



Mediterranean Diasporas. Settlements of Religious Minorities in Exile (16th - 18th centuries)

Call for papers

The monographic issue will deal with the settlements of religious minorities in their Mediterranean places of exile during the Early Modern Period. The voluntary exile and forced diaspora of hundreds of thousands of people belonging to different ethnic-religious groups (Moriscos, Sephardim, Marranos, Greeks, Albanians, to name but a few) as a result of civil and inquisitorial persecutions, as well as religious wars, characterize the landscape of this area and this era with unprecedented dimensions in comparison with its past. As Yosef Kaplan stated, the religious refugee is a global mass phenomenon of the Early Modern Age and one of its formative factors in European culture.

While it is true that many individuals from persecuted ethnic groups do not practice religion, or do it with a low profile, it is unavoidable that, due to their origin, they are pulled into the diasporic maelstrom of their own group. As Nicholas Terpstra has masterfully explained, this happens because the purification of society, an idea and practice typical of early modernity, implies the eradication of impure elements considered potentially hostile due to their ancestral diversity. Bound by the memory of persecution and attachment to their homeland, real or dreamed, these groups often maintain an exclusive endogamous circulation of information, and even goods, which allow for a certain socio-cultural integrity of the community. To survive and assert themselves, however, these communities were obliged to keep complex relations with both the authorities and the local populations.

If, on the one side, there is a government that expels or a majority society that forces people to leave, on the other side, there are rulers who organize hastily improvised hospitality and other who do plan it. Ironically, while diaspora implies dispersion, in colonization projects the authorities aim to hold or rebuild a certain group unity in order to shape and consolidate the settlement.

These large-scale group movements have given rise to new social geographies. It is indeed significant that in normal times government authorities often tolerate or encourage certain rhetoric against foreigners and religious minorities. However, when it is time for welcoming them for economic and political benefits, silence falls. Not all these settlements, whether individual or group, forced, spontaneous or organized, were consolidated over time, though many were.

Through this proposal, we pretend to draw two thematic issues on:

- a colonization project, spontaneous or planned, not necessarily successful, but a testing ground of social coexistence between denizens of different origins which offers opportunities for the visibility of migrants, despite religious divergences.
- the mechanisms of negotiation between refugees and local authorities that favor settlements in urban or rural settings.

The case studies that we are looking for will tie different religious ethnic groups (Christians, Jews, and Muslims, at least), geographic spaces (with the idea of a broad Mediterranean), and centuries (16th-18th).

Scholars who want to submit a proposal may send an e-mail with an abstract of 250 words max. to bruno.pomara@uv.es until next 2nd April 2023. The issue will be published on the on-line open access peer-reviewed journal *Diasporas. Circulations, migrations, history*, n. 43, June 2024-1 (<https://journals.openedition.org/diasporas/>). Article submissions are scheduled by 31st July 2023. They can be delivered in English or French. Please, note that non-native speakers' papers must be translated or edited by a professional mother tongue speaker at the author's expenses.