

Introduction

Laura LODDO
Università degli Studi di Cagliari

To Elemer Balogh, a Hungarian scholar of comparative and international law, and to Raphael Lemkin, a lawyer from a Polish Jewish family, we owe two works that are different in many respects, but basically similar in the idea that inspired them. For what concerns Lemkin, he left Poland following the Nazi occupation in 1939, living as a refugee in Sweden before the international community took care to define the refugee status. On 5 November 1943 he composed the preface to his fundamental work, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe. Laws of Occupation*, which was published in Washington the following year. In that work the term genocide was used for the first time to indicate a clear infringement of international law.¹ On 28 August 1942 Balogh completed his preface to *Political Refugees in Ancient Greece from the Period of the Tyrants to Alexander the Great*, published in Johannesburg in 1943. As regards Balogh, who had been teaching in Berlin since 1932, he had to leave Germany because of the National Socialist *Machtergreifung* in April 1933. After a short stay in France, he reached South Africa where he stayed continuously until 1947.² Like Lemkin, Balogh also experienced the condition of exile: the political climate and their personal experiences meaningfully conditioned their research interests.

In his foreword to the book on ancient political refugees, Balogh refers to two elements that make similar his approach to that of Lemkin. First, they have in common the project to compose a work on refugees in three parts, in which matter followed their history in three periods, the Classical period, the Middle Ages and the contemporary era.³ A similar historical and comparative approach also characterizes Lemkin's book on genocide. Second, they share the idea that the historical appearance of the phenomenon they were studying anticipated the formalisation of the concept: Lemkin found the origin of the concept of genocide in ancient Greece as well as Balogh believed that the Cilionians constituted the first historical example of refugees.⁴ Nevertheless, Lemkin's premature death did not allow him to carry out his project, so that there is no discussion of the Greek origins of genocide. On the contrary, Balogh could only fulfil the section about Classical Greece, renouncing to provide a discussion about this phenomenon in its *longue durée*.

1 For a critical introduction to Lemkin's work see Jacobs, 2012.

2 For Balogh's biographical portrait see Hamza, 2008.

3 Balogh, 1943, p. xi.

4 Balogh, 1943, p. 5-8.

Balogh's belief in the ancient origins of the political refugee is basically correct. The history of ancient Greece is dotted with individuals and groups of exiles in search of refuge, whose influence on the events of their *poleis* and on international politics is proved to be remarkable and constant. Despite this, Balogh's work, as appreciable as it is as the first systematic attempt to put the issue to the scientific community, is inadequate for the modern reader, who can appreciate it as a historiographical product of his time.⁵ In fact, already the first reviewers, even though evaluating this study as timely, highlighted the limits of the treatment. Treves, for example, rebuked the lack of a precise definition of the concept of refugee and of an adequate framework of the question from a legal point of view; he also disagreed with the view that only Alexander would remedy the problem of the proliferation of refugees in the Greek cities, a view that did not take into account the substantial ineffectiveness of the Exiles Decree.⁶ Similarly, Wolff assessed Balogh's attempt to illustrate the refugees history as unsatisfactory: in his opinion, the author was unable to provide an account of the historical development of this phenomenon and to highlight the psychological factors related to refugee status.⁷ In the same way, a law scholar like Wolff could not help but notice Balogh's oversimplification in defining the different conditions that originated the refugee status. A certain tendency to anachronism that Wolff reproached the author for, however, is well explained by the understandable difficulty of detaching himself from the contemporary situation, dramatically present in the early forties of the twentieth century. The very conclusions, which Balogh drew from his confrontation with the ways in which the Greek world faced the problem of refugees, appear problematic and affected by his own experience.⁸

In the *Einleitung* to his volume *Die politischen Flüchtlinge und Verbannten in der griechischen Geschichte*, published in Darmstadt in 1979, Jakob Seibert justified his work as a necessary completion of Balogh's volume, where the point of arrival of the treatment coincided with Alexander's decree on the return of exiles. The arrest in the year 324 BC gave the false impression that this decree represented a caesura in the history of the exiles, as if the end of the *poleis'* independence concurred to reduce the employ of exile for political reasons. On the contrary, the Hellenistic world continued to face a refugee problem similar to the previous period. Even the Atheno-centric perspective that characterized Balogh's work, while it seems justified by the fact that most of the available documentation concerns Athens, it does not fully take account of the proliferation of the phenomenon outside Attica and of its pan-Hellenic character.

5 For an in-depth examination of the legal issues see Usteri, 1903 and Paoli, 1930, p. 328-334, especially on the meaning of *atimia*. Lécivain, 1919 is a collection of evidence about political exile. See also Lécivain, 1940, p. 214-216, arguing that exile in the political trials was an alternative sanction to capital punishment.

