

Palmyrenes Abroad

Diasporas from Rome to Mesopotamia and Beyond

Edited by

Michael Sommer, Stefano Magnani and Antonietta Castiello

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Preface

Palmyra was a unique place within the Roman Empire .The city, located in a Syrian oasis, preserved a culture and social organization of its own distinct character .It was closely intertwined with a larger region that extended beyond the boundaries of the Empire . Its livelihood was sustained through long-distance trade, not through agriculture or the production of commodities .And the people of Palmyra remained identifiable and distinguishable as Palmyrenes even when they left the oasis and established a life far from their homeland .Therefore, one can rightly speak of a Palmyrene diaspora, and it is the subject of investigation in this book .

A unique place in modern Europe is Villa Vigoni, a German-Italian conference center at the foot of the Alps on Lake Como .From October 13 to 16, 2020, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft funded conference “From Hadrian’s Wall to India: The Palmyrene Diaspora in Europe, Africa, and Asia” was held at the Villa .To be more precise, it was supposed to be held there, but then the COVID-19 pandemic struck .As a result, only some of the conference participants could enjoy the hospitality of the Villa .Most had to settle for a virtual diaspora in front of a screen .Nevertheless, the organization of the conference would not have been possible without the team at Villa Vigoni, led by Dr .Christiane Liermann .The organisers are extremely grateful for the Villa’s enormous contribution to the conference .They extend their thanks to all the participants of the conference who, despite the challenging circumstances, presented and discussed their work—and ultimately provided their contributions for this volume .

* * *

The volume is divided into four parts .Part I (“Diasporas”) explores the significance of diaspora throughout history .The world-historically formative diaspora is that of the Jews, but there are many other diaspora groups from which we can learn much when researching historical diaspora phenomena .Part II (“Trajectories”) is dedicated to the various – military, religious, social – dimensions of the Palmyrene diaspora .Part III (“Areas”) examines the large regions – from Rome through Dacia to Asia – where Palmyrenes found a new home far from their oasis .Part IV (“Perspectives”) ventures a look into the future study of the Palmyrene diaspora .

Palmyra was an 'idiosyncratic civilization' with idiosyncratic cults and gods. Ted Kaizer searches the traces of their idiosyncrasies: in Mesopotamian Dura-Europos, where Palmyrene religious life remained distinct from that of their environment and stands out clearly in the archaeological-epigraphic record, and in Dacian Sarmizegetusa, where a wealthy Palmyrene consecrated a temple to the native gods. But what does that mean? Despite the relative abundance of the evidence, Kaizer warns against jumping to premature conclusions. Too much eludes interpretation by modern scholarship.

The military dimension of the Palmyrene diaspora is appreciated by Stefano Magnani. He first explains why the Palmyrenes were so attractive for recruitment by the Roman army and then looks at their spread across the empire. Inscriptions and papyri provide information on the deployment of Palmyrene units. Magnani traces them from the Near East, through Dacia, to Britain and Numidia.

Who left Palmyra to settle in foreign lands on a long-term or permanent basis? Ann-Christine Sander and Peter von Danckelman show that quite a few of those who set out to leave their home had an elevated social standing in Palmyra, but were also better off than those who became their new neighbours. The diaspora attracted people whose goal it was to move upwards on the social ladder. But also those who already had reached the top were drawn towards the outside world where often high positions waited for them. Sander and von Danckelman show that for many Palmyrenes, the diaspora offered the possibility of accessing information and network contacts, and it was precisely such opportunities that were a strong incentive to maintain one's identity as a Palmyrene far from home.

All roads lead to Rome. It was the capital that provided more opportunities than any other place to those who were seeking them, which is why Rome is the ideal starting point for a geographical tour d'horizon of the Palmyrene diaspora. Tommaso Gnoli demonstrates, despite the scarcity of the evidence, how the Palmyrene ways of life along the Tiber gave visible expression to their identity as sons and daughters of the oasis city, without coming into conflict with the host society or isolating themselves unduly from it.

The diaspora of the Palmyrenes in Dacia was very different from the one in Rome. They came to the land on the Danube as soldiers, first to conquer the Roman province and then to defend it against the barbarians from the north. Ovidiu Țentea and Ioan Piso introduce us to several of the soldiers and veterans as well as their family members. They clearly stand out from the mass of provincials, if only because they are a lot more visible in the epigraphic record. These people remain distinguishable as Palmyrenes, while also harbouring ambitions in a local context. Quite a few of them achieve great prosperity and make a political career. Not unlike many Jews they became respected members of the communities where they settled, without however giving up their distinct Palmyrene identity.

Many Palmyrene soldiers were stationed in Egypt, possibly because their experience in desert warfare was of particular benefit to the Roman Empire in that arid environment. However, Palmyrene traders also operated from Egypt from the 2nd century AD onwards, as Matthew Cobb demonstrates. Egypt was attractive to them because the alternative

route to India originated from there, but also because the commercial diaspora could dock seamlessly with the military one. As far as we can see, the long-distance traders were members of a multicultural, prosperous community. However, as for other diaspora groups the caveat applies that many Palmyrenes probably escape our attention altogether because they were indistinguishably fused with their Egyptian environment.

The seminal case study on the Palmyrene diaspora that also coined the term was written some 25 years ago by Lucinda Dirven. Now, Dirven has undertaken another visit to the Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos, a venture well worth the while: nowhere else is there a comparably rich archaeological and epigraphic record of the daily life and religion of Palmyrenes living in foreign lands. At the same time, Palmyra was just around the corner, and the ties to the homeland remained close as long as the Parthians were the lords of Dura-Europos. Paradoxically, this changed when Rome expanded to the middle Euphrates and successively intensified its rule over western Mesopotamia: when the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* took quarters in Dura, the military character of the diaspora became more dominant superimposing itself on the Palmyrene traditions. At the same time, the cult of the Palmyrene gods, which until then had been practiced exclusively by Palmyrenes, opened itself for other groups. What it meant to be Palmyrene was now defined along visibly different lines in the Roman garrison town of Dura-Europos as opposed to the Parthian border city Dura had been before.

Further southeast, in Babylonia, there was also a notable Palmyrene diaspora from at least the 2nd century CE onwards. It owed its existence to long-distance trade, but Eivind Heldaas Seland also wonders what other activities were pursued by the Palmyrenes in Babylonia. Little is known about them. At best, historical parallels such as the diaspora of the Jews, which was not primarily commercial, give clues as to how the Palmyrenes lived far from their homeland. Seland sees the most important function of the diaspora in the Parthian Empire for the Palmyrene long-distance trade in the establishment of trust. Only by means of peaceful coexistence practiced over decades, the transaction costs in the transfer of goods could have been reduced to a tolerable level.

Contacts between the oasis city and South Arabia are well documented: three people can be identified as originating from Palmyra in the epigraphic evidence. But while a permanent settlement of their compatriots in many places in the Roman Empire and in Mesopotamia can be easily proven, the Palmyrene presence in the Arabia Felix seems to have had a rather transitory character. If Palmyrenes moved to the region, it was most likely for economic reasons. But did they come as merchants, seafarers, or envoys? Did they come to trade or to establish long-term contacts? In her thorough study of the inscriptions, Danila Piacentini warns against premature conclusions, but notes that the findings fit well with the growing commercial interest, attested otherwise, of the Palmyrenes in the Red Sea route from the 2nd century AD onward.

