *Comparativ* gives insights into various projects that epitomise the approach and focus followed within the DFG priority programme Transottomanica with the specific focus on the entanglements in the twentieth century. Three essays contained in this issue therefore take up the perspectives of the priority program Transottomanica. With the project “Knowledge and Science Transfer and Transnational Circulation of Ideas between Central and Eastern Europe and the Republic of Turkey” (PD Dr. Zaur Gasimov), the priority programme reaches into the mid-twentieth century and the present. We briefly explain the research questions of this programme here, as well as offering a contextual account of the contributions;¹⁸ and we are very grateful to the editors of the journal for giving us the opportunity to do this.

The programme focuses on “Transottoman” mobility dynamics, that is, societal ties and communication practices which emerged as a consequence of mobility, migration, and transimperial rivalries in general between Muscovy/Russia, Poland-Lithuania, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran/Persia. Historical societies in this geographical range developed mobility dynamics that evolved and interconnected in chains of situations and dense social, spatial, relational network structures over centuries, consolidating transregional migration society across the empires. These societal ties have not been systematically studied by now in studies on individual empires or bilateral relations, as established area studies segregated these regions of interest (Eastern European, Middle East/Near East Studies) from each other. Thus, the shared history beyond the container spaces of

15 More on that: A. Bennigsen, “Molla Nasreddin” et la presse satirique musulmane de Russie avant 1917, in: Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique (1962), pp. 505–520; B. Grant, Satire and Political Imagination in the Caucasus: The Sense and Sensibilities of Molla Nasreddin, in: Acta Slavica Iaponica 40 (2020), pp. 1–17.

16 V. Adam, Rußlandmuslime in Istanbul am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges. Die Berichterstattung osmanischer Periodika über Rußland und Zentralasien, Frankfurt am Main 2003; Z. Gasimov, Krimtatarische Exil-Netzwerke zwischen Osteuropa und dem Nahen Osten, in: Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften 28 (2017) 1, pp. 142–166.

17 Z. Gasimov, Transfer and Asymmetry, in: European Journal of Turkish Studies [Online], 24 (2017), Online since 8 November 2017, <http://journals.openedition.org/ejts/5432>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/ejts.5432> (accessed 31 March 2023).

18 For a general overview of the German Research Foundation (DFG) priority programme Transottomanica, our approach, and the state of the art see S. Rohdewald/S. Conermann/A. Fuess (eds.), 2019. Transottomanica. Osteuropäisch-osmanisch-persische Mobilitätsdynamiken. Perspektiven und Forschungsstand. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. Open Access: <https://www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com/themen-entdecken/geschichte/geschichte-der-fruehen-neuzeit/27422/transottomanica-osteuropaeisch-osmanisch-persische-mobilitaetsdynamiken> (accessed 25 January 2021). www.transottomanica.de.

these regions remained secondary at best. Instead, our post-area studies approach unveil and set centre stage large-scale mobilities of people, knowledge, and objects, profoundly affecting the societies across the aforementioned empires and their respective successor states from the sixteenth century to the present.

Societal mobility and migration can be seen as constitutive for the very emergence of the empires focused on. Both the Ottoman and the Safavid dynasties evolved from nomads. Military mobility dynamics between “moveable empires” were key for their consolidation.¹⁹ The rapid expansion of Lithuania to the Black Sea in the fourteenth century was conditioned by the competition with the Golden Horde and cooperation with Tatars. On the other hand, the extension of Muscovy to Kazan and Astrakhan in the sixteenth century into territories of the Golden Horde and then the Ottoman Empire and Persia increased transimperial mobility and fundamentally changed the involved societies. Not least due to these Transottoman rivalries, not only in the Ottoman and the Persian, but also in the Moscovite and Polish-Lithuanian realms, large multilingual and multireligious migration societies were fostered.²⁰

Emigrants, immigrants, and destination as well as original societies, including their immobile parts, were changed by the mobile actors, which from a meta-level can be seen as Transottoman migration society.²¹ “Circulation societies”²² of Jewish, Armenian, Greek, Arab, and Multani long distant merchants rather than “diasporas” were constitutive and not marginal or isolated parts and pieces of society locally and transregionally.²³

In the Transottoman context, the Ottoman Empire played a key role as a hub for the circulations or flows of knowledge in general.²⁴ An Ottoman military revolution has been observed, which transformed Eastern Europe in the sixteenth century.²⁵ Russian-Persian-

19 R. Kasaba, *The Moveable Empires. Ottoman Nomads, Migrants, and Refugees*, Seattle 2009; R. Tapper, *Frontier Nomads of Iran: A Political and Social History of the Shahsevan*, Cambridge 1997.

