

## Polonezköy (Adampol) in Turkish Academic Studies

### Polonezköy (Adampol) w tureckiej literaturze naukowej

**Summary:** Adampol/Polonezköy is one of the oldest Polish diaspora settlements in Turkey. In Adampol, which nowadays is still an important centre of Polish minority, people of different cultures, religions and status live together. This village was founded in the surroundings of Istanbul in 1842 by Michal Czaykowski, who went to Turkey at Adam Czartoryski's bidding and settled in the village along with November insurgents, as well as Polish prisoners of war redeemed from the Turkish and Circassian captivity. Today, the village attracts people's attention, especially as a popular tourist destination and as a hunting place. The community of Adampol is known as one of the oldest groups of immigrants in Turkey and has been subject to research by the representatives of Turkish Humanities and Social Sciences. The authors dealt with the problems of history, culture, tourism and landscape of Adampol. The article is an attempt to summarize the most important facts and conclusions reached by the researchers of the Polish enclave in Turkey.

**Key words:** Adampol, Polonezköy, migration, minority, cultural identity, Polish immigrants, Turkey

**Streszczenie:** Adampol/Polonezköy jest jedną z najstarszych polskich wspólnot w Turcji. W Adampolu, który stanowi dziś ważny ośrodek polskiej mniejszości, mieszkają obok siebie ludzie różnych kultur i religii. Wieś została założona w okolicach Sztambułu w 1842 r. przez Michała Czaykowskiego, który udał się do Turcji na polecenie księcia Adama Czartoryskiego i osadził tam powstańców listopadowych, a także wykupionych z niewoli tureckiej i czerkieskiej polskich jeńców. Osada przyciąga dzisiaj uwagę przede wszystkim ze względów turystycznych i jako popularne miejsce polowań. Wspólnota Adampola jest znana jako jedna z najstarszych wspólnot imigranckich w Turcji i była badana przez tureckich uczonych – przedstawicieli nauk humanistycznych i społecznych. Autorzy poszczególnych publikacji poruszali zagadnienia historyczne, kulturowe, a także z zakresu badań turystyki i studiów krajobrazowych. Artykuł stanowi próbę podsumowania najważniejszych faktów i wniosków wynikających z badań polskiej enklawy w Turcji.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Adampol, Polonezköy, migracje, mniejszość, tożsamość kulturowa, polscy imigranci, Turcja

### Introduction

Turkey's immigration history starts from the Ottoman Empire and during that period, immigration movements were under state control. The first wave of immigration in the Ottoman period comes from Crimea. After the Crimean Turks immigration, which had begun with the persecution by the Russian authorities, with the flow of time the Ottoman Empire experienced immigration from different regions: the migrants were of Greek, Armenian and Bulgarian origin, as well as from the Caucasus. One of the groups that came to Turkey at the end of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century consisted of the immigrants from Poland. Good

relationships between the Ottoman Empire and Poland for many years had been an important factor stimulating immigration from the former Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania, which in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was divided by the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austrian Empire (later the Austro-Hungarian Empire). Moreover, the Ottoman Empire was heavily involved in immigration movements. Allowing immigration of a non-Muslim group such as Poles is evidence of good relations as migration movements were supported by prohibitions and relocations in the Ottoman Empire.

On the one hand, the relations of the immigrant group from Poland with the authorities continued in a good way. The Ottoman Empire, which did not accept foreign pressures and especially Russia's requests for the return of the Polish immigrants, made it possible for the newcomers to live a comfortable and free life. On the other hand, one has to mention the problems of Poles as the citizens of the host country. Especially, the tax-giving issues, which began with the taxation of the Adampol lands by the authorities, and became one of the biggest bones of contention between the Polish immigrants and the Ottoman Empire. Later, the naturalization of immigrants was also a problematic issue, and so were their struggles to avoid taxes by acquiring foreign citizenship with the support of other states embassies. However, the Ottoman Empire suspended the taxpaying issue of Polish immigrants over time. And after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the land tax issue was no longer a problem. Shortly after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the Polish immigrants received Turkish citizenship.

