

BOOK REVIEW

Bülent Yıldırım, *Bulgaristan'da Türk Varlığı ve Nüfusu (Bulgar İstatistik Kurumunun Verilerine Göre 1880-2011)* [The Turkish Presence and Population in Bulgaria (According to the Data of the Bulgarian Statistic Institution 1880-2011)], Istanbul: İlgi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2018, 140 p. ISBN: 978-605-2022-56-6.

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The Bulgarian geography has been a popular location for those people who migrated from east to west since the earliest periods of history. The fact that this geography is on the migration route of the tribes that invaded Europe has enriched the demographic structure of this region throughout history. Moreover, the richness of the vegetation and climate has been effective in making it an attractive residential area. For these reasons, Bulgaria has actively witnessed the settlement in different periods of history.

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The Turkish tribes coming to Europe from the north of the Black Sea crossed the Danube and landed on the Bulgarian mainland in the Balkans. Especially during the Middle Ages, the Turkish tribes such as Ogurs (Bulgarians) Pechenegs, Uzes and Cuman-Qipchaqs played their role in here acquiring the Turkish identity. With the Turks coming from the north of the Black Sea and becoming members of the Christian faith after a while, the Muslim Ottoman Turks began the settlement activities in the Bulgarian geography in the 14th century as a necessity of their beliefs from the south of the Black Sea. In the course of time, the Ottoman conquest covering the entire Bulgarian geography conducted in here acquiring a Turkish-Islamic identity. The Yuruk-Turkmen groups in Anatolia were settled in different parts of the Bulgarian geography and led to fundamental changes in the socio-cultural and ethnic structures of Bulgaria. The Ottoman rule in Bulgaria came to an end with the effect of the nationalist movement in the 19th century. The fate of the Muslim Turks, falling outside from the Ottoman administration, brought dramatic events. The Muslim Turks had to return to their ancestral lands as a result of oppression and persecution from the lands which they had come from centuries ago with the perception of a new homeland. An important academic study related to the Turkish presence during the period from the end of the 19th century to present-day in Bulgaria and the migration fact was presented the scientific community in titled "*Bulgaristan'da Türk Varlığı ve Nüfusu (Bulgar İstatistik Kurumunun Verilerine Göre 1880-2011)*" (*The Turkish Presence and Population in Bulgaria (According to the Data of the Bulgarian Statistic Institution 1880-2011)*) by Bulent Yildirim.

The book consists of 3 chapters as well as introduction and conclusion sections. In the introduction, the subject is approached from a general framework. The brief information about the chapters of the book and the research studies used in the chapters is given. Besides, in introduction the naming problem of immigrants with the expressions like Bulgarian Turks, Bulgarian immigrant and the concept confusion are mentioned.

In the first chapter, the chronological information about the Turks who crossed the Black Sea from two different routes is narrated through the available literature. It is emphasized how and under what conditions the Turks settled in the region. The last subtitle of this chapter provides information on the scope of the Ottoman rule in Bulgaria for nearly five centuries. The content of the Ottoman administration in the Bulgarian geography, the places where the Muslim Turks settled, and the

innovations brought by the Ottomans to the region are mentioned together with the details.

In the second chapter, Yildirim touches on the events that ended the Ottoman rule that had lasted for several centuries and the migration waves to Anatolia as a result of these events. The Bulgarian nationalism played a leading role in the displacement of the Turkish population. As a result of wars, the persecution of Muslim Turks is explained in detail in this chapter. The second part of this chapter describes how and under what circumstances the migrations took place in detail. The migrations beginning towards the end of the 19th century continued until the end of the 20th century occurred sometimes compulsory and sometimes the agreement of Bulgaria and Turkey periodically. The author explains that although the administration changed in Anatolia, the migration from the Bulgarian geography to Anatolia was continuous. In the last part of this chapter, the author evaluates the whole migration phenomenon with projection population calculation method.

In the last chapter, Yildirim gives the number of Turkish population according to the settlement places in the statistical data arranged by the governments that took the lead in the Bulgarian geography. The author determines the total number of Turks according to all censuses conducted by Bulgarians. The Turkish presence in the Bulgarian geography based on official statistical data is examined. The author interprets the Turkish population and mentions the desultoriness among the data. With the graphs and tables that he prepared, the author comments the change experienced by the Turkish population in Bulgaria.

In the conclusion, Yildirim makes a general consequence about the results of the immigration case in which the Muslim Turkish presence in the Bulgarian geography had to live and the place of the Turkish population in the general census conducted by the Bulgarian governments.

This scientific study, which Bülent Yildirim composed on the basis of the official state data prepared by the Bulgarians and enriched with the researches about that period, relates the story of the Muslim Turks who were forced to return to Anatolia a few centuries later with an academic point of view. The most important inference of this study is that despite the forced or voluntary migration, Bulgaria is the country with the highest number of Muslim Turkish population in terms of indigenous community in Europe. With half a million inhabitants, Muslim Turks are an essential part of this country. Based on biased and incomplete population data staged by the Bulgarian state, the author identifies the

population of Muslim Turks and expresses the Turkish presence in Bulgaria.

The study evaluates the painful memories of Turkish Muslim population in Bulgaria. The migration sequence, based on official numerical data, has given the study a unique character. On the other hand, this study sheds light on the removal of Turkish-Islamic culture from the Bulgarian geography. Despite all the bitter practices such as oppression, violence, exile and massacres, the Muslim Turkish reality in Bulgaria has existed since the 14th century.