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The Migration Movements of the Macedonian Bulgarians to the Third Bulgarian State (1878–1912)

(Abstract)

The migration of Bulgarians from Macedonia to the territory of free Bulgaria represents a long and multifaceted process with significant political, demographic and sociocultural implications for the new Bulgarian history. This study provides an overview of the foundational stage of this process spanning from the Liberation in 1878 to The Balkan Wars of 1912–1913. Its internal periodization is determined by the various phases of the Macedonian question, characterized by uprisings, wars and diplomatic endeavors.

Throughout this period, migration from Macedonia extended beyond refugees and their settlement, encompassing temporary stays and repeated permanent movements back and forth or economic and other reasons. In many respects and instances, these movements were regulated, restricted and even effectively reversed through the efforts of the Bulgarian state, which prioritized preventing mass emigration from Macedonia in order to avoid the de-Bulgarianization of the region. However, this dynamic shifted dramatically with the Balkan Wars and the First World War, after which the migration of Macedonian Bulgarians became unstoppable, predominantly refugee-driven (or at least forced) and irreversible. In

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perspective, a very significant part of the modern Bulgarian nation turned out to be Macedonian-Bulgarian in its geographical origin, genealogy and collective memory.

Keywords: migration movements, Macedonian Bulgarians, refugees, settlers, Macedonia, Macedonian Question, Third Bulgarian State, Balkan Wars.