Nowadays, Polish immigrants still cultivate their traditions and customs without departing too much from their cultural identity. The number of the inhabitants of the village and its everyday life have changed with the cultural changes in the city of Istanbul, the agglomeration to which Adampol belongs. This situation has caused the structure of the village to become multicultural today. This article is an attempt to answer the questions how Adampol (Polonezköy) has been characterized by the Turkish scholars, what issues they pay attention to, and how they perceive the Polish enclave near Istanbul. On the one hand, there are not many publications in the field of social sciences in Turkey about Adampol. On the other one, there is large interest in the village in the fields of forestry, media and tourism.

### **An outline of the history of the research on Adampol/Polonezköy in Turkish academic studies**

According to the conducted query, the first publication at least partially devoted to Adampol was Toros' (1983) monographic work *Geçmişte Türkiye-Polonya İlişkileri*, in which the Polish enclave was presented in the context of the Polish-Turkish relationships. The number of publications about Adampol significantly increased at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The articles referring to the Polish community started in 1999 with Erol's article about geomorphology of the village. Although Erol informs that there were many papers in the Turkish language devoted to Polonezköy's geology, as reported in Ketin's (1983) monograph, these publications referred only to geological issues, i.e. the non-social aspects of the territory of Adampol. In 2005 Erdönmez published a paper dealing with the issues of urbanisation and natural resources *İstanbul'daki Korunan Alanlarda Rekreatiyonel Kullanımların Görsel Etkileri; Polonezköy Tabiat Parkı Örneği*. However, the author refers to the history of the village, too. Later, Erdönmez & Yurdakul Erol published an article

called *Orman Toplum İlişkileri Açısından Tarihsel Bir İnceleme: Polonezköy Örneği* in 2009. The article contains information about the history of Adampol and its current situation. In 2011, Kıvrak wrote a master thesis about Polonezköy's landscape *Beykoz – Polonezköy'ün Kültürel Peyzaj Analizi ve Değerlendirmeleri*. At the same time, Doldur published an article *One of the Recreational Areas near Istanbul: Polonezköy*, which was the first paper about Adampol written by a Turkish scholar in English. It dealt with the importance of Polonezköy as recreational and hunting areas. Apart from the publications, there were also conference presentations addressing various aspects of the functioning of the Polish enclave near Istanbul, e.g. Paçacı Elitok's talk *An Oral Historical Study of Socio-Cultural Change and Place-Identity in Polonezkoy* delivered at the Artefacts Culture and Identity conference. However, the presentation has not been published by the author.

Topaktaş, in her article (2015), referred to the facts related to the period of the Ottoman Empire. This was the first article that focused only on the village of Adampol and its culture, history and social life. The given paper was an important contribution to establishing the presence of Adampol in Turkish academic studies. Topaktaş has also authored publications about Polish-Turkish relationship from past to present, in which she discusses various aspects of these ties. The other work of that time was Bodziany and Köstekçi's (2015) paper *Two Worlds-Two Cultures. Poles and Turks in Exile*. The authors examine the relationship between Poles and Turks from many points of view. Additionally, it contains some sections devoted to Adampol, the Erasmus programme, and Turks in Poland. One year later, another master thesis was published by Duydu in 2016 *Polonezköy (Adampol) Yerleşiklerinin Sosyo-Kültürel Açidan İncelenmesi*. The work presents the unique features of Polonezköy from a socio-cultural perspective and imparts a lot of new information about the village. These publications prove that the significance of Adampol in social sciences has increased recently. There are also examples of Polish-Turkish co-written works on Adampol, for instance Burak & Marszałek-Kawa's (2016) paper *Polonezköy*. In 2017 two papers were published in English by Demirsar Arlı & Kaya *An Evaluation of the Architecture, Culture and History of the Polonezköy/Adampol settlement in Istanbul* and Karakelle *Examination on Zoos as an Architectural Typology and Historical Origins of Zoos with Example of Polonezköy Country Club*. Although Karakelle's paper has not been published in any other form than a self-uploaded Academia.edu item, it presents a lot of new and original information about the zoological gardens and wildlife parks in Polonezköy. In 2018 Bollukcu & Zevit published a paper *Polonezköy'de kırsal Turizme İlişkin Değerlendirmeler*, in which they deal with various aspects of Polonezköy's contemporary lifestyle but mainly focus on tourism. The most recent publications on the Polish cultural island in Turkey were Zevit's *Sürdürülebilir Turizm – Sürdürülebilir Peyzaj İlişkisi Araştırılması: İstanbul – Polonezköy Örneği*, dealing with the tourism and landscape issues, and Özer & Ağan's *Polonya Mutfak Kültürü Yansıması ve Polonezköy Örneği*, containing the description of culinary habits and Polish cuisine in Polonezköy.

