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Nomads and their Neighbours in the Middle Ages

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Preface

Medieval Nomads (MeN) at the dawn of a Modern Global Pandemic:

Eighth International Conference on Medieval History of the Eurasian Steppe, "Nomads and their Neighbours in the Middle Ages", held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on November 20–3, 2019

In 1997, 2000, and 2002, the Department of Medieval History at the University of Szeged organized several conferences on the history of medieval nomads of the Eurasian steppe, the proceedings of which were subsequently published in Hungarian. In 2004, the Department of Medieval History and the Department of Archaeology at the same university together with the Research Group on Hungarian Prehistory of the Regional Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Szeged decided to convene an International Conference on Medieval History of the Eurasian Steppe. The first conference of this kind was held in Szeged in 2004, followed by events in Jászberény (2007), Miskolc (2009), Cairo (2011), Moscow (2013), Szeged (2016), and Shanghai (2018).

As a continuation of this series, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and the Institute for Historical Studies of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences organized the Eighth International Conference on Medieval History of the Eurasian Steppe, "Nomads and their Neighbours in the Middle Ages", held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on November 20–3, 2019. It was only to be expected that the regular scholarly migrations of the MeN series would follow in the footsteps of their medieval nomadic forerunners and will appear south of the Lower Danube to gather on a venue in the foothills of the Balkan Mountains. Thus, Bulgaria, which shares with Hungary a steppe origin of its medieval statehood, also shared with the modern Magyars the historiographical interest in the nomads of the past as well as the honour to host a scientific forum of internationally recognized researchers in this field.

Given the fact that the medieval Eurasian nomads affected in one way or another the history of most of the Old World, it comes as no wonder that the participants in the 8th MeN were also globally represented. As could be observed on the website of the event,¹ more than forty scholars from Hungary, China, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, France, Russia, Turkey, South Korea, Poland, Israel, Finland, Germany, Kazakhstan, and, of course, Bulgaria, presented their research. Two distinct key notes were offered to this diverse audience—by Prof. Lorenzo

¹ www.medievalnomads2019.weebly.com

Pubblici on the Italian commercial presence in the Azov Sea, and by Prof. István Zimonyi on the history of Volga Bulgaria.

Yet, modern scholars, not unlike medieval nomads and indeed humans in general, are not immune to the vagaries of nature and politics. Although this was neither the first time when an event with a nomadic connection foreran a global pandemic, nor the first MeN conference that found itself in proximity to historical events,² in late November 2019 nobody could have expected that very soon the Horsemen of the Apocalypse will gallop through Eurasia – Pestilence starting from the east, to be followed by War in the west. One could only speculate that when their hooves finally come down, our world will never be the same – what is certain is that it is now a bit more similar to the world of our medieval forefathers. Thus, as mortal human beings we cede our humble offerings to the everlasting Clio – written about those who went before us for those who come after.

Acknowledgments

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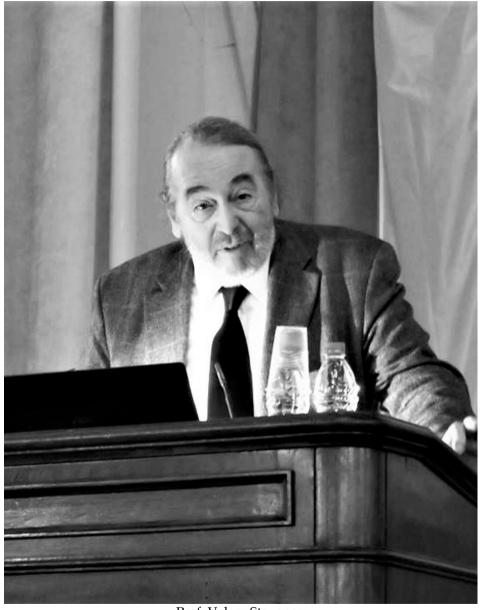
This publication is supported by the National Research Program Cultural Heritage, National Memory and Society Development (https://kinnpor.uni-sofia.bg), funded by the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science. The same program financed the 8th International Conference on Medieval History of the Eurasian Steppe, "Nomads and their Neighbours in the Middle Ages", Sofia, Bulgaria (November 20–3, 2019).

KONSTANTIN GOLEV - DELYAN RUSEV

² ZIMONYI, I. Medieval Nomadic conference in the shadow of the Egyptian revolution. *Chronica* 11 (2011), 3–5.

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This volume is dedicated to the seventieth anniversary of Prof. Valery Stoyanov (b. 24.02.1951) – a historian of the medieval Eurasian nomads and their historians.



Prof. Valery Stoyanov

The Carpathian Basin in the Cosmography of the Unknown Ravennese

RICHÁRD SZÁNTÓ*

Abstract

Anonymous of Ravenna, an unknown cleric, described the whole world in his *Cosmography*. The exact time of the writing of the work is disputable. Joseph Schnetz assumed that Anonymous wrote his work in the early 8th century. In the opinion of Franz Staab, the *Cosmography* was compiled in the late 8th or early 9th century. The *Cosmography* consists of five books, of which the fourth book contains a detailed description of Europe. It presents a description of Central Europe and the Balkan Peninsula, including Saxony, Dacia, Pannonia, Illyria, Dalmatia, and Moesia. Anonymous of Ravenna listed the settlements and rivers in Dacia and Pannonia and mentioned the peoples living in these territories. The author also uses the name *Patria Albis Ungani*, which does not appear in other sources. This study presents the Carpathian Basin based on the description of Pannonia and Dacia and determines the geographical position of this *Patria Albis Ungani*. Finally, a hypothetical interpretation explains its name and origin.

Keywords: Anonymous of Ravenna, Cosmography, Pannonia, Patria Albis Ungani

Unknown Ravennese (Anonymous of Ravenna) wrote his cosmography at the beginning of the 8th century. The anonymous author was an Italian cleric living in Ravenna at the end of the 7th and the beginning of the 8th century. He collected the geographical and cosmographical knowledge of his age. The autograph manuscript of the *Cosmography* did not survive, but three copies have survived.

The first critical edition of the *Cosmography* was issued by Moritz Pinder and Gustav Parthey in Berlin in 1860. The second critical edition of the *Cosmography* was published by Joseph Schnetz in 1940, but his work did not include an index of

^{*} Institute of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Szeged, Hungary. The article is a revised version of a paper delivered at the 8th International Conference on Medieval History of the Eurasian Steppe *Nomads and their Neighbors in the Middle Ages*, held in Sofia, November 20–3, 2019.

the toponyms.¹ Marianne Zumschlinge has prepared the index of toponyms for Schnetz's publication and issued the whole work in 1990.² Additionally, a German translation of the *Cosmography* was published by Joseph Schnetz in 1951.³

The medieval manuscripts of the *Cosmography* do not include any maps, but two maps were created on the basis of its text in the 19th century. Heinrich Kiepert drafted the first one in 1859,⁴ and Konrad Miller created the second one in 1898.⁵

For the composition of the *Cosmography*, Anonymous of Ravenna used the works of ancient Roman and Greek authors.⁶ Furthermore, he could have obtained additional information from merchants, envoys, and sailors. Thus, in the *Cosmography*, the data from preceding historical periods is mixed with the information from Anonymous's own age.

Various researchers have examined the book. Joseph Schnetz published several studies on the *Cosmography*, and Franz Staab wrote a study on the sources of the European part of the text. Tuomo Pekkanen researched the names of the cities on the Black Sea coast and their variations in the various chapters of the *Cosmography*. Alexander Podossinov translated most of the *Cosmography* into Russian and published it with commentary and studies. Kurt Guckelsberger and Florian Mittenhuber summarized the geographical information of the *Cosmography* and described some elements of the geographical concepts that emerged in it. The chapter on Britannia in the *Ravenna Cosmography* was studied by Keith J. Fitzpatrick-Matthews. Daniel T. Potts published studies on the Armenian toponyms and the placenames of India and the Persian Gulf on the basis of the *Cosmography*.

In general, the *Cosmography* contains the description of the countries and peoples on the Earth; it consists of five books, and the description of Europe is in the fourth. Anonymous of Ravenna listed the Roman provinces, the countries, peoples, rivers, and cities of Europe. This study presents the Carpathian Basin on the basis of the *Cosmography*. Anonymous of Ravenna depicted the rivers and cities of Dacia and Pannonia, which represented the Roman provinces in the Carpathian Basin.

¹ SCHNETZ 1940.

² Zumschlinge 1990.

³ SCHNETZ 1951.

⁴ Kiepert 1859.

⁵ MILLER 1898.

⁶ SCHNETZ 1942.

⁷ SCHNETZ 1925; SCHNETZ 1932; SCHNETZ 1934.

⁸ Staab 1976.

⁹ PEKKANEN 1979.

¹⁰ Podossinov 2002.

¹¹ Guckelsberger - Mittenhuber 2011.

¹² FITZPATRICK-MATTHEWS 2013.

¹³ Potts 2019; Potts 2017; Potts 2018.

The *Cosmography* also included an unknown country under the name of *Patria Albis Ungani* that can be localized between the Elbe and Pannonia.

I. Dacia

Anonymous of Ravenna wrote down the name as *Datia* (!), and he mentioned the names *Datia prima et Secunda*. According to Anonymous, Dacia had a large territory and he also noted that this province was called *Gepidia* in his age. The Huns and Avars (*unorum gens, avari*) were the inhabitants of *Gepidia*. The *Cosmography* mentions that *Illiria* was between *Gepidia* and *Dalmatia* (*provincia*). The author listed ancient cities in Dacia: Drubetis, Medilas, Pretorich, Panonin, Gazanam, Masclunis, Tibis, Tema, Tiviscum, Gubalis, Zizis, Bersovia, Arcibada, Canonia, Potula, Bacaucis. The names of these cities are identifiable within Dacia's toponyms depicted on the Tabula Peutingeriana. The origin of the Tabula Peutingeriana goes back to an old Roman map, which was copied several times in the late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Anonymous of Ravenna could have used an early copy of this Roman map. A great part of the toponyms in the *Cosmography* come from the geographical names in this map, of which the Tabula Peutingeriana is the last medieval copy.

Table 1. Settlements in Dacia

An. Rav.	Drubetis	Medilas	Pretorich	Panonin	Gazanam	Masclunis	Tibis
TP	Drubetis VII. 4. o	Ad Me- diam VII. 4. o	Pretorio VII. 4. o	Ad Pan- nonios VII 4 o	Gaganis VII. 4. o	Masclianis VII. 4. o	Tivisco VII. 4.
An. Rav.	Тета	Tiviscum	Gubalis	Zizis	Bersovia	Arcibada	Canonia
TP	?	Tivisco VII. 4. o	Caput bubali VII. 3/4.	Azizis VII. 3. o	Bersovia VII. 3. o	Arcidava VII. 3. o	?
An. Rav.	Potula	Bacaucis					
TP	Centum Putea VII. 3. o	?					

The rivers of Dacia were also listed in the *Cosmography*: Tisia, Tibisia, Drica, Marisia, Arine, Gilpit, and Gresia. Anonymous of Ravenna also noted that the rivers flowed into the Danube. He noted that the Flautasis River ended in Dacia. This

¹⁴ ZUMSCHLINGE 1990, 53-4.

¹⁵ RATHMAN 2018, 8-26.

¹⁶ Weber 1976, 20-3.

¹⁷ PEKKANEN 1979, 111-112.

river may be identical to the Aluta, or Olt in modern Romania. Anonymous of Ravenna mentioned that he adopted information referring to Dacia from Iordanes's work. Nowadays, the rivers of Dacia can be identified as the following rivers.

Table 2. Rivers of Dacia

An. Rav.	Tisia	Tibisia	Drica	Marisia	Arine	Gilpit	Gresia	Flautasis
Iordanes ¹⁹	Tisia	Tibisia	Dricca	Marisia	Miliare?	Gilpil	Grisia	Flutaus/ Aluta?
Identifi- cation of the rivers names ²⁰	Tisza/ Tisa	Tamiš/ Timiş	?	Maroş/ Maros	Crişul Alb/ Fehér- Körös	Crişul Negru/ Fekete- Körös	Crişul Repede/ Sebes- Körös	Olt
Country	Romania, Hungary, Serbia	Serbia, Romania		Romania, Hungary	Romania, Hungary	Romania, Hungary	Romania, Hungary	Romania

II. Pannonia and Valeria

Anonymous of Ravenna mentioned *Pannonia superior, Pannonia inferior* and *Valeria*. He named the two Pannonias (*Pannoniae*) as countries (*patriae*), but they were originally Roman provinces and were not independent political formations. In the *Cosmography*, the geographical names related to the two Pannonias are divided into three groups. The first list contains 31 toponyms. As already mentioned, Anonymous of Ravenna adopted these geographical names from an earlier copy of the Tabula Peutingeriana (TP). The TP was a copy of an old Roman imperial road map that also included the stations on the roads. Many stations were settlements, but some were named after a geographical point, for example the Drina River (*Drinum flumen*). Anonymous of Ravenna copied these station names of the Roman roads into the *Cosmography*.

¹⁸ Zumschlinge 1990, 54.

¹⁹ *Tisia*: Mommsen 1882, 62, 104, *Flutaus*: Mommsen 1882, 62; *Aluta*: Mommsen, 1882, 75. *Tibisia*: Mommsen 1882, 104; *Dricca*: Mommsen 1882, 104; *Marisia, Gilpil, Grisia, Marisia, Miliare*: Mommsen 1882, 87.

²⁰ BÓNA - CSEH - NAGY - TOMKA - TÓTH 1993, 172-3.

²¹ ZUMSCHLINGE 1990, 56-7.

²² TABULA PEUTINGERIANA (TP).

Table 3. The first list of the geographical names in Pannonia

		- 66	1			
An. Rav.	Confluentes	Taurinum	Idominio	Bassianis	Fossis	Sirmium
TP	Confluentibus VI. 5. o	Tauruno VI. 5. o	Idominio VI. 5. o	Bassianis VI. 4. o	-	Sirmium VI. 4. o
An. Rav.	Drinum	Saldis	Bassantis	Marsonia	Mursa maior	Mursa minor
TP	Drinum fl[umen] VI. 3/4. o	Saldis VI. 3. o	ad Basante VI. 3. o	Marsonie VI. 2. o	Mursa maior VI. 2. o	Mursa minor VI. 1. o
An. Rav.	Ioballios	Berevis	Sorenis	Marimanus	Balenilo	Sirote
TP	Iovallio VI. 1. o	Berebis (Berbis/ Vereis?) VI. 1. o	Seronis (Serenae?) V. 5. o	Marinianis (Mariniana) V. 5. o	Bolentio V. 5. o	Sirotis V. 4/5. o
An. Rav.	Cucconis	Lentulis	Sonista	Botivo	Populos	Aquaviva
TP	Cuccio VI. 3. o	Luntulis V. 4. o	Sonista V. 4. o	Botiuo V. 4. o	Populos V. 3. o	Aqua Viva V. 3. o
An. Rav.	Remista	Petaviona	Vincensimo	Ligano	Salla	Aravona
TP	Remista V. 3. o	Petavione V. 2/3. o	Advicesimum V. 3. o	-	-	Arrabone V. 2/3. o
An. Rav.	Savaria					
TP	Sabarie V. 2. o					

Table 4. The second group of the geographical names in Pannonia²³

An. Rav.	Burgenis	Spaneatis	Ansilena	Cibalis	Certisiam	Lavares	Cuminion
TP	Burgenis VI. 4. o	Ulmospaneta V. 3. o	Cansilena VI. 3. o	[Cibalae]? VI. 3. o	Certis VI. 2. o	ad La- bores VI. 2. o	-

In the Pannonian chapter of the *Cosmography*, the third list of toponyms contains 33 place names, five of them are identifiable on the basis of the Tabula Peutingeriana. 24

²³ Zumschlinge 1990, 57.

²⁴ ZUMSCHLINGE 1990, 57; TABULA PEUTINGERIANA (TP).

An. Rav.	Serbitium	Fines	Lamatis	Lausaba	Baloia
тр	Seruttio	ad Fines	Lamatis	Leusaba	Baloie
11	VI. 1. o	VI. 1. o	VI. 1/2. o	VI. 2. o,	VI. 2. o

Twenty-eight geographical names are not identifiable: Siclis, Ecclavia, Sanigion, Persetis, Netabio, Speridium, Bedini, Necal, Brindia, Clande, Assino, Bercio, Apeva, Sapua, Bersellum, Ibisua, Derva, Citua, Anderba, Sarminium, Charmenis, Scaladis, Sapua, Aleba, Suberadona, Asione, Clande, Berginio.²⁵

Anonymous of Ravenna mentions that several rivers flow through the two Pannonias (*Pannoniae*): *Parsium, Ira, Bustricius*, and *Dravis*. Schnetz identified *Ira* with the Mura/Mur River between Austria and Hungary nowadays. *Dravis* can be identified as the Drava River between Hungary and Croatia. ²⁶ *Parsium* is an unidentified river in Pannonia. In the territory of Croatia, Dillmann and Miller identified *Bustricius* as the *Bistritza*, a tributary of the Drava. ²⁷ According to the linguists, the root of *Bistritza* originates from the Old Slavonic *bystr meaning fast-running clear water/stream. There were many *Bystric*, *Bistrica*, *Beszterce*, *Besztercény* toponyms in the medieval Carpathian Basin. ²⁸

According to Anonymous of Ravenna, there was a large lake in Pannonia bearing the name of *Pelsois*. This lake can be identified as today's Balaton in Hungary.

Anonymous of Ravenna also depicts the province of *Valeria* as lying between the two Pannonian provinces and he mentioned that Valeria was called *Media Provincia*.²⁹

The cities (civitates) of Valeria are divided into two groups in the Cosmography.³⁰

Table 6. The first group of the toponyms in the province of Valeria

An. Rav.	Acunum	Usum	Malatis	Catio	Cornacum
TP	Acunum	Cusum	Milatis	Cuccio	Cornaco
11	VI. 3/4. o	VI. 3. o	VI. 3. o	VI. 3. o	VI. 2. o
An. Rav.	Alusione	Annama	Clantiburgum	Livori	Donatianis
TP	Lusiene	Annamatia	Tittoburgo (?)	ad Labores	Donatianis
11	V. 5. o	V. 5. o	VI. 2. o	VI. 2. o	VI. 1. o
An. Rav.	Antiana	Lugione	Belsalino	Lumano	Cardelaca
ТР	Antiana	Lugione	Vetusallo	Lusomana	Gardellaca
11	VI. 1. o	VI. 1. o	V. 4/5. o	V. 4. o	V. 4. o

²⁵ Zumschlinge 1990, 57.

²⁶ SCHNETZ 1951, 62.

²⁷ DILLEMANN 1997, 99; MILLER 1898, 18.

²⁸ KISS 1988, vol. 1, 208.

²⁹ Zumschlinge 1990, 57.

³⁰ ZUMSCHLINGE 1990, 57–8.

The second group of settlements in the province of *Valeria* consists of seven toponyms.³¹ These geographical names are identifiable with the stations of the Roman imperial road between Siscia and Emona.

Table 7 . The	second group	of settlement	s in	Valeria
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An. Rav.	Sicce	Fines	Romula	Nomiudum	Сгиррі
TP	Siscia	ad Fines	Romula	Novioduni	Crucio
	V. 5. o	V. 4. o	V. 3. o	V. 2/3. o	V. 2. o
An. Rav.	Acerbo	Atamine			
TP ³²	Aceruone V. 1. o	ad Emona > Ata- mine (?) V. 1. o			

Anonymous of Ravenna additionally mentions that the border of Valeria was the Saus River (Sava), but this is a mistake as the southern boundary of the province of Valeria was actually the Drava River.

III. Patria Albis Ungani

In addition to *Dacia* and the Pannonian provinces, Anonymous also places another country (*patria*) in the Carpathian Basin and west of it. According to him, there was a country (*patria*) called *Albis Ungani* south of Saxony. The word *Albis* reflects the name of the Elbe River, so this country may have been near the Elbe. The *Cosmography* describes that the territory of *Albis Ungani* was mountainous to the east and the extent of its territory was large in that direction. Anonymous Ravennese mentions that a part of this country is called *Baias*. According to the *Cosmography*, the Pannonian provinces (*Pannonia Superior* and *Inferior*) had a long and extensive frontier with *Albis Ungani*.³³ It is also important to note that the word *patria* has two meanings in the text of the *Cosmography*. The anonymous author uses it to describe both the Roman provinces and the political formations of the barbarian tribes and peoples.

The name *Baias* originated from the antique *Boius*, which was the name of a Celtic tribe. The Pannonian *Boius* tribe settled in the territory of ancient Pannonia, modern Slovakia and Bohemia.³⁴ Therefore, based on the text of the *Cosmography*, it seems that the area of *Albis Ungani* was located south of Saxony, east of the Elbe, and north of the Pannonian provinces. As already mentioned, the territory of this country was large and mountainous to the east.³⁵ The mountain range of the North Carpathians is identifiable with the mountainous territory of *Albis Ungani*. Only Anonymous of Ravenna mentions the name *Albis Ungani*, it is not found in any

³¹ Zumschlinge 1990, 58.

³² TABULA PEUTINGERIANA (TP).

³³ ZUMSCHLINGE 1990, 56.

³⁴ Szabó 2005, 51-3, 63-8.

³⁵ Zumschlinge 1990, 56.

other medieval text, and the description of *Albis Ungani* represents only a short passage in the *Cosmogrpahy*. The author does not include the names of any settlements in *Albis Ungani* and he names only the Elbe River as situated near its territory.

Thus, the question arises: where does the name *Ungani* come from? What kind of people could be called *Ungani*? In my hypothetical opinion, the ethnonym *Ungani* may have developed from *Onogun(dur)*.

Anonymous of Ravenna had information on the migration and territories of the different Bulgar tribes (Bulgars, Onogurs, Onogundurs). He claimed that the Bulgars came from Scythia and settled in Moesia, Macedonia, and Thracia. He also lived after the age of migration of the Bulgars and knew the Bulgar people well. He mentions that *Onogoria* was next to the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov (*Maeotis*). The author could get information about the people and the territory of the *Onogurs/Onogundurs* along the boundary of Pannonia, but the name of the *Onogundurs* apparently underwent a change in the time of Anonymous. Thus, he could have recorded the name *Onogundurs* in the form *Ungani*.