20 A. Kappeler, *Rußlands erste Nationalitäten. Das Zarenreich und die Völker der Mittleren Wolga vom 16. bis 19. Jahrhundert*, Köln/Wien 1982.

21 M. V. Poros, *Modern Migrations. Gujarati Indian Networks in New York and London*, Stanford 2011, p. 161.

22 S. D. Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean. The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*, Berkeley 2011.

23 S. Rohdewald, *Adeligkeit, Fernhändler und Luxuswaren in transosmanischen Mobilitätsdynamiken vor 1800*, in: A. C. Cremer/A. Jendorff (eds.), *Decorum und Mammon im Widerstreit? Adeliges Wirtschaftshandeln zwischen Standesprofilen, Profitstreben und ökonomischer Notwendigkeit*, Heidelberg 2022, pp. 233–255. Open Access: <https://heiu.uni-heidelberg.de/reader/download/818/818-69-96802-1-10-20220120.pdf>.

24 S. Baumbach/B. Michaelis/A. Nünning (eds.), *Travelling Concepts, Metaphors, and Narratives: Literary and Cultural Studies in an Age of Interdisciplinary Research*, Trier 2011; D. Bachmann-Medick (ed.), *The Trans/National Study of Culture: A Translational Perspective*, Berlin/Boston 2014; J. Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Global History of Empire since 1405*, London 2008.

25 B. L. Davies, *Warfare, State and Society on the Black Sea Steppe, 1500–1700*, London/New York 2007; B. L. Davies, *Empire and Military Revolution in Eastern Europe: Russia's Turkish Wars in the Eighteenth Century*, London/New York 2013.

Ottoman military technology rivalry²⁶ and diplomatic relations that were consolidated in eternal peace treaties²⁷ changed also political concepts in Iran.²⁸

The emergence of regional education centres in the early modern period, from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries onwards, led to the dissemination of the practice of printing, knowledge production, and knowledge exchange between (Eastern) Europe and the Near East.²⁹ The origins of Arabic printing in the Near East itself evolved exactly in this Transottoman context, as well as the printing of Ottoman texts: Among the books printed by İbrahim Müteferrika (1670/4–1745) was in 1729 his Ottoman translation of the history of the decline of the Safavids on the part of the Polish Jesuit residing in Isfahan, Jan Tadeusz Krusiński (1675–1751), in a comparatively large edition of 1200 copies.³⁰ In view of Persia's perceived decline, Müteferrika also wrote an influential book in 1732 that suggested (military) reforms to the Ottomans based on the Western European model to avoid the fate of Iran.³¹ Moreover, his first printed work was the first map of Persia printed in the Middle East in 1729. Müteferrika should thus be considered a relevant example of the transimperial and transreligious dissemination of new concepts by a few mediating actors between Ottoman Eastern Europe and Iran.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, academic knowledge was developed and fostered by the imperial elites.³² Constitutive for this were the founding of the Oriental Faculty in St. Petersburg, in 1856 and of the Russian Archaeological Institute in Constantinople/Istanbul, in 1895.³³ The very concept of Muslim modernity was conceived in these Transottoman flows of knowledge.³⁴ The growing rivalries of colonial powers