6 Treves, 1943, p. 132-133.

7 Wolff, 1945, p. 204.

8 Balogh hoped for the solutions the Greek *poleis* adopted to face the problem of refugees to be put forward by the European countries. However, his conviction did not take into account the dangers that the imposition of unwanted individuals in the cities of origin could create, especially with regard to the resumption of conflict among the parties involved. For a criticism of Balogh's position, see Murphy, 1944, p. 111.

On these assumptions Seibert wrote a systematic history of refugees and displaced persons without renouncing to identify principles of conduct, tendencies, attitudes of the refugees during exile. Probably the most useful part of the volume is the section dedicated to the analysis of the structures of the exile, with particular regard to the attitudes of Greek cities towards exile, to the conduct of exiles abroad, to their relationship with their countries of origin, and to the issue of returning home.

A history of exile, therefore, already exists⁹. When in 2017 I organized a two-day conference on political refugees at the Maison Méditerranéenne des sciences de l'homme in Aix-en-Provence, I did not intend to propose again a history of political refugees, as Seibert's work still represents a point of reference for scholars today, albeit with some limitations. Rather, I preferred to give space to contributions on specific themes, which Seibert understandably could not develop in an adequate way, in view of his descriptive approach.

This is a collection of 16 essays dealing with specific aspects of both the political exile and the subsequent refugee status. The order of publication of the articles tries to follow the chronological order of the matter. The peculiarity of this collection concerns its interdisciplinary nature, which looks at the issue of refugees from a literary, historical and philosophical point of view, in the belief that this approach can ensure a deeper understanding of the refugee condition in the ancient Greek world. The essays by Chiara Militello, Etienne Helmer and William O. Stephens focus on issues interesting from a philosophical point of view. Chiara Militello examines the sources concerning those Pythagorean philosophers who ruled some cities in southern Italy and who fled into exile because of the action of their political opponents. Despite the plurality of reasons that led these philosophers into exile, Militello finds a common element to all these cases in the Pythagorean elitism, while stressing that the reasons for hostility to the Pythagoreans were attributable to different origins. If Militello reconstructs the reasons for the exclusion of the Pythagoreans, Etienne Helmer studies the meaning of the inclusion and reception of refugees in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, placing the reflection of the dramatist in an ideal dialogue with the point of view of philosophers such as Arendt and Agamben. After clarifying that the *Suppliants* are not simply a "tragedy of immigration" and that the condition of the Danaids in the play reproduces not so much that of ordinary immigrants as that of refugee women, Helmer goes so far as to argue that Aeschylus does not limit himself to representing on stage the political and legal policies implemented in Athens in favour of the *phygades*; he rather uses the Danaids as a tool for reflecting about the

9 After Seibert's work, several studies have addressed specific issues concerning exile. The best treatment of *stasis* as one of the main causes of the proliferation of refugees is Gehrke, 1985, but, with regard to Sicily, one should add Berger, 1992. Doblhofer, 1987, focuses on Roman exile, but the first chapter includes some useful thoughts on Greek exile; something similar can be said about Grasmück, 1978. Equally important are Lonis' several essays on exiles (see mainly Lonis, 1991 and Lonis, 1993). On ostracism and the politics of expulsion see Forsdyke, 2005. The issue of wandering is the object of Montiglio, 2005, especially from a philosophical point of view. For the discourse on displacement in antiquity the references are Claassen, 1999 and Gaertner, 2007. Garland, 2014 is a treatment of the different types of wanderers in Archaic and Classical Greece which also involves a reflection on refugees. Gray, 2015, adopts political exile as a key to interpret the Greek political cultural. See also the papers collected in Isayev – Jewell, 2018 and Rubinstein, 2018.

concept of otherness and its ambivalence. In particular, Helmer focuses on a line that Pelasgos, the King of Argos, addresses to the messenger of the Egyptians, according to which there is a specific wisdom of the foreigner that the messenger proves to ignore. The ambiguity evoked by Helmer implies that the dimension of the otherness in the tragedy is sometimes absolute, since it corresponds to the ignorance of the condition of foreigner; sometimes it is latent, being confused with the proximity, especially when a foreigner is expected to be aware of his condition and behave accordingly. Through the reconstruction of this preliminary conceptual framework, Helmer illustrates the three different ways of thinking about otherness: the full reception as an antidote to violence without measure and a refusal of the traditional borders of otherness; the impossible reception, according to which otherness coincides with an insurmountable cultural difference; and following the point of view of those who request reception, an attitude of caution with respect to the real limits of reception.

