



Summary :

The need of new metal-producing areas, in combination with the increased population in the mountainous region of Chaldia, resulted in the frequent migrations of metal-workers. Migration increased due to the exhaustion of the mines' reserves and the continuation of deforestation resulting from systematic woodcutting for the production of the timber and coal needed in the mining production.

Date

16th-19th century

Geographical Location

Pontus, north-eastern Anatolia, mining centres all over Asia Minor

1. Migration to Developing Metallurgy Centres

The great development of the mines of Gümüşhane ([Argyroupoli](#)) at first and the entire region of [Chaldia](#) later, as well as the [privileges](#) granted to those involved in their operation, contributed to the increase in the population of the region. Similar developments were also noted in Şebinkarahisar, where part of the population probably came from Argyroupoli,¹ as well as in other metallurgy centres, such as Bilecik and Van.

2. Migration from Chaldia

2.1 Reasons

Particularly as regards Argyroupoli, the original tendency towards the concentration of population was reversed in the mid-17th century and the people moved outside Chaldia and the Pontus. In any case, this was also due to the increased population of a mountainous region like Chaldia, which, apart from the mines, lacked resources. As a result, part of the surplus population sought its fortune in other places. However, migration from Chaldia could also be connected with the developments in metallurgy at the time. The frequent movements of metal-workers in search of new areas rich in ores were very common and led to the foundation of new settlements in those areas.

The search was encouraged by the state, which would make profits generated by the exploitation of the new ores. Thus, the Ottoman official in charge of the mines and the chief mines superintendent in Argyroupoli were assigned with the search for new ores and their exploitation. The Church also took advantage of the expanded activities of the miners of Argyroupoli, since the donations of the superintendents (who were Christian) were often a significant source of income. The [metropolitan of Chaldia](#), however, reaped the greatest benefit, as the new settlements were under his jurisdiction, although they were outside the boundaries of his diocese. Among the reasons for this expansion must have been the personal ambitions of the superintendents and the pursuit of profit. Moreover, the improvement of the road system, which allowed direct connection between some regions and [Trebizond](#), should also be mentioned. Taking into account that from the late 17th century onwards the ores were usually sent by ship to Constantinople via Trebizond, the foundation of settlements on the Pontus coasts was only natural. Apart from the gradual exhaustion of ores, this movement must have also resulted from gradual deforestation, due to the need for timber and coal for the mines.

2.2 Migration

The above developments led to the foundation of settlements of miners in the regions of [Samsun](#) (Amisos), [Kerasounta](#) (Giresun), Urdu ([Kotyora](#)) and Tirebolu ([Tripolis](#)), with most typical example being the mine of Espiye. Those who settled in the above regions were also involved in agriculture, apart from metallurgy, since the soil was fertile. Immigrants from Chaldia founded settlements in Şebinkarahisar, [Erzurum](#), Bayburt, Harput and Diyarbakir thanks to the famous mines of Keban and Argana maden.



The gradual exhaustion of ore reserves in Chaldia towards the late 18th century, a problem that became worse because of inadequate technological knowledge, threatened the superiority of Argyroupoli as a centre of metallurgy. The ores produced by mines outside Chaldia and controlled by Argyroupoli helped the latter to maintain its position. This development increased the migration of Pontic miners and expanded it to remote regions. The mines of [Akdağmaden](#), Gümüş maden and Keskin, as well as those of [Buğamadén](#) and Bereketli maden in the region of Mount Taurus, were founded under those circumstances. Pontic miners migrated to the Bithynian mines of Bilecik and [Balya](#). Finally, the migratory movements that followed the Russo-Ottoman wars of [1829](#) and [1877-1878](#) stimulated the interest of the Pontic miners and affected the operation of mines.

3. Migration Patterns

3.1 Permanent Settlement

The search for new ores was among the responsibilities of the miners. Thus, they travelled in groups and, as a result, were often away for long periods. The migration of miners often resulted in their permanent settlement and the formation of a community near the new mine. That was the case in Buğamadén, which, according to tradition, was founded by the experienced Chatzi Lefteris Apostologlou, the head of a small group of miners seeking for new ores.² The miners also went to already existing settlements in order to work in mining. This type of migration sometimes concerned entire families.

The example of some inhabitants of Imera is indicative of the impact the decline of the mines had on the population. They originally worked in the mines of nearby Argyroupoli. After the suspension of works, the immigrants moved to inland cities –Erzurum, Erzincan, Arganamaden and [Malatya](#)– situated near mines, where they became farmers and builders. After 1878 they started moving to Russia.

3.2 Seasonal Migration

Apart from the permanent or long-term settlement, there was also seasonal movement in search of a job in mining. That was the case in the mines of the Pontus coasts as well as in Keban and Argana maden. Both practices were followed as a means of manning the particular mines. Seasonal migration concerned only men and was organized in groups. It lasted from spring until September or October. During the winter, the immigrants would stay in their birthplace, where they managed their affairs, among which was the wedding of those that were already engaged. A relevant song about a migrant miner sung by his family before the departure has been recorded.