According to the thematic scope of the papers mentioned above, one can state that Polonezköy arises interest mainly in its natural resources, landscape and tourist potential, which is a result of its location. The Polish village lies in the Asian part of Istanbul. This location is known for the natural beauty, cultural assets and these reasons attract the interest of the scholars specialising in the landscape studies to this area. At the same time, Adampol's

location is well known as a popular destination for single-day trips from the capital city, which has made tourism studies another popular research topic referring to the village of our interest. However, one may notice that recently scholars have been paying more attention to the Polish enclave, and the number of publications have increased. Especially Topaktaş's (2015) and Duydu's (2016) contributions to the field are worthy of being mentioned. It has been observed that the number of papers addressing the cultural and historical issues have increased both in popular media and in academic journals. In this study, I will focus on the latter, presenting their thematic profile and the way of presenting the life of the Polish enclave near Istanbul.

### **Polish migration in Turkey from the historical point of view**

The territory of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania was shared between Austria, Russia and Prussia in 1772–1795. Then, with the failure of the November Uprising against Russia in 1830–1831, immigration began from Poland. These migrations were directed to many regions from Europe to the Ottoman Empire. The reform movements in 1839 (Tanzimat Fermanı) and the London Agreement restricted Russia's activities within the Ottoman region. After these changes, the way was opened for Polish immigrants to settle in the Ottoman Empire (Erdönmez, Yurdakul Erol 2009: 37).

In 1840 Prince Adam Czartoryski, the leader of the Polish emigrant conservatist-liberal political faction Hotel Lambert, and his collaborators came to an idea of the renewal of the Slavic world with the help of the Ottoman Empire. Eventually, Michał Czaykowski (known also as Mehmet Sadık Paşa), as the president of the General Agency of the Polish Eastern Mission, after the agreement signed in 1842, on behalf of the prince Czartoryski founded a village in the area where the Lazarist Catholic Mission had been located (Adamska 2004).

The village was named Adampol in honour of Adam Czartoryski in a religious ceremony in 1842, and it was recorded as the first Polish village established outside Poland. The population in the village was 18 when it was first established; however, this number decreased to 3 with the deterioration of living conditions after 15 years. Although, due to the dynamic ebb and flow of the population of the village, it was constantly inhabited by at least few persons. With the suppression of the freedom uprisings in Poland, the village of Adampol became more important. Thus, around 100 immigrants settled in Adampol between 1849–1851 (Erdönmez, Yurdakul Erol 2009: 37).

After the Crimean War (Kırım Savaşı), approximately 90 people, including soldiers under the Michał Czaykowski's command, settled in the village. In addition, a new Polish village – Derbina – was established in the Ottoman Empire with the population of 150 people. However, the members of this community settled in Adampol in 1859 (Adamska 2004). In 1863 another uprising was organised against Russia, and right after it a young and educated group came to Adampol.

After the migration, the Polonezköy residents lived together in an organized manner of social life. At this point, it has been observed that the solidarity feeling was very high in Adampol. In particular, two concerts were held at the Tepebaşı theatre in 1893 and the income was given to the sick and poor of the Polish immigrants (Topaktaş 2015: 307–308).

Later, with the Ottoman-Russian War, more Polish immigrants came to Adampol. In 1883 Prince Władysław Czartoryski bought Adampol (Adamska 2004). After this sale the village became the property of Poles and they lived freely without being pressured or persecuted by the Ottoman authorities for their cultures and religion.

After the Ottoman-Russian War, the Ottoman administration offered members of the Polish minority the possibility to become Muslims, which could protect them from the pressure of the Russian Empire. The Turkish authorities aimed to avoid the obligation to give Polish immigrants back to the Russians. For that purpose, Michał Czaykowski, one of the founders of Adampol, took the name of Mehmet Sadık Paşa and became a Muslim. Later, the Ottoman Empire gave the Adampol residents Ottoman citizenship in 1885 (Topaktaş 2015: 300-301).