William O. Stephens investigates Stoic thought about exile and the ways in which the Stoics, who often were victims of exile and refugees themselves, applied their ideas to the issue of refugees. After illustrating the arguments that Musonius Rufus, Epictetus and Seneca use to argue that exile is not a bad condition in itself for the human being, but it can even favour the pursuit of virtue, Stephens goes on to analyse the Stoic attitude towards friends who find themselves experiencing the condition of refugees, arguing that sharing the burden of exile is what is expected in situations of this kind. The author then discusses the Stoics' attitude towards refugees in general, concluding that their ethics required refugees to be received, helped and protected in the communities in which they chose to live. In particular, the Stoic cosmopolitanism represents the key to understand the Stoics' relationship with refugees: it is their conception of *oikeiosis* that justifies the idea that exiles are fellow citizens of our cosmopolis and, by virtue of this, brothers and neighbours, whose condition we have the duty to improve. Xenophobia, on the other hand, constitutes in the eyes of the Stoical sage a form of self-inflicted mental disease.

While intellectuals have considered binary themes such as inclusion/exclusion, proximity/otherness, brotherhood/extraneousness to the community of citizens, the literary representation of exile and refugees seems quite articulated and irreducible to a single definition. This is one of the conclusions of the essay by Amandine Gouttefarde, which opens this dossier on political refugees. Through an overview of the literary sources with the aim of investigating the typology of exiles as literary characters, Gouttefarde identifies three different prototypes of *phygades*, which seem to occur more often in a specific literary tradition, being inevitably conditioned by the rules of the genre to which they belong. Thus, the exile persecuted by fate, often represented as an individual torn apart by the uncertainty of being able to find a place that welcomes him, or persecuted by those who drove him out of the country, living a miserable life, always in need of everything, is recurrent in tragedy. So, the characters in myth weep on the scene, complained about their condition, were compared to domestic animals, defenseless and querulous, such as birds, to indicate weakness, or to wild beasts, whose ferocity, which needs to be tamed, justified their enslavement.

Nevertheless, this representation mostly concerns the heroes of the myth. Instead, the historical exiles are characterized by recklessness and activism. Acting frequently in groups, the conduct of the fellow exiles is qualified as violent and destructive in historiographical sources: sometimes assimilated to mercenaries, these exiles represented a problem for the

cities of origin, but their ambivalence allowed Plato to define them as heroes. Although far less frequent, the typology of the exile thinker, who chose exile as a form of protest against the political line of his home country that he judged to be unworthy and corrupt, appears above all in philosophical reflection. This form of exile, however, did not correspond to a definitive severing of the ties with his country of origin, but it consists in choosing a privileged condition for the intellectual to reflect on the limits of politics.

Some essays focus on the request to return home by refugees. This is the case of Pindar's fourth *Pythian Ode*, of which Dennis Alley offers a new historical reading. The poem, which develops the request for the repatriation from the political exile Demophilus, who was removed from Arcesilaus IV, the King of Cyrene, resorts to myth to represent the strategies used to ensure his return home. Through the analysis of Jason's conduct, Alley maintains that the hero, avoiding resorting to violence to gain his *kathodos*, made it clear that his intention was not to bring down the kingdom of Pelias, but to obtain repatriation by negotiating it with his interlocutor.

Moving between history and literature, Benjamin Gray offers a substantial contribution to the studies on refugees' political agency, applying to the Greek world interpretative paradigms employed in the analysis of the activism of the twentieth century's refugees. The author considers refugees' recourse to collective memory and shared historical traditions as an important means of overcoming the obstacles to the agency due to the exile. Ancient refugees did not limit themselves to resorting to the past, but they shaped past traditions to strengthen their own prerogatives, in a way that could be defined as an example of "intentional history". This strategy was aimed both at preserving their identity and cohesion even in exile and at building connections with other interlocutors, so claiming a specific role for them within a wider pan-Hellenic network. This theoretical framework is applied to concrete cases, belonging to a wide time span and to different geographical contexts, relating both to the period of exile and to its commemoration after returning home. In most cases, refugees resorted to the past in order to continue having a voice even in exile.

This is surely true of the so-called famous refugees, leading figures of their *poleis* of origin, who, for various reasons, were forced to flee into exile, where they continued to live as protagonists of the political scene. This applies to the Alcmeonid *genos*, when they experienced the status of refugees in Delphoi between 514 and 511 BC. Francesco Mari attempts to reconstruct the history of their exile, paying great attention to the tradition about Pythia's corruption by Cleisthenes. He argues that such an accusation against the Alcmeonids was arisen in Delphoi after the Thessalians gained control of the Amphyctionic council. Hence, the desire to free Apollo from the blame to support the cause of these Athenian refugees could have given rise to the issue of corruption making it necessary to place all responsibility on a single person, the Pythia. In any case, one should point out how the Alcmeonids were able to preserve their prestige even as refugees, resorting to a broad range of contacts that was useful also for the purposes of their return home.

Something similar can be said of those Athenian generals, Themistocles and Cimon, whose Gabriella Vanotti has studied the cross destinies. Vanotti analyses the direct and indirect relations between these two figures with particular attention to the original collaboration on the eve of the battle of Salamina and the comparative analysis of their exiles. Their destinies as refugees appear to be quite different: while Themistocles was destined to die in Asia,