However, there were movements in the opposite direction, too. Some miners of Chaldia, as well as other professionals living in mining areas, abandoned the region during the winter and left for the Pontus coasts accompanied by their families. The men were involved in agriculture and other sectors, while the women worked as servants or sometimes begged in the streets. They returned to their birthplace towards mid-spring and worked in mining for the rest of the year. In some cases, seasonal migration became permanent, since the immigrants leased land from local landowners. To this development contributed also the overpopulation of Chaldia, which allowed superintendents to replace the immigrants relatively easily, thus contributing to the gradual relaxation of the relevant prohibitions.

The closure of a mine sometimes brought about changes in professional activities. A typical example is the closure of Akdağmadén. The inhabitants of the settlement turned to agriculture, stock breeding and building. Every summer groups of builders would travel to [Ankara](#), Constantinople ([Istanbul](#)), [Ikonio](#) (Konya), [Adana](#), [Sevasteia](#) (Sivas) and [Smyrna](#).

1. Τριανταφυλλίδης, Π., *Οι Φυγάδες: Δράμα εις μέρη πέντε μετά μακρών προλεγόμενων περί Πόντου* (Athens 1870) p. 64; Σαμουηλίδης, Χ., «Λεξιλόγιο γλωσσικού ιδιώματος Νικόπολης Πόντου», *Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά* 17 (1980) p. 270.

2. Χατζηκυριακίδης, Κ., *Το Μετάλλειο του Ταύρου (Μπουγά Μαντέν) 1626-1924: Συμβολή στην ιστορία των ελληνικών οικισμών της Μ. Ασίας* (Thessaloniki 1999) pp. 40-42. According to another version of the settlement's foundation myth, Chatzi Lefteris acted without help, guided only by the Pontic miners who were already settled at Bereketli madén.



Bibliography :

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	Τριανταφυλλίδης Π. , <i>Οι Φυγάδες. Δράμα εις μέρη πέντε μετά μακρών προλεγομένων περί Πόντου</i> , Αθήνα 1870
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	Κανδηλάπτης Γ.Θ. , "Συμβολή εις την μελέτην περί της μητροπόλεως Χαλδίας", <i>Αρχείον Πόντου</i> , 14,15, 1949,1950, 42-63, 84-97
	Παπαδόπουλος Α. , "Ο Πόντος διά των αιώνων", <i>Αρχείον Πόντου</i> , 1, 1928, 7-46
	Σαμουηλίδης Χ. , "Λεξιλόγιο γλωσσικού ιδιώματος Νικόπολης Πόντου", <i>Μικρασιατικά Χρονικά</i> , 17, 1980, 270-303
	Φωστηροπούλου Σωτηρία , "Το χωρίον Ιμέρα", <i>Αρχείον Πόντου</i> , 11, 1941, 146-158
	Φωτιάδης Γ. , "Οι μεταλλωρύχοι του Ακ-Δαγ-Μαντέν", <i>Αρχείον Πόντου</i> , 38, 1983, 199-202
	Faroqhi S. , <i>Towns and townsmen of Ottoman Anatolia: Trade, crafts and food production in an urban setting, 1520-1650</i> , Cambridge 1984
	Οικονομίδης Δ.Η. , "Αργυρούπολις", <i>Αρχείον Πόντου</i> , 3, 1931, 145-194

Quotations

Migration patterns of the miners (1710):

«... οι Γκιουμισχανελίδες Χριστιανοί ματεντζίδες, οι επαρχιώται της αυτού αρχιεπισκοπής, πάλαι μεν και εξ αρχαίων χρόνων έχοντες επιτήδευμα οικειόν, του μετέρχεσθαι την μεταλλικήν τέχνην επορεύοντο όπου ήσαν τα μαδένια ομού μετά του βασιλικού εμίνη του Γκιουμουσχανέ εις αναζήτησιν του ασημοχώματος, απήρχετο δε εκείσε και η αυτού θεοφιλία (ο μητροπολίτης Χαλδίας) και επεσκεπτετο αυτούς ως αρχιερεύς και ποιμήν αυτών πνευματικός και προστάτης... αλλά και άλλοτε, όταν απήρχοντο οι αυτοί Γκιουμισχανελίδες και επαρχιώται αυτού Χριστιανοί μετά των οσπιτίων αυτών εις έτερα βασιλικά ματένια και διέτριβον ικανόν καιρόν δουλεύοντες και εργαζόμενοι την τέχνην αυτών...».

Κανδηλάπτης, Γ., «Συμβολή εις την μελέτην περί της μητροπόλεως Χαλδίας», *Αρχείον Πόντου* 14 (1949) p. 49.