In 1904, due to the contribution of the Adampol residents to the country, the Ottoman Empire considered giving the lands to all the inhabitants of the village. However, this process was left to the heirs because the land was considered private property of the Czartoryski family (Topaktaş 2015: 301).

The village headman Ludwik Biskupski, who did not want to pay taxes (one of them called *tekalif-i emiriyye* – the tax collected from the Ottoman citizens), encouraged the villagers to acquire French citizenship, which resulted in sanctions against him. Later, the tax issue was discussed by the Ottoman administration and in the end the decision was cancelled. Since the inhabitants of the village received Ottoman citizenship, a census was carried out. However, the people of Adampol opposed it due to their desire to avoid tax obligations. Although the tax demanded due to the valuable land of Adampol caused the Adampol immigrants to request other citizenships, the Ottoman Empire did not allow this. They held various demonstrations, especially with the support of the Austrian embassy. For this reason, the Ottoman authorities increased the number of gendarmes and built a police station in Adampol. It was also recorded that the Russian ambassadors came to the village in 1906 and tried to persuade its inhabitants to acquire Russian citizenship. The arrivals and visits of Russian ambassadors to Adampol, which had for a long time been popular as a hunting area, were accompanied by the gendarme (Topaktaş 2015: 303).

Living conditions in the village were very difficult in the first period after the village had been founded. Its inhabitants were suffering of epidemics and had to face also other threats such as theft and fire. Due to the lack of arable land, Polish migrants cleared forests. Farming became their another source of income for a comfortable and peaceful life. The immigrants who managed to create a living space decided to establish a library with Polish books (Duydu 2016).

However, there are also churches and schools built in the village with the permission of the Ottoman Empire and Turkish government. The first Church was built between 1845-1846 and it was named as Saint Anna's. And prince Czartoryski and Archbishop donated to the church and schools, but after the strong earthquake hit Istanbul, the Church of Saint Anna collapsed. It is seen in the official documents that the villagers tried to build a new church and a new school. In 1913, the new church got the construction license (Arli, Kaya 2017: 184–187).

In addition to immigrants, there were also Polish prisoners in the village (saved from Russian soldiers), who sometimes caused unrest. Additionally, there were disagreements with Lazarist priests about the management of the colony (Duydu 2016).

The lands belonging to the village and tax issues were among the issues that the village people were dealing with for a long time. Within the colony, immigration to America was propagated, but those who were involved in those actions were expelled from Adampol. Michał Czaykowski, who worked for the economic development of the village, tried to popularize the Polish settlement as a hunting area. His efforts resulted in the economic development of the village. Since internal conflicts, such as political fights between the first Polish immigrants and those who settled in the village after the Crimean war, hampered the positive processes, a parliament according to the Turkish legal system was considered. Although the problem of enfranchisement of the residents of Adampol could not be solved due to the property rights of Czartoryski family, it was an important factor ensuring the continuity of the cultural identity of the village. It is observed that the family structure in the village was dominated by an extended family in the early days. Although the family structure and roles within the family varied, there was a patriarchal order with clearly marked domination of the male head of the family. However, even in this pattern, family relationships were open and the leadership of the father of the family was not oppressive. Consequently, it has been observed that the duty of men in families was the livelihood of the household, and the duty of women and children was housework. Despite this, solidarity and tolerance prevailed in the families in Adampol (Duydu 2016: 34–40).

In the early 1900s, it was claimed that the maximum population reached in the village was 220 and Adampol started to assume the same rights and responsibilities as other Turkish villages in 1908. When it came to 1918, some of the immigrants returned to Poland, which regained its independence after the end of the World War One. Most of the Poles living in Turkey at that time were the residents of Adampol (Erdönmez, Yurdakul Erol 2009: 38).