The certainly ephemeral presence of a Palmyrene on Soqatra may also belong to this context. It is attested by an inscription from the Hoq Cave, a limestone cave on the island located about 230 kilometers off the Horn of Africa. Maria Gorea reconstructs the cir-

cumstances that led Abgar and his apparently motley crew to Soqotra sometime in the 3rd century. Whether Abgar and his crewmates stopped on the island voluntarily to trade or replenish their supplies, or whether shipwreck forced them to land, cannot be determined today. However, the circumstances of the inscription's discovery show that a Palmyrene like Abgar integrated effortlessly into the multicultural community of sailors and merchants who travelled in the Indian Ocean.

That Palmyrenes reached the west coast of India by sea has been proven beyond doubt by a number of caravan inscriptions. Yet, little is known about the presence of Palmyrenes there. Archaeological evidence for the region does hardly give a clue. Surveys on the coast of India have recently uncovered large quantities of so-called Torpedo jars attesting to intensive contacts with southern Mesopotamia, but this says nothing about a permanent presence of traders from the west or Palmyra in the Indian ports. Tomas Larsen Høisæter warns against jumping to conclusions: the presence of a Palmyrene diaspora in India must remain hypothetical for now.

The case studies show that systematic research on this diaspora is only just beginning. Yet, as Antonietta Castiello shows in conclusion, the diaspora as an ideal type is ideally suited in order to conceptualize the mobility of the Palmyrenes, their permanent or at least long-term presence in a foreign land, and the tenacity with which they held on to the traditions of their homeland. A conceptual approach is essential for any comparative investigation of Palmyrenes staying abroad, be it permanently or for longer periods of time. Such an investigation, in turn, can be expected to provide answers to several of the questions that keep busy and sometimes divide Palmyrene scholarship to this day: how unique was the oasis city's contribution to ancient Mediterranean civilization? Why did the Palmyrenes stand out so strikingly from their surroundings? What role did compatriots scattered across the Roman world and as far as India play in the Palmyrenes' long-distance trade? And finally, why did the diaspora disappear from the scene so rapidly after Zenobia's defeat by Aurelian, seemingly without leaving a trace?

Oldenburg, September 2024

Michael Sommer

Part I

Diasporas

Michael Sommer

Out and about. Palmyrenes abroad

The last 20 years or so have seen a rapid increase in research activity in, around and on Palmyra .Not only has fieldwork conducted by Syrian, Austrian, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish and Swiss archaeologists shed new light on the cityscape of ancient Tadmur and its surrounding landscapes,¹ the history,² culture,³ art,⁴ economy,⁵ religion,⁶ and afterlife⁷ have also been the subject of numerous investigations .

1.Palmyrenes abroad

One aspect of Palmyrene history and culture that has not yet been researched systematically, is the presence of Palmyrenes abroad .The term ‘abroad’ needs clarification: in the first three centuries AD, Palmyra and its wider hinterland in the Syrian Desert, the Palmyrene, formed a unity .From an ecological, political, social, cultural point of view, the territory was distinct from the neighbouring areas, its inhabitants differed from the outside world in respect of language and ethnicity .From an inside and outside perspective,

-
- 1 Austrian, German and Swiss, for instance: al-As‘ad – Schmidt-Colinet 2005; Schmidt-Colinet 2003a; Schmidt-Colinet 2003a; Schmidt-Colinet 2003b; Schmidt-Colinet 2005; Schmidt-Colinet 2013; Schmidt-Colinet – al-As‘ad 2002; Schmidt-Colinet – al-As‘ad 2013; Italian: Grassi 2010; Grassi 2011; Grassi – Zenoni – Rossi 2012; Grassi 2017; Japanese: Saito 2016; Nakahashi 2016; Norwegian: Meyer 2016; Meyer 2013; Meyer – Seland – Anfinset 2016; Polish: Gawlikowski 2005; Gawlikowski 2014 .
 - 2 Andrade 2019; Delplace 2017; Hartmann 2001; Sartre – Sartre 2016; Sommer 2016c; Sommer 2018a; Sommer 2018b; Sommer 2020b; Yon 2002; Veyne 2017; Sommer 2014 .
 - 3 Andrade 2013; Delplace 2017; Smith 2013; Gnoli 2007 .
 - 4 Kropp – Raja 2016; Raja 2017; Raja 2015; Raja 2019a; Raja 2019b; de Jong 2017 .
 - 5 Hoffmann-Salz 2015; Hoffmann-Salz 2011; Schörle 2017; Seland 2016a; Seland 2015a; Seland 2014; Sommer 2016d .
 - 6 Kaizer 2002; Kaizer 2016; Kaizer 2019; Dirven 1999; Dirven 2011b; Dirven 2019; Raja 2019c .
 - 7 Genequand 2013; Genequand 2012; Intagliata 2016; Intagliata 2018; Intagliata 2019; Sartre-Fauriat 2019 .

both the land and the people were considered 'Palmyrene', which did not exclude that they were perceived as 'Roman', at least by some, at the same time .

Among the cities of the Roman Empire, Palmyra stands out as a *solitaire* .First, Palmyra is, with the one exception of the Edessa region in Osrhoene, the only place in the empire which preserved a language and writing system other than Greek or Latin .The Jews did, but their presence in Judea was largely discontinued by the Jewish revolts in the 1st and 2nd century AD .And apparently, some groups in North Africa used a Semitic idiom based on Punic in oral communication even in Late Antiquity, but this left hardly any mark in the epigraphic record .

Second, it has been convincingly argued that Palmyra was set apart from the thousand other cities scattered across the empire because of its social organisation .Rather than being a 'Roman' or a 'Greek city' with its peculiar set of institutions, Palmyra seems to have been dominated by tribal identities, and such identities seem to have continued to play a decisive role in Palmyrene politics until the very end in AD 272 .In addition, unless recent interpretations of the evidence are terribly off the mark, pastoral nomads of the Palmyrene had strong social ties with the urban dwellers .It is probably due to such 'polymorphic' social patterns that Palmyra was in a position to fend off, more or less single-handedly, the Persian king Shapur's attack on the eastern Roman provinces following the emperor Valerian's defeat in AD 260 .

Third, the society in the oasis of Tadmur was itself multicultural and probably, at least in the early phase of Palmyra's existence, polyethnic .To what extent precisely, we do not know, as we are also unaware as to where the various constituencies of Palmyra's population came from .Despite the findings in the so-called 'Hellenistic city' in the wadi area, Palmyra was probably a newcomer among the urban centres of Hellenistic and Roman Syria .There was a Bronze Age settlement at Tadmur, but in all likelihood it was divided from classical Palmyra by a long hiatus .A substantial part of the urban population may have originated in the Syrian Desert, where they had been pastoralists before moving permanently to the oasis .Others may have come from further afield, from Mesopotamia or other parts of Syria, possibly even from the Phoenician coast .The presence, at Palmyra, of Aramaic and Arabic, and of gods and religious practices from various parts of the Near East suggest such a multicultural beginning of Palmyra sometime in the 3rd or 2nd century BC, although the precise circumstances remain opaque .