The Byzantine authors Patriarch Nikephoros (ca. 758–828) and Theophanes the Confessor (ca. 758/60–818), describe the history of the Onogundur-Bulgars. According to Theophanes, Kubrat's fourth and fifth sons crossed the Danube after the death of their father and went to the land of the Avars in Pannonia. One of them was subjugated by the Avar Khagan. Kubrat's fifth son did not stay in Pannonia, but he and his people wandered to Italy and settled near Ravenna.³⁷

After the collapse of the Avar Empire, the Bavarian Geographer described the regions east of the Kingdom of the Franks. In this source, *Betheimare* (Czechs), *Marharii* (Moravians), *Vulgarii* (Bulgars) and *Merehani* (South Moravians) are located north of the Danube in the territory of the Carpathian Basin in the middle of the 9th century.³⁸ The *Marharii* (Moravians), living in the Morava valley, were the eastern neighbours of the Czechs. The *Vulgarii* (Bulgars), a component of the population of the Avar Empire, survived the collapse of the Avar Khaganate and lived in the Great Plain in the Carpathian Basin. The region of the Bulgars was east of Pannonia and the Danube, and it came under the supremacy of the Danubian Bulgarian Empire in the 9th century. The territory of *Merehani* (South Moravians) covered the southern part of the territory between the Danube and the Tisza, and the Morava valley south of Belgrade.³⁹

³⁶ Zumschlinge 1990, 45, 48-9.

³⁷ Mango 1990, 86-9; Niebuhr 1839, 544-7; Turtledove 1982, 55-6.

³⁸ BAVARIAN GEOGRAPHER 1618, 321; POLGÁR 2003, 243–5.

³⁹ Szántó 2017, 152.

At the end of the 9th century, the Hungarians conquered the Carpathian Basin and established their kingdom, Hungary. The name of the *Onogundurs* survived in the form of *Nándor* [(O)no(gu)ndur] and became a toponym in medieval Hungary.⁴⁰

Conclusion

Anonymous of Ravenna describes the Earth based on books by ancient authors while also using information from his own age. The Cosmography includes a description of the provinces of Pannonia and Dacia. The author notes that Dacia was also called Gepidia in his time. In the Roman age, these provinces were located in the Carpathian Basin. The cities and rivers of Pannonia and Dacia were listed in the Cosmography, and Anonymous of Ravenna also mentions the Avars (Huns) who lived in Dacia. In addition to Pannonia and Dacia, the author mentions another country by the name of Albis Ungani. This country was south of Saxony, its territory was large and mountainous to the east, and it had a boundary with Pannonia. A part of the territory of Albis Ungani was called Baias. The area of Albis Ungani incorporated certain parts of the territory of the modern Czechia and Slovakia and the northern part of the Carpathian Basin. Albis Ungani appears only in the Cosmography; it was a short-lived political formation (patria) – and not a Roman province - that existed at the end of the 7th and the beginning of the 8th century. Around 670/80 AD, Kubrat's fourth and fifth sons and their Onogur/Onogundur people migrated into the Avar Empire and some of them settled in the northwestern region of the Charpathian Basin. The name of the Onogundurs changed to Ungani and this ethnonym reached Ravenna where it was recorded by the writer of the Cosmography. Albis Ungani was ruled by the Avar Khaganate but Anonymus of Ravenna describes its geographical position and preserves the name of the Onogundurs in the form of *Ungani*.

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Medieval Nomads and the First Pandemic: Theoretical Considerations

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Abstract

This paper attempts to apply the author's model for understanding the impact of the Second Pandemic of bubonic plague (the "Black Death" in the mid-14th century and its later waves) on the Golden Horde and Anatolia to the events in the steppe and sedentary regions during the era of the First Pandemic (6th-8th centuries) beginning in the time of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. The paper tries to analyze selected direct and indirect evidence for political disruption, depopulation, population movements, decline of sedentary populations urban centers, cultural and technological regression, the decline of existing literary languages and the rise of new vernacular-based languages, and an increase in religiosity. It argues that, as in the 14th-15th centuries, there is a close relationship between depopulation in sedentary centers and the in-migration of nomadic populations.

Keywords: Bubonic plague, Black Death, First Pandemic, Second Pandemic, depopulation, nomadic migrations, Byzantium, Avars, Bulgars, Türk

Introduction

A little over one month after the 8th International Conference on the Medieval History of the Eurasian Steppe took place in Sofia, Bulgaria in late November 2019, the world began to be confronted by the growing COVID-19 pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus known as "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2"

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(SARS-CoV-2). It is a reminder that pandemics have been with us throughout our history and pre-history as well. Another important point is that the lives of sedentary and nomadic populations were intertwined in the past. In this article I would like to draw upon my research on the Second Pandemic beginning in the 14th century to address the question of the First Pandemic beginning in the 6th century and how it might have affected the various populations in the Balkans, including both sedentarists and nomads.

1. The Three Pandemics in History

Historians speak of three historical pandemics of bubonic plague caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, namely the First Pandemic (6th-8th centuries CE), the Second Pandemic (14th century on), and the Third Pandemic (19th century on). There is a substantial body of historiography for the Second Pandemic – the initial years of which are better known as the "Black Death" – for Europe and a growing body of literature for the Middle East as well. I have devoted numerous studies to trying to understand the role of the Black Death in the collapse of the Golden Horde and its aftermath in Central Eurasia. There is also a small but growing body of literature devoted to the First Pandemic, also known as the "Plague in the Time of Justinian". The study of the Third Pandemic is still emerging as a field of inquiry among historians.¹

The cause of bubonic plague is the bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, which is a clone of *Yersinia pseudotuberculosis*, with the date for this split given as 1,500-20,000 BP. I should note that for the period preceding written historical sources samples of ancient DNA (aDNA) of *Y. pestis* have been identified from Scandinavia (4900 years BP) and from Yakutia and the Cis-Baikal region (4400 years BP).² These samples indicate that *Y. pestis* has been a Eurasia-wide phenomenon since the 3rd millennium BCE. It has been suggested that it may be responsible for the decline of Neolithic and Bronze Age communities across Eurasia, including the disappearance of large settlements such as Arkaim. These arguments are in line with the arguments I have been making for the Second Pandemic and more recently for the First Pandemic.

Studies of the genetic history of *Y. pestis* have established for the first time that the site of the polytomy (or multifurcation) of the bacterium *Y. pestis* for all three historical pandemics is the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, along the intersection of the Silk Road and the Horse-Tea Road.³ Recent scholarship has focused on what we can learn from the genetic history of *Y. pestis*, the various rodents which form a vector for animal to human transmission by fleas, and the role of trade networks in the

¹ LITTLE 2011.

² RASCOVAN 2018; KILINÇ 2021.

³ Cui et al. 2013.

transportation of fleas.⁴ This is a rich and complex field and a review of this literature would be beyond the scope of this article. Rather, I would like to draw upon my own studies to try to sketch out a framework for understanding what the results of the First Pandemic might have been in the Balkans.

2. The Second Pandemic as a Model for Understanding the First Pandemic

As a model for thinking about the effects of the First Pandemic I would first like to dwell briefly upon the Second Pandemic. I shall begin with the general model which I have constructed for understanding the collapse of the Golden Horde with reference to Anatolia as well.⁵ This model considers the following phenomena:

- 1. Political disruption, with the collapse of the Mongol World Empire beginning in some regions already in the 1330s. Contrary to expectation, the Golden Horde remained a stable state until falling into anarchy following the death of Berdibek Khan in 1359. I attribute this political disruption to the sudden sharp rise in mortality among the élite resulting in a crisis of succession in which it was no longer clear who was closest in line to succeed the previous khan and/or the previous tribal leader(s).
- 2. Sudden large-scale depopulation and later in-migration of new nomadic elements into newly depopulated territories. We see the case of relatively more severe depopulation of the western territories of the Golden Horde (the *Aq orda* or "White Horde"), with new tribal populations moving into the western territories under Toqtamış Khan. These new tribal populations would form the basis of the later Khanates of Kazan and the Crimea, for example.⁶ We can also take the relative size of the new khanates of the Later Golden Horde as a proxy for differences in the size of population: whereas the Golden Horde controlled a territory from Lake Zaysan to the west, the later khanates were much smaller states centered around Kazan, the Crimea, Kasimov, Astrakhan, and Tümän.
- 3. In the case of the Golden Horde we see the decline of urban centers, including the capital city Saray Berke, and probably sedentary agricultural populations as well. Concurrently we see in the case of the territories of the Golden Horde the rise in the relative power of nomadic confederations such as the Great Horde and later the Nogai Horde. In the Middle Volga region it is clear that during the Golden Horde there was a sizable sedentary population speaking Volga Bulgarian, but in the aftermath of the Black Death we see that these centers have disappeared along with the in-migration of Qipchaq Turkic speakers and the use of Old Tatar on tombstones, replacing the earlier Volga Bulgarian language.⁷

⁴ Green 2020.

⁵ SCHAMILOGLU 1993, SCHAMILOGLU 2004; SCHAMILOGLU 2017a.

⁶ SCHAMILOGLU 2018a; SCHAMILOGLU 2018b.

⁷ SCHAMILOGLU 2016b.

- 4. Cultural and technological regression is a well-known phenomenon for medieval Europe. In the case of the Golden Horde a cessation in the manufacture of tombstones in Volga Bulgarian as well as the sudden disruption in the production of works in the literary language of the Golden Horde can be seen as signs of cultural and technological regression.⁸ The Islamic high culture of Saray Berke, which included the production of scientific works in Arabic, was totally wiped out along with the population of the city.
- 5. In the territories of the Golden Horde and Central Asia there appear new vernacular-based literary languages replacing earlier languages. In Anatolia we see the emergence of the modified orthographic system of Ottoman Turkish replacing the earlier Central Asian orthographic tradition. There is a temporary "renaissance" in the use of the Uighur script in the late 14th–15th centuries as well, probably reflecting in-migration of scribes from territories further to the east which would have been less affected by the pandemic than territories further to the west.
- 6. It is well known from medieval Europe that there was a shortage of labor (including skilled labor) resulting in a rise in the price of labor leading to inflation as well. There are some indicators for this for the territories of the Golden Horde as well.
- 7. Finally, as we know well from medieval Europe, there is a heightened religiosity in this period. In the case of the Golden Horde there is a rise in the production of religious literature focusing on how to get to Heaven (since, after all, the population was being punished by God for being insufficiently devout Muslims). There is also literature in Anatolia which reflects an increase in religiosity and morbidity in this period. In the second half of the 14th century, we also see a movement to build cathedral mosques in Anatolia as well as the establishment of new monasteries in Greek Orthodox territories, for example.

Lest one argue that the Balkans (or Central Europe for that matter) escaped the ravages of the Black Death in this period, I would suggest that the rather limited coverage of this phenomenon in the historiography does not mean that it escaped its devastation. Quite the opposite. As I have argued elsewhere, the rise of the Ottoman Empire is to be understood as the semi-nomadic or nomadic Ottomans being less impacted by the pandemic which afflicted the coastal regions of the Mediterranean and the Aegean. I am writing these lines while riding out the pandemic in Bodrum, Turkey and slowly collecting indirect evidence for establishing the effects of plague upon the *beylik* of Menteshe.

There is extensive evidence for the ravages of the Black Death in Byzantium. ¹¹ In Constantinople, the population would fall to around 40,000 by the time of its

⁸ SCHAMILOGLU 1991.

⁹ SCHAMILOGLU 1991; SCHAMILOGLU 2012.

¹⁰ SCHAMILOGLU 2004.

¹¹ SCHAMILOGLU 2004; STATHAKOPOULOS 2016.

conquest by Mehmed the Conqueror in 1453. In Anatolia there is evidence for unharvested fields and untended herds of animals as well. The Black Death is rarely considered as a factor in the historiography, however, see for example the article on medieval Anatolia in the *Cambridge History of Turkey* by Rudi Lindner, who ignores the topic completely. ¹² In the same volume Machel Kiel writes only that "the long Byzantine civil wars, combined with the disastrous effects from 1348 onward of the Black Death (to which the settled population was more vulnerable than the mobile Turks), had well prepared the soil for Ottoman take-over". ¹³ Fortunately, by now we have excellent studies of the Black Death in the Ottoman Empire. ¹⁴

Already beginning in the mid-14th century, the Ottoman Empire began its expansion from Anatolia into the Balkans, bypassing Constantinople until its conquest later in the mid-15th century. I would argue that the rapid expansion of the Ottomans into the Balkans can be explained in large measure by expansion into a territory affected by severe depopulation. Yet I am not aware of sources available to me offering direct written evidence for the depopulation or its causes. Kiel believes the territory was prepared by the Black Death for rapid expansion by the Ottomans, but he offers no sources. Varlık points out that the Black Death spread widely throughout Rumelia and that Bulgaria was astride one of the major trade routes through the Balkans.¹⁵

In an article in honor of Bernt Brendemoen, who is an expert on the Turkish dialect of modern Trabzon, I undertook to reexamine the problem of the similarities which have been noted between that NE Anatolian dialect and western Bulgarian dialects of Turkish which were already endangered when they were studied by Gyula Németh in the mid-20th century. 16 I began to understand, largely on the basis of the studies of the Ottoman historian Ömer Lütfi Barkan, that there is evidence available on forced internal migration (sürgün) in Anatolia and Rumelia over the course of the 15th century. The Ottomans had a regular practice of resettling nomads throughout Anatolia as well as in Istanbul. Once the Ottomans seized control of the region of Trebizond in 1461, they began to resettle Türkmen nomads from that region to Western Bulgaria. In the view of Barkan, it was not only a question of reducing overcrowding, maintaining control over the nomads, and getting more tax revenue from a sedentarized population in western Bulgaria as opposed to the agriculturally poor region of Trebizond, but also of establishing control over the newly-conquered territories. I understand that the Ottomans were repopulating a region which had apparently emptied out as a result of recurring waves of the

¹² LINDNER 2009.

¹³ Kiel 2009, 154.

¹⁴ Ayalon 2015; Varlik 2015.

¹⁵ VARLIK 2015, 107ff., 134 (Map 2. Plague Networks, 1453-1600), 137 (Map 3. Plague Networks in the First Phase, 1453-1517).

¹⁶ NÉMETH 1965; SCHAMILOGLU 2018c.

Black Death beginning in the mid-14th century and continuing over the course of the 15th century. This policy of forced internal migration resulted in the Turkification and Islamization of the Balkans, which would last until the rise of modern nation-states in the late 19th century and the subsequent ethnic cleansing of Turks even late into the 20th century. In his study of the Ottoman expansion into the Balkans, including a critique of Barkan's studies on the Ottoman policy of forced resettlements in the Balkans, Nikolay Antov does not consider that this policy might have been related to depopulation as a result of the Black Death, a phenomenon which he does not mention at all.¹⁷

3. The First Pandemic: an outline

Now that we can point to the Qinghai-Tibet plateau as the site of the origin of the outbreak of the First Pandemic, we understand that it may have arrived in Ethiopia via the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. According to Procopius (see below), after reaching Ethiopia, the plague then reached Pelusium in Egypt, whence it spread throughout Byzantium. There is indirect evidence suggesting that it afflicted sedentary Central Asia, too, but we do not have any direct evidence for this. At any rate, the First Pandemic did not reach Constantinople via the Black Sea, unlike in the 14th century. Once the pandemic arrived in Byzantium in 541–2, the plague revisited Constantinople in 543, 544, 558, 573, 574, 599, 608? (sometime between 602-10), 618, 640 (?), 697, 700 (?), 717, and 747. Theophanes mentions the plague under the years 541–2, 555–6, 557–8, 560-1, 683–4, 725–6, 732–3, and 745–6.

Procopius in his *History* (Book II, xxii-xxiii and xxiv: 8, 12) describes the feverish symptoms and the human toll reaching 5,000 deaths per day and later rising to 10,000 deaths per day.²² As in the 14th century, Procopius reports that the population could not keep up with the burial of the dead. A similarly grim portrayal is offered by Theophanes two centuries later for the outbreak of 745–6.²³ There can be no doubt that the pandemic had a profound impact on the population of Byzantium and spread widely to the rest of Europe, the Middle East, and presumably Africa as well, see the essays in the volume *Plague and the End of Antiquity* (individual chapters cited below).²⁴

There is no basis for assuming with confidence that the Balkans or Pannonia were able to avoid the ravages of the disease, since it appears that the Second Pan-

¹⁷ ANTOV 2017, 37, 41-7.

¹⁸ Sarris 2006, 121–2; Schamiloglu 2016c.

¹⁹ Schamiloglu 2016c.

²⁰ Biraben, 1975-6, vol. 1, 27-32.

²¹ Mango 1997, 322, 337, 340, 345, 389, 503, 559, 569, 573, 585-6.

²² Dewing 1954, 451-73, 475, 477.

²³ Mango 1997, 585-6.

²⁴ Schamiloglu 2004; Matanov 2004; Stathakopoulos 2006; Dimitrov 2011; Dimitrov 2015; Dimitrov 2016; Kovachev 2017.

demic had a devastating impact on the Balkans, for example. Of course, at the same time we also know from the 14th century that while some towns or neighborhoods could lose 90% of their population, other nearby towns or neighborhoods might remain unaffected. For the purposes of this paper, I will assume that regions such as the Balkans and Pannonia also suffered from massive depopulation, since on the scale of the Old World this pandemic was a universal phenomenon. The rest of my paper will be devoted trying to think systematically about the First Pandemic to outline a framework for discussing some major historical developments in the Balkans and Pannonia in the 6th-8th centuries.

4. Seeking direct and indirect evidence: an agenda for research

We are at a great disadvantage in the study of the First Pandemic in comparison to the Second Pandemic because of the dearth of primary sources, though Byzantium represents a notable exception compared to other regions. This does not mean, however, that we should not seek direct and indirect evidence for its impact, on the contrary.²⁵ After all, it was a universal phenomenon in the Old World, as already noted, and at least for Byzantium there is substantial evidence for numerous waves of plague striking especially Constantinople. The Black Sea coastal regions of the Balkans are adjacent to the region of Constantinople and, as we know, maritime routes were another highly effective route of transmission during all three historical pandemics.

The first area we might consider is the Ponto-Caspian steppe region. This zone north and northeast of the Black Sea apparently had a substantial population of various nomadic groups speaking a Western Turkic language with ethnonyms ending in -gur such as the Utrigur, the Kutrigur, etc. plus other groups speaking a Turkic (?) language such as the Sabirs.²⁶ Golden has noted that the Sabirs could field an army of 100,000 early in the 6th century, but later he also expressed the view that such a claim was an exaggeration.²⁷ Nevertheless, we may consider that when the Avars first arrived in the Ponto-Caspian region in 557-8, so approximately 16–17 years after the arrival of the pandemic in Constantinople, it is possible that the populations north of the Black Sea may already have been affected by the disease, in which case the result would have been a dramatic decline in population. It is not clear whether the pandemic may have already affected the territories in the east whence the Avars came and whether that gave them a numerical advantage (which becomes a factor in the late 14th-early 15th centuries). Later, the Avars captured Sirmium in 582 and moved into Pannonia and the other territories which they now controlled. They remain a force to be reckoned over a considerable period of time. It appears that the Avars also absorbed elements of the earlier local

²⁵ LITTLE 2006, 18-21.

²⁶ RÓNA-TAS 1999, 209-14.

²⁷ GOLDEN 1980, vol. 1, 33-9; GOLDEN 1992, 105.

groups already mentioned, but the relative proportions cannot be known except that the Avars were clearly the dominant force militarily. It has also been argued that the Avars lost population as a result of the wave of pandemic in 597–9.²⁸

The flight of the Avars represents both an out-migration out of the eastern Eurasian steppe region following their defeat by the founders of the Türk Khaganate and concurrently an in-migration to a relatively depopulated area, first the area north of the Ponto-Caspian steppe, then to Pannonia. Following the departure of the Avars, the Türk themselves began an expansion across Central Eurasia, which also led to the beginning of the process of the Turkification of Central Asia. (This suggests that they had not yet been afflicted by the pandemic.) I have argued elsewhere that this must be seen at the same time as a period of decline for Sogdian population and language.²⁹ There is also some indirect evidence for the restructuring of urban centers in Central Asia. These phenomena could be the results of waves of epidemic, even though I am not aware of direct historical evidence for any specific waves. The Türk appear to have reached the Black Sea region very quickly, but their rapid and dramatic expansion across a territory which must have been undermined demographically in the meantime was followed by an equally rapid and dramatic disintegration of the First Türk Empire. The Western Türk Khaganate found itself in a situation of anarchy in the western regions and because of this we may never understand exactly the emergence of the Khazar state after 630.30 A clarification of the chronology of the waves of plague during the First Pandemic remains a critical desideratum for the study of sedentary Central Asia and the steppe region in this period.

I have argued that in Byzantium the rise of the *themes* system in Anatolia (640s-?) was a response to depopulation and the lack of manpower to govern directly. As a part of this process there was also an influx of Slavic populations into the Byzantine territories to serve as soldiers, which may have served to reduce Slavic populations in the Balkans (?) even further.³¹ It has also been suggested that in the 7th-8th centuries NE Thrace may have been a zone of depopulation because of frequent outbreaks of plague.³² It is against this backdrop that we may consider the establishment of the Bulgarian states.

Magna Bulgaria was a confederation of Onogur Turks led by Kubrat ca. 630–5 which was defeated by the Khazars several decades later. Eventually, one group went west under Asparukh and founded the Danubian Bulgarian state ca. 681. Another group went north to the Volga-Kama confluence and was visited by Ibn

²⁸ Stathakopoulos 2006, 102-3; Kovachev 2017. On the Avars see Szádeczky-Kardoss 1990; Róna-Tas 1999, 209-14; Pohl 2018.

²⁹ SCHAMILOGLU 2016c; SCHAMILOGLU 2017b.

³⁰ GOLDEN 1980, i; GOLDEN 1992, 233ff.; RÓNA-TAS 1999, 228-234.

³¹ SCHAMILOGLU 2004; LITTLE 2006, 24.

³² KOVACHEV 2017.