With the rebirth of Poland in 1918, the people who wanted to leave for their ancestors' fatherland and did not want to pay taxes were given permission for emigration, and those who wanted to acquire Polish citizenship were given the right to regain Ottoman citizenship in the future. On September 18th, 1921, local authorities considered changing the name of the village to Ümraniye, but the final decision was to maintain the first name: Adampol. Therefore, in 1923, together with the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the inhabitants of Adampol asked to be granted the citizenship of the Republic of Turkey (Topaktaş 2015: 303).

With the establishment of the Republic, the name Adampol changed to Polonezköy. After that, in 1938, Turkish citizenship was granted to everyone living in the village as an immigrant. In the 1960s Turkey experienced an economic crisis and people started to migrate to other countries. For that reason, some members of the Polish minority also emigrated from Polonezköy to Austria and Germany. The land left by the immigrants started to be bought by the Turks, and even some Turkish farms were established in the village (Adamska 2004).

Despite the historical processes in Polonezköy, the traditions and religious rituals have not changed and are still cultivated in the community. One of the most important factors supporting the maintenance of Polishness is the liberty of the functioning of religious and traditional environment of the village without restrictions from the Turkish government.

### **Polonezköy in three historical periods**

According to Erdönmez & Yurdakul Erol (2009), the history of Polonezköy can be divided into three historical phases. The first period covered the time from the foundation of the village, with its beginnings as an agricultural community, until the early 1900s. Since farming was problematic, its role in the rural economy was reduced to an additional activity. The other sources of income, such as hunting and financial aid from Poland, became more important in Adampol's livelihood. In this period, immigrants had limited relations with the external environment and other cultures (Erdönmez, Yurdakul Erol 2009: 38–39).

In the second period, from the 1900s to the 1960s, the village became a popular hunting resort and tourist attraction, among others because of its “European character”, and the community started to open up partially. In the 1920s, the village started to provide hotel services, which also contributed to its economic development. The external marketing of the products produced in the village was another important factor in establishing relations with the outside of the village. The products from “the Polish village” started to be sold in Istanbul by horse carriages and attracted great attention of consumers (Erdönmez, Yurdakul Erol 2009: 39).

The last period began in the 1960s. Since, major changes occurred in the village along with the opening of the road between Adampol and Beykoz. Also, the hotel services developed, e.g. in connection with the construction of new buildings. In 1968, when the peasants had the right to own land and property (Prince Władysław Czartoryski's heirs resigned from their rights to the land), the residents of the village were allowed to buy and sell land. Tourism became a sufficient source of income for livelihood and eventually outflow migration processes stopped. With the development of tourism in the village, the labour demand was met by migrants from Tokat. Therefore, today, some of the residents of the village have originated from Tokat. However, the newcomers did not cause serious changes in the village and did not affect its traditions. The village administration is still in the hands of the Poles (Erdönmez, Yurdakul Erol 2009: 40).

### **A brief evaluation of the current cultural characteristics of the village**

Finally, 2013 can be considered as the beginning of the subsequent, 4<sup>th</sup> period, in the history of Adampol, due to the change in the village status, because then Polonezköy was incorporated into the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality. Although contacts with the city have increased in recent years due to the ease of transport, the settlement remains outside the city due to lifestyle-related and environmental factors. According to demographic statistics, in 2017 Polonezköy was inhabited by 377 people (90 of whom are of Polish origin). The dynamics of the population data shows that the population of Polonezköy tends to decrease. However, one may observe that the number of people living in Polonezköy increases in the summer months. Nowadays, agriculture and tourism can be considered the most important sources of income for Polonezköy (Bollukcu, Zevit 2018: 456).

It seems that the cultural landscape of the village is being maintained. It has been observed that young people in the village have recently migrated to other cities for such

reasons as work, education or marriage. This has caused changes in the demographic structure of the village. In the first period of the history of Adampol, after its foundation, the inhabitants of the village residents were linked by family and neighbourhood ties. Nowadays, many of the descendants of the first settlers live in other countries or cities. Although Polish cuisine used to dominate the culinary habits of the members of the Polish community, nowadays the residents of Adampol mostly eat Turkish dishes and its members even take part in Muslim religious festivals. The founders of the village originated from various regions of Poland and spoke different dialects. Thanks to the library and the lessons of Polish organized by the Catholic parish, the minority managed to maintain their traditional language. Religious holidays are of great importance to the inhabitants of the village, especially Christmas and Easter. One has to underline that the local Church played an important role in the process of culture preservation. When we look at weddings and entertainments, weddings mostly take place in the man's house and the wedding is also organised in the church. Some beliefs, for example that the ceremonies are held in months such as March, June, August, September, October and December so as to bring luck, were applied in the first immigrant group. Some of these traditions are still practised today. Also, festivals with music and dance have been held frequently in the village since the past (Duydu 2016: 45–56).