Therefore, by saying that the presence of Palmyrenes 'abroad' has not been systematically studied, we mean groups and individuals coming from this unique environment moving elsewhere and staying there with some permanency .The areas for which we can establish a Palmyrene presence include many parts of the Roman world: the provinces on the Danube as well as North Africa, Rome as well as Britain and Egypt .They also include places which are outside and even far beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire: Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf and probably the west coast of India . 'Systematically' means that a comprehensive, comparative investigation of Palmyrenes living far from their home is still something of a desideratum .

2. Current state of research

While this is true, research in the Palmyrene presence in various parts of the ancient world has gained momentum in recent years.

Lucinda Dirven's *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos* (1999) was the initial spark for any research on Palmyrenes who took root far from the oasis city. In this monograph, Dirven has shown how important cults and religion are for understanding Palmyrene identity outside Palmyra. She has shown that "religious interaction" could take a wide variety of forms and did produce a likewise wide variety of results. The Palmyrene diaspora community in Dura-Europos consisted of traders and soldiers. Dirven was able to show that the religious practices of these two groups differed fundamentally. While merchants maintained close ties to their hometown and especially worshipped its civic deities, the religious practices of the Palmyrene soldiers garrisoned on the Euphrates were affected by the traditions of the Roman army. Dirven has also made it plausible that the tribal division of the Palmyrene cults in Dura-Europos lost substance and more unifying elements came to the fore. The Palmyrenes, having arrived in a foreign land, perceived less what separated them and more what united them all.⁸

The large number of inscriptions attesting to the presence of Palmyrene soldiers in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD have made Dacia the most fertile ground for research into the Palmyrene military diaspora. For all further research, the edition of the rich epigraphic material as well as onomastic and prosopographic studies by Romanian scholars in the 1970s and 1980s have provided the basis. Since then, our knowledge of the Syrian and Palmyrene auxilia stationed in the Danubian provinces has steadily improved.⁹ Because the cults of the Palmyrenes are the element that most clearly distinguishes them from their non-Palmyrene neighbours in the epigraphic and material evidence, research focused early on religious aspects of their presence in the Dacia region.¹⁰ A relatively recent work by Ovidiu Țentea is now devoted to the Palmyrenes in Dacia exploring military as well as religious aspects of their history.¹¹ A second area where auxiliary troops of Palmyrene origin were garrisoned in substantial numbers, was Numidia. For this North African province, unlike for Dacia, an investigation of the Palmyrenean military presence is still in its infancy.¹²

8 Dirven 1999. See also Dirven 1998, Dirven 2011b. For further research on the, civilian and military, presence of Palmyrenes at Dura-Europos: Gawlikowski 2007, James 2019, Kaizer 2017, Luther 2004, Ruffing 2016, Sommer 2004, Sommer 2006, Stuckenbruck 2016b.

9 For instance Petolescu 1979, Piso – Țentea 2014, Țentea 2011.

10 Bertolazzi 2015, Bianchi 1987b, Condurachi 1975, Gorea 2010, Magnani 2018, Nemeti 2005, Sanie 1989 (the list is by no means comprehensive).

11 Țentea 2012.

12 But see Le Bohec 1989, 120–140 (on the *numerus Palmyrenorum Sagittariorum*, with a prosopographical apparatus) and Yon 2002, 271–272.

Area studies on Dacia and Numidia have now been complemented by an empire-wide inventory of auxilia with a Near Eastern origin.¹³

The Palmyrene military presence in Dacia and Numidia provides for a relatively rich epigraphic record from the two provinces. There is considerably less evidence on Palmyrenes elsewhere. That there was a Palmyrene community in Rome has been known for some time and is well documented through inscriptions. In the imperial capital, Palmyrenes were mainly resident in *Trans Tiberim*. When a new railway station was built in Trastevere shortly after the mid-19th century, archaeological field work brought to light architectural fragments, inscriptions and artefacts that attest to cult activities by Palmyrenes at this site.¹⁴ Similar to their compatriots in Dacia, the Palmyrene diaspora community in Rome has also attracted the interest of researchers primarily through its cultic activities.¹⁵ The Palmyrenes' religious assimilation to the Roman environment is clearly visible, while at the same time they preserved the cultic traditions of their homeland. Corinne Bonnet recently highlighted the "creativity" with which the Palmyrenes living in Rome used the religious repertoire of their new and old homeland alike.¹⁶ In the meantime, however, other activities of the Roman diaspora have also received attention, especially their participation in the long-distance trade between Syria and the Mediterranean West.¹⁷

Evidence on the presence of Palmyrenes in other parts of the Roman Empire is even more sketchy. Long known is the funerary inscription for Regina from South Shields on the Tyne estuary, commissioned by a *Palmyrenus* named Barates.¹⁸ Undoubtedly, Palmyrene soldiers were also stationed in Egypt. Two inscriptions attest to the presence of Palmyrene soldiers in the *praesidium* of Didymoi along the road from Koptos to Berenike. Further epigraphic material points to a military presence in Koptos.¹⁹ Palmyrenes, however, were not only in Egypt as soldiers, but also to engage in long-distance trade across the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.²⁰

Yet, Palmyrenes did not only settle permanently in the territory of Roman provinces, but also beyond, sometimes far beyond the Roman frontiers. Research into this diaspora is

13 Schmidt Heidenreich 2016b.

14 Visconti 1860. Locating the precise find spot, however, has turned out to be difficult (Terpstra 2016, 39–40). For a discussion of the archaeological remains as documented by Visconti, see Coarelli 1982.

15 Belayche 2014; Ensoli 2003; Ensoli 2002; Equini Schneider 1987; Houston 2022; Manetta 2012; Fowlkes-Childs 2016.

16 Bonnet 2018, 249 ("l'Vrbs è allo stesso tempo un luogo di elezione dove si esprime con forza la ricerca di un compromesso non solo accettabile, ma 'creativo', carico di significato, capace di garantire distinzione e prestigio, legami e sicurezza").

17 Terpstra 2016.

18 Adams 1998, Birch 1878, Smith 1959.

19 Speidel 1984, who suggests that the Palmyrene's expertise in desert warfare was crucial for their being garrisoned at places such as Koptos and Berenike.

20 For a comprehensive investigation of Palmyrene mercantile activities in Egypt now Cobb 2020 and in this volume.

still in its infancy. The Palmyrene long-distance trade through Parthian Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf has met with great interest in research, and in this context, Palmyrenes who had settled permanently in Parthian cities have repeatedly come into focus.²¹ Palmyrenes also feature in an area study on the Parthian regnum of Charakene, where the towns of Forat and Spasinou Charax harboured substantial communities of traders from the oasis city.²² So far, the only evidence on this Palmyrene presence comes from inscriptions from Palmyra itself. There is no archaeological data from Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf region or India bearing witness to Palmyrenes living permanently (or indeed transiently) in those parts of the world.

3. The power of diaspora

The sheer visibility of Palmyrenes across the Roman world raises the questions as to why they were so conspicuous when abroad? Is it because they were more mobile than, say, the inhabitants of Athens or Trier? Was there a significantly higher number of Palmyrenes establishing themselves far from home than of Lugdunienses or Carthaginienses? Or is the visibility of Palmyrenes elsewhere simply owing to the fact that their city was so different from its peers, its inhabitants hence noticeable due to their striking otherness? And to the fact that they maintained this otherness over some time? In other words: is what looks like a peculiar Palmyrene wanderlust merely a matter of evidence – or are we grasping here a behavioural trait of the Syrian oasis dwellers that is itself of historical significance?