Faḍlān in 922 CE. (This region was apparently largely uninhabited for a period of time before the arrival of the Bulgars, no doubt another consequence of the First Pandemic.) A third group stayed behind and some scholars consider them the ancestors of the modern Balqars.³³ Given the limited number of reports of plague years for the mid-7th century, how do we explain the in-migration of the Onogurs into the Balkans under Asparukh? Were there additional waves about which we do not have reports, or might it be that the retrenchment of Byzantium to its core territories in Anatolia led to a vacuum in the future territories of the Danubian Bulgarian state, just like in NE Thrace? This remains a matter for further consideration.

In the east there appear to have been periods of major outbreaks of plague in 636–55 and 682–707; these waves may or may not have extended to the west.³⁴ It is in this period that the Second Türk Khaganate emerges (682–744). As these waves of plague subside we see the growing predominance of the Second Türk Khaganate, whose great figures are described in the Old Turkic runiform inscriptions of the early 8th century. Is it possible that the waves of plague did not impact the Türk adversely in the precise location where they are residing in the period 682-702(?)?³⁵

In the 14th century the eastern territories were affected less drastically by plague, for which reason elements of eastern populations were able to migrate to the west. This may be indicative of a population rebound in the east already in the late 14th century. Can we speak of a parallel phenomenon then during the rise of the Second Türk Khaganate? If so, this raises the question of what the underlying reason for such parallel phenomena in the 7th and 14th–15th centuries might be, either some aspect of the climate and geography in the western region in comparison to the eastern steppe region which meant that the effects of plague were not as profound in the east,³⁶ or perhaps the creation of foci in the west which made the situation markedly worse compared to the eastern territories. Some population movements between 541 and 747 or so might be groups of population escaping to a relatively unpopulated region, as might be the case with the Avars and later the Bulgars who migrated and founded states in the Balkans and the Middle Volga region.³⁷ There is little basis, however, for discussing the First Pandemic as a recurring phenomenon in the western regions past the midpoint of the 8th century.

Finally, some cultural considerations as informed by an awareness of the mid-6th to mid-8th centuries as having been a time of pandemic. As I have already noted elsewhere, Vasiliev considered this period to have been a "dark age" in Greek let-

³³ GOLDEN 1992, 244–58; RÓNA-TAS 1999, 215–28.

³⁴ For occurrences of plague in the west in this period see Morony 2006, 65, 73, 76, 84–5; Stathakopoulos 2006, 104; Kulikowski 2006, 154; Maddicott 2006, 200; McCormick 2006, 311p.

³⁵ See my "Turkological Notes on Pandemics": SCHAMILOGLU (in press).

³⁶ SCHAMILOGLU 2016a.

³⁷ For a general discussion of population movements in this period see HAYS 2006, 46–9.

ters.³⁸ This would be an example of cultural and technological regression. Of course, we can hardly speak of vernacular literatures in this period, but as in the 14^{th} – 15^{th} centuries, we see the beginnings of the use of a vernacular language, if not a vernacular literature. This is a very complex topic, as will be seen below, and for the west in the 8^{th} century it is much more speculative than for the east.³⁹

At some point in time, we see the beginning of Danubian Bulgarian inscriptions using the Greek alphabet, with many of them dating from the time of Omurtag in the first half of the 9th century (r. 814-31).40 We also see the controversial issue of the use of the runiform alphabet for Avar as well as for Danubian Bulgarian and in the "Treasure of Nagyszentmiklós", which also used the Greek alphabet. The precise dating of all of these is problematic.⁴¹ If we can say in the end that the eastern Eurasian runiform alphabet as used for Old Turkic is introduced in the west, could this be considered a parallel to the situation in the mid-14th to 15th centuries when there was a "renaissance" of the Uighur script in the place of the Arabic script? One problem with this is the wide variation in the kind of runiform alphabet used, while another is that these inscriptions have not all been reliably deciphered.⁴² The fact they may date from a period after the end of the pandemic is not a problem, however, since this would represent a parallel in some ways to the "renaissance" of the Uighur script in the late 14th-15th centuries, in all likelihood following the end of the pandemic in the east. Another question is whether we should conclude that the territories of the Golden Horde and the Chagatay Khanate were already in a far more advanced position with regard to the level of literacy in the 14th-15th centuries in comparison to the Balkans and Pannonia in the 6th-8th centuries, or did the Black Death end relatively earlier in the east, where it must have been less destructive? Reversing the question, may we conclude that the devastation of the First Pandemic really was so great (as some scholars believe)? In this regard literacy and literary production can serve as proxy data for discussing the severity of the effects of the pandemic.

Finally, I will consider one more issue here, namely the question of religious conversion, which seems to run parallel to the question of the rise of vernacular writing, if not literature. It is only the conversion of the Khazars to Judaism which may date to before the mid-8th century, but is more likely to have taken place (at once or in stages) in the 8th century. The Danubian Bulgarian conversion to Christianity took place in 864. As with the inscriptions produced by the ruling élite of these peoples, it is a century or more later than the end of the waves of pandemic,

³⁸ VASILIEV 1958, 181-2.

³⁹ Schamiloglu 2017b.

⁴⁰ Menges 1951; Beshevliev 1962; Róna-Tas 1999, 113, 167; Agyagási 2019, 18.

⁴¹ For a critical analysis of the corpus of the Treasure of Nagyszentmiklós and the dating of its inscriptions to the mid-7th to 8th centuries, see RÓNA-TAS 2016.

⁴² RÓNA-TAS 1999, 128-32.

⁴³ GOLDEN 2007.

to the best of our knowledge. The mission of Cyril and Methodius and the creation of the Glagolitic script are also from the 9th century. This stands in sharp contrast to the other state conversions or the construction of great religious temples elsewhere in Eurasia in the mid-8th century. There are many other topics which researchers should also consider, such as the rise and fall of towns and urban centers, but in the case of the Balkans and Pannonia this is an area which I will leave to other scholars who are more qualified to discuss this topic.

In conclusion, the lack of adequate written sources should not serve as a pretext to avoid pushing the boundaries of our understanding of the realities on the ground in the era of the First Pandemic. I would like to think that I have demonstrated that it is possible to frame questions and that a certain level of analysis is still possible, albeit less satisfying than for the 14th–16th centuries. The fact that we know that the First Pandemic, the Second Pandemic, and the Third Pandemic all played a major role in world history makes it incumbent upon scholars to attempt to explain the past through the direct and indirect evidence available to us through the framework offered by the three pandemics.

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⁴⁴ SCHAMILOGLU 2016c.

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Some Notes on the Missions of Pei Ju

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Abstract

Pei Ju was a high official in the Sui Empire. He was sent as an emissary to the Turks in 593 and played an active role during Sui Emperor Wen's marriage alliance with the royal house of the Turk Khaganate as well as during their conflict. His actual rise and role in policy-making coincided with the reign of the Sui emperor Yang. The emperor gave Pei Ju permission to oversee the commerce in Zhangye. He also wrote *Xiyu Tuji* ("Illustrated Records of the Western Regions"). Pei set about convincing Emperor Yang to develop both a new policy for the Xiyu (Western Regions) as well as a divisive policy for dealing with the Turks. Using Pei Ju's plan, the Sui wanted to establish tributary and trade relations with the cities of Xiyu; however, he was faced with two obstacles: the Turkic Empire and the Kingdom of Tuyuhun. The emperor accepted Pei Ju's plan about the Turks and the Tuyuhun. I will examine some elements of the historical and strategical policy of the Chinese people on the example of Pei Ju.

Keywords: Pei Ju, Turks, Turk Khaganate, Tuyuhun, Koreans, Chinese, the Sui Dynasty, Emperor Yang, Xiyu, Western Regions, Xiongnu

Pei Ju 裹矩 (547–627) was a high official in the Sui Dynasty (581–618). His courtesy name was Hongda 弘大, and he was from Hedong. His grandfather, Ta, had served as an imperial secretary (duguan shanghu 都官尚書) in the Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534/5). His father, Nezhi, was the heir apparent's secretary (taizi sheren 太子舍人) in the Northern Qi Dynasty (550–77). While Pei Ju grew up alone and under very difficult circumstances, he nevertheless received a decent education. He was wise and loved literature and rhetoric. His uncle, Rangzi, had reportedly told him: "I see both holiness and wisdom in you, I see complete talent. I would like to place you in the state service." Before long, we would then see him as an official serving throughout many Chinese states.

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¹ Sui Shu 1997, 1577.

When the Turkic Empire threatened the Sui in 593, Pei Ju was sent as an emissary to the Turks. He played an active role during Sui Emperor Wen's (581–604) marriage alliances² with the Turkic Khagan Dulan (Ashina Yongyulü) and prince Ashina Rangan as well as during their conflict. Later, Wen sent him as an emissary to Ashina Rangan, whom the Sui recognized as Khagan.

His actual rise and role in policy-making coincided with the reign of the Sui emperor Yang (604–18). After Emperor Yang ascended the throne, he commissioned the building of a new Eastern Capital in which Pei Ju was to construct the governmental buildings. At that time, various people from the Xiyu, or "the Western Regions", came to Zhangye in order to trade with China. The Emperor gave Pei Ju permission to oversee that commerce, upon which Pei Ju invited Hu merchants. It was there that he also gathered information about his observations and compiled it into the three-volume *Xiyu Tuji* 西域圖記 ("Illustrated Records of the Western Regions").3

Following the death of Emperor Yang's key advisor, Gao Jiong, in 607, Pei Ju's influence began to increase. He became one of the five nobles at the Sui palace that were in the inner circle of Emperor Yang.⁴

Pei set about convincing Emperor Yang to develop both a new policy for the Xiyu (Western Regions) as well as a divisive policy for dealing with the Turks. Using Pei Ju's plan, Sui wanted to establish tributary and trade relations with the cities of Xiyu; however, the Emperor faced two obstacles: the Turkic Empire and the Kingdom of Tuyuhun. Nevertheless, once various states in Xiyu were subjugated, Turkic and Tuyuhun peoples could be destroyed. Lengthy discussion between him and the Emperor had led Pei Ju to underline that Xiyu was filled with many riches that the Tuyuhun could seize. The emperor accepted Pei Ju's arguments and ordered him to go ahead with his plans.⁵

Most of our information on Pei Ju and his activities comes from various records found in the *Sui Shu*, the official history of the Sui Dynasty written in 636, and most notably his biography found in volume 67. The biography contains a preface that sheds some light upon the missing *Xiyu Tuji*. With this, we can take a closer look at Pei Ju's actions, and do so under several subchapters.

Tuyuhun

During the early years of the Emperor Yang's reign, the Sui focused on the Tuyuhun within the framework of Central Asian politics. Pei Ju appealed to the Töles in order to settle the Tuyuhun affairs. The Töles themselves had previously

² Marriage alliance (Chinese: Heqin) refers to the historical practice of the Chinese emperors to marry princesses to rulers of the neighbouring states.

³ Sui Shu 1997, 1578.

⁴ XIONG 2006, 47.

⁵ Sui Shu 1997, 1578–81.

been under the control of the Western Turks. With the fall of Turkic power in 605, the Töles rebelled and established their own khaganate, and ruled various citystates in the Xiyu. They attacked the Sui border in 607 and then offered to make peace with the Sui. Pei Ju saw this as an opportunity to implement his plan: he visited the Töles and persuaded them to attack the Tuyuhun in 608.6 The position of the Tuyuhun in Qinghai (Köke Nur) was an important obstacle on China's path to the Xiyu. Additionally, they attacked Zhangye and formed a marriage alliance with Qimin Khagan of the Turkic Empire, a close relationship that would end up threatening China. Even though the Tuyuhun Khagan Fuyun sent his son, Shun, as a hostage to China, Emperor Yang still wanted to destroy the Tuyuhun Kingdom. Eventually, Prince Shun was arrested by the Sui. When the Töles defeated the Tuyuhun in 608, the emperor sent his army against the latter. Tuyuhun's territory was annexed by Sui as part of the Chinese provinces Xihai and Heyuan. Districts, garrisons, and border posts were established there. A Chinese general in exile had established farming in Heyuan, thus assuring the Tuyuhun that the road to Xiyu would be open, and ultimately allowing Fuyun and his people to flee.⁷

Xiyu (Western Regions)

In 608, China sent a general to take over the Yiwu (Qumul). There, he established a garrison of a thousand soldiers, ultimately ensuring trade with the Xiyu. In 609, the Turfan king Qu Boya, under the influence of Pei Ju, came to the Chinese court and paid homage to the emperor. Many cities followed him and that same year Pei Ju managed to gather envoys from 27 cities in Wuwei, where the emperor granted them gifts. Emperor Yang then established the Xiyu Jiaowei (Western Territorial Commandery), setting up four commanderies from the east of Qinghai to the south of Xinjiang: Heyuan 河源, Xihai 西海, Qiemo 且末, and Shanshan 鄯善.8

The Turks

In 608, again, under the influence of Pei Ju, Emperor Yang sent an envoy to Chuluo Khagan (619–620/21). Chuluo was convinced both to join the Chinese army to fight against the Tuyuhun as well as to come to court to pay tribute; but in the end he did not come. In 611, Shegui of the Western Turks sent an envoy to the Sui court to propose a marriage alliance. Pei Ju accepted the request, and then Shegui attacked Chuluo. Towards the end of that year, Chuluo Khagan came to the court to pay his respects to Emperor Yang. Following the Koguryo war in 614, Emperor Yang began to worry about the growing power of the Turkic Empire. Pei Ju enacted a strategy that envisaged confusion and disorder among the subjects of Shibi Khagan (609–619) of the Eastern Turks, but that wasn't a suitable policy for China

⁶ Sui Shu 1997, 1844-5, 1879-80.

⁷ Sui Shu 1997, 1504, 1845.

⁸ Sui Shu 1997, 1533-4, 1580-1, 1841; Xiong 2006, 205-6.

itself. In order to cope with Koguryo, Turkic support was needed. Pei Ju therefore proposed that the Sui palace offer a Chinese princess to Shibi's younger brother, giving him the title of South Khagan. He was hesitant to accept as he was not strong enough to oppose his elder brother. Shibi was annoyed when he found out about China's actual plans. Before long, Pei Ju proposed that Shibi's Sogdian assistant Shi Shuxi be murdered, and thus summoned both him and his associates on the pretext of trading, and had them ambushed by the Chinese. Consequently, Shibi broke his ties with China and decided to retaliate. In 615, the Khagan planned to attack the emperor whilst travelling north. The Turks besieged Emperor Yang in Yanmen, and captured 39 of Yanmen's 41 cities, until eventually Shibi withdrew because of false information provided by his Chinese wife, Yicheng, about an attack that had taken place at the northern border.9

Koguryo

Emperor Yang claimed victory along the western and north-western borders, and then headed for Koguryo. Pei Ju stated that Koguryo had been a part of China from its very onset right into the Han and Jin eras. He told the emperor that he should summon the king of Koguryo to the palace, and to attack were the king not to obey. The emperor accepted this proposal and told the King of Koguryo that if he did not come to the Chinese palace, the Turks would be sent to Koguryo. King Yongyang did not obey; he never sent a tribute after 609, thus instigating China to attack Koguryo in 614. An unsuccessful campaign against Koguryo led to China breaking out in turmoil as the Sui collapsed.¹⁰

Having perfected traditional Chinese policies, Pei Ju truly stood out, but what did he manage to accomplish? Let us take a look:

1) Tributary and trading system: Pei Ju planned and re-established the tributary and trading system of the Han era. Records in the *Han Shu*, the official history of Han Dynasty written in 111, reveal the economic collapse of the Han Empire because of this system:

There came the further expenses of presents sent as gifts or to accompany escorts; of the courtesies exchanged at a distance of ten thousand *li*; and of the armed forces, too high for calculation... the strength of the people was spent, and resources were exhausted... robbers and thieves rose up everywhere and the roads were impassable. For these reasons, in his latter days Emperor Wu abandoned the lands of Luntai and proclaimed a decree expressing anguish and sorrow.¹¹

⁹ Sui Shu 1997, 89, 1582, 1876-9.

¹⁰ Sui Shu 1997, 89, 1581-2, 1875.

¹¹ Han Shu 1997, 3928-9; Hulsewé - Loewe 1979, 201-2.

According to this practice, delegations from Xiyu cities went to the capital and offered to pay tribute to the emperor in order to trade. Not only did they bring him and the upper echelon of society exotic goods, but they also elevated the Sui's political influence. While the Chinese already had influence in Xiyu, trade under the tribute system proved not to be particularly profitable. Pei Ju's tribute and trade system soon caused the collapse of the Sui economy. In fact, the Sui's collapse was related to Pei Ju's politics with the Xiyu.

- 2) Pei Ju feeds the ambitions of Emperor Yang: Emperor Yang wanted to create a world empire on the Han model. It was not only Pei Ju who encouraged it. Although there were ministers and advisers who opposed the expansionist policy of Yang their voice was not heard. Pei Ju's role in foreign policy was so important that Sima Guang blamed him for directing Emperor Yang. According to Sima Guang, the emperor felt that he was imitating Qin's first emperor and Han emperor Wu. It was as if China was weakened and ruined by Pei Ju's fantasies. Nevertheless, many researches claim that it is not fair to blame Pei Ju for the catastrophes at the border as he knew the emperor's inclinations and told him what he wanted to hear.¹³
- 3) "Right Arm": The region of Xiyu, that is Gansu and Xinjiang in its narrow sense, was referred to by Han sources as the "right arm of the Xiongnu". In order to defeat the Xiongnu, the Xiyu had to be seized. In his quest to restore the domains of the Han Empire, Pei Ju put Xiyu at the centre of his struggle against the Turkic Empire. This strategy essentially took the same form as the one which the Han Empire used in order to fight against Xiongnu, as reported by Zhang Qian. *Chanyu* himself had stated the importance of Xiyu for the Xiongnu.

The lands of Cheshi are fertile and fine, and lie close to the Xiongnu. If the Han acquire them and accumulate stocks of corn from a large number of harvests, the Xiongnu people and state would, without doubt, suffer loss. These lands must not be left uncontested.¹⁴

In a policy aimed at destroying the power of the Xiongnu, the *Han Shu* clearly records that Xiyu was placed at the centre of the strategy: "the Yumen was opened so as to communicate with the Xiyu, and in order to sever the right arm of the Xiongnu".¹⁵

Pei Ju, naturally, regarded Xiyu as the "right hand of the Turks". His book *Xiyu Tuji* gave detailed information about the political situation, rulers, geographical conditions, traditions, food, and clothing—in other words the culture—of Xiyu. Pei Ju also studied maps showing roads leading westward. In the introduction of his

¹³ PAN 1997, 117, 124.

¹² PAN 1997, 119.

¹⁴ Han Shu 1997, 3923; Hulsewé - Loewe 1979, 187-8.

¹⁵ Han Shu 1997, 3928; Hulsewé - Loewe 1979, 197-8.

book (only the preface of the book has survived), he wrote that the Han Empire had opened the road to the Xiyu and expanded its control over the region. According to him, China's power had now reached the Xiyu, but the Western Turks and the Tuyuhuns ruled over most of the peoples in the region, preventing them from coming to China to pay tribute. He advocated that the Sui Emperor would lure all peoples, gain their support, and thus defeat the Turks and the Tuyuhun. 16

4) "Prevent Unification!": According to Pei Ju's strategy, it was very important to prevent the Turks from collaborating with the Tuyuhun of Southern Xiyu. On the other hand, one of the goals of China's Xiongnu policy during the Han period was to prevent the Xiongnu from joining the Qiang and Yuezhi peoples of the Southern Xiyu. This, too, is clearly recorded in Han Shu:

In the age of Emperor Xiao Wu, policy was directed towards controlling the Xiongnu, in the realization of the danger that they might form a union with the western states and alliance with the southern Qiang. The Chinese thereupon demarcated the area west of Yellow River; a line of four commanderies was established... in order to sever the right arm of the Xiongnu and to separate them from the southern Qiang and Yuezhi.¹⁷

The Sui Empire followed the same policy against the Turkic Empire, and ultimately achieved the same results. Pei Ju's divisive tactics required that the Turkic peoples not merge with the Tuyuhun.

- 5) Aggressive expansionism: Pei Ju advocated an aggressive expansionist policy and was deeply influenced by the Confucian political ambition to restore the Han Empire. He provided the intellectual foundation for Emperor Yang's expansion policy. The exacerbation of his aggressive expansionism perhaps marked the end of the empire. Although Pei Ju needed the support of the Turks during the Korean-Chinese War of 614, he continued his aggressive and divisive policy towards them by deciding to kill Shibi's Sogdian assistant. This perhaps drew the Turkic Empire's attention towards China, which ultimately marked the end of the Sui.
- 6) The northern route passing through Tujue Khagan's yurt: According to Xiyu Tuji's preface in Pei Ju's biography, there are three routes from Dunhuang to Xihai (the Western Sea), including the northern route, starting from Yiwu and passing through Puleihai Tiele 蒲類海鐵勒 (Barköl Töles), the Tujue Khagan's yurt (centre), and "rivers flowing north" arriving in Fulin and reaching the "Western Sea". 19

This route is not mentioned often in history records or itineraries. There are two possible reconstructions:

¹⁶ Pan 1997, 117, 209.

¹⁷ Han Shu 1997, 3928; Hulsewé - Loewe 1979, 197-8.

¹⁸ PAN 1997, 117, 209.

¹⁹ Sui Shu 1997, 1578.

- (i.) The "rivers flowing north" may be rivers such as the Chu and Seyhun (Sir Derya). The road must pass north of the Aral Sea and the Caspian Sea. The Turkic Khagan was Western in origin, whose "yurt" or centre could in fact be the city of Tokmak (Suyab). Xuan Zang had visited this city.
- (ii.) The "rivers flowing north" may refer to the Ili and Chu rivers. Accordingly, if one sets off from Qumul, passes through the territories of Barköl and Töles, one then arrives at the Western Turkic Khagan's "yurt" in the north of Kucha and the Mount "Sanmi" (according to Chinese sources). After that, if one crosses the Ili and Chu rivers, passes north of the Aral and the Caspian seas, one would ultimately reach the Black Sea.