Turkish influences are observed in many aspects of Adampol's life. One of the examples is the cuisine and culinary habits of the Polish enclave. Although Poles still cook and eat traditional dishes prepared according to the recipes inherited from their ancestors, they have also adopted many elements from other cultures, not only from the Turkish surroundings, but also from Germans, Jews, Russians, Lithuanians, and Hungarians. The Adampol cuisine is based on vegetables and meat dishes. The vegetables are used as puree (potatoes), boiled and fried. Traditional Polish sausages (kielbasa) are also popular. The inhabitants of Polonezköy maintain many traditional Polish soups, whose names are being used both in their original as well as slightly modified forms (e.g. adopted to the Turkish pronunciation or orthography): Zurek, Borç, Uszka ve Barszcz, as well as other dishes Gulazs, Golabki and Bigos (meat dishes), Pieczone cwiartki z kurczaka (poultry dish), smazony pstrag (fish), salatka selerowa z kurczakiem, koperkowa surowka obiadowa, surowka obiadowa as salads, pierogi (pastries), kuchinie Turecka pilowz, makaron z pesto i suszonymi pomidorami (pasta) and, lastly, makowiec as a dessert. The villagers still prepare traditional dishes from Polish cuisine and teach their children to do so, too. Some informants say that they are planting vegetables and breed animals used for their dishes, because they couldn't find the right ingredients in Turkey easily. However, Adampol's culinary habits have been affected by Turkish cuisine, too, and the descendants of Polish migrants got accustomed to cooking Turkish dishes made with olive oils like sarma and şakşuka. They prepare Turkish dishes as often as the Polish ones, and, for instance, during Church holidays they generally cook and eat Turkish dishes (Özer, Ağan 2019: 1340–1346).

Another example of the evolution of Adampol's culture comprises architectural traditions. In the first period of the history of the village, the settlers were building wooden houses with thatched roofs, resembling those found in the regions of their origin. The houses had small windows like in Polish villages. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, traditional Turkish houses were built, too. These buildings were examples of hunting lodges, and in 1937



Mustafa Kemal Atatürk stayed in one of the them during his visit in the village (Arli, Kaya 2017: 188–189).

## Conclusion

Historically, the Polish diaspora in Turkey appears to be about two centuries old. The newcomers from Hungary and Poland are considered the first refugees to the territory of the Ottoman Empire. Since the Ottoman Empire controlled the immigration movements to a great extent, it was an unusual decision to accept different religious groups such as Poles and Hungarians. Polish immigrants were given the freedom to use their language, as well as to cultivate their religion and traditions. Although the granting of these rights did not entail any specific actions in favour of immigrants from the Turkish administration, the Catholic church in Adampol was built with the help and permission of the Ottoman authorities. Later, a group of Polish migrants became Ottoman citizens and Muslims. However, despite this, the cultural structure and religious character of the village have not changed in a significant way.

Turkey has experienced many changes over the years until today since the foundation of Adampol. In particular, one has to enumerate the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and the country's management, social and cultural life changes experienced within immigrant groups living in the country as it has affected the whole country. Therefore, in relation to the present day, we can also talk about changes within the Polish community, which, however, for a long time has retained its original ethno-cultural character, and now differs from the Turkish environment. These processes are observed as a change of cultural identity in scholarly works on the Polish settlement in Turkey. However, nowadays the descendants of Polish immigrants still cultivate their traditions and religion. The changes have affected predominantly culinary habits and some traditions such as marriage customs, religious holidays and festivals. The presence of varieties of Turkish cuisine on the table, especially during religious holidays such as Christmas, is an important indicator of this change. Thus, the life of the Polish minority in Adampol has not been fully described and can still form the basis of research in several academic disciplines.

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