Does it really have to be a question of either-or? Could Palmyra's involvement in the intercontinental long-distance trade, the unique mixture of its population, an over-average inclination towards mobility and the Palmyrene's cultural distinctiveness all have contributed towards their visibility not only in the epigraphic record, but also the religious topography of so many places? This is at least a feasible hypothesis: if the Palmyrenes really differed so much from their contemporaries in the Roman Empire, but also to the east of the Euphrates, there could have been, by Roman standards, a stronger-than-average leaning towards migration, establishing nodes of Palmyrene presence in foreign places, preserving a Palmyrene identity among strangers and possibly towards maintaining contacts with Palmyra and other Palmyrenes. Potentially, this could even have led towards a pan-Palmyrene network including many such nodes and stretching from Britain to Mesopotamia, and possibly beyond.

The technical term for such a network of individuals maintaining a distinct sense of belonging and strong ties to their homeland is diaspora. "Diaspora is a Greek term for a nation or part of a nation separated from its own state or territory and dispersed among

21 Celentano 2016b; Gawlikowski 2016; Gawlikowski 1996; Gregoratti 2019; Schörle; Seland 2016a; Seland 2015a; Seland 2014; Sommer 2016d; Zuchowska 2013a.

22 Schuol 2000, 380–388.

other nations but preserving its national culture” reads a classical definition of diaspora put forward by Simon Dubnow in a likewise classical entry to the 1937 edition of the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*.²³ While there are other diasporic ethnicities such as the Armenians, Dubnow writes, the term is most commonly used for the Jews scattered across the world since the time of Classical Antiquity, an equivalent of the Hebrew words *galuth* (exile) and *golah* (exiled).²⁴ In order to preserve what Dubnow calls its “national culture”, a diasporic community has to reach out to the past and to its original homeland.

“We simultaneously tell the stories of our specialness and remind ourselves how risky those stories are. We sustain the wisdom by embodying and reiterating the question, ‘naḥnu ma,’ we are—what is?”²⁵ This is how Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin define the “paradoxical power of diaspora”. Diaspora means the ability to connect with the past by means of a biological or cultural genealogy. At the same time, a diasporic existence is always and intrinsically precarious. In the Boyarin brothers’ words: “On the one hand, everything that defines us is compounded of all the questions of our ancestors. On the other hand, everything is permanently at risk. Thus, contingency and genealogy are the two central components of diasporic consciousness.”²⁶

The quote puts in a nutshell the problem diasporic communities face wherever they live: how can group cohesion be maintained if the environment is alien and potentially hostile? Furthermore: can the price for maintaining group cohesion ultimately be too high, for instance in times of persecution or ethnic cleansing, and can assimilation provide a viable alternative?

4 .Maintaining and managing diaspora

As pointed out by Boyarin and Boyarin, the key to preserving the cohesion of a diaspora is genealogy. Keeping the physical genetic heritage uncompromised is therefore the strategy of choice for diasporic minorities to remain intact, distinguishable from the majority and in touch with their diasporic peers elsewhere. Genetic purity is, very basically, a question of identity, if not survival, for all such groups.²⁷

23 Dubnow 1937, 126.

24 Ibid. 126–27.

25 Boyarin – Boyarin 2002, 4.

26 Ibid.

27 On Judaism MacDonald 2002, 34–49. On purity as a basic principle of diaspora Hall 2017, 163: “One reading of diaspora, after all, is precisely that linear story of the scattering of ‘a chosen people’ from their natal, originary homeland; the preservation of their ethnos – their strong sense of cultural difference – in the face of all adversity; how they held fast to their sacred texts; and how tradition was passed down through the lines of kinship and descent. What matters most to this reading are practices that produce a strong marking of ‘inside’ and ‘outside,’ such as marriage within the group and the policing of boundaries to maintain the ‘purity’ of tradition [...]”

As a consequence, issues of ‘purity’ are pivotal for maintaining diasporic identities . Purity is usually expressed in, and reinforced through, religious commandments .For that reason, it is more difficult for non-religious diasporas to maintain group identity than for those based on a shared faith – more difficult, but not impossible, as non-religious diasporas have developed means to compensate for this disadvantage.²⁸ Often, diasporas which are primarily non-religious, such as the Irish in North America or the Turkish in present-day Europe, acquire a religious dimension sooner or later.²⁹ While the dichotomy of purity vs .impurity is engrained in many religions, from Judaism to Islam and Hinduism, it becomes vital once a religious community finds itself in a diaspora situation .The areas where purity is to be maintained extend to sexuality, food, dress and the practice of religious rites .

The first traces of the *kashruth*, the set of Jewish dietary laws, go back to the biblical books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus.³⁰ The core of Deuteronomy had been composed in the late 7th to early 6th centuries BC, Leviticus mainly in the 5th to 3rd centuries BC – and hence in periods, when Juda and Israel were no longer independent kingdoms but parts of vast territorial empires where the Hebrews had to engage with people of a different background on a regular basis .Leviticus which deals to great extent with purity, cleanliness, illness and the holy, also reflects the recent experience of the Babylonian exile and hence the first stage of Jewish diaspora .The book contains a detailed list of permitted and non-permitted animals, concluding in the remark³¹:

“These are the regulations concerning animals, birds, every living thing that moves about in the water and every creature that moves along the ground .You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten”.

In Deuteronomy, the worship of the old Canaanite gods and a set of ritual practices tied to them is prohibited .Jewish holidays such as Passover and Shavuot are introduced and the ‘mixing of kinds’ is prohibited .Barring the yoking of a donkey and an ox or wearing of clothes from mixed fabric can be read as a metaphor for purity, which alone is agreeable to god.³²

The provisions on diet were later refined and elaborated by the Mishnah .The outcome of the first and second Jewish revolts had destroyed the Second Temple and ultimately wiped out Judaism in Judea turning it into a fully diasporic religion .Some of the biblical

28 Fundamental on religion and purity Douglas 1970, Durkheim – Schmidts 1998 .Burschel – Marx 2011,5: “Wer über Reinheit spricht, spricht deshalb immer auch über Identitäten und Alteritäten”.

29 On the Turkish diaspora in Europe and the rise of a ‘neo-orthodoxy’ in the second generation Schiffauer 2004, 364–65 .On the importance of Catholicism for the Irish diaspora in America McCaffrey 1997, esp .97 .