One rare record about "passing Turkic Khagan's yurt" is to be found in the travelogues of Wu Gong (8th century). He sets off from Chang'an and travels to the Uighur Khagan's yurt in the north because the Dunhuang region was under Tibetan occupation, whereupon he follows the northern fringes of the Taklamakan Desert and the southern foothills of Tianshan, until he ultimately reaches Kucha.²⁰

7) "Do not tease the Turks!": The Ancient Chinese led sedentary live. Their steppe Turkic counterparts, on the other hand, were nomads. Despite this, we know that, even in the earliest historical records, the Chinese had been able to keep the mighty Turkic armies away from their borders through calm, silent diplomacy, and that they had even managed to divide them. Turkic peoples, in contrast, were known to be short tempered, while the Chinese maintained their tranquility, but were also sly and two-faced. When Turkic peoples were shown respect, they quickly calmed down. However, when they realized that they had been deceived, they were quick to draw their swords on a moment's notice. Pei Ju understood the Turks very well, and thus attempted to trick them in order to divide them. Yet, he could not calculate the degree of their anger after they learned that they were tricked. Although he successfully managed to deceive and thus put the Turkic peoples against one another, they retaliated, thus rendering the Chinese unable to fully understand their character for centuries to come.

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²⁰ YILDIRIM 2015, 21–39.

Art in Mongolia Between the 6th and 8th Centuries: Cultural Diversity in the Arts of the Turks

AH RIM PARK*

Abstract

The 6th to 8th-century steppe arts in Mongolia were based on the artistic trends running through the active relations between the nomads, such as the Turks, and cultural agents like the Sogdians, who covered the steppe road and the Silkroad from China, Mongolia, East Turkestan, and West Turkestan. Two recently discovered tombs, the Bayannuur Tomb and the Pugu Tomb, as well as the Shiveet Ulaan clearly exhibit the tastes of nomadic people residing along the Silk Road. The burial objects and practices shown in these tombs can shed a light on the cultural background of the buried as well as the cultural interaction along the Steppe Route. The Shiveet Ulaan ritual complex displays extraordinary artistic cultural exchanges and is the beginning of the combination between the Turkic and the Chinese style in the building of ritual complexes.

Keyword: Turks, Sogdians, Bilge Khagan, Kul Tegin, Shiveet Ulaan, Bayannuur Tomb, Pugu Yitu Tomb

1. Introduction

The arts of the Turks in the period from the 6th to the 8th centuries in Mongolia were not well known until recently. Originally, Turkic art and archaeology are known for horse burials, rock carvings of armed warriors mounted on a horse, ritual complexes, and stone sculptures.

The situation has changed thanks to new discoveries from central Mongolia in the provinces of Töv Arkhangai, and Bulgan. The continuing excavations of the memorial complex of Bilge Khagan, located at Khöshöö Tsaidam, Khashaat District, Arkhangai Province, and the ritual complex at Shiveet Ulaan, located at Ar

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Khondii, Orkhon District, Bulgan Province, have shown the unique significance of the Turkic ritual complexes. The Shiveet Ulaan site, especially, has been excavated for five years and has yielded many interesting features revealing the unique nature of the Turkic ritual complex.

Furthermore, recent excavations made in the Bayannuur Tomb and the Pugu Yitu Tomb in central Mongolia have provided extraordinary perspectives on the nomads on the Steppe Route. The murals, the tomb epitaph, as well as the burial objects, such as Byzantine coins and textiles, and the burial customs of the Bayannuur tomb and Pugu Yitu Tomb are an exceptional testimony to the complicated cultural mixtures in 7th-century Mongolia.

Those findings from Mongolia are intricately intertwined with contemporary finds in East and West Turkestan as well as in China. The Turks interacted with the Sogdians, who acted as intermediate agents between the East and the West. The Afrasiab murals in Samarkand (modern Uzbekistan) have been dated to the mid-7th century, and according to one of the interpretations the major figures in the western wall represent the portrait of the Samarkand King Varhuman and possibly a depiction of the Western Turkic Khagan receiving foreign envoys, and having a hunting and a procession ceremony. On the other hand, in China, the descendants of the immigrant Sogdians have left unique funerary monuments embodying both the Sogdian and the Chinese secular and funerary art traditions.

By considering all related materials that can enhance our understanding of the artistic diversity of the Turks and the artistic contacts between the Turks and the Sogdians, the current research aims to analyze the acculturation of the Turks and the Sogdians. This study discusses the three major monuments approximately dated to the second half of the 7th century in Mongolia—the Bayannuur tomb, Pugu Yitu Tomb, and the Shiveet Ulaan ritual complex—in order to understand the nature of the acculturation along the Steppe Route.

2. Funerary art of Mongolia in the 6th-8th centuries: The tomb murals at Ulaan Kherem, Bayannuur District, Bulgan Province

Two recently excavated tombs in central Mongolia, the Bayannuur Tomb and the Pugu Yitu Tomb, present significant evidence of the intermingling of different cultures in the second half of the 7th century in central Mongolia. They were built during period of Tang domination in the steppe (630–87), between the First Turkic Empire (552–630) and the Second Turkic Empire (687–745).¹

From July to September 2011, the joint research team from Mongolia and Kazakhstan excavated a tomb with murals at Ulaan Kherem, Bayannuur District, Bulgan Province, Mongolia. The tomb is the first excavated mural tomb in Mongolia to date (fig.1). It is dated approximately to the second half of the 7th century.

¹ Steinhardt – Erdenebold – Park 2016; Park 2019; Steinhardt – Erdenebold – Park 2018; Steinhardt – Erdenebold – Park 2017; Steinhardt – Erdenebold – Park 2014; Park 2020.

The structure and mural subjects of the tomb as well as the style of the figure paintings resemble those of the mural tombs in the subsidiary burials of Zhaoling near the tomb of the Tang emperor Taizong (r. 626–49), most of which were constructed in the second half of the 7th century. They also follow the funerary art tradition in terms of the placement of paintings of the Azure Dragon and the White Tiger, two of the four guardian gods of cardinal points, as well as the pavilion architecture, the monstrous mask, and the lotus flower. This tradition was established by the nomadic people known as the Xianbei in the late Northern and Southern Dynasties period during the 6th century, and continued under the Tang dynasty in the 7th century.

Another recently excavated tomb in the Zaamar District, Töv Province, yielded a stone epitaph dated to 678. The tomb's occupant belonged to the Pugu tribe of the Tiele. The geographical closeness and the similarities in the tomb structure and burial objects found in this tomb and the Bayannuur Tomb suggests that the later can be dated to the second half of the $7^{\rm th}$ century as well, and more precisely to around the 670s. The stylistic analysis of the murals and burial objects from the Bayannuur Tomb also suggests that the tomb can be dated to the same period, i.e. during the period of Tang occupation after the collapse of the First Turkic Empire. Additionally, according to the scientific analysis of the tomb figurines and the lime plaster of the murals the Bayannuur Tomb can be dated to AD 670 \pm 70.

The figurines from the two tombs resemble those found in the early Tang tombs located in the Chinese city of Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, which provides strong evidence of Tang Chinese influence on the region. However, in terms of materials, techniques, and pigments, there are certainly different features from those in the Central Plains region of China. Actually, they are more like those from the Astana tomb complex in Turfan in the Chinese region of Xinjiang, which appear to have a close relation with sculptures and murals in Central Asia. Thus, the tomb figurines from the Bayannuur Tomb and Pugu Yitu Tomb should be considered not only in the context of Tang Chinese tombs but also in comparison with sculptures and paintings from Central Asia.

Female wooden figurines from the Pugu Tomb wear a rectangular shaped fragment of a textile with a pearl roundel pattern. Several fragments of such a textile from the Pugu Yitu Tomb may provide more evidence of the Sogdian connection found in Mongolia. The presence of a number of those textiles in the arms of the wooden figurines displays a unique acculturation of Central Asian materials for funerary purposes.

It is possible that the Pugu ruler governing the Bayannuur and Zaamar regions invited a Chinese artisan to construct his tomb, but the tomb occupants definitely embody a certain nomadic taste and culture exhibited by the unique burial practice and the rich gold and silver ornaments, a culture that was a result of the broad interactions with various peoples ranging from the territories of Byzantium to China.

The burial objects from the Bayannuur Tomb also clearly exhibit the tastes of

nomadic people residing along the Silk Road and the Stepp Route. The tomb figurines and Byzantine golden coin imitations discovered both there and at the Pugu Yitu Tomb indicate that there were active exchanges with China and the Byzantine Empire.

The tomb occupant of the Bayannuur Tomb was cremated, and the ashes were put inside a small wooden box that was covered with a textile with golden leaf decoration and buried together with silk bags. They contained a Turkic-style golden cup, 40 Byzantine coin imitations, and other gold ornaments. The rectangular wooden box was placed inside a wooden coffin with a wide top and narrow bottom. Additionally, in the tomb chamber one can observe a silk screen painting with a wooden frame. Male and female figures surrounded by a landscape are recognizable on the fragments of a silk painting found inside. This type of a silk screen painting with a human figure under a tree is a well-known motif popular during the Tang dynasty of China.

While the wall paintings of the Bayannuur Tomb are a clear sign of the adoption of the Chinese funerary mural style, the burial custom—namely, the interment of a cremated body inside a wooden coffin covered with the golden leaf textile along with a silk bag with 40 Byzantine coin imitations and a Turkic-style golden vessel and ornaments—is certainly different from that of the contemporary Chinese tombs.

The 40 gold coins from the Bayannuur Tomb seem quite unusual compared to examples found in China in view of their number, techniques, and general burial practices. Only one or two, or at most four or five Byzantine coins, are usually buried in one tomb in China. The tombs in China where Byzantine coins were discovered, such as those of the Sogdian descendants in the southern suburb of Guyuan, Ningxia, contained burial objects related to Central Asia as well.

A Byzantine and a Sasanian coin found in a tomb might speak not only of cultural exchanges between regions where the same kind of Byzantine coins have been discovered, but also of the background of the tomb's occupant, the process of regional transmission of such Central Asian objects, and the possible location of a workshop. For instance, as most of the coins from the Bayannuur Tomb are replicas based on Byzantine prototypes, they are assumed to have been made not in Byzantium but in Sogdiana. Among them were imitations of Tiberius II Constantine (r. 578–82), Phocas (r. 602–10), and Heraclius (r. 610–41).

Currently, it is not easy to precisely determine where those coins were made. A. Naymark suggests that some of the coins are not found in Sogdiana (fig. 2).² They depict a human head and a bust, a profile found on neither Byzantine nor Sogdian coins. The motifs in this sort of coins can be found in the vessels of a Central Asian type, like those found in the southern suburb burials in Datong, Shanxi, China, during the Northern Wei dynasty (386–534). Ultimately, both a Byzantine coin and

² Naymark 2019.

a Central Asian vessel, which is often interpreted as a representation of Sasanian or Sogdian style, could have been used as a prototype. The fact that the manufacturer decided to use such a unique model is very peculiar: golden coin imitations with a motif of a human figure found on Sasanian or Sogdian vessels. The fact that there was a manufacturer who knew the contexts both of a Byzantine golden coin and a Sasanian- or Sogdian-style vessel might shed some light on the artistic mindset of the nomads in Eurasia.

Parallels to the Turkic-style vessel found in the Bayannuur tomb were discovered in China, Mongolia, Xinjiang (East Turkestan), and West Turkestan, either as actual vessels or depicted in a mural or sculptured as a part of a stone statuary. Among the numerous stone sculptures of Eurasia, a Turkic-style statue holding a cup is a sign of a sculpture belonging to the Turkic period. It is often seen in the banquet depictions in Central Asia and in the Chinese funerary arts related to the Sogdians.

As discussed above, the burial objects and the burial practice shown in the Bayannuur Tomb and the Pugu Yitu Tomb can deepen the understanding both of the cultural background of the occupants of two major tombs in Mongolia as well of the cultural interaction along the Steppe Route.

3. The ritual complexes and stone sculptures of the 6th-8th centuries in Mongolia

The ritual complexes and stone sculptures of the 6th–8th centuries in Mongolia are important monuments of the Turkic period that signify the acculturation in ritual architecture and art.³

In Mongolia, more than 730 Turkic stone statues in 114 districts of 21 provinces have been registered. Typically, Turkic funerary monuments consist of one or two stone statues, but occasionally sacred offering sites of eminent members of the elite are marked by more than a dozen. Some well-known Turkic ritual complexes are those of Kul Tegin (732), Bilge Khagan (735), and Tonyukuk (720). Recently excavated ritual complexes include those at Shiveet Ulaan, Dongoin Shiree, Khaya Khudag, Gunburd, Nomgon, etc. The Khaya Khudag and the Gunburd sites were excavated by the National Museum of Mongolia in 2018 and 2019. Two stone sculptures of males in the style of *balbal*, ritual offerings of 14 horses and two sheep, and small potteries in a canal have been excavated from the Khaya Khudag site. At the Gunburd site, several ritual complexes have been discovered. One of them yielded a large stone sculpture of a seated figure and three stone coffin plates

³ This part of the article has been prepared on the basis of two visits to Mongolia in 2018 and 2019. The trip was made possible with the generous help of Professor Erdenebold of the Mongolian University of Science and Technology. It was supported by the 3-year grant of the Korea Research Foundation entitled *Art of the Mongolian Steppe in the 6th–8th Centuries*. For the ritual complexes and stone statues of the 6th–8th centuries, see: BAYAR 1997; EREGZEN 2016; SAMASHEV – TSEVENDORZH – ONGGARULY – CHOTBAYEV 2016; STEINHARDT – ERDENEBOLD – PARK 2018; PARK 2019; PARK 2020.

carved with a floral motif. The seated sculpture appears to be similar to those found in the Bilge Khagan complex.

An international joint survey by Professor Takashi Osawa from the Graduate School of Languages and Cultures, Osaka University, and the Archaeological Research Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Mongolia made an important discovery at Dongoin Shiree in the Tüvshinshiree District of the Sükhbaatar Province in 2015–16. About 14 stone steles have been found at the site. The sizes and the numbers of Dongoin Shiree stone steles are impressive. The highest stele is 6.4 m, the shortest one is 3.32 m, and their average height is 4.43 m. Some inscriptions and 30 tamga signs have been found on the statues. This was the first discovery of Turkic inscriptions in eastern Mongolia. The Dongoin Shiree site located in the southeast of Mongolia is a unique example that includes only huge steles installed in two rectangular rows inside the complex. Those in the front of the stone coffin have more tamga signs. The shape of the steles resembles the stone statuary at the Tonyukuk ritual site with a rather circular contour. It is certainly different from the Chinese-style stele found at the Bilge Kagan site.

Examples of Turkic stone sculptures that show early features in the evolution of the Turkic ritual complex can be the Xiaohongnahai sculpture in Xinjiang, China, the Choiren sculpture in the Mongolian province of Dorno Gobi, and sculptures from the ritual complex at Ongot in the Altanbulag District, Töv Province, as well as the ritual complex at Shiveet Ulaan in the Bayan-Agt District, Bulgan Province. Each of these could represent an early type of sculpture for the respective region.

The Xiaohongnahai sculpture clearly indicates that the Turks knew the iconography and human representation of Sogdian art. The Xiaohongnahai stone statue in western Xinjiang is suggested to have been built for Niri Kagan 泥利可汗 (r. 587–99) of the Western Turkic Empire in 599–604. On its lower body there is a Sogdian inscription of 20 lines. The shape of the crown is probably derived from the Sogdian one, which can be ultimately traced back to an Iranian-style royal headwear. Both the hand gesture and the seated posture with a cup or ewer in the hand of the Turkic stone statue are assumed to have been largely borrowed from those of Sogdian-style nobility banqueters.⁴

On the other hand, the rather primitive representation of the face and the body of the Choiren stone sculpture resembles traditional steppe stone sculptures such as the *balbal*. It has a round carved face without too many details marking the hair and the costume.

The 28 balbal sculptures with a primitive carving of a head on rectangular or circular stone at Ongot have been considered as an early example of Turkic funerary art, similarly to the ritual complex built by the Rouran or the Xueyantuo in Altanbulag, Töv. The Ongot statuary is a sign of the transformation from deer stone or balbals to a style of human stone sculpture with a round shape in central Mongolia.

⁴ Hayashi 2006.

It was at Shiveet Ulaan that the Turkic-style funerary ritual complex was established. The Shiveet Ulaan ritual complex has been excavated for five years by a joint excavation team from Mongolia and Kazakhstan (fig. 3). Contrary to the usual location of a Turkic ritual complex on a plain, it is located on the top of a high hill. According to the 2015 excavation, the ritual building in the center of the platform of piled stones has an octagonal shape (107×45 m) and was made of red sandstone.

To the east of the ritual building are placed about 11 stone human figures, 8 stone lions (some have a *tamga* sign on the leg), and four stone sheep. To the east of the stone sculptures is a square stone stele base (height 1.54 m, width 1.04–0.83 m, thickness 0.55 m). The stele itself (height 2.24 m, width 0.82 m, thickness 0.24 m) is now placed in front of the foundation of the ritual building along with stone sculptures and its surface is carved with 60 different *tamga* signs. No Sogdian or Chinese inscriptions have been found.

There are some debates regarding the person to whom the Shiveet Ulaan ritual complex was dedicated. The laboratory analysis with radiocarbon dating of the wooden part of the log cabin from sector D8 of Shiveet Ulaan was made by the Japanese Institute of Accelerator Analysis in Kawasaki, Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan, on 21 July 2017. According to the analysis of the Institute, the date of the Shiveet Ulaan ritual complex corresponds to the years 665–71 or 685–91. It is approximately during the reign of Elteris Kutlu Khagan (r. 682–91), who established the Second Turkic Empire.

Unfortunately, no seated human sculpture, which is usually presumed to depict the occupant of the shrine, is left at the site. All human figures there are standing, holding cups and some other tools. A similar ritual complex consisting of a mound of piled stones located on top of a hill is the one at Shiveet Tolgoi in the Khashaat District, Arkhangai Province, located about 70 km away from Kharhorin and 50 km from Khöshöö Tsaidam. The head and a decorative pattern on the body of the male stone sculpture with a seated posture at Shiveet Tolgoi (height 160 cm) are preserved (fig. 4). Unfortunately, its whereabouts are currently unknown. The vivid floral patterns on the body of the seated sculpture resemble those on the seated sculpture (120×75×33 cm) found at the Tarnin Gol in the Bürd District, Övörkhangai Province, behind which is also a large mound of piled stones.

The difference between the Turkic stone statuary of the 7th century and the 8th century can be understood by comparing the Shiveet Ulaan complex with the Bilge Khagan complex. The Bilge Khagan and Kul Tegin ritual buildings show the remains of Chinese-style roof tiles which could have been part of a building with a rectangular plan imitating the Chinese wooden architecture, as indicated by the reconstruction of the complex. On the other hand, the octagonal-shaped ritual building at Shiveet Ulaan is certainly different from the Chinese prototype and might have stemmed from the steppe tradition, which can be observed in the remains of the octagonal- or circular-shaped Turkic ritual building at Bozok in Kazakhstan, at

Saryg-Bulun in Tuva, as well as at Voznesenka on the Dnieper River in Ukraine.5

In the Bilge Khagan ritual complex, the stone statues of the king and the queen were placed inside the ritual building. Near the complex, more than 10 other Turkic ritual complexes are distributed and some of them await to be excavated. According to the excavator, several balbals with inscriptions have been discovered inside the Bilge Khagan complex and it is not known why the balbals were buried inside the moat. The placement of the balbals at equal distance from each other inside the moat might have been intended from the beginning or it could have been a deliberate later interment. If the overall construction of the Turkic ritual complex of Bilge Khagan shows the adoption of a Chinese-style funerary system, the interment of balbals inside the complex might show the deliberate manifestation of the traditional steppe funerary practices, which included deer stones and steppe stone sculptures. If the balbals found inside the moat of a ritual complex are of the type developed from the deer stone tradition of the steppe, it is natural that they would have a primitive and flat representation of a human being, a clear sign that it is derived from the flatness of the deer stone.

4. Conclusion

Assumed to have been built for Elteris Kutlu Khagan (r. 682–92), who established the Second Turkic Empire, the Shiveet Ulaan ritual complex and the stone statuary built at the same time display features typical both for the steppe and for China. Some features of the Shiveet Ulaan that are not seen in the ritual complexes of Tonyukuk, Bilge Khagan, and Kul Tegin might be a sign of the original Turkic identity, which would later be discarded with the adoption of the Chinese style.

The Bayannuur Tomb and the Pugu Tomb, also dated to the second half of the 7th century, give an important context for the study of the Shiveet Ulaan site. While the Shiveet Ulaan site was built at the beginning of the Second Turkic Empire by the Ashina family, the two tombs were built during the period of Tang domination probably by the Pugu family. They indicate that the Ashina family and the Pugu family had different burial customs and a different manner of choosing how to accept foreign cultural elements. These three monuments from the second half of the 7th century reveal the ways in which the Turks and the Tiele (later the Uyghurs) accepted the Chinese funerary ritual system.

In Mongolia, the Turkic stone statuary and ritual complexes are important monuments for this period that signify the close relations between the Turks and the Sogdians. Stone sculptures of the 7th and 8th centuries in Mongolia reveal the transmission to the steppes of the iconography of a banquet scene and a hand gesture, typical of the Sogdian arts found in Sogdiana and China.

According to the Jiu Tang Shu and the Xin Tang Shu, the ritual complexes of Bilge Khagan and Kul Tegin were built by Chinese artisans sent by the Tang

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⁵ Khabdulina 2010.

Xuanzong, which suggests that the Turkic ritual complexes with stone sculptures must have followed the Chinese funerary ritual system. However, the number and the composition of the Turkic sculptures of a human figure and an animal did not exactly follow the Chinese prototype. The inclusion of a seated figure and the representation of the most prominent figure in a cross-legged postition and holding a banquet cup have never been attested in sculptures of the royal and noble tombs of Tang China. The ritual complex at Shiveet Ulaan and some important sculptures of the Turkic period, including those at the Shiveet Tolgoi and the Xiaohongnahai, reveal that the sculptures of the Turks must have followed the iconography of the Sogdians (or an earlier one, of the Kushans and the Hephthalites). Thus, the Turkic ritual complex and the stone sculptures of that period exhibit both more traditional characteristics of Eurasian steppe stone sculptures and the deep influence of Sogdian iconography.