- 26 G. Ágoston, *Guns for the Sultan: Military Power and the Weapons Industry in the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge 2005.
- 27 S. Rohdewald, "bu sulh u salah mukarrer ve mü'ebbed"/"Pax perpetua": Polnisch-litauische Friedensformeln und Allianzen mit Osmanen und Krimtataren bis 1790, in: *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropaforschung* 65 (2016) 2, pp. 167–192.
- 28 S. Güngörürler, *Brotherhood, Perpetual Peace, and Alliance in Ottoman-Safavid Relations, 1688–1698: A Diplomatic Revolution in the Middle East*, in: *Turcica* 50 (2019), pp. 147–209.
- 29 E. Dierauff/D. Dierks/B. Henning et al., *Knowledge on the Move in a Transottoman Perspective. Dynamics of Intellectual Exchange from the Fifteenth to the Early Twentieth Century*, Göttingen 2021. Open Access: <https://www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com/themen-entdecken/geschichte/transnationaleglobalgeschichte/55610/knowledge-on-the-move-in-a-transottoman-perspective?c=1483>; cf. A. Helmedach et al. (eds), *Das Osmanische Europa. Methoden und Perspektiven der Frühneuzeitforschung zu Südosteuropa*, Leipzig 2014.
- 30 R. Skowron, *Tłumaczenia i recepcja w Europie i Turcji prac Judy Tadeusza Krusińskiego SJ o wojnie Afgańsko-Perskiej i upadku dynastii Safawidów* [European and Turkish Translations and Reception of Works by Juda Tadeusz Krusiński SJ Regarding the Afghan-Persian War and the Fall of the Safavid Dynasty], in: *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego Prace Historyczne* 147 (2020) 1, pp. 13–36; W. J. William, İbrahim Müteferrika and Turkish Incunabula, in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 (1968) 3, pp. 435–441, p. 436 sq.
- 31 O. Sabev (aka Orhan Salih), *Portrait and Self-Portrait: İbrahim Müteferrika's Mind Games*, in: *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 44 (2014), p. 110 sq.
- 32 Y. Sarıkaya, *Abū Saïd Muhammad al-Hādīmī (1701–1762). Netzwerke, Karriere und Einfluss eines Osmanischen Provinzgelehrten*, Hamburg 2005; K. Kreiser, *Wissenschaftswandel im Osmanischen Reich des 18. Jahrhunderts?*, in: B. Schmidt-Haberkamp (ed.), *Europa und die Türkei im 18. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2011, pp. 433–446.
- 33 V. Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods*, Oxford 2011; K. Jobst, *Wo liegt das russische Morgenland? Orient-Diskurs und imperiale Herrschaft im Zarenreich*, in: R. Born/S. Lemmen (eds.), *Orientalismen in Ostmitteleuropa. Diskurse, Akteure und Disziplinen vom 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Bielefeld 2014, pp. 65–84.
- 34 D. Dierks, *Scripting, Translating, and Narrating Reform. Making Muslim Reformism in the European Peripheries of*

changed mobilities of people, goods, and ideas from the mid-nineteenth century onward. Newly globalized imperial and new national logics of action soon led to new Transottoman dynamics not yet systematically researched.³⁵ In this setting, new, pan-imperial, or ethnic-identity concepts such as Pan-Slavism³⁶ or Pan-Turkism³⁷ but also Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Georgian, Armenian, as well as Arab historical imaginations of one's own tradition and cultural or national identity concepts emerged in the conscious mutual demarcation within the nationalizing empires or in emancipation from them. Revolutionary experts travelled or fled across the empires since the end of the nineteenth century, engaging in and leading constitutional revolutions in Russia, Iran, and the Ottoman Empire.³⁸ The collision and collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires in the Caucasian-Anatolian borderlands in 1908–1918 have been studied as shared and transimperial history.³⁹ Global imperial rivalries between Russia and the British Empire culminated in Iran, that is the so-called Great Game.⁴⁰ The Balkan Wars and World War I established enforced migration and expulsion, as well as genocide, as elements of modern warfare globally.⁴¹

The genesis of the asymmetrical relations between Russia and Persia in the nineteenth century evolved after 1900 in the context of Russian-British relations, which became an important factor in Russian policy toward Persia and were reflected in the Russian-British Agreement of 1907. In the course of this agreement, Russian penetration into the economy and social development of northern Iran deepened, which mutated into a Russian zone of influence par excellence. The case studies touch on continuities in the dynamics of interdependence, for instance by pointing out that the new (Ankara, Moscow) postimperial capitals were able to renew their positions as transregional centres of power in the ongoing tension between cooperation and rivalry. The focus is not so much on the ruptures, but much more on the transformations, hybrid forms of politics that absorbed numerous elements of respective ancient regimes and were adapted by the changing

the Muslim World at the Turn of the 20th Century, in: Dierauff et al. (eds). Knowledge on the Move in a Transottoman Perspective, pp. 157–222.

