

Historical-Demographic Changes in the Northwestern Rhodopes – Immigrants and Emigrants in the Period XVII–XX Century

Georgi Kumanov
(Summary)

The paper focuses on historical-demographic changes in the Northwestern Rhodopes. The author reviews only the movement of population – immigrants and emigrants – in search of their dynamics and detail in order to make possible the discovery of contemporary characteristics of the music and dance folklore of the separate confessional and ethnic communities in the region under consideration. For the first half of this period due to scarce information we could only mark some demographic changes. The great disturbances in the Ottoman Empire during the riots from the end of the XVIII century and the decades that followed laid the foundation for the later processes of immigration and emigration from and into the Northwestern Rhodopes. After the Liberation, and for this region especially during the first decades of the XX century, the demographic changes were turbulent, dramatic and tragic. The strength of the changes was so great as to bring a transformation in the power status in the communities of the Bulgarian Muslims and Bulgarian Christians, a new ethnic community – Aromanians, and a new folklore image of the region by the means of the changed ratio between locals and settlers. The second half of the XX century had brought a new change in the region related to industrialization and ideology production. But the immigrants in this region did not succeed in transforming the folklore image so strongly and distinctively as in the previous period. A number of factors – economic, social and especially political - have lead to a considerable wave of immigrants – Bulgarian Muslims in North Bulgaria, but this movement did not essentially influence the general situation. In the last decades the migration processes to the bigger cities, the capital and abroad have had no impact either.

Keywords: resettlers, emigrants, demographic changes, Bulgarian Muslims, Aromanians, Bulgarian Christians.

Georgi Kumanov
Historical Museum – Velingrad
Vlado Chernozemski Str., N 4
4600 Velingrad, BULGARIA
g_kumanov@abv.bg