It was in the second half of the 6th century in China that extraordinary Sogdian funerary monuments were produced in several major cities like Xi'an and Taiyuan. The funerary couch from the tomb of An Jia in Xi'an, the stone sarcophagus of the tomb of Shi Jun in Xi'an, and the tomb of Yu Hong in Taiyuan show that the buried Sogdians had various interactions with the Turks. They even preceded the appearance of major Turkic stone statuaries in Mongolia and the famous Afrasiab murals in Uzbekistan. The Turks and the Sogdians depicted themselves in Chinese-style funerary couches and stone sarcophagi on which they manipulated their images within Chinese funerary iconography.

Even before the appearance of these Sogdian funerary relief sculptures, the presence of the Sogdians in China has been well attested by the Sogdian letters and tombs with frescos in Loulan, Xinjiang and Gaotai, Gansu during the Wei-Jin period (220–420). Metal wares of Central Asian style found along the Silk Road also attest to the wide presence of the Sogdians in China.

Some models of iconography not derived from Chinese precedents are certainly inspired by the Sogdians or derived originally from the arts of the Sasanian Persian relief sculptures and silver plates. The Sogdian murals in Samarkand and Varakhsha in Uzbekistan and Penjikent in Tajikistan are dated later than the related Sogdian funerary arts found in China. The similarities among these examples of the so-called Sogdian iconography were probably based on the painting models distributed ever since the Wei-Jin and the Northern and Southern Dynasties periods (3rd – 6th centuries). These models probably stemmed not only from murals but also from Sogdian or Central Asian metalware.

The routes and mediums of transmission must have been varied. Both the Silk Road and the Steppe Route must have played a role in the artistic transmission. The unique profile bust of a male figure from the golden coins found in the Bayannuur tomb is a good example of the depth of the interconnections between the Sogdians and the Turks.

In conclusion, the steppe arts in 6th to 8th-century Mongolia, including the

Bayannuur Tomb, the Pugu Tomb, the ritual complexes, and the stone statuaries of the Turks, followed the artistic trends running through the active contacts between nomads such as the Turks and cultural agents like the Sogdians, who traversed the Steppe Route and the Silk Road in China, Mongolia, and East and West Turkestan.

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Figures



Figure 1. A horse and a groom on the western wall of the first chamber, Bayannuur tomb



Figure 2. A Byzantine coin, Bayannuur tomb



Figure 3. Shiveet Ulaan ritual complex



Figure 4. Shiveet Tolgoi sculpture

The Tree Cult and the "Piece of Wood the Size of a Phallus"

EDINA DALLOS*

Abstract

In the 10th century, during his journey to the Volga River, Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān noted about the Bashkirs: "Each of them sculpts a piece of wood the size of a phallus and hangs it on himself. If he is about to undertake a trip or to meet an enemy, he kisses it and prostrates himself before it, saying: 'O my Lord, do unto me such and such.'" This statement by Ibn Faḍlān is undoubtedly based on some misunderstanding, as has already been ascertained by Zeki Velidi Togan. The present paper seeks to place it into a new theoretical and conceptual framework—and thus to offer an understanding of the possible meaning of this medieval account.

Keywords: tree cult, ethnology of Turkic peoples, totemism, ancestor-worship, group identity

In the 10th century, Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān¹ in his account of his trip to the Volga Bulgars briefly mentions the Bashkirs. There, we can read the following passage, which is rather enigmatic:

Each of them sculpts a piece of wood the size of a phallus and hangs it on himself. If he is about to undertake a trip or to meet an enemy, he kisses it and prostrates himself before it, saying: "O my Lord, do unto me such and such." I said to the interpreter: "Ask one of them as to their justification for this, and as to why he believes it to be his lord." He said: "I came out of

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¹ In 921, Caliph al-Muqtadir (r. 908–29, 929–32) accepted the invitation of the Volga Bulgars' ruler and sent a delegation to the land of the Bulgars. Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān was a member of this delegation and he wrote a detailed account of the trip, which lasted for almost one year.

something similar to it, and I do not know any creator of myself other than it."2

The "piece of wood the size of a phallus" described here has first been mentioned in the ethnographic literature by Zelenin.³ In his analysis of a shamanic rite, he interpreted Ibn Faḍlān's reference in the sense that the Bashkirs had some kind of a phallus cult. However, there is no trace of such a cult neither in the Bashkirian ethnography nor in the ethnography of Turkic peoples in general, which has already been established by Zeki Velidi Togan in his book about Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān's travels.⁴

Nevertheless, this passage has not yet been analysed from other aspects even though it raises several interesting issues. In my paper, I am going to concentrate on one aspect only: the material of the little sculpture. That is to say, the main research question is whether the wood itself is a "random" (readily available, therefore practical) material or whether it carries added meaning. My choice of topic was motivated by some studies and articles that interpret Turkic people's cults related to trees differently from previous analyses.⁵

Before detailing this particular issue, I must clarify which concepts in Ibn Faḍlān's description are related to the piece of wood that is the object of our study. The following features can be identified in his description:

- 1. The Bashkirs sculpt a small piece of wood which they hang on themselves.
- 2. It is significant when they are about to undertake a trip or to meet an enemy.
- 3. In these potential crisis situations:
 - a) they kiss this object;
 - b) they prostrate themselves before it;
 - c) they pray to it.
- 4. They call it their Lord because they came out of something similar to it.
- 5. They do not know any creator of themselves other than it.

Hereinafter, I am going to examine two elements of the text that are dominant. These are transcendence and origin, which are present in the following segments:

I: transcendence (divine/helping power): 3; 4; 5

II: origin: 4; 5

In the text, these are somehow combined in relation to the piece of wood. Such a relation between these two aspects is not at all untypical—ethnology calls this

² English translation: MCKEITHEN (1979). The interpretation problems of the Arabic text are not related to the topic of my paper, but I must indicate that even in this short passage there are some. Information about them can be found in previous editions and translations, e.g.: Togan 1939; Krachkovsky 1939; Kovalevsky 1956; Simon 2007—the latter with a detailed description of the text editions and the philological literature related to them.

³ ZELENIN 1928, 83-98.

⁴ Togan 1939, 148-53.

⁵ E.g.: Kypchakova 1983, 130–6; Sagalaev – Oktyabr'skaya 1990, 43–63; Ivanics 2017, 172–7.

phenomenon ancestor worship, one type of which is totemism. For Turkic peoples, the totem was basically an animal (the best-known example is the wolf in the case of the Orkhon-Turks).⁶ However, some scholars also suppose the totemic nature of trees or the descent from some tree ancestor,⁷ especially on the basis of the sources that I have also endeavoured to study. In my paper, I will give examples in which one of the two concepts (transcendence or origin⁸) is related to a tree. I am going to present five such examples originating from different eras and locations.

a) Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī

Our earliest source is Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī's dictionary from the 11th century. The Muslim scholar working in the Seljuq Empire compiled a dictionary of contemporary Turkic languages and dialects. Under the entry *Tengri*, whose first meaning is given as "God", he also includes the following: "The infidels – may God destroy them! – call the sky TANKRIY (täŋri); also anything that is imposing in their eyes they call TANKRIY (täŋri), such as a great mountain or tree, and they bow down to such things."

Thus, albeit succinctly, this source provides the description of a kind of a tree cult.

b) Sources referring to the Uighurs

Form the 13th–14th centuries, there are several sources referring to the Uighurs where, in a myth about the origin of the ruler, one or two trees play a key role. This legend was recorded in most detail by Juwainī (1226–83):

In that age two of the rivers of Qara-Qorum, one called the Tughla and the other the Selenge, flowed together in a place called Qamlanchu; and close together between these two rivers there stood two trees; the one they call *qusuq*, which is a tree shaped like a pine, whose leaves in winter resemble those of a cypress and whose fruit is like a pignon both in shape and taste; the other they call *toz*. Between the two trees there arose a great mound, and a light descended on it from the sky; and day by day the mound grew greater. On seeing this strange sight, the Uighur tribes were filled with astonishment; and respectfully and humbly they approached the mound: they heard sweet and pleasant sounds like singing. And every night a light shone to a

⁶ The role of the wolf is not entirely clear in the early culture of the Turkic peoples. Here are some important studies with further literature: CLAUSON 1964; SHCHERBAK 1993; GOLDEN 1982, 42–4; GOLDEN 2018.

⁷ E.g. Kypchakova 1983, 134; Ivanics 2017, 174.

⁸ The "family tree", signalling origin only as a symbol in many languages and cultures, does not constitute the topic of my paper. Nor do the beliefs existing in many cultures, which are based on the relationship of a given person with a given tree (e.g. when a tree is planted after the birth of a child).

⁹ Dankoff – Kelly 1982–1985, II, 342–3.

distance of thirty paces around that mound, until just as with pregnant women at the time of their delivery, a door opened and inside there were five separate tent-like cells in each of which sat a man-child: opposite the mouth of each child hung a tube which furnished milk as required; while above the tent was extended a net of silver. The chiefs of the tribes came to view this marvel and in reverence bowed the knee of fealty. When the wind blew upon the children they gathered strength and began to move about. At length they came forth from the cells and were confided to nurses, while the people performed all the ceremonies of service and honour. As soon as they were weaned and were able to speak they inquired concerning their parents, and the people pointed to those two trees. They approached the trees and made such obeisance as dutiful children make to their parents; they also showed respect and honour to the ground in which the trees grew. The trees then broke into speech and said: 'Good children, adorned with the noblest virtues, have ever trodden this path, observing their duty to their parents. May your lives be long, and your names endure forever!' 10

The legend recorded in chapter 22 of Yuanshi (1370) is similar in a number of points. It is the myth of origin of the Uighur Bögü Kaghan (r. 759–80), who was born from a tree:

There was in that country (where the Uigurs originally lived) a mountain called Ho-lin, from which two rivers took their rise, the T'u-hu-la and the Sie-ling-k'o. It happened once in the night-time that a stream of light fell from heaven upon a tree standing between the two rivers; whereupon the tree began to swell like a pregnant woman, and after nine months and ten days gave birth to five boys. The youngest received the name Bu-k'o han.¹¹

Now, I have no opportunity for a detailed analysis. I only want to emphasize that in both sources the tree plays the role of a parent, so the notion of descent from a tree is present. Rashīd ad-Dīn also mentions that the Uighur Bögü Kaghan was born from a tree: "[...] it is said that he [Bögü Kaghan] was born from a tree." Marco Polo also gives an account of a legend known to him: "Icoguristan is a large province [...] They say that the king, who first ruled them, was not of human origin, but born of one of those swellings that the sap produces on the bark of trees, and that we call *escal*." ¹³

¹⁰ Boyle 1997, 55–6.

¹¹ Bretschneider 1888, 247.

¹² Hetagurov 1952, 139.

¹³ BENEDETTO 1931, 73.

c) The Oghuznāme

Our next source is of internal origin, i.e. a Turkic-language one, where the tree carries at least one of the two functions mentioned above (transcendence or origin): the *Oghuznāme* is written in Uighur letters from the 16th century.¹⁴ In it, on the occasion of a voluntary surrender the son of Urus Bey says the following to Oghuz Khan: "Our *qut* has become your *qut*. Our clan has become the clan of your tree." ¹⁵

I would like to add two comments to this brief extract. The word qut is hard to translate. In early sources it mostly has the meaning of "the charisma of the ruler", and later "blessing", "life force", "fortune", or some kind of "soul". ¹⁶ In this particular source it is hard to define its exact meaning and relate it with one word only, which is why I have not translated it. A second comment must be added to the second sentence, to the word I translated as "clan". In the original Turkic text, there is the word $uru\gamma$, whose first meaning was (in the Old Turkic and later, too) "seed", ¹⁷ which later came to metaphorically mean "descendant", "originating from the same ancestor", and thus also "clan". ¹⁸ Therefore, the extract can be translated as follows: "Our seeds (descendants) have now become the seeds (descendants) of your tree."

d) The Chinggisnāme

Our next sources are the *Chinggisnāmes*, recorded in the 17th–18th centuries (in the Volga Tatar literary language), which were compiled from previous fragments based on earlier oral tradition and court historiography. According to the texts, Chinggis Khan called together his beys at the foundation of his state and gave them territories and peoples, and he also "[...] created people-units by giving each and every bey a *tamga*, a bird, a tree and a password." ¹⁹

Here are but two brief extracts about how this happened (there are fifteen such *tamga*, bird, tree, and password units listed in the text, the sixteenth one being Chinggis's own):

Then thus spake Chinggis Khan: – Ej Kereit-bey, thy tree shall be the linden, thy bird the goose, thy password the jackal and thy tamga shall be an eye²⁰ [...] Then thus spake Chinggis Khan: – Ej Borkit-bey, thy tree shall be the

¹⁹ IVANICS – USMANOV 2002, 56; 228.

¹⁴ Most recently on the dating: DANKA 2019. Naturally, this is the time of its recording, not its creation, as the text is a compilation of various written texts and oral-traditions.

¹⁵ The latest edition: DANKA 2019. Translation of this sentence: "Herewith, our regal charisma (*qut*) has become your regal charisma. Herewith, our progeny (*uruy* lit. 'seed') has become the progeny of your lineage (*iyač*, lit. 'tree')." (Danka 2019, 95).

¹⁶ For the meanings of *qut*: CLAUSON 1972, 594, SEVORTYAN 1974–2003, VI, 176–8.

¹⁷ Clauson 1972, 214–215; Sevortyan 1974–2003, I, 604–6

¹⁸ Cf. CLAUSON 1972, 214.

²⁰ IVANICS-USMANOV 2002, 57; 228.

maple, thy bird the hoopoe, thy password Buruj [the name of a clan] and thy tamga shall be the letter $amza^{21}$ [...]²²

After this, the text provides the list of tamgas, birds, trees, and passwords.²³

The fact that a community or social group has some kind of communal attachment to a certain tree species is first shown here. However, it is also worth mentioning that the signs or markers this source talks about had not originated internally and did not characterize a given clan for a long time but were given to the people-units ordered under the *beys* from the outside: from Chinggis himself.²⁴ Nevertheless, albeit only in traces, we can find similar matches in some 19th- and 20th-century records about Altaian and Khakas peoples. Unfortunately, the available data are not the result of systematic collection and, what is more, it is clear even from these scattered accounts that the system was already incomplete and inconsistent at the time. Nevertheless, let me present some interesting data.

e) The Khakas čula and some Altaian data

Potanin recorded a few Altaian Turkic clan names during his trip to north-western Mongolia in 1879-80, 25 as well as some fragments of legends and rhymes related to them. Some of these provide an explanation to the name and origin of the clans. Here, we can find some short notes about tree-origins, for example the Irqït clan is supposed to have originated from the rgai (Cotoneaster) tree. According to another source, the father of the Irqït is the rgai and their mother is the birch tree. 27

²¹ Arabic hamza.

²² IVANICS-USMANOV 2002, 58; 228.

²³ The following tree species are mentioned: larch, Caucasian elm, field elm, birch, beech, elm, willow, linden, rowan, oak, maple, juniper, sandalwood, ash, alder, and Chinggis's tree is the plane.

²⁴ Delyan Russev drew my attention to another possibility: "Isn't it possible that these were actually 'internal', traditional markers that were ideologically linked to Chinggis in the literary tradition?" The suggestion cannot be dismissed a priori.

²⁵ Potanin 1883, 7.

²⁶ POTANIN gives this form (*peaū*) both in Russian and Turkic environments, even though it can be found neither in the Russian nor in the Turkic languages in this form. The Latin equivalent (Cotoneaster) that Potanin provides is the name of a shrub. Equivalents of the Mongolian word *irghai* (Cotoneaster) can be found in the Turkic languages of Southern Siberia as well as in Russian as Mongolian loan words, even though with different meanings. Cf. Altaian *irgay* 'honeysuckle' (Lonicera) (Verbitsky 1884, 458), which is also a creeping shrub, Russian *irgay* 'saskatoon' (Amelanchier); 'meadowsweet' (Filipendula); cotoneaster (EsBE 1890–1907, XIII, 310). Further data: Ramstedt 1935, 216; Vasmer 1950–1958, I, 486; Räsänen 1969, 166.

²⁷ POTANIN 1883, 7.

The Qara ('black") brothers' origin is said to be the following: "They came out of the black kind of iron, from the inside of the black tree."28

Among the Khakas people, L'vov and Usmanov recorded in the 1970s that their informants had another group identity besides their clan (sök 'bone; clan'), which was their čula: always the name of a tree species.29 In the Turkic languages of Southern Siberia, čula (Altaian šula) means "name, nickname, honorary name, title".30 The čula tree-names and the clan names did not provide a matching or complementary system-whereas 43 clan names were recorded, there were only 10 different čulas. What is more, several clans shared the same čula and sometimes two or three different čulas occurred within one clan. However, one informant said that a man and a woman with the same čula did not get married,31 which suggests that the čula as an exogamous group marker was somehow related to the clan system (at least in the given social group). The reason for the incomplete system may be that the structure that once had fully existed lost its meaning and function by the mid-20th century and at the time of the recording only its remnants, mostly remembered by the elderly, could be found by the researchers.

In summary, let us see what conclusions can be drawn from the sources listed here. We have several sources referring to the Uighurs that point to a tree ancestor. The only longer text, Juwaini, also mentions the element of religious respect (kneeling and kissing the ground) besides the miraculous birth; therefore, we can say that origin and transcendence are strongly combined here. It is worth emphasizing again that this is not the myth of origin of a certain clan, tribe or people, but the Uighurs only gave this explanation about the origin of their ruler.³² In the Oghuznāme, the tree "only" refers to the origin, which is only partly biological and strongly linked to loyalty. The "common" trees have a rather different nature in the texts of the *Chinggisnāmes*, where the non-consanguineous, newly-created

²⁸ Potanin 1883, 8.

²⁹ This collection has not been published; some parts are found in: SAGALEV - OK-TYABR'SKAYA 1990, 54-9.

³⁰ Some authors incorrectly identify the Khakas word čula (Altaian šula) with the Altaian word yula / d'ula 'a kind of soul; the soul of the deceased'. (For the word yula: VERBITSKY 1884, 102; Anokhin 1929, 253-8; Malov 1929, 330). Based on the correspondence, they try to ascribe some sacred content to the word čula, which is totally wrong! (So did SAGALAEV -OKTYABR'SKAYA 1990, 56, 194; IVANICS 2017, 174). For the Khakas word čula / Altaian šula: Verbitsky 1884, 449; Dyrenkova 1940, 282, 408; Räsänen 1969, 115; Ryumina-Syrkasheva – Kuchigasheva 1995, 100.

³¹ SAGALAEV – OKTYABR'SKAYA 1996, 56.

³² This topic deserves a separate study, so here I am only mentioning the fact that in 762 Bögü Kaghan converted to Manichaeism, which he then made a state religion. The legends and legend-fragments describing Bögü's miraculous birth show an origin which is very different from the legends of other Turkic peoples: instead of the commonly known animal origin, here we can find a tree-parent. The two facts (Manichaeism and the markedly different legend of tree-origin) may be related to each other.

communities are given common markers in the form of birds, trees, tamgas, and passwords.³³ In the latest and rather fragmented Altaian and Khakas data, the tree is a kind of a marker of origin.

Table 1. Origin and transcendence

Source	ORIGI	TRANSCENDENCE					
	individual	communal					
Kāshgharī	_	_	+				
Uighur "royal"	_		+				
legend	Т	_					
Oghuznāme	_	_ > +	_				
Chinggisnāme	_	_ > +	_				
Khakas čula	_	+	_				

In the table, the signs ->+ mark a movement: the non-common origin is replaced by a fictitious common origin or at least some kind of expression thereof. In the case of the $Oghuzn\bar{a}me$ it appears as a part of the act of surrender, and in the $Chinggisn\bar{a}me$ it is a sign of the integration of a newly-created group into the military and imperial order.

It is clear from the table that origin and transcendence are only combined in the Uighur myth of origin but, as we could see before, even there it is not represented on a communal but an individual level, in a specific relation to the ruler. Examining the relationships of tree and origin more accurately, it is also clear that a real descent from a tree is only expressed in the Uighur legend:

³³ Each of these can be interpreted as the marker of a genealogical community. We may not only think of the tamga, tree or bird, since clan names and animal names also occur among the passwords. However, among the tamgas, traditionally used as the emblem of a clan or tribe, we can also find ones that are not of great antiquity or culturally not embedded, such as the Arabic hamza. The four types of markers are summarized in a table by IVANICS 2017, 265.

	"blood" origin	kinship is marked	community is
	from a tree	by a tree	marked by a tree ³⁴
Uighur "royal"	1		
legend	т		
Oghuznāme			+
Chinggisnāme			+
Khakas čula		+	

Table 2. Origin from a tree/the tree is a symbol of origin

My original aim was to fit Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān's information on the topic among the more specific cases of tree worship by Turkic peoples, which may refer to some kind of ancestor worship. Examining the background of the issue, I have found that in the culture of Turkic peoples the reverence for trees was not combined with totemistic concepts; in fact, we only have a single (specifically, Uighur) example of this. On the basis of the above, I assume that in the short extract by Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān wood as a material had no added meaning, as the religious respect and some kind of ancestry are specifically present together. This data can rather be related to the forms of ancestor worship where some kind of small puppet or doll (made of different materials according to different sources³⁵) could constitute a helping force or a cult object depicting the ancestor and connecting with the transcendent.

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³⁴ In the case of the data only appearing in this box, the question may arise whether this information belongs to the topic of my paper, as they not only do not refer to descent from a tree, but there is neither blood lineage within the groups marked with a particular tree, nor are the trees here connected to the transcendent aspect(?). These data are important, however, as they provide some kind of communal marker for a secondary or external, (not even fictitiously consanguineous) group, which must have been a marker or creator of group identity, interpretable within the given culture(s). Therefore, it is worth taking them into consideration even if only as secondary systems.

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³⁵ TOGAN 1939, 149 (with further literature).

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Pechenegs in the Imperial Space of Byzantium in the Middle of the 10th Century

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Abstract

The paper is devoted to the analysis of the Pecheneg "dossier" in the work of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus *De administrando imperio*, and, in particular, to the place occupied by the Pechenegs in the space of the foreign policy interests of the empire. The study of information about the Pechenegs, as well as the analysis of the terminology used to describe the Pecheneg society, showed, on the one hand, a deep knowledge of the administrative-political and social structure of the Pechenegs, their historical background and their important role in the balance of power in the steppes of Eastern Europe, and on the other, revealed the ability of Byzantine intellectuals to explain the significance of the Pecheneg factor for Byzantium in terms of their own political and cultural tradition.