- 35 Cf. as an example: J. Leonhard/U. von Hirschhausen (eds), *Comparing Empires. Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Göttingen 2011.
- 36 M. Sapper/V. Weichsel/S. Troebst/A. Gaşior (eds.), *Gemeinsam Einsam. Die Slavische Idee nach dem Panславismus*, special issue of *Osteuropa* 12 (2009); A. Gaşior/L. Karl/S. Troebst (eds.), *Post-Panславismus. Slavizität, Slavische Idee und Antislavismus im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2014.
- 37 J. M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism. From Irredentism to Cooperation*, Bloomington 1995; B. Pekesen, *Panturkismus*, in: *Europäische Geschichte Online (EGO)*, ed. by Leibniz-Institut für Europäische Geschichte (IEG), Mainz 2014-03-04, <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/pekesenb-2014-de>; URN: urn:nbn:de:0159-2014030401 [2023-03-31].
- 38 M. A. Reynolds, *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires 1908–1918*, Cambridge/New York 2011; T. Atabaki (ed.), *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, London/New York 2007; J. H. Meyer, *Turks Across Empires: Marketing Muslim Identity in the Russian-Ottoman Borderlands, 1856–1914*, New York 2014.
- 39 Reynolds, *Shattering Empires*.
- 40 A. Wynn, *Persia in the Great Game: Sir Percy Sykes, Explorer, Consul, Soldier, Spy*, London 2003.
- 41 S. Rohdewald, *Afterword: Transitions from a Transimperial to a Transnational Migration Society*, in: C. Horel/C. Severin Barbutie (eds.), *From Empire(s) to Nation-States: Population Displacements and Multiple Mobilities in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Leiden/Boston 2023, pp. 197–215.

international and regional situation. Unlike before and during World War I, when the Ottomans and Russians were each on different sides of the barricades, close cooperation between Kemalists and Bolsheviks emerged in the 1920s and 1930s.⁴² At the same time, Bolshevik policy in Persia contained many elements of the old tsarist policy and distinct imperial and colonial features.⁴³

Due to the relations with the internationally boycotted Soviet Union after 1917, the long Turkish neutrality during World War II, the Iranian corridor for allied logistics to the Soviet Union until 1945, the East-West antagonism during the Cold War, and the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the greater region became the arena of large-scale conflicts and renewed transregional cleavages in a global context.⁴⁴ Today, Iran supplies drones to Russia, whereas Turkey to Ukraine – which is only one exemplary symptom of a renewal of transregional political and military entanglements in our (post-)Transottoman setting with glocal meanings and consequences.

This thematic issue focuses on the period from 1900 to 1939, when the revolutions and the collapse of the empires in World War I set the course for new configurations of trans-Ottoman entanglements. The revolution and the war changed the societies involved as well as the configuration of transregional modes of interaction. The contributions illustrate that Transottoman mobility dynamics remained relevant for the post-imperial period as well: Petersburg/Petrograd – or then Moscow –, Tehran, and Istanbul remained and were reproduced as centres of transregional powers that were in close rivalry and/or cooperation with each other as well as characterized by shared social contexts due to important individual mobilities and large-scale migrations, flows of knowledge, and shared material culture. Iran under Reza Shah Pahlavi, Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as well as the Soviet Union under Stalin were all trying to accommodate their societies to new concepts of (il)liberal modernities. The development of their mutual ties remained at the core of any history of the region, be it political, cultural, or societal history.

The first contribution puts migration and travelling concepts into the focus – a classical “Transottoman” approach: In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Persia was one of the main sources of immigration to the Russian Empire, but following the Russian Revolution and the subsequent Civil War, the trend reversed and Persia became

42 B. Gökay, The Turkish Communist Party: The Fate of the Founders, in: *Middle Eastern Studies* 29 (1993) 2, pp. 220–235; J. Hasanli, The Sovietization of Azerbaijan: The South Caucasus in the Triangle of Russia, Turkey, and Iran, 1920–1922, Utah 2017; S. Demirci, Turkish and Soviet Revolutionaries, 1919–22: Cooperation on the Basis of Common Interests, in: *Turkish Historical Review* 1 (2022), pp. 1–18.

43 L. Ravandi-Fadai, “Red Mecca” – The Communist University for Laborers of the East (KUTV): Iranian Scholars and Students in Moscow in the 1920s and 1930s, in: *Iranian Studies* 48 (2015) 5, pp. 713–727; N. Mossaki/L. Ravandi-Fadai, A Guarded Courtship: Soviet Cultural Diplomacy in Iran from the late 1940s to the 1960s, in: *Iranian Studies* 51 (2018) 3, pp. 427–454; D. V. Volkov, Russia’s Turn to Persia: Orientalism in Diplomacy and Intelligence, Cambridge 2018; Z. Gasimov, Observing Iran from Baku: Iranian Studies in Soviet and Post-Soviet Azerbaijan, in: *Iranian Studies* 55 (2022) 1, pp. 37–59; D. V. Volkov, Bringing Democracy into Iran: A Russian Project for the Separation of Azerbaijan, in: *Middle Eastern Studies* 58 (2022) 6, pp. 989–1003.