30 On Jewish dietary laws Kraemer 2007, Rosenblum 2010, 35–102 .

31 Lev .11: 46–47 .Cfr .Nihan 2013 .

32 Deut .22:9–11.

provisions needed clarification and explanation where the Jews now lived, some, as the ban on cooking “a young goat in its mother’s milk,”³³ were substantiated with new rules: not to eat ‘milky’ and ‘meaty’ food together. Gradually, additional provisions were introduced: the *shehitah* became compulsory for the slaughtering of animals;³⁴ it had to be performed by a qualified butcher licensed by the Jewish authorities in a particular manner. The concept of *kasher* (*kšr*, Yiddish *kosher*, meaning ‘fit’) was introduced to create an umbrella term for everything that was in accordance with the law of the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud.³⁵ In Islam, the analogous concept *halāl* (permitted) extends to everything that is considered to be in line with Islamic law, including food. It is complemented by two other categories: *fard* (religious duty) and *harām* (forbidden).³⁶

In the Jewish diaspora, the dietary provisions are meaningful as tools to draw a symbolic line between the Jewish in-group and the various non-Jewish, but also dissenting non-rabbinic Jewish out-groups: “Tabuschränken”, tabooistic barriers, as Max Weber labels them.³⁷ Not only do they demonstrate, to the Jews, their special relationship with god in everyday life; they also physically segregate Jews from non-Jews. While there is only scarce evidence for commensality with gentiles being banned by religious law altogether,³⁸ dietary provisions make it more difficult to keep company with non-Jews. Eating and feasting with people to whom Jewish prohibitions are irrelevant, is an incalculable risk for any Jew. Abstaining from joint meals would, in turn, also reduce the risk of genetic

33 Exod. 23:9; 34:26; Deut. 14:21.

34 Deut. 12:21 states that sheep and cattle must be slaughtered “as I have instructed you”. On the *shehitah*: Talmud, Hullin 1–2 (“1. All may slaughter, and their slaughtering is valid, except a deaf-mute, an imbecile or a minor, lest they mess up [the animal] through their slaughtering. And if any of these slaughtered while others were standing over them, their slaughtering is valid. That which is slaughtered by a non-Jew is a *nevelah* and defiles by carrying. If one slaughtered at night, and also a blind man that slaughtered, the slaughtering is valid. One who slaughtered on Shabbat or Yom Kippur, even though he is liable for his own life, the slaughtering is valid. 2. If one slaughtered with [the smooth edge of] a hand sickle, with a flint or with a reed, the slaughtering is valid. All may slaughter; at all times one may slaughter; and with any implement one may slaughter, except a scythe, a saw, teeth or a fingernail, since these strangle. One who slaughtered with a scythe, moving it forward only: Bet Shammai declare it invalid, But Bet Hillel declare it valid. If the teeth of the scythe were filed away it is regarded as an ordinary knife.”); Maimonides (Mishneh Torah), Kedushah, Shehitah; Shulchan Aruch, Jore De’an 1–28.

35 Talmud, Moed, Sukkah 1.

36 *Halāl*: Qur’ān, Surah 5,3; 5,5; *fard*: Qur’ān, Surah 24,1; 33,38; *harām*: Qur’ān, Surah 2,144; 16,116; 17,1; Constitution of Medina § 49.

37 Weber 1980, 745, Weber 1921b, 360: “Rituelle Abschießung” (of the Jews).

38 The issue of commensality has been raised repeatedly by Weber, who interprets the ‘Day of Antioch’ where Paul criticises Peter for breaking the table-fellowship with the gentiles as described in Gal. 2:11–21 as the “hour of the conception of the West’s bourgeoisie” (“Konzeptionsstunde des ‘Bürgertums’ des Occidents”), Weber 1921a, 39–40. Cfr. Meier 2016, 5, Nippel 1993, 17–18, Sommer 2015a, 27–31, Sommer 2017a, 99. On Judaism and commensality now Rosenblum 2010, esp. 43: “Even though table-fellowship between Jews and non-Jews is clearly emerging as an issue, these most likely prescriptive sources suggest that this was not an insurmountable barrier for all Jews in the Hasmonean period. This is not to say, however, that some Jews did not consider commensality with other, nonsectarian Jews – let alone with non-Jews – to be completely verboten.”

amalgamation: Jewish daughters are ‘safe’ as long as their parents stayed away from the gentiles.³⁹ The same pattern is echoed by dietary restrictions for the Muslim *umma* and for the castes in Hinduism. Where diaspora is not constituted by means of religious difference, dietary provisions do not mark a symbolic boundary between the in- and the out-group. Yet, non-religious diasporas such as the Asian diaspora in North America and Europe tend to adhere to traditional styles of dining and cooking imported from the homeland. Often an infrastructure of trades and specialized shops evolves in ‘ethnoburbs’ in order to satisfy the demand for particular foodstuff.⁴⁰

Dietary provisions are complemented by rules for dress, sexuality and the creation of inalterable physical marks, namely circumcision. The pointed Jewish hat that marked Jews in the European Middle Ages, probably had its origin in a costume worn by Jewish men and in the requirement that Jewish males should keep their heads covered at all times. It then evolved into a stigma imposed on Jews by the non-Jewish authorities. The line between self-adopted and stigmatising attributes is often foggy. In early modern Eastern Europe, the Hasidim, in an attempt to live their mystic form of Judaism, adopted their own traditions of costume, visually marking male and female Hasidim till the present day.⁴¹ Non-religious diaspora groups often proudly wear their traditional costumes: Germans in Brazil, for instance, or immigrants from the Balkans in Italy.⁴² The display of traditional costume is indispensable when national festivals such as the German-American Steuben Parade, St Patrick’s Day or the Sicilian Festa della Madonna della Cava held each year in Boston are celebrated. Festivals are an important instrument of remembering the common origin; they function as celebrations and rhythmical visualisations of diaspora.⁴³

Hover, the most efficient tool to keep the diasporic bloodline pure is a ban on any form of exogamous intermarriage. In Judaism, marriage, *kiddushin*, is possible only between a Jewish man and a Jewish woman. Sexual intercourse, between a Jewish man and a non-Jewish woman does not result in legitimate offspring. Not even the *pikuach nefesh* which permits the violation of the Jewish law under exceptional and potentially life-threatening circumstances does make concessions in this respect.⁴⁴ While the prohibition of inter-faith marriage is not exclusive to diasporic religions, its implementation is usually stricter when a religious group operates from a minority position. In Islam, the marriage of a Muslim man to a non-Muslim woman (but not vice versa) is usually permitted, as long as the woman belongs to a “religion of the book” and the children grow up in the Muslim

39 The assumption that dietary restrictions are a means to control undesired social relations is supported by Rosenblum 2010, esp. 102: “Yet even though Jews and Gentiles are not completely separated, commensal interactions become increasingly more difficult, as the meal becomes increasingly laden with social practices that construct Jewishness”.

40 On the Chinese shop and restaurant infrastructure in American ethnoburbs Kwong – Mišćević 2013, 824–25.

41 On Jewish head-gear and the relationship between voluntary and stigmatising dress-codes Jütte 2016, 140–157.

42 Germans in Brazil: Barbian 2014, 457–463; immigrants in Italy: Macioti – Pugliese 1991, 180–81.

43 Irish festivals: Manning 2008; Madonna della Cava: Ferraiuolo 2009, 137–39.

44 Mishnah, Nashim, Kiddushin 68a–b.

faith.⁴⁵ Similarly, the Roman Catholic Church allows interfaith marriage if the offspring is raised according to the Catholic faith.⁴⁶ In both cases, the regulation of marriage serves at extending the durability of diaspora groups. In Islam, the effectiveness of the regulation is further increased through the rigid dress code for women (*hijāb*).⁴⁷ The harshest sanctions against exogamous intermarriage are practiced by the Yezidis who are a minority in their Turkish, Iraqi and Syrian homeland and have created a strong diaspora in Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. For a Yezidi, marrying a non-Yezidi means immediate expulsion from the community and the family.⁴⁸ Non-religious diasporas also favour endogamous over exogamous marriage, preferably within the own ethnic group or at least within the same faith. While in religious diasporas keeping intermarriage under control is a matter for the whole congregation, it tends to be devolved to individual families where religion is not the main criteria constituting diaspora.⁴⁹