Keywords: Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, *De administrando imperio*, Pechenegs, mental map, imperial policy, Greek terminology

The Pecheneg "dossier" of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (r. 913–59) has been repeatedly studied by historians and linguists who analysed the information of the Byzantine emperor in various contexts: textual, historical, linguistic, ethnocultural.¹ I would like to draw attention to a less studied geographical aspect of the information, namely to the place occupied by the Pechenegs on the mental map of the author of the treatise *De administrando imperio* (hereinafter — DAI).

Descriptions of the Pechenegs are placed in several chapters of the DAI. By their nature, all data relating to the Pechenegs can be divided into three groups. The first

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¹ The literature devoted to the analysis of the Pecheneg "dossier" is enormous, for bibliographic reviews see: Litavrin – Novosel'tsev 1989, 279–80, 388–91; Golden 1995; Malamut 1995; Shcherbak 1997; Spinei 2003, 155–9; Konovalova 2009; Kozlov 2012; Kozlov 2013.

of them (chapters 1–8), devoted to the place of the Pechenegs in the system of foreign policy interests of Byzantium, is distinguished by a high degree of systematization of the material due to the fact that it is conceptually developed and didactically designed. The second group of information about the Pechenegs is a summary of historical, ethnographic, socio-political, and geographical data (chapter 37), which, although presented in a systematic form, do not have a strongly marked didactic character. Finally, the third group includes scattered information about the Pechenegs cited in connection with the stories of other peoples (in chapters 9, 13, 31, 38–40, 42, 53). If we leave aside separate references to the Pechenegs, it turns out that they are described in detail twice: in chapters 1–8 and in chapter 37.

Trying to explain this fact, R. Jenkins suggested to consider chapter 37 as relating to the "antiquarian", by his definition, part of the treatise, and as such he contraposed it with the story of the Pechenegs in the DAI narrative of the Northern peoples (chapters 1-13), which he thought to be the "actual" part of the treatise composed last. R. Jenkins believed that chapter 37 could not be mechanically transferred to the beginning of the treatise since its "antiquarian style" was incompatible with the tasks of the compiler, who had to show (in chapters 1-13) what benefit the Northern peoples could provide for Byzantium.² It should be noted that the definition of chapter 37 as "antiquarian" contradicts the commentary on the text of the chapter by Gy. Moravcsik, according to which the information presented in this chapter was collected in the time of Constantine,³ whence it follows that the compilers of the treatise subjectively regarded it as actual, and not "antiquarian". J. Howard-Johnston rejected such an assessment of chapter 37, referring, however, its compilation not to the middle, but to the beginning of the 10th century. 4 P. Magdalino recognized the disjointed character of the treatise and suggested that the key to understanding the work of Constantine VII is "the power perspective of the DAI", which determined the structure of the book and gave it inner integrity. 5 One more consideration regarding the structural features of the DAI was recently expressed by A. S. Shchaveley, who supposed on the basis of formal markers that the treatise had two authors, Constantine VII himself and an "Anonymous Collaborator". According to his hypothesis, the chapters dedicated to the Pechenegs belonged to different compilers: chapters 1-13 were written by Constantine, and chapter 37 – by his "Anonymous Collaborator".6

Thus, in historiography it is recognized that the Pecheneg "dossier" lacks integrity as the information about the Pechenegs placed in chapters 1–8, on the one hand, and that in chapter 37, on the other, have significant differences, since they

² Jenkins 1962, 7, 12.

³ JENKINS 1962, 143.

⁴ HOWARD-JOHNSTON 2000, 319, 324-6.

⁵ Magdalino 2013, 36.

⁶ SHCHAVELEV 2019, 691–701.

were collected at different times and, possibly, processed by different authors. Nevertheless, a statement of this fact makes it impossible to understand why the compiler (or compilers) of the book needed such a composition of the story about the Pechenegs and what purpose it pursued.

The chapters devoted to the Northern peoples are the most conceptually developed part of the composition. In each chapter relating to this group, firstly, the implicit question that this chapter is intended to answer is easily read, and secondly, the answer to it is almost always clearly formulated – going as far as to include step-by-step instructions to the Byzantine ambassadors and officials in chapters 7-8. For example, chapter 1 contains the answer to the question of why the Byzantine emperor needs peaceful relations with the Pechenegs: because Pechenegs can raid Cherson and the so-called Climates ($\tau \alpha K\lambda i \mu a \tau a$). Chapter 2, devoted to what Byzantium can extract from the relations between the Pechenegs and the Rus', contains an answer to the question of what happens when the Rus' are at war with the Pechenegs, the answer being that the latter cannot come to Constantinople either for war or for trade. The third chapter, which analyses the relations of the Pechenegs and the Magyars (οί Τούρκοι), shows that the latter were afraid of the Pechenegs. In the fourth chapter, Constantine goes from analysing bilateral relations to finding out what Byzantium can extract from the mutual relations of the Pechenegs, the Rus' and the Magyars, and answers that, on the one hand, the peace with the Pechenegs guarantees the safety of the empire against attacks by the Rus' and the Magyars as well as against racketeering from them and, on the other hand, that it is possible to induce the Pechenegs – as Byzantine allies – to attack the Rus' and the Hungarians. The fifth chapter, to consider the balance of forces north of Byzantium, adds the Bulgarians and concludes that they, like the Hungarians, are interested in peaceful relations with the Pechenegs. The sixth chapter, as if summarizing everything stated in the first five chapters, contains the conclusion that the Pechenegs can be used as intermediaries in imperial relations with all the Northern peoples. Developing this theme, chapters 7-8 give instructions to Byzantine officials on interacting with the two main Pecheneg groups, which nomadized on the right and left sides of the Dnieper respectively. Chapters 9-12 discuss the interests and policies of the empire regarding the Rus', the Khazars, and the Alans. And chapter 13 summarizes the section on all the Northern peoples, explaining how to handle them in the interests of the Byzantine Empire.

In chapters 1–8, which deal with the Pechenegs, the power relationship in the region north of Byzantium is presented in an extremely general form. The space in which the region's main political players—the Pechenegs, the Rus', the Hungarians, and the Bulgarians—are placed is almost devoid of geographical signs. In the first five chapters Constantine manages to write about all these peoples using only one toponym—imperial Cherson ($Xep\sigma\dot{\omega}v$: 1.26–28), which throughout the whole story about the Northern peoples continues to be the most important geographical marker of the space they occupy (6.3; 7.1, 3, 6, 16; 8.8; 11.1, 8, 10, 12). The Northern

peoples are localized either in relation to each other or through the outside world. So, about the Pechenegs it is reported that they are adjacent to Cherson (1.25–26; 6.2–3), the Rus' (2.2), the Bulgarians (5.5–6), and adjoin the Hungarians from the North (13.4–5). Only the names of the Dnieper and Dniester rivers, "towards the area of which" the Pechenegs are located (8.5–7), can be considered as an indication of the limits of the Pecheneg territory.

In the story about the Northern peoples in chapters 1-13, the compiler's attention was not directed to a comprehensive description of the Northern nomads, but to an analysis of their relationship in terms of the benefits that the empire could derive from this. Therefore, speaking about the relations between the Pechenegs, the Rus', the Hungarians, and the Bulgarians, Constantine omits the details, giving only the essence. For example, in chapter 5 the Pechenegs are considered as a hostile force in general with respect to the Bulgarians, although Constantine is well aware of the cases of joint actions of these peoples, in particular, their campaign of 895 against the Hungarians (40.13-16). In characterizing the relations of the Northern peoples, the emphasis is placed on the contradictions that exist between them, which in fact does not exhaust the whole real picture of their ties, but it demonstrates well how these contradictions could be used in the interests of Byzantium. Thus, reporting on the Pechenegs and the Rus', Constantine underlines only one side of their relationship – the damage that the raids of the nomads caused to the Rus' (2.2-4, 9-11, 19-23; 4.9-13), although relations between these peoples were actually much more multifaceted.7 The trade of the Rus' with the Pechenegs was evaluated by Constantine only as a foreign policy factor, which, from his point of view, could seriously affect the interest of the Rus' in maintaining peaceful relations with the Pechenegs (2.5-8).

It can be concluded that in chapters 1–8 the Pechenegs are characterized in the framework of a special kind of space—the space of the foreign policy interests of the Byzantine Empire, and this angle of view set both the principles of data selection and the parameters of the description itself.

The information about the Pechenegs included in chapter 37 is also conceptualized, but in a different way than at the beginning of the treatise. This chapter tells of the life of the Pechenegs in the Volga-Ural interfluve and the history of their emergence in the steppes north of the Black Sea, and it describes in detail the internal structure of the Pecheneg society and the geographical location of the Pechenegs. Despite the abundance of specific data that, at first glance, is preparatory or even optional in relation to chapters 1–8, chapter 37 nevertheless continues the same line on the consideration of the Pechenegs through the prism of imperial interests.

This approach is shown in chapter 37 primarily in the subtle use of Greek terminology to describe certain phenomena of the Pecheneg society, and only those

⁷ For a general outline of the Rus'-Pecheneg relations and historiography, see: TOLOCHKO 2003, 45–66; SPINEI 2003, 114–126; MIKHAILOVA 2006, 60–76.

whose adequate understanding was necessary for the effective conduct of imperial policy towards the Pechenegs. The names of the Pecheneg "themes" are given without translation and have not been commented on in any way by Constantine. At the same time, the most important concepts describing the hierarchy of power among the Pechenegs are given in Greek terms familiar to the imperial administration.

According to chapter 37, the Pecheneg union consisted of eight "themes" $(\theta \dot{\varepsilon} \mu a)$ – four on each side of the Dnieper – which, in turn, included forty smaller "parts" ($\mu \dot{\epsilon} \rho o \varsigma$). The term "theme" is used here neither in its technical meaning of a military-administrative district,8 usual for the royal office of the 10th century, nor as a synonym for the words "territory", "habitat", "region", but as a designation of a specific form of administrative-territorial, military-political, and socio-economic organization of the Pechenegs. Like other steppe peoples, the basis of the Pecheneg society was a clan organization with absolute dominance of the principles of genealogical and blood relationship. The Byzantine officials, apparently, were aware of this feature of the Pecheneg society, since, describing the contemporary placement of their eight "themes" in space, the term "kin" (γένος) is used twice as a synonym for the word "theme" (37.34, 39). In addition, from the given list of names of the rulers of the "themes" (37.21-24), it is quite obvious that even during the clashes between the Pechenegs and the Oghuzes in the Volga region (to which period, according to the DAI, this list of names refers), their "themes" wore the same denominations as later, when the Pechenegs migrated to the Pontic steppe (37.16-24, 35-36, 40-43). Thus, according to chapter 37, the term "theme" in relation to the Pechenegs means primarily a people and only then the territory occupied by it. Modern scholars of nomadism suppose that the term "theme" refers to the Pecheneg tribes (tribal groupings)¹⁰ organized in a kinship-based political hierarchy of the "chiefdom" type. 11

The rulers of the Pecheneg "themes" are called "great archons" (37.16: μέγαλοι ἄρχοντες) to contrast them with "lower rank archons" (37.33: ἐλάττονες ἄρχοντες). However, in the same chapter, the rulers of the "themes" are twice called simply "archons" (37.20, 32). Similarly, these terms are used in relation to the rulers of the Hungarians: Árpád (ca. 895 – ca. 907) is once called "the great archon of Turkey" (40.53), and in other cases he and his direct heirs are called simply "archons" (38.49, 51, 53, 56; 40.12–13, 48, 58). The term "great archon" also refers to the eldest son of the Great Moravian Prince Sviatopolk (r. 871–94), who is placed over his other two co-rulers (41.6); the title of Sviatopolk himself is simply "archon" (41.2).

⁸ KAZHDAN 1991.

⁹ MORAVCSIK – JENKINS 1962, 145: "the word means here the territory or homeland of the various Pecheneg clans"; MALAMUT 1995, 110: "le terme de 'thème' donné aux provinces"; BELKE – SOUSTAL 1995, 185–187: "acht Provinzen (Themen)"; TOLOCHKO 2003, 46: the author explains the word "theme" as "the area of settlement of particular hordes".

¹⁰ GOLDEN 1995, 289.

¹¹ Marei 2000, 338.

Thus, the term "great archon", as far as one can judge from the text of the DAI, is not used in a strictly terminological sense, unlike, for example, the term "archon of archons" ($\alpha \rho \chi \omega \nu \tau \delta \nu \lambda \rho \chi \delta \nu \tau \omega \nu$), used as the title of Bagratids (see: 43.30, 34–35, 112; 44.6, 7, 9, 13, 18, 19, 20, 21–22, 26–27, 35, 37, 38–39, 42, 45, 50, 120).

Constantine's assertion that units included in any "theme" were headed by "archons of a lower rank" in comparison with the rulers of the "themes" themselves, indicates that Byzantine politicians and intellectuals had an idea of the hierarchical structure of the Pecheneg society. As it was with other nomads, the Pecheneg administrative mechanism was inextricably linked with the hierarchy of levels of kinship. In this sense, the term $\mu \dot{\epsilon} \rho o \varsigma$ ("part", "share") used to denote the structural units of the Pecheneg "theme" undoubtedly had not only administrative and territorial significance, but also reflected the corresponding level of the patrimonial system of the Pechenegs. Thus, in the "archons of a lower rank" one can see the leaders of individual Pecheneg clans the "elders" (maiores, meliores). He beginning of the 11th century, called the "elders" (maiores, meliores).

The division of eight Pecheneg "themes" into two wings (with four "themes" in each) noted in the DAI is a reflection of the ancient Turkic tradition of the dual left-right organization of power.¹⁵ The information about the "great archons" that headed eight Pecheneg "themes" seems to imply their complete equality from the point of view of the Byzantines. This is evidenced by the absence of any reflection regarding the actual Pecheneg titles of their senior officials—Yula ($\gamma \dot{\nu} \lambda a$, the Grecized form of the Magyar personal name and title "Gyula") and Tzour ($\tau \zeta o \dot{\nu} \rho$). These terms are only mentioned as the names of two "themes" (37.17–18, 35, 41, 69–70), despite the fact that the author of the DAI knew that the nomads that belonged to the corresponding "themes" of Kouartzitzour ($Kova\rho\tau \zeta \iota\tau \zeta o \dot{\nu} \rho$) and Chabouxingyla ($Xa\beta ov \xi \iota\gamma \gamma \nu \lambda \dot{a}$) were the most notable and influential among the Pechenegs (37.68–71).

Thus, the use of Greek terminology in the story of the Pecheneg "themes" indicates a deep understanding in Byzantium of the nature of the socio-political structure of the Pecheneg society. The close attention to precisely these aspects of Pecheneg life demonstrated in chapter 37 fully reflects the significance that was attached to the relations with the Pechenegs by the imperial administration in the middle of the 10th century, and this circumstance allows us to consider chapters 1–8 and chapter 37 as parts of a uniform "dossier". The inner unity of these parts of the treatise is also indicated by the fact that chapters 1–8 clearly show how the Byzan-

¹² P. Golden, for example, translates the term in question as "clan groupings" (GOLDEN 1995, 289).

¹³ Marei 2000, 338.

¹⁴ KARWASIŃSKA 1973, 99-100.

¹⁵ Golden 1982, 52-3, 63-5, 68.

tines' ideas about the Pecheneg society (described in detail in chapter 37) were applied in the real diplomatic practice of the empire.

The composition of chapters 5–8, devoted to the relations of Byzantium with two groups of Pechenegs (left- and right-bank) is based on the understanding of the dual structure of the Pecheneg tribal confederation, divided into two wings, the border between which was the Dnieper (37.34–45). In their diplomatic practice, the Byzantines distinguished precisely two groups of Pechenegs, which is clearly seen from chapters 7–8. These chapters contain instructions for imperial officials sent to different groups of Pechenegs—respectively—from Cherson to the left-bank Pechenegs (chapter 7) and from Constantinople to the Pechenegs nomadizing between the Dnieper and the Danube (chapter 8).

At the same time, knowledge of the fractional structure of each of the two Pecheneg wings allowed Byzantine officials to distinguish a special group of Pechenegs — "another people ($\lambda a \dot{o} \varsigma$) from the same Pachinakites" (6.2), who lived near Cherson, traded with it, and also performed intermediary functions between the Chersonites and the emperor, on the one hand, and Russia, Khazaria, and Zichia, on the other (6). Constantine's reference to a certain autonomy of this group of Pechenegs (6.11) may relate not only to assessing their status as a foreign political partner, but also to the structure of the Pecheneg society itself, in particular to the lack of central authority among the Pechenegs. Obviously, this group was identical to one of those Pecheneg "themes" that were discussed in chapter 37. In this case, not only $\gamma \dot{\varepsilon} v o \varsigma$ (37.34, 39), but $\lambda a \dot{o} \varsigma$ (6.2) is also synonymous with the term "theme".

The volume and content of the information about both the Pechenegs themselves and their place in the system of foreign policy interests of the empire, as well as the terminology used in the description, indicate that the most likely informants about the Pechenegs could have been people that belonged to two cultural traditions at once—this allowed them not only to provide valuable information about the Pecheneg society, but also to present it in terms familiar to the Byzantines. This, as it seems, confirms the assumption made by S. A. Kozlov that ethnic Turks who converted to Orthodoxy and transferred to the diplomatic and military service of the empire played a significant role in collecting and processing information for the treatise. One such informant for chapter 37 could have been the Cherson *strategos* (στρατηγός) John Bogas, who is a vivid example of the adaptation of the Pechenegs to the imperial space of Byzantium. 17

In my opinion, the information about the Pechenegs in chapters 1–8, on the one hand, and in chapter 37, on the other, should be considered as organically supplementing each other (regardless of their authorship) as parts of the treatise, and together constituting a uniform Pecheneg "dossier", which was undoubtedly writ-

¹⁶ Malamut 1995, 114.

¹⁷ Kozlov 2012; Kozlov 2013.

ten with specific intentions. If in chapters 1–8 the Pechenegs are characterized as one of the many peoples of Eastern Europe that substantially influenced the balance of power in the region, then in chapter 37 the focus and the scale of the description change, and the Pechenegs themselves with their historical background come to the fore.

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Late Medieval Nomads in the Bulgarian Historical Apocalyptic Literature: Images and Realities

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Abstract

This article aims to demonstrate some descriptive strategies of unknown Bulgarian scribes (monks) regarding the image of late nomads (Magyars, Pechenegs, Cumans). The texts under study come from the so-called historical apocalyptic literature in Bulgaria from the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries. For the Bulgarian *literati*, the peak moments in the process of perceiving the *arch*-enemy before the Second Coming of Christ were during the 10th century (personified by the Magyars before the year 992), and during the 11th century (personified by the Pechenegs before the year 1092). In light of these facts, it is surprising that these Bulgarian sources do not contain any notion of the Cumans as the *arch*-enemy. The authors are of the opinion that the image of the Cumans in medieval Bulgaria, which possessed characteristics of both *own* and *other*, can be classified into a specific category, which does not fit or fall into the category of "Ishmaelites" or "Peoples of Gog and Magog".

Keywords: medieval Bulgarian historical apocalyptic literature, imagology, Cumans, Pechenegs, Uzes, Magyars/Hungarians, "Ishmaelites"

A few clarifications need to be made at the beginning of this article on how the idea of its writing came about. It happened quite naturally and is yet another confirmation of the significance of forums such as the 8th International Conference "Nomads and Their Neighbours in the Middle Ages". They have undoubtedly given impetus to scientific development as a whole and to the research of *Pax Nomadica* in its relations with the world of the *Others* in particular.

Tsvetelin Stepanov has posed the problem alluded to in the title of the article numerous times before¹ but has never received any kind of "feedback". So, during one of the sessions of the Eighth International Conference, he directly proposed to

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STEPANOV 2009a, 30-42; STEPANOV 2011a, 148-63; STEPANOV 2011b, 335-51; STEPANOV 2016b.

the audience to comment on the relevant parts of the presentation and to attempt to answer the questions raised in it. Ivelin Ivanov responded with a detailed commentary and it is his ideas and visions that are presented in the second part of this short article. It should be emphasized that these suggestions and comments of Ivelin Ivanov are of a contextual nature and this fact should be taken into account from the very beginning. Our hope is that future studies of and searches for apocalyptic texts will shed more light on the below-mentioned discrepancies in the *images* of the so-called late nomads among the Bulgarian *literati* during the Middle Ages.

The Bulgarian historical apocalyptic literature is a specific "genre" that was very productive in medieval Bulgaria. Moreover, compared with the other Slavic-speaking countries whose population professed Eastern Orthodox Christianity, this "genre" had already been strongly developed in the 11th century. Here, one can find both historical facts (e.g., realities) and fictitious personal names, topoi/loci, as well as peoples' names. Some of them are mainly based on the two Testaments and the so-called Revelation of Pseudo-Methodius of Pathara (ca. 691/2, according to G. Reinink), the others—on real actors' deeds dating from the late 10th to the 13th century. By the latter we mean the real Magyars/Hungarians, Pechenegs (together with Uzes), and Cumans, who were attacking and migrating to the lands populated by the Bulgarians in the above-mentioned period of time. In these texts some of the intruders were labelled as "Ishmaelites", i.e. Muslims. Naturally, it's important to ask whether they were actual "Ishmaelites", i.e. real Muslims. Additionally, the others are obviously grouped in the cliché description of "unclean peoples of Gog and Magog" known from the Bible.

These apocalyptic texts contain a number of symbols and (proto)images often used by the medieval Christians in order for them to establish a strictly defined perception that it was precisely *their own* Empire/Tsardom that was *chosen by God* and had a *salvational mission* for mankind before the Second Coming of Christ. As a rule, in turbulent times some "novelties" appeared in those kind of Biblical texts — they were usually adapted in accordance with the specific addressees (on a local and regional level, but also on the level of the elite as a whole) as this type of literature permitted such intentional "distortions" of a given archetypal text.