44 Cf. S. Kott/C. Schayegh, Introducing the CEH special issue ‘Eastern European–Middle Eastern Relations: Continuities and Changes from the Time of Empires to the Cold War’, in: *Contemporary European History* 30 (2021) 4, pp. 463–477.

a destination for immigrants from the former Tsarist Empire. The occupation of the Caucasus republics by the Red Army in the early 1920s brought a new wave of refugees into Persia. Moscow and Tehran were at odds over the fate of these refugees, which overshadowed the fledgling relations between the two countries. Ali Kalirad shows in his contribution on Azerbaijani émigrés in Persia and anti-communist activities in the 1920s and 1930s how Transottoman entanglements consolidated under these new circumstances. The treaty of 1921 between Persia and Soviet Russia banned anti-Soviet political and military movements in the Iranian territory, as enshrined in the agreement of 1927 for joint exploitation. However, the two sides continued to differ over the activities of the opponents of the Soviet regime in Persia, especially the Caucasians. The collectivization policy and mass deportations and oppressions during the late 1920s and 1930s led to new waves of migration from the Caucasus and Central Asia, which eventually forced the Iranian authorities to create a special commission to deal with the Soviet refugees. Refugees from Azerbaijan and Armenia were distinguished by their large numbers and long-standing political, cultural, social, and economic ties with Persia. Azerbaijani activists did not play the same role as their Armenian counterparts in the Dashnaktsutyun and Hunchak organizations in the political arena of Persia during the first years of the twentieth century. However, figures such as Mehmed Emin Resulzade (1884–1955) were well known for their participation in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911). Azerbaijani immigrants were tied to the Iranian society, mostly through religion, language, traditions, and even kinship with high-ranking Iranian families. Consequently, their settlement in Persia did not pose a serious threat to the modern nation-state building project under Reza Shah (1925–1941). Nonetheless, relations between the Azerbaijani émigrés and Iranian officials and intellectuals had been fraught with serious problems from the very beginning. The emphasis of ruling Musavat party on the Turkish aspect of the Azerbaijani identity during the independence years of 1918–1920, which dissatisfied Iranians, proved a formidable obstacle to cooperation between the two sides after the establishment of the Bolshevik power in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijani leaders in exile sought to exploit the situation and gain the trust of the Iranians. Their aim was to emphasize Soviet threats to Iran's independence and its territorial integrity and persuade Tehran to join anti-communist activities. In recent years, various studies have been conducted on anti-communist activities by Azerbaijani émigrés in Europe and Turkey, but their role in Persia, which along with Turkey has been the main destination of Azerbaijani immigrants, have been overlooked. This study aims to provide an overview of the situation of Azerbaijani émigrés in Persia during the 1920s and 1930s, their role in anti-communist activities, and the Iranian government's attitude toward them based on available Persian, Turkish, Azerbaijani, and Russian sources.

The change of visual representations and the consolidation of public media in our Transottoman setting can be observed in cartography⁴⁵ or in journalism⁴⁶ and photography⁴⁷. In her article, Mira Xenia Schwerda looks through the lens of Visual Studies onto the aftermath of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution. With photographs of massacres by Russian soldiers in Urmia and Tabriz 1911, she debates the usage and functions of the new technique when the Russian army invaded the Iranian city of Tabriz and discusses the photographic documentation of the events, the circulation of the images, and their changing interpretations. The contribution thus builds on the Transottoman discussions in a transimperial setting of military violence and publicity.