The final decisive factor for the management and maintenance of diasporic communities is leadership. From the outset, diasporic Judaism required a leadership very different from the priestly elite in the Judean homeland. From Spain to Central Asia, Jews gathered in circles called *ἐκκλησίαι* or *συναγώγαι* in Greek. The corresponding Hebrew term is *qahal*, meaning ‘gathering’, but also ‘congregation’.⁵⁰ Diasporic organisation in an age before fast means of long-distance communication required a high degree of self-reliance of the local Jewish communities. For this reason, Jewish communities acted as autonomous bodies, with complete autonomy in religious, fiscal, cultural, intellectual and judicial matters – both in relation to each other and in relation to local society and its ‘state’. In Eastern Europe, the *qahalim* were used by sovereigns as brokers and mediators between the ‘state’ and the Jewish communities. While the religious and cultural autonomy of the Jewish communities as well as the safety and property of its members were, more or less, guaranteed by the state, the *qahalim* had to collect taxes.⁵¹ In the Muslim diaspora in Europe, religious – and often also cultural – affairs are managed by private associations run by ‘com-

45 Qur’ān, Surah 5:5 (marriage between a Muslim man and a woman “from among those who were given the scripture”; 2:221 (marriage between Muslim men and polytheist women). On the legal practice in Muslim countries: The Law Library of Congress, Global Legal Research Center, Prohibition of interfaith marriage, September 2015, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/marriage/prohibition-of-interfaith-marriage.pdf>, viewed 27 September 2020.

46 CIC 4,998–116.

47 On *hijāb* as a means to preserve group identity in a diasporic setting: Nilan 2017, 15–16.

48 To complicate things further, the Yezidis are split in two entirely endogamous religious classes, the laymen and the clerics Ackermann 2004, 158–59. On the ‘diasporisation’ of the Yezidis Ackermann 2010, 25–29.

49 Proportions of endogamous marriages among first-generation immigrants to France: Maghreb 74.29%; Africa 69.16%; Southern Europe 65.84%; Northern Europe 44.25%; Eastern Europe 53.88%, Turkey 85.35%; Asia 78.59%. Among second-generation immigrants: Maghreb 53.40%; Africa 39.35%; Southern Europe 23.42%; Northern Europe 6.16%; Eastern Europe 16.16%, Turkey 51.76%. Cfr. Algan – Landais – Senik 2012, 59, quoting the French Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2002–2007.

50 Gruen 2002, 105–123.

51 On the *qahal* in Eastern Europe: Bartal 2005, 9, 50–51.

munity leaders'. However, under the auspices of globalization the parameters under which diasporic communities operate have vastly changed: especially the religious associations of Muslim communities in Europe are often effectively controlled by foreign stakeholders such as the Turkish Ministry of Religion or the Muslim Brotherhood. But like with the early modern *qahalim* in Eastern Europe, modern governments often use 'community leaders' of immigrant diasporas in order to exert influence on their constituencies.⁵²

	religious diaspora		diaspora with a religious component	non-religious diaspora
	Jewish	Yezidis	Turkish	Irish
dietary provisions	<i>kasher</i>	hardly any	(if observant) <i>halāl</i> , (otherwise) traditional cuisine	traditional cuisine and beverages
costume	'Jewish hat', side locks, Shtreimel, Hassidic dress and hairstyle	traditional costume, violet headscarf for women	(if observant) <i>hijāb</i>	(rarely) traditional costume
festivals	Jewish religious festivals	Yezidi Fasting, various religious festivals	(if observant) Ramadan, various Islamic festivals, (otherwise) Turkish Victory Day and other national holidays	Lá Fhéile Pádraig (St Patrick's Day)
marriage restrictions	endogamous	strictly endogamous, otherwise expulsion from the community	(if observant) men may marry non-Muslim women, but not vice versa, Children to be educated in the Muslim faith, (otherwise) preferably within the Turkish community or with people from the homeland	preferably endogamous, preferably within the Catholic faith
community organisation	strictly autonomous: historically <i>qahal</i> ; today Jewish congregations	cultural and religious associations, <i>Zentralrat der Jesiden in Deutschland</i>	cultural and religious associations, partly controlled by the Turkish government	cultural associations, Congregation of Christian Brothers, predominantly Irish Catholic congregations in the US, Australia etc.

52 E.g. Islamkonferenz in Germany and Austria; Common Purpose Pakistani Diaspora Leader Programme in the United Kingdom.

5. Diasporic environments: empires, nation-stations, melting pots

As the brief survey in chapter 4 has shown, diasporas, no matter whether they are defined primarily by religion or not, have surprisingly similar strategies when it comes to maintaining their integrity: restrictions on marriage, food and costume as well as festivals – all unmistakable markers of identity. However, the conditions under which diasporic communities operate, differ depending on their socio-political environment. An important parameter influencing the way a diaspora develops is the way a society deals with difference and diversity. Different polities have utterly different approaches of accommodating variety and hence constitute different ‘diasporic environments’. Ideal-typically, three types of diasporic environments can be distinguished:

1. *Empires*, of which the usually smaller pre- and early modern European monarchies constitute a sub-type, are by definition polyethnic, multilingual, multicultural and religiously variegated.⁵³ Empires can live with diversity in many respects. An empire’s power is spread unequally across space, resulting in a hierarchic centre-periphery-pattern and vast frontier zones at its outer arena. Empires usually practice ‘structural tolerance’, meaning that they possess neither the intention nor the potential to completely assimilate their peripheries which therefore retain autonomy, while the centre demands the periphery’s undivided loyalty.⁵⁴ In empires, selected ethnicities often serve specific, indispensable purposes as ‘functional ethnicities’: the Phoenicians, for instance, as sailors and traders in the Neo-Assyrian and Persian empires; Greeks as teachers and intellectuals in the Roman world; Germanic tribesmen as soldiers in the later Roman und Gurkhas in the British Empire; Armenians as merchants and money changers in the Ottoman Empire; the Dutch as water engineers in Prussia. Empires, with their rather inhomogeneous populations, do not usually develop a strong sense of belonging together. Rather, groups that have been absorbed by the empire, retain their collective identities: ethnicities, tribes, cities, former states, kingdoms and principalities. Some empires harbour empire-wide dominant religions: Orthodoxy in Russia, Islam in the Ottoman Empire, the various Christian denominations in the early modern territorial states within the Holy Empire after the *confessio Augustana*.
2. *Nation-states* are largely a creation of the French Revolution. Inspired by the idea of “la nation une et indivisible”, the nation-state lacks the empire’s capacity to integrate diversity without assimilating it.⁵⁵ In contrast to empires, nation-states have clearly marked boundaries and exercise their power equally across their territories. Nation-states tend towards centralism, unless they have a federalist component de-

53 Geiss 1994, Geiss 1999, Münkler 2005, 11–3.

54 Osterhammel 2009, 607–616. See also Münkler 2005, 16–22.

55 Geiss 2007, 347–349.

volving prerogatives to its component states .Nations are, in the words of Benedict Anderson, imagined communities,⁵⁶ and in order to function as such, they require a strong notion of collective identity .For this reason, the states which are formed by nations have to assimilate cultural, linguistic and religious difference almost at any rate .Multiculturalism and the nation-state are in principle mutually exclusive .Despite the nation-states' assimilating power, some diasporic groups retain the ability to survive as distinguishable sub-communities .We shall call this ability to withstand assimilation pressure 'diasporic resilience'.