Therefore, the article aims to demonstrate some of the descriptive strategies of unknown Bulgarian scribes (in fact, monks) regarding the image of late nomads such as the Pechenegs, Magyars/Hungarians, and Cumans.

First, some words should be said about the historical context at the time. Between the 10th and the 12th centuries the Bulgarians, *firstly*, had been a settled population for a long time, and *secondly*, they had a Christian Tsardom starting from 927 and up to 1018. Hence, naturally, they thought of themselves as a people with a mission, i.e. saving the world before the Second Coming of Christ and the End of Times. It has already been said that the lands of Bulgaria were attacked and

severely devastated in that same period of time by different nomadic peoples who were crossing the Danube River from the north. It should be noted, of course, that since the beginning of the 10th century some of the Magyars had already settled down in the modern lands of Hungary and had started attacking the Bulgarians from the north-west. Additionally, the Pechenegs and the Uzes in the 11th century (starting from the late 1020s), as well as the Cumans in the last decades of that same century entered from the north-east into the lands of Bulgaria, at that time part of the Byzantine Empire. In the eyes of the Bulgarian scribes they were all *Evil Forces* before the End of Times.

The above-said perception, namely the salvation of the world during the *Last Times* and before the Second Coming, was further elaborated in Bulgaria in detailed schemes. It was especially clearly seen after the unsuccessful Bulgarian uprisings against the Byzantine Empire in 1040–1 (led by Petar Delyan) and in 1072–3 (led by Georgi Voytekh and Konstantin Bodin), i.e. on the threshold between the 11th and the 12th centuries, and, in particular, before the well-known year of 1092, which was connected to the Anticipation of the End of Times. Generally speaking, in the years between ca. the 1060s and 1070s and ca. 1200, a number of historical apocalyptic texts emerged in the Bulgarian territories, mainly texts that associated the prophecies with the names of Isaiah and Daniel of the Old Testament. As a rule, these Bulgarian texts presented the lands of the Bulgarians as the *centre* of the Christian Empire that at that time was being plundered by various "barbarian" peoples, called at times "Vugri" (meaning Magyars/Hungarians), "Pechenegs", and sometimes "blonde-beards" (meaning Rus', the Varangians in general, or the knights of the West).

What is the situation with regard to the *Evil Forces* invading the Bulgarian lost Tsardom before the *End of the world* that was expected to happen in 1092? It is noticeable that in the Bulgarian cycle of historical apocalyptic texts the invaders before the End of Times are most often called "Ugrians"/"Vugri" or "Pechenegs". The first serious clash between the Bulgarians and the Magyars was in the 890s and more precisely in 894–6, in the early years of the reign of the Bulgarian ruler Simeon (893–927). During the times of his successor, Tsar Petar (927–969, †970), these same Magyars undertook a number of further attacks, especially between the 930s and 960s. It seems all too likely that the Magyar invasions against the Christian people of Bulgaria were placed in the memory "mould" of the Bulgarians both in written texts and later in folklore, since they occurred before 992 (or 1000, according to another chronology typical for the Eastern Orthodox peoples and influenced

² Tăpkova-Zaimova - Miltenova 1996, 135-6, 156, 198, 202. Also see Tăpkova-Zaimova - Miltenova 2011.

by the Byzantine culture), i.e. precisely at a time when the Second Coming of Christ was expected.3

These events obviously had a strong impact on the Bulgarians' way of thinking also for another far more prosaic reason: the Magyars, invading before the End of Times, were still pagans, which made them easily identifiable according to the cliché "Gog and Magog attacking the Christian, i.e. Bulgarian, Tsardom" before the expected End and the Second Coming. Moreover, the Hungarians invaded Bulgaria from the north/north-west (!), across the Danube River (!), and were pagans (!), i.e. they corresponded to all the indicators in the definitions of the "unclean peoples Gog and Magog". The Magyar invasions also continued during the years of Byzantine rule over the Bulgarian lands.⁴ In 1072-3, the Magyars attacked Belgrade – a fact that is well documented in the Hungarian chronicles. It is mentioned that Pechenegs helped the Bulgarians and Byzantines to defend the city of Belgrade, with the following detail deserving special mention: the imperial army also included Arab mercenaries.5

Let us now direct our attention to the aforementioned Pechenegs, the next late nomadic tribes that invaded from the north/north-east-once more across the Danube—into the Bulgarian lands. In the so-called Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle, the first Bulgarian ruler of Danube Bulgaria, Asparukh (d. 701) (called Ispor in the same Chronicle), is presented by the unknown scribe as a victorious ruler over the "Ishmaelites"; later in the same text he appears as the ruler who fell in battle "on the Danube" against those same "Ishmaelites".6 The specific passage goes as follows:

And then after him [Tsar Slav] another tsar was found in the Bulgarian land, a detishte7 carried in a basket for three years; he was given the name Tsar Ispor and [he] took over the Bulgarian Tsardom. This tsar built great cities: on the Danube, the town of Dorostorum; a great rampart (prezid) between the Danube and the sea; and he also built the town of Pliska. This tsar slew a multitude of Ishmaelites. [...] Tsar Ispor ruled over the Bulgarian land for one hundred and seventy-two years and then the Ishmaelites slew him on the Danube.8

³ See more in, MOLLOV 1997, passim. For the purely event-related aspect of these relations, see also Makk 1994, 25-33.

⁴ See further details in DIMITROV 1998, 93-104, as well as in SHEPARD 2011, 55-83.

⁵ Dimitrov 1998, 95–6.

⁶ TĂPKOVA-ZAIMOVA - MILTENOVA 1996, 196, 199-200; PETKOV 2008, 195. For more details see BILIARSKY 2013.

⁷ Bulg. detishte, denoting a child of immense size, strong and heavy for its age, from dete, literally "child".

⁸ Tăpkova-Zaimova - Miltenova 1996, 199-200.

Naturally, this does not mean—as indeed is unconditionally accepted by a number of contemporary scholars—that Ispor/Asparukh perished by the hand of a Khazar somewhere along the Danube River,⁹ because the Khazars widely perceived the Danube as their western border in the 670s, that is, to the point where Asparukh was allegedly chased by them.¹⁰ It is well known that Khazaria has never controlled the lands to the west of the Dnieper River. Neither was it possible for Ispor to die by the hand of an actual Muslim. Perhaps another explanation is more appropriate in this case, namely that Asparukh was presented by the anonymous scribe of the *Chronicle* as the victim of imaginary invaders infringing on the Christian Empire through the well-known Danube River that served as a boundary of the Roman and Christian civilization.

Also, it is hardly coincidental that Ispor/Asparukh is associated with the construction of a "prezid", meaning a wall or protective embankment, precisely on the Danube river bank and reaching all the way to the Black Sea. It is true that the Bulgars fortified these lands with a series of ramparts and ditches, something that has been known for a long time mainly as a result of archaeological research. The allusion in this case, however, is most probably to the barrier that, according to the legend, Alexander the Great built in the Caucasus against the "steppe barbarians" coming from the north. Thus, it is as if the anonymous author of the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* tried to persuade his readers that Asparukh had surrounded the lands of civilization with a wall to keep it safe from the invading "barbarians" that inhabited the steppe north of the Black Sea. At the very end, the same text mentions the actual Pechenegs, this time labelled as "infidels and lawless", as well as "violators and deceivers". 12

The Pechenegs began their attacks on the Bulgarian lands in the late 1020s and started to settle permanently in the mid-11th century.¹³ By then, the independent Bulgarian Tsardom was no more since it had been conquered by the Byzantines in 1018. The Pechenegs, therefore, formally invaded Byzantine lands that were inhabited by Bulgarians at that time. The direction of their invasions, as that of the Magyar ones earlier on, was again from the north southwards; and again, they had to

RASHEV 1702, SQUATRITI 2003, 37-70.

⁹ On the notion of the Danube as a *boundary* of the Christian and, prior to that, Roman Empire and civilization, see Tăpkova-Zaimova 1976; Mollov 1997, 33, 35, 67–69, 102, 105, 109 and n. 9; Stepanov 2003, 14–27; Stepanov 2016a, 299–309; Vachkova 2004, 135–50. Especially on the Slavic visions and in particular those of the Rus' on the same issue, see Petrukhin 2013, 35–47.

¹⁰ On this concept, see the correspondence between Hasdai ben Shaprut and the Khazar khagan-bek Joseph from the 950s-960s in KOKOVTSOV 1932.

¹¹ RASHEV 1982; SOUATRITI 2005, 59-90.

¹² Tăpkova-Zaimova - Miltenova 1996, 198, 202; Petkov 2008, 199.

 $^{^{13}}$ On the Danube frontier during the 11^{th} and the 12^{th} centuries and, in particular, on the Pechenegs, Cumans, and Magyars along it, see MADGEARU 2013, 115–66, and also TÄPKOVAZAIMOVA 1993, 95–101.

cross the Danube! The reason for this is because from a geographical point of view during the 10th and early 11th centuries the Pechenegs inhabited the lands north of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, in other words, to the north – north-west of the Caucasus. Therefore, in the eyes of the unknown Bulgarian scribe who created the *Bulgarian Apocryphal Chronicle* (according to Anissava Miltenova, it is dated to the end of the 11th century or the beginning of the 12th), the Pechenegs perfectly fit the cliché of the "unclean peoples Gog and Magog" who lived in the steppe north of the Caucasus and invaded from the north. It is obvious, then, that for the Bulgarians during the decades between the 1040s, in general, and ca. 1200, the *arch-evil* before the Second Coming of Christ was expected to invade the Christian Empire, the New "Holy Land", from the north. Thus, the Magyars and the Pechenegs ideally suited the profile of the steppe peoples from the North, known as Gog and Magog.

The first Cuman attacks south of the Danube were carried out during the reign of Basileus Michael VII Doukas (1071-8), i.e. in the late 1070s, and the second phase began at the start of the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (1081-1118), i.e. again before the well-known year 1092. During this period, the Cuman invasions were strictly related to the large-scale Pecheneg offensive on the Balkan Peninsula that was carried out during the 1080s.14 Given that situation with the apocalyptic Bulgarian sources, it seems important to point out that the only nomadic tribes that appeared in the Bulgarian historical apocalyptic literature under the name "Ishmaelites" during the above-mentioned period are indeed the Ugrians/Magyars and the Pechenegs, but not the Cumans. This means that the Byzantine and Bulgarian sources from the time contain accounts of the Cuman invasions in South East Europe, but it also means that the unknown Bulgarian scribes of the apocalyptic texts did not "recall" the Cumans as the invaders of the Bulgarian "Holy Land". At the same time, the Ugrians/Hungarians were the people that can be found in the Bulgarian written sources and later in folklore (where they were called cherno vugre, literally "black Vugri", i.e. black Hungarians). Therefore, in view of this, for the Bulgarians these same Cumans never became the arch-enemy and the apocalyptic sign of the coming of the Antichrist.

Let us draw some preliminary conclusions from the above. For the Bulgarian *literati* in general, the peak moments in the process of perceiving the *arch*-enemy before the Second Coming were during the 10th century—personified by the Magyars/Ugrians as pagans coming from the north (before the year 992), and during the 11th century—personified by the Pechenegs (this time before the year 1092). In view of these findings, it seems quite surprising that the Bulgarian sources prior to the Fourth Crusade do not contain any notion of the Cumans as the *arch*-enemy, although they were located north of the Bulgarians, beyond the Danube River, and they were also pagans, or in other words, they fit perfectly into the apocalyptic scheme of the "unclean peoples" called "Gog and Magog." Whether this was due

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¹⁴ See STOYANOV 2005, 6-9.

to the fact that a large number of these same Cumans were assimilated rather quickly in Bulgaria after the 1230s and even managed to lay the foundations of some royal dynasties in the 13th and the 14th centuries, including the Terterids and the Shishmanids, shall be discussed in the next pages.

No doubt, this absence of the Cumans in the Bulgarian apocalyptic sources deserves special attention as they are an exception to the apocalyptic images of Magyars/Hungarians and Pechenegs. As for the Magyars, their image of invaders and destroyers is far greater in scope as it is attributed to their attacks not only in the Bulgarian lands and the Byzantine Empire but also in Central and Western Europe, reaching even Italian territories. In this respect, the apocalyptic image of the Pechenegs, for example, is more regional than that of the Magyars. We should also not disregard the fact that Bulgarian-Magyar relations had a much longer history over the centuries than the Bulgarian-Pecheneg contacts. The relations between Bulgarians and Magyars were often hostile even in the centuries after the Christianization of the Magyars, with military conflicts in the beginning of the 13th and even in the 14th century. This also contributed to the creation of a long-lasting and clearly evil image of the Hungarians in Bulgarian medieval literature.

Going back to the image of the Cumans, we should note that they devastated the Bulgarian lands no less than the Pechenegs did in the 10th and 11th centuries. It has already been pointed out that the Cuman attacks started during the rule of Emperor Michael IV Doukas and the second wave of raids devastated *Paristrion* during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos. Raids were also recorded in the written sources in 1095, 1114, and in 1122 (the last one probably in an alliance with the Pechenegs). But the stability of Byzantium and the fortified borders helped the local authorities and population build up a strong defence against the Cumans in the second half of the 12th century. However, a historical review shows that effective Cuman attacks lasted about a century—from the second half of the 11th century to the mid-12th century. Therefore, the answer to the above question cannot be linked to an absence of destructive Cuman raids in Bulgarian territories.

But where should we look for a plausible and logical answer to the question of the absence of the Cumans among the "peoples of Gog and Magog" in Bulgarian apocalyptic literature? First of all, we would emphasize the political-dynastic relations that influenced the historical apocalyptic literature under question. The issue of the relationship between the Cumans and the first Bulgarian dynasty ruling after 1185, the Asenids, has been widely debated, but even the fiercest adversaries of the hypothesis about the Cuman origin of the dynasty cannot dismiss the dynas-

¹⁵ Dimitrov 1998, 110–120, 235–9.

tic relations of Bulgarian rulers such as Kaloyan (1197–1207) and Boril (1207–18) with the mighty Cuman clans north of the Danube.¹⁶

Even the deteriorated relations with the Cumans after 1211 under the reign of the Bulgarian Tsar Boril did not completely interrupt the traditional ties and the Cuman (military) influence in the Bulgarian society. ¹⁷ Last but not least, the Cuman military power was crucial to the political establishment of the restored Bulgarian Tsardom in the late 12th and the early 13th centuries. Although not explicitly stated in the written sources, Cuman assistance also played an extremely important role in the Bulgarian-Hungarian military conflicts of the abovementioned period. The Cuman support in the clash with the knights of the newly established Latin Empire in the period 1205-8 was also of a decisive role for the Bulgarians. 18 But some of the written sources indicate that the Cuman influence in Bulgaria was greatly undermined after 1211 under Boril's politics. Whatever the main cause of this turnaround, its consequences were dramatic and lasting. The Mongol invasion played the role of an additional and severe blow that marked the beginning of the decline of Cuman influence in the European South-East, but in fact the Cuman presence in the Bulgarian lands lasted until the very end of the Second Bulgarian Tsardom. Vivid examples of this are the abovementioned Bulgarian dynasties of the Terterids and the Shishmanids.

The resumption of Cuman activity after 1185 coincides with the uprising of the Asenids, which turned the allied campaigns against the Byzantines south of the Haemus Mountains (Stara Planina) into a regular, relatively secure, and extremely lucrative occupation. At the same time, the Bulgarian-Cuman alliance protected the population and territories between the Danube and the Haemus Mountains from raids and devastation from the north-east and the south. What is more, the same raids and devastation of lands occurred in Thrace as well, which benefited the aris-

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¹⁶ The Cumans and their influence on the Bulgarian-Hungarian and Bulgarian-Latin relations have been the subject of research by some Bulgarian medievalists such as ZLATARSKI 1940 (1994); TSANKOVA-PETKOVA 1978; ILIEV 1984, 85–94; DANCHEVA-VASILEVA 1985; DIMITROV 1998; STOYANOV 2002, 680–9; NIKOLOV 2007, 30–46; NIKOLOV 2005, 223–229; PAVLOV 1989, 9–59; PAVLOV 2002, 9–18; PAVLOV 2009, 388–409; IGNATOV 2005, 83–98; IVANOV 2017, 153–64. Also see, RASOVSKY 1939, 203–11; RASOVSKY 2016; PLETNEVA 2010; DALL'AGLIO 2008–2009, 29–54; DALL'AGLIO 2013, 299–315. The hypothesis about the Cuman origin of the Asenid dynasty could explain the close Bulgarian-Cuman alliance in the period 1185-1211, but the events after 1211 testify to complicated and hard relations with some of the Cuman chieftains and tribes. This indicates that the close ties of the previous period were not the result solely of kinship relations but of a common political and military interest.

¹⁷ According to some authors, young Ivan (the future tsar of Bulgaria Ivan Asen II, 1218–41) and his brother Alexander were taken to the Cumans in 1207 and later to the Principality of Kiev. Whether this relocation was caused by the deteriorated relations with the Cumans after 1211 or not is still under debate.

¹⁸ Pavlov 1989, 9-59; Nikolov 2005, 223-9; Dall'aglio 2008-2009, 29-54.

tocracy and a part of the population north of the Haemus Mountains. The Cumans, most probably, sold a significant portion of the booty acquired in their raids in Thrace—this task was difficult and the prices were probably lower than the real market value of the goods, but it was meaningless to transport them many hundreds of kilometres to the Dniester and Dnieper rivers. It is also reasonable to believe that some of the captives were also left or sold in the Bulgarian territories north of the Haemus Mountains. This practice most likely led to the accumulation of booty and power by the local aristocracy and even by the common people in Northern Bulgaria. That was probably yet another reason why the Cuman raids, so violent in Thrace and other Byzantine territories, did not leave the same negative memories in the lands north of the Haemus Mountains.

The issue of the image of the Cumans in historical sources could be analysed from another point of view—by the methods of *imagology*. Here we would apply a comparative approach to the image of the Cumans in the *Chronicon Pictum* (*Képes Krónika*), where they occupy an important place. *Chronicon Pictum* depicts very close Hungarian-Cuman relations, even within the royal Hungarian family. The image of King Ladislaw IV the Cuman (1272–90), for example, is represented in typical Cuman clothing, unlike other Hungarian rulers in the chronicle.¹⁹

However, despite the close Hungarian-Cuman relations, the analysis of the textual and visual information about the Cumans in the *Chronicon Pictum* leads to the conclusion that, even when they were on or near the throne the Cumans remained part of the *others*. On the other hand, the image of the Cumans in medieval Bulgaria can be classified into a category that possesses characteristics of both *own* and *other*. The Cuman's image in medieval Bulgarian apocalyptic literature does not fit or fall into the category of "Ishmaelites", or "Peoples of Gog and Magog", etc. Ultimately, the Cumans will remain between the own and the other.

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¹⁹ IVANOV 2017, 157.

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Shifting Foundations: The Cumans of Paristrion and Their Influence on the Second Bulgarian State

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Abstract

Traditionally, the historiography of medieval Bulgaria tends to emphasize the European dimension of the Bulgarian polity, and its links to European political and cultural actors. While this is by no means incorrect, this position risks to limit the study of medieval Bulgaria to only a fraction of its extensive network of international connections, overlooking the strong ties it maintained with the steppe world throughout its history. This is especially true for the so-called "Second Bulgarian State" and its close association with the Cumans. While the military alliance between the two polities has been explored at length and it is well documented in the sources, less attention has been devoted to the socio-cultural interaction between the Bulgarians and the Cumans and, in general, to the role of the *mixobarbaroi* in bridging the gap between "steppe and sown" in South-Eastern Europe.

Keywords: Cuman-Qïpchaqs, medieval Bulgaria, Medieval Nomads, Byzantine History

As a general rule (which, as every rule, comes with its fair share of exceptions) the usual historiographical representation of medieval Bulgaria, including that of the so-called "Second Bulgarian State" (1185–1396) originating by a rebellion of the population of Paristrion led by the brothers Peter and Asen, is one of a stable and organized state, perfectly aligned with contemporary models of political organization. The elements of stability, such as the presence of a capital city where political

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¹ "The main protagonist of the master national narrative is the state, represented by its rulers [...] The master national narrative shows particular interest in statehood in the sense of

and religious authorities had their residence, a ruling dynasty with uninterrupted continuity, a well-defined territorial core firmly controlled by the state, and an ethnically homogeneous population, are always stressed and analysed at length.² Moreover, while the role of Bulgaria as a geographical and cultural crossroad between East and West is duly noted and appreciated,3 the representation of medieval Bulgaria, limited or not to the Balkans, the Slavic world, the "Byzantine Commonwealth", or Orthodox Christianity, is essentially that of a European nation. The boundaries of the Bulgarian polity, perceived as compact, homogeneous, and "natural", were permanently set at the Danube (although occasional forays or temporary expansions to the north of the river were not ignored), but undefined and stretchable, almost at will, southward and westward.4

The elements discussed above are of no small importance for the development of the Bulgarian medieval state, its political ideology, and its culture. It is also out of question that the great majority of its interactions with other polities, both peaceful and hostile, involved European actors, that its religion (leaving aside the first two centuries of its history) was Orthodox Christianity, and that Byzantine traditions were the main influence in both politics and culture. Yet, this discourse is at risk of omitting, or at least neglecting, Bulgaria's relation with the Northeast, with the Euro-Asiatic steppe macroregion and its inhabitants. This neglect is particularly evident in the first historiographical researches devoted to the medieval history of Bulgaria:5 once the Bulgars led by Asparukh crossed the Danube and established their polity south of the river in 680-1, their nomadic past and their Asiatic/Eurasian origins tend to be forgotten, as if their history really began only when they established themselves in a world of settled and, needless to say, civilized polities and populations, and as if they had left little or no traces in the Bulgarian polity, which was represented as essentially Slavic and Christian. In his Istoriya Slovenobolgarskaya, completed in 1762, Paisiy Hilendarski omits any mention of a non-European origin of the Bulgars: according to him they were a Slavic people whose ancestral land was located along the Volga river. They crossed the Danube in 328 and, after a period in which they were loyal subjects of the Byzan-

institutions and state traditions, as well as in the church": DASKALOV 2020, 270. Cf. also DASKALOV 2018. The best and most influential example of this general attitude is Vasil Zlatarski, who entitled his seminal work History of the Bulgarian State during the Middle Ages (emphasis and translation mine). Cf. ZLATARSKI 1918-40.