Serhan Afacan takes a biographic approach and thus continues the relevant debates when he interprets Turkey's ambassadors to Iran in early republican period. Turkey-Iran relations, in the centuries-old Transottoman setting, entered a new phase in the early 1920s with the proclamation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty of Iran in 1925. The modernizing policies implemented in these two states throughout the 1920s and 1930s showed important similarities on the surface but carried significant differences at the core which affected the course of each state throughout the rest of the twentieth century. The presence of two powerful and authoritarian leaders, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk of Turkey and Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran, was one of the key similarities. Although there is a growing literature on the bilateral relations during the period, this paper aims to offer a new dimension by bringing into discussion the different agencies in establishing and maintaining the relations. To do that, Afacan focused on Turkey's ambassadors to Iran from 1923 until 1941 when Reza Shah abandoned the throne in favour of his son about three years after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's death in 1938. Although Iran's ambassadors to Turkey were referred as much as possible, emphasis was put on the profiles and the activities of Turkey's ambassador in Tehran by paying special attention to the reasons behind their selection. In the main, this chapter argues that Mustafa Kemal was very careful in building good relations with Iran which led him to handpick the best suitable ambassador in every stage of the relations. The archive of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Archives of Great Britain, along with the memoirs of the ambassadors under study and the newspapers, especially the Iranian ones, of the period constitute the main sources of this study.

45 S. Seegel, *Mapping Europe's Borderlands: Russian Cartography in the Age of Empire*, Chicago 2012.

46 V. Adam, *Rußlandmuslime in Istanbul am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkrieges. Die Berichterstattung Osmanischer Periodika über Rußland und Zentralasien*, Frankfurt am Main 2002.

47 P. E. Chevedden, *Making Light of Everything: Early Photography of the Middle East and Current Photomania*, in: *Review of Middle East Studies* 18 (1984) 2, pp. 151–174; Z. Çelik/E. Eldem (eds.), *Camera Ottomana: Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840–1914*, Istanbul: 2015; A. Behdad, *Camera Orientalis: Reflections on Photography of the Middle East*, Chicago 2016; A. Behdad, *Mediated Visions: Early Photography of the Middle East and Orientalist Network*, in: *History of Photography* 41 (2017) 4, pp. 362–375; M. Ritter/S. G. Scheiwiller (eds.), *The Indigenous Lens?: Early Photography in the Near and Middle East*, Berlin 2017; L. Ryzova, *The Image sans Orientalism: Local Histories of Photography in the Middle East*, in: *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication* 8 (2015) 2–3, pp. 159–171.

The chosen four decades within the longer history of interdependence – in both bilateral and trans-Ottoman contexts – should be interpreted from perspectives of neighborhood, rivalry and cooperation. This period is one of both transformation and maintenance of older patterns of mobility and interdependence. And in the following periods – the Cold War⁴⁸ and the present⁴⁹ – these phenomena, which at first sight seem contradictory, persist. All in all, the three contributions make clear the importance of an interregional or, transcontinental – or Transottoman – approach for a multidimensional assessment of Iran in the first half of the twentieth century. *hood, Rivalry, and Cooperation: Russian-Persian Entanglements in a Transottoman Context since the Nineteenth Century.*

- 48 Jamil Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet-American Crisis Over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941–1946*, Lanham 2006; Geoffrey Roberts, *Moscow's Cold War on the Periphery: Soviet Policy in Greece, Iran, and Turkey, 1943–48*, in: *Journal of contemporary history* 46 (2011) 1, pp. 58–81; J. Hasanli, *Stalin and the Turkish Crisis of the Cold War, 1945–1953*, Lanham 2011; T. Nunan, *Novoe znakovstvo s musul'manami SSSR: demonstratsiia sovet'skogo islama v Turtsii i Irane, 1978–1982* [New Knowledge about the Muslims of the SSSR: Demonstrations of Soviet Islam in Turkey and Iran], in: *Ab imperio* 4 (2011), pp. 133–171; S. Dokuyan, *İkinci Dünya Savaşı Sonrasında Sovyetler Birliği'nin Türkiye'den İstekleri* [Soviet Union's Demands from Turkey after the Second World War], in: *CTAD: Journal of Modern Turkish History Studies* 9 (2013) 18, pp. 119–135; R. Alvandi, *The Shah's détente with Khrushchev: Iran's 1962 missile base pledge to the Soviet Union*, in: *Cold War History* 14 (2014) 3, pp. 423–444; V. Kurban, *1950–1960 Yıllarında Türkiye ile Sovyetler Birliği Arasındaki İlişkiler* [Relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union in 1950–1960], in: *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi* 14 (2014) 28, pp. 253–282.
- 49 E. D. Moore, *Russia – Iran Relations Since the End of the Cold War*, London/New York 2014; Z. Gasimov, *Russland und die Türkei: Pragmatismus und Kooperation in der post-amerikanischen Welt*, in: *Südosteuropa Mitteilungen* (2022) 5–6, pp. 95–101.