3. *Melting-pots* we shall call the prototypical societies of immigration, such as present-day Canada, Australia, the United States and Israel as well as 'Cosmopolises' like London which are situated in nation-states, but home to large immigrant communities .Despite their claim to 'melt' people with a diverse cultural baggage into one body of citizens, melting-pots are similar to empires inasmuch as they exert a relatively low level of pressure of assimilation .Like in empires, the absence of such pressure leads to a relative high level of cultural, social and religious difference within melting-pot societies .Although some immigrant minorities, like the Hispanics in the United States, prefer to stay with their ancestral language for some time, possibly several generations, the linguistic pressure of assimilation is significant .Unlike in empires, the dominant language is not merely a lingua franca, but the common language of everyday life .Failure to learn this language in most cases results in social marginalization .Melting-pots also develop powerful symbolic tools in order to create a sense of belonging that bridges the gaps between minority identities and 'melts' them into one single umbrella identity .In the US, such melting tools include the nation's transcendental mission of 'manifest destiny', the constitutional convention of 'pursuit of happiness', the stereotypical American dream of the from rags to riches success story and the self-description as 'God's own country' .In Israel, the melting tool is the Zionist narrative of Eretz Israel as the Promised Land to which the dispersed tribes of Israel return and the homestead protecting Jews from persecution elsewhere .We shall call the symbolic toolbox of narratives and projected images a 'melting mythology'.

It is evident that the three polity types provide significantly different conditions for diasporic communities .The parameters to look at are the following:

- a . low vs .high assimilation pressure
- b . low vs .high diasporic resilience
- c . weak vs .strong melting mythology

56 Anderson 1996, 6–7 .

a. Assimilation pressure

In nation-states assimilation pressure is usually high, while in melting-pots it is medium to low and in empires low. In Europe, the Jewish diaspora was immediately affected by the rise of the nation-state in the 18th and 19th centuries. Not accidentally, the emancipation of Jews started in Great Britain and Ireland, where the enfranchisement of British Jews had been debated from the early 18th century onwards. In 1753, a *Naturalizing Bill* was passed by both houses of Parliament, but was later withdrawn due to fierce public criticism. In the United States, Jews became citizens in 1790 and in France in the course of the French revolution in 1791. Over the 19th century, most European states followed, the last ones being Russia (1917), Finland (1918) and Romania (1923).⁵⁷

While emancipation granted the Jews civil rights and some degree of security, it also increased the pressure of assimilation. Jewish congregations lost their autonomy, and some governments, as in Napoleonic France, introduced coercive measures in order to prevent Jews from segregating themselves from the majority society (1808).⁵⁸ Furthermore, the civil emancipation did not put an end to the social marginalization of Jews. The road to social recognition was long and stony. Whoever wanted to walk it had to assimilate, either through conversion by means of baptism or by adopting some sort of Judaism 'light' that was compatible with the standards and customs of the majority society.

However, the history of Jewish assimilation started long before that. It goes back to medieval Spain where, fuelled by riots in 1391, Jews were given the choice between conversion, emigration or death. In Spain where the Reconquista was at its climax, assimilation pressure was high due to the absolute identification of crown, country and Christianity during the fight against the Moorish Muslims. Spain, with its strive for religious homogeneity, echoed many features of the nation-state of later days.⁵⁹

In Western Europe, where in the course of the 19th century the nation-state became the exclusive model of political organization, assimilation through conversion or religious reformism became the preferred way of most Jews. At first, assimilation was rewarded with equal ranking. With time, however, nationalism was increasingly concerned with ancestry and purity of the 'blood'; as a consequence, traditional, religion-based anti-Judaism from which conversion offered an escape route, was translated into a racial anti-Semitism that soon became genocidal.

The opposite model is represented by the Russian empire where Jews continued to live in the segregated, marginalized world of the Shtetl. Despite being drafted into the Russian army from 1827, when Nikolay I introduced the canton system,⁶⁰ Jews did neither acquire civil rights nor an equal footing with the majority population. There was neither pressure

57 Geiss 1988, 180–93, Mendes-Flohr – Reinharz 1995, 112–4, Sorkin 2019, 141–234.

58 Sorkin 2019, 135.

59 Geiss 1988, 114–121.

60 Sorkin 2019, 191.

nor incentive for the Jews to go native .Not only in terms of religion, but also culturally and linguistically did the Jews remain a distinct, segregated group that with the *qahal* retained its autonomous social organisation .There was a brief period, under Alexander II (1855–1881),when the government curbed some of the restrictions and a small Jewish elite headed for assimilation especially in the cultural sector.⁶¹ Yet, as in Western Europe, in Russian-ruled Eastern Europe nationalism made the situation of the Jewish diaspora precarious .When, in 1881,Alexander II was murdered by anarchists and an attempt to assassinate his successor, Tsar Alexander III, failed, a series of pogroms hit the empire's Jewish population, which also became the target of discriminative legislation.⁶² Overall, emancipation and assimilation were never realistic options for Jews living under Russian rule .Therefore, they left the empire by the thousands .Along with economic factors, the crisis following the attempted murder triggered the First Aliya, the first large-scale re-migration movement of primarily Eastern European Jews to Palestine.⁶³

Different, yet in some ways similar, was the history of the Jewish diaspora in the Ottoman Empire .Here, the millet system, in a matter of speaking, institutionalised diaspora .Organised in millets were the main non-Islamic 'religions of the book' (Armenian Christians, Orthodox Christians and Jews): they were autonomous communities in religious, economic, cultural and legal affairs, with their own leadership, taxes, laws and jurisdiction .In turn, they were subject to a discriminatory apartheid, had to pay higher taxes, were banned from wearing arms and from riding horses .The apartheid system created a certain and sometimes effective assimilation pressure: conversion to Islam with integration into the *umma* was an easy escape route from the millets' marginal existence.⁶⁴

Jewish diaspora in present-day melting-pots could be labelled a 'secondary diaspora'. Today, the United States and Israel are home to the largest and at the same time most diverse Jewish populations in the world .The Jewish presence in Israel is not diasporic, of course, yet surprisingly similar to the North American diaspora .To both countries, Jews came from their homes in the diaspora, meaning that they brought with them the whole baggage of diverse diasporic experiences and interpretations of their being Jewish .There is hardly anything aside from his Jewishness, a liberal, reformed Jew of German ancestry has in common with a Hassidic Jew whose forefathers have come from Poland, let alone with a Sephardic Jew from North Africa or an Aethiopian Jew .In the United States, all these groups co-exist with each other rather as a cluster of diasporas than as a diaspora in the proper sense .As in a melting-pot, assimilation pressure is low to medium, the groups decide for themselves to what degree and in what respects they want to merge with the surrounding society .Haredi Jews, for instance, will choose to stay visibly apart, settle in

61 Ibid , 197–99 .

62 Ibid , 202–04 .

63 Geiss 1988, 235–36 .

64 Lewis 2014, 125–26.

the own neighbourhoods and get in touch with the outside world as little as possible, while liberal Jews will blend with the social mainstream to a degree that they are no longer perceptible as different. Nonetheless, the melting-pot imposes certain rules, behavioural and cognitive patterns on them which are binding for everybody: laws in the first place, but also customs, values and aesthetic perceptions.

In the globalised present, the assimilation pressure exercised by many nation-states is in steady decline which, in turn, increases the resilience of diasporas especially in Western Europe. The principle of “la nation une et indivisible” clashes with two recent developments which are questioning the nation-state’s very existence: (1) the exponential reduction of transportation and communication costs owing to technological deflation, making available cheap flights, foreign television channels and zero-cost telecommunication virtually everywhere; and (2) the advancement of a multiculturalist, cosmopolitan ideology replacing nationalism especially, but not exclusively, among the economic and intellectual elites in the West. Both developments put assimilation pressure itself under pressure, to an extent that, in 2008, the then Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan could address thousands of his German-Turkish supporters with the words, largely unchallenged: “assimilation is a crime against humanity”.⁶⁵

b. Diasporic resilience

As a side-effect of globalisation, former nation-states, from a diaspora perspective, are being transformed into melting-pots at a dizzying speed. Most nation-states in Western Europe have become the targets of large-scale immigration since the 1960s, resulting in increased levels of diversity everywhere. The process is fastest in the United Kingdom and Germany; it is somewhat slower in France where republicanism and secularism work as antidotes to a certain extent and slower still in Northern Europe where communitarianism is strong and political visions such as the Swedish ‘Folkhemmet’ were effective for a long time; it is weakest in Eastern Europe which so far has not been affected by mass immigration. In Germany now roughly 25 per cent of the population have a so-called ‘background of migration’, meaning that at least one parent was born as a foreign citizen. Hypothetically, it is to be expected that the transition from nation-state to melting-pot increases the resilience of diasporic identities.

Given the urgency of the topic, surprisingly little sociological fieldwork in diasporic identities in Western Europe has been produced so far. One survey, carried out in 2014 by researchers of the University of Mannheim, has researched the self-identification of children and teenagers between 9 and 17, all with a ‘background of migration’. They divided the panel of almost 1700 youngsters, most of them of Turkish (40 %), Polish (10%)

65 <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/erdogan-rede-in-koeln-im-wortlaut-assimilation-ist-ein-verbrechen-gegen-die-menschlichkeit-1.293718>, viewed 27 September 2020.

and Russian (7%) descent, in three groups: first, second and third generation youngsters . Not surprisingly, the self-identification exclusively with the nation of origin was highest among first generation migrants (30 %). This proportion decreased in second- (16%) and third-generation (5%) respondents .An additional 23%, 21% and 14 % respectively identified themselves primarily with the country of origin .Reciprocally, the self-identification with Germany rises with each generation: 3%, 8 % and 26 % identify themselves exclusively with Germany; 6 %, 5% and 21% do this primarily .Significant proportions of the interviewees declared that identify themselves equally with both nations: 37%, 50 % and 34 % ⁶⁶

The survey gives evidence to a surprising resilience of diasporic identities .Even among second and third generation respondents, only minorities see themselves as entirely or primarily German, while significant proportions of 29 % and 19 % identify themselves primarily with the country of origin .Historically, the last influx of ethnic non-Germans to Germany happened in the 19th century during the Industrial Revolution and brought Poles to the Ruhr District by the hundreds of thousands, most of them after 1880 .Yet by 1920, the 'Ruhrpolen', safe for their names, had virtually become invisible: many due to remigration into their homeland, now a nation-state, but a substantial number owing to root-and-branch assimilation .In hardly more than one generation, Poles had mutated into Germans .Both case studies illustrate how far, in the course of a century, the German nation-state has gone down the path of becoming a melting-pot ⁶⁷

In the case of the Ruhrpolen, a classical non-religious diaspora, diasporic resilience was low, clearly much lower than in the case of the German Jews, a religious diaspora which, however, by the time the Great War broke out, also had become largely absorbed into the German nation-state .From this, we may conclude that diasporic resilience is only to a certain extent a matter of how the diaspora group itself is composed and that, overall, the majority society's attitude towards diasporas is the more important parameter .

In melting-pots, diasporas are widely left to themselves .Ethnic enclaves across the United States such as the countless Little Italies, Chinatowns, Irish, Hispanic or Jewish neighbourhoods all bear witness to the immigrant diasporas' efforts to stick together and preserve a strong sense of community .Contrary to the melting mythology, the degree of adaptation and assimilation lies largely with the immigrants themselves .They alone decide on whether and to what extent they desire to 'melt' with American society .However, at least some of the individual behaviour is group-specific: certain diasporas have a stronger diasporic resilience in melting-pots than others .This can be influenced by political history: as a result of the First World War, the structural integrity of the German diaspora in the United States was shaken; the Second World War dealt the final blow to the formerly strong German-American sub-identity .Most other diasporas, however, continue to share a sense of community .49 % of third-generation Hispanics continue to identify themselves primarily as 'Hispanics' or with their grandparents' country of origin; about the same pro-

66 Leszczensky – Gräbs Santiago 2014, 21.

67 According to Kleßmann 1978, 88–89, schools were the prime instrument of Germanisation .

portion (48%) see themselves as Americans in the first instance.⁶⁸ If the United States are a melting-pot, this concerns language in the first place. The 'language shift' from monolingualism in one language to English monolingualism usually took no more than two generations, with bilingualism as an intermediate step in the second generation, while third-generation immigrants almost never spoke their ancestral languages. Data suggests that the 'language shift' is somewhat slowing down with the recent immigration of Latin Americans whose Spanish appears to be more hard-wearing than the languages of previous immigrant groups: 44% third generation immigrants identifying as 'Hispanic' still speak the mother tongue of their grandparents.⁶⁹

There is of course no sociological fieldwork in diasporic resilience for pre-modern empires. Yet evidence is fairly conclusive that few empires had an interest in assimilating diasporic minorities. If there were incentives for assimilation, as in the Ottoman millet system, they were inefficient and did not prompt large-scale conversion of Orthodox, Armenians or Jews to Islam. The same is true for Russia where, most of the time, minorities were purposefully kept in isolation from each other and from the majority population. Where efforts of Russification were made, success was usually limited and short-lived.⁷⁰ Empires tend to put to use minorities as 'functional ethnicities', which is why rather than assimilating them they have an interest in cultivating those peoples' specific capabilities. Furthermore, most empires follow a divide-and-rule-policy which, from the rulers' point of view, makes uniformity appear rather undesirable. Therefore, diasporic resilience is usually strong in empires. The one notable exception from the rule is China which has attempted to Sinacise minorities and immigrant communities more or less at all times, including pastoralists settling in marginal areas. The Chinese rulers' policy of assimilation often used brute force, was successful in most cases and continues, more or less unchanged, till the present day, as Tibet and the Tarim Basin show. As a consequence, the level of diasporic resilience in China has been remarkably low at all times.⁷¹

68 On shifting identities in the First World War: Luebke 1974. On German-American identity in general: Kazal 2004.

69 Ortman 2008.

70 The most interesting case-studies for Russification (*obrusenie*) being Poland and Lithuania where, from the 1840s onwards, Catholic churches were demolished or converted into Orthodox churches, the Cyrillic script was imposed for spelling Polish and the Polish and Lithuanian languages were banished from use in schools and the public sphere. This was successfully countered by clandestine networks providing education, including higher education (the Flying University in Poland), and smuggling books into Lithuania (the Knygnešiai). Cfr. Weeks 1996, 92–109, Weeks 2001, Weeks 2004.

71 On the Sinacisation of nomadic conquerors in Han China: Lewis 2017, 699–700, 741–47.