² See, for instance, the classical treatments of ANGELOV 1971; PETROV 1981.

³ For an analysis of medieval Bulgaria's in-betweenness, see especially STEPANOV 2020 and the extensive bibliography provided in the text.

⁴ On the subject of frontiers (political, cultural, geographical) in the Middle Ages, see especially Bartlett - Mackay 1989; Power - Standen 1999; Desplat 2000; Abulafia - Berend 2002; Merisalo - Pahts 2006.

⁵ DETCHEV, 2013.

tine empire, they created a state of their own.6 Both Paisiy's omission and his conflation of the Slavic and Bulgar migrations were justified, since the few sources he could access offered him no insight on the matter, and he had neither the training nor the education to be considered a historian. The belief that the Bulgars were Slavs was also expressed in the first half of the 19th century by Yuriy Venelinagain an author that was only an amateur historian.⁷ Marin Drinov, on the other hand, who certainly was a historian in the technical sense of the word, and who could profit form a much larger body of sources and secondary literature, did not ignore the non-Slavic origins of the Bulgars, but according to his interpretation they could not be considered proper ancestors of the modern Bulgarians, since their contribution to the culture and the ethnicity of the local Slavs was negligible.8 The same opinion was maintained by Konstantin Jireček a few years later.9

In the beginning of the 20th century, this approach rapidly changed and the Eurasian roots and culture of the first Bulgarian state have since been thoroughly analysed and detailed, with particular regard to the establishment of the state, its relations with its neighbours (chiefly with the Byzantine Empire), its internal organization and composition, and the relations between Bulgars and Slavs. 10 However, the nomadic, and specifically Cuman, contribution to the establishment of the Second Bulgarian State is usually studied only in its military aspects;¹¹ the Cumans are considered, just as the medieval chroniclers represented them, as radically different from the Bulgarians. Their impact on the Bulgarian state (now truly and fully European, in its relations with crusaders, Roman pontiffs and emperors of Constantinople), aside from the aforementioned military assistance, either goes unnoticed or is presented in confrontational, even destructive terms, 12 with little attention to the interactions between sedentary people and nomads, and little concern for the development of the Cumans' own culture, and of nomadic civilization in general. Just as in many reconstructions of Byzantine history Bulgaria is seen as an accessory, in many reconstructions of Bulgarian history this is the role played

⁶ HILENDARSKI 2012, 80-5.

⁷ VENELIN 1829; VENELIN 1841.

⁸ Drinov 1971, 81, 121–2 (first published in 1869).

⁹ Jireček 1876, 136–8.

¹⁰ See, for example, BEŠEVLIEV 1980; BEŠEVLIEV 2008; BOŽILOV 1992; BOŽILOV 1995; NIKOLOV 2005; Stepanov 1998; Stepanov 1999; Stepanov 2005; Stepanov 2010; Stepanov 2020. On the remembrance of the nomadic and pagan past during the First Bulgarian State, see NIKOLOV 2011; KAYMAKAMOVA 2011, 43-101.

¹¹ The classical treatment of the military alliance between Bulgarians and Cumans is RASOV-SKY 1939. In the past, I have also approached the matter exclusively from this (limited) point of view: Dall'Aglio 2008-2009.

¹² For the supposed existence of a "Cuman party" that hindered the development of the Bulgarian state, see note 45 below.

by the Cumans.¹³ One of the main reasons for this omission is not a lack of will on the scholars' side, but rather the fact that there are very few literary sources or archaeological remains that can shed some light on the subject, that many of the references found in the chronicles are indirect, ambiguous, biased, or uninformed. But were the Cumans, and their customs, so alien and perplexing to the Bulgarians as they were to a "poor" French knight, or to a refined Byzantine intellectual, who considered barbaric even the periphery of Constantinople?¹⁴

Nikethas Choniates, the main source for the establishment of the second Bulgarian state, makes no reference to the Cumans in his account of the beginnings of the rebellion led by the brothers Peter and Asen. He mentions Cuman incursions in the imperial territories during the 11th and the 12th centuries, calling them by the antiquated name of "Scythians" and not differentiating between them and the other northern nomads, to the point that at times it is difficult to understand precisely which ethnic group he refers to. The creation of the new state (or the restoration of the old Bulgarian state, as Choniates himself writes¹⁵) is the deed of the local Vlachs and Bulgarians, and no Cuman presence or influence is mentioned for the first phase of the insurrection. But when Emperor Isaac II Angelos organized a resolute counter-attack in 1186, Peter and Asen were forced to flee across the Danube.16 Once there, with a passionate speech Peter convinced the Cumans to join his side,17 promising a rich and easy plunder because he was certain that the emperor would return as soon as possible to Constantinople, leaving only few troops in Paristrion. The Cumans, characterized according to the classical Byzantine representation of the nomadic northerners as greedy, cowardly, and not particularly clever, accepted Peter's offer with enthusiasm, and with their support he was able to cross back over the river, recover the land lost to the emperor, and secure the survival of his dominions.¹⁸ His speech was obviously made up retrospectively by Choniates, following the canons of ancient Greek historiography, and the aim of

¹³ For some insightful exceptions to this trend, see Tăpkova-Zaimova 1976; Pavlov 1989; Pavlov 1990; Nikolov 2005; Stoyanov 2005; Stoyanov 2009; Golev 2013; Golev 2018a; Golev 2018b; Vladimirov 2018.

¹⁴ The "pobre chevalier", according to his own definition, is Robert De Clari, whose description of the Cuman customs is rightly famous: DE CLARI 2004, § 65. Nikethas Choniates is the Byzantine writer whose chronicle is the most detailed source for the establishment of the second Bulgarian state: Choniates 1975. On the medieval perception of the steppe world and its inhabitants, see especially Ahrweiler 1998; Sardelić 2019; Chekin 1992; on migrations and mobility in the Byzantine world, see Stouraits 2020.

¹⁵ Choniates 1975, 374.

¹⁶ Choniates 1975, 371-2.

¹⁷ It must be pointed out (this is another usual flaw in the historiography of the Bulgaro-Cuman relations) that it was not the Cumans *as a whole* but only certain clans that joined the Bulgarian side: see PAVLOV 1989, 18-20, with extensive bibliography.

¹⁸ Choniates 1975, 373-4; Choniates 1972, 7-8.

the chronicler was not to provide an accurate description of the events but rather to highlight Isaac's lack of combative spirit. Nonetheless, he is correct in representing the Cumans as willing, even eager to assist the Bulgarians in their enterprise (which, notwithstanding what Choniates had Peter say, was not easy at all, as both the Bulgarian ruler and the Cumans most certainly knew). This willingness to commit their armies and their resources, after so many years of peaceful relations with Constantinople, had different causes than the rhetorical abilities of Peter and the supposed greed of the nomads. The Bulgarian proposal turned the attention of some Cuman chieftains and clans towards the territories south of the Danube, an area that had been marginal to their interest for many years. In the second half of the 12th century their attention gravitated mostly towards the Dnieper and the rich commercial settlements of Crimea, and further expansion in the neighbouring regions had been stalled.¹⁹ Just two years before Peter's proposal, their armies had suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of the Rus', 20 so the opportunity to compensate for their losses was surely welcomed.

It would be interesting to know if the Cumans already stationed south of the Danube were instrumental in brokering the alliance between the Bulgarians and their fellow clansmen, if they facilitated or suggested it, or if they thought it was in their best interest. It would be also interesting to know if they had retained their old customs, or if they had adapted to a way of life more similar to that of their settled neighbours. What we know for certain is that since the end of the 11th century groups of Cumans had moved in the imperial territory and that most of them were employed as military auxiliaries by the Byzantine army. Their presence (although we cannot be sure about the actual number of Cumans who settled in the region) contributed to further diversification of the local population of Paristrion, which had already experienced a constant afflux of new settlers, especially transhumant Vlachs,²¹ after the period of the great Pecheneg and Oghuz invasions that had depopulated the region. The sources paint a vivid picture of the network of cities, villages, and fortresses dotting the region in the 11th century, "populated by a multitude of people speaking all kind of languages."22 The Pechenegs and Cumans in Byzantine service are called in the sources, regardless of their actual ethnic origins, with the derogatory name of mixobarbaroi, a reference to their "barbaric" nature only partially tamed by Byzantine customs, which placed them halfway be-

¹⁹ PAVLOV 1989, 13; SPINEI 2009, 140–1; GOLEV 2018B, 101–3, with extensive bibliography. ²⁰ PSRL, vol. 2, 1962², 631-3.

²¹ Staney 2013, 215-17.

²² ATTALEIATES 2011, 158. On Paristrion and its inhabitants in the 11th and 12th century see especially Stephenson 1996; Stephenson 2000; Túpkova-Zaimova 1976; Túpkova-Zaimova 2010a; Tüpkova-Zaimova 2010b; Madgearu 1999a; Madgearu 1999b; Madgearu 2013; Curta 2006, 293-9, 302, 314, 319; Božilov - Giuzelev 2004, 102-24; Bonarek 2007; Dall'Aglio 2013.

tween the sedentary and nomadic world, between civility and savagery.²³ As noted by V. Tŭpkova-Zaimova,²⁴ they tended to mingle with the locals, i.e. Bulgarians and Vlachs, and to use the local language rather than Greek, which was not spoken in the region apart from the elites and the clergy. At first rewarded for their service with money, gifts, and honorific titles, they began to receive plots of land after the institution of the pronoia system and became not only consumers, but also producers of agricultural goods and breeders of livestock while continuing to serve as intermediaries, along with other local and foreign actors, for the goods exchanged between Constantinople, Paristrion itself, and the territories to its north. They became integrated in the network of Paristrian productive activities, and their number, while never particularly high, increased steadily.²⁵ Only minor Cuman raids are reported in Paristrion after the late 1150s, a further proof of the fact that peaceful relations appeared now more lucrative. Due to the lack of major incursions, the second half of the 12th century saw a demographic increase in the region, 26 which consequentially led to an economic expansion²⁷ and to the rise of a new class of local magnates of various ethnic origins: Bulgarian, Vlach, or mixobarbaroi.

This relatively prosperous situation, however, did not last long, especially after the death of Manuel I Komnenos in 1180. The reasons for this are manifold. The end of the Cuman incursions and the parallel tensions with Hungary, Serbia, and the Normans led to the gradual decommissioning of the Byzantine fortresses on the Danube since the military personnel was needed elsewhere.²⁸ This in turn reduced the trade opportunities for the local producers, whose goods could not be sold on the rich markets of Thessalonica or Constantinople due to the competition with other regions of the empire closer to those markets and better served by roads

²³ Attaleiates 2011, 158; Stănescu 1965; Tanașoca, 1973; Tüpkova-Zaimova 1976, 126–31; Tüpkova-Zaimova 1979; Ahrweiler 1998, 10–15; Madgearu 2013, 87–8; Stephenson 2000, 109–14; Zhekova 2020.

²⁴ Tŭpkova-Zaimova 1976, 130.

²⁵ Golev 2018b, 108; Rashev 2007. On the institution of *pronoia*, see especially Bartusis 2012, 94–7; Birkenmeier 2002, 148–68; Laiou, 1977, 142–58; Lemerle 1979, 166–88, 230–48; Kazhdan 1952, 202–3; Kazhdan 1995, with a comprehensive bibliography. On the Cuman *pronoiars*, see especially Ostrogorski 1977; Zhekova 2020. Niketas Choniates was extremely critical of the idea of giving military command to half-barbarians and other people that are inadequately experienced (according to him) and of low social status, because in his opinion this weakened the army: Choniates 1975, 208–9; see also Ahrweiler 1998, 2–3, for other examples of Byzantine writers expressing their disgust at the concept of Roman soldiers being led by barbarians.

²⁶ Harvey 1989, 55-66; Staney 2013.

²⁷ Harvey 1989, 87–8; Laiou 2012, 145–6; Oberländer-Târnoveanu, 1979.

²⁸ Božilov – Gjuzelev 2004, 113–114; Curta 2006, 334–5, 339, 346–7; Fine, Jr. 1994, 6–9; Stephenson 2000, 279–84; Madgearu 2017, 32–3.

and infrastructure, such as Thrace or Macedonia.²⁹ To make matters worse, the tax burden became increasingly oppressive. The tipping point was reached in the early autumn of 1185, the unintended consequence of the marriage arranged between the new emperor Isaac II and Margaret, the daughter of King Béla III of Hungary. Isaac decided to pay the expenses of the ceremony from his estates in Thrace, but apparently the tax collectors were overzealous and confiscated large amount of cattle from other regions of the empire, especially from the vicinities of Anchialos.³⁰ The town was an important commercial outlet where Paristrian goods were traded, so it seems logical to suppose that those who were taxed in excess and saw their cattle confiscated were not the locals but the traders who brought their goods there to be sold locally or shipped to Constantinople. This interpretation is corroborated by the later testimony of Akropolites. According to his chronicle, the requisition was particularly hard on the Bulgarians: "sheep, pigs, and oxen were collected from every province of the Roman empire. But since the land of the Bulgarians rears more of these than do other places, more animals were also demanded from it."31 It may have been particularly hard on the Cumans as well if they were among those who brought their cattle to Anchialos, and we may suppose they were, although Akropolites does not mention them specifically.

The requisition increased the dissatisfaction of the Paristrians, and it was in this context that Peter and Asen appeared at Kipsella, where Isaac II was preparing the expedition against the Normans who had taken Thessalonika.³² We ignore whether they went to Kipsella for personal reasons (according to Choniates, they asked to join the imperial army in exchange for a small plot of land and a small revenue) or to voice the discontent of the Paristrians. In any case, their request was denied and they returned home angered and ready to take vengeance. The same Choniates, however, writes that the decision of seceding from the empire had already been taken, and that they were just looking for a pretext. It has been speculated that, since they were able to access the emperor, they were already at the service of the empire, maybe even pronoiars or anyways men of great standing among the local population,33 and that their main occupation was horse breeding;34 and although

²⁹ On grain production in Thrace, see HARVEY 1989, 139-40. See also LAIOU 2012, 125-46, especially p. 130 for the 11th-12th century trade networks between Thrace and Constantinople, p. 137 on Thessalonika; ASDRACHA 1976, 180-230.

³⁰ Choniates 1975, 368.

³¹ AKROPOLITES 1978, 18 (English translation: MACRIDES 2007, 133). For an assessment of the number of animals possessed by large estates, see HARVEY 1989, 153-7, although the examples provided date mainly from the 11th century.

³² Choniates 1975, 368-9.

³³ Malingoudis 1980, 83-5; Simpson 2016, 6-7; Madgearu 2017, 41-3; Tǔpkova-Zaimova 1976, 131; ZLATARSKI, vol. 2, 435-9; FINE, JR. 1994, 10.

³⁴ On the basis of CLARI § 64, where the initiative of the rebellion is assigned to Kaloyan (not to his older brothers) who, according to the chronicle, was "un serjans l'empereur qui

Choniates is consistent in calling them "Vlachs" it is also possible that they were *mixobarbaroi*, possibly of Cuman ancestry,³⁵ so despised by Choniates and other Byzantine intellectuals.

While this is certainly possible, especially in a border area where many different populations lived side by side with no clearly defined ethnic boundaries, with all the obvious intermingling that this proximity caused and favoured, it must be pointed out that all the available sources, Byzantine or Latin, unanimously consider Peter, Asen, and Kaloyan to have been Vlachs or Bulgarians, not Cuman. Moreover, the Cumans were always considered a different people than the Bulgaro-Vlachs and their allies. Akropolites, while not particularly attentive towards the ethnic differences separating the enemies of the empire (like the vast majority of the Byzantine writers), even writes that Kaloyan became more savage when he married a Cuman princess. He exchanged his previous nature of Bulgarian, which, while extremely violent, was at least more civilized, for that of the Cumans: "since he had won over the Scythian race and was associated with them by kinship and partook of their habits which were bestial by nature, he delighted in the murder of Romans."36 Choniates also differentiates between Bulgarians and Cumans,37 but his disdain and bias against the Asenids, the same disdain and bias he had for the mixobarbaroi, is more evident, and he makes no effort to hide it especially when presenting the actions of Asen and Kaloyan. In his eyes, those populations are different and separated, but both participate in various degrees of barbarism. The Cumans, being nomads and pagans, are demon-worshippers: "they flogged some of their prisoners, outstanding for their beauty, before hanging them as a sacrifice

wardoit une huiriere l'empereeur; si que quant li empereres mandoit soisante chevaus ou chent, que chis Jehans [Kaloyan] li envoioit". The Anatolian plain had been the most important horse breeding ground for military use, where the greater number of imperial stud farms was located. According to HARVEY 1989, 152, "its loss in the 1070s probably caused problems in the supply of horses to the army". See also HENDY 2008, 54–6. We may suppose that as a consequence of this loss the importance of Paristrian horse breeding increased dramatically.

³⁵ On the various theories about the ethnicity of the Asenids, see BOŽILOV 1994, 18–19. ZLATARSKI 1933 supposes that Peter and Asen were chosen as leaders of the uprising because of their Cuman descent since the Bulgarians needed to secure the help of their northern neighbours. According to Angelov 1987, 48; DUJČEV 1945, 50; and Malingoudis 1980, 85–7, they were of Bulgaro-Cuman descent. Pritsak 1982, 373, maintains not only that the Cumans led the uprising, but also that all the subsequent Bulgarian dynasties until the Ottoman conquest were of Cuman origin: "They [the Cumans] led the Wallachian-Bulgarian insurrection against Byzantium which led to the formation of a second Bulgarian kingdom with three Polovcians dynasties: Asen (1185–1280), Terter-oba (1280–1323) and Sisman (1323–1396)"; similarly, according to Vásáry 2005, 41, "the Asenids were a Cuman dynasty whose members became Vlakhs in the twelfth century and Bulgars in the thirteenth."

³⁶ AKROPOLITES 1978, 24 (English translation: MACRIDES 2007, 140).

³⁷ See, for instance, CHONIATES 1972, 3-6.

to their demons."38 But the Bulgarians are described, at times, as being just as fiendish: the seers who prophesize the good fortune of the insurrection are "possessed by demons", 39 Peter and Asen escape the Byzantine army throwing themselves in the Danube "like, in the Gospel, the flock of pigs in the sea", 40 and when Kaloyan took Varna in 1203, "the barbarian was not impressed by the sanctity of the day (since it was the most holy Saturday, in which Christ slept in the Sepulchre) and had no respect for the Christian name, which he only honoured with his lips, but was driven by bloodthirsty demons".41

De Clari is the source in which the difference between Bulgarians and Cumans is most evident. He devotes an entire chapter of his chronicle to the outlandish (for him and for his audience) habits of the Cumans, 42 stressing the fact that they were "dressed in animal skins". 43 At the same time, he does not feel the need to comment on the habits of the Bulgarians, which evidently conformed to his standards of normality; and when he describes the meeting between Kaloyan and Pierre de Bracheux his representation of the Bulgarian tsar is that of a king perfectly able to behave according to the chivalric code of conduct.44

The same diffidence towards the Cumans, and the assumption of their somewhat malignant alterity, has also at times surfaced in the Bulgarian historiography of the past. A case in point is, again, Zlatarski, who has ascribed the dynastic troubles of the first Asenids and the violent deaths of Asen and Kaloyan to the deeds of an unspecified "Cuman party" whose motivations remain, however, unexplored in his analysis. 45 Needless to say, the sources do not support this interpretation: leav-

³⁸ Choniates 1975, 618.

³⁹ Choniates 1975, 371.

⁴⁰ Choniates 1975, 372.

⁴¹ Choniates 1975, 533.

⁴² DE CLARI 2004, § 65.

⁴³ DE CLARI 2004, § 112.

⁴⁴ DE CLARI 2004, § 106.

⁴⁵ According to ZLATARSKI, vol. 3, 94-101, no internal opposition existed in Bulgaria, since Asen and the Bulgarian aristocracy shared the same goals. According to him, any discording voice was external, or suborned by an external force. Ivanko, the killer of Asen in 1195, was therefore the instrument of a "Cuman party," expression of the Cuman nobility dissatisfied by Asen's apparent lack of consideration. Thus, Zlatarski pointed out at a rivalry between Bulgarians and Cumans that, according to him, will continue in the following years and bring also to the death of Kaloyan, killed in 1205 while besieging Thessalonika at the hand of one of his Cuman generals, Manastras, acting on behalf of the "Cuman aristocratic party" ("куманската болярска партия", 260). PAVLOV 1995, 56, rightly considers that a "Cuman party" may have well existed, but only at the time of the Terterid dynasty, whose founder George I Terter (r. 1280-92) was of Cuman descent. He also considers (p. 36) that even if Kaloyan was killed by the Cuman Manastras, this was not the result of a plot organized by the Cumans, but rather because of their "Bulgarization", i.e. their involvement in the factionalism of the Bulgarian aristocracy. They were not the maneuverers, but the maneuvered.

ing aside the fact that it makes no sense to consider all the Cumans as a single political entity with the same goal, they continued to cooperate with the Bulgarian State even after the deaths of the sovereigns allegedly killed by them, something which hardly seems possible if they had reasons to hold the Bulgarians in contempt.

Peter came from the north in 1186 as Asparukh did in 681, both crossing the Danube, both at the head of an army of nomads, both establishing an independent polity with their help. The analogy, of course, ends here (even if it probably did not escape Choniates, who was after all the first one to point out that the aim of the rebels was to rebuild the old Bulgarian state "as it had been in the past").46 While Asparukh was leading his own people, Peter was bringing a "foreign" army of allies. The Cumans remained a distinct entity with their own customs, traditions, and political interests; Bulgaro-Vlachs and Cumans did not create a unified polity, and after a period of collaboration, long and fruitful as it was, they went their separate ways, even if the contacts were never interrupted. Apparently, Peter and Asen did not include any of the Cuman traditions in their political ideology, which emphasized the elements of continuity between their polity and the First Bulgarian State, presenting themselves as the legitimate successors of the Bulgarian rulers and their country as the revival of the old and glorious Bulgarian state.⁴⁷ But was this continuity true in all its elements? Is it possible to consider the Paristrian community, even in its predominantly Bulgarian cultural features, as the faithful reproduction of the old state that was absorbed by the Byzantine Empire in the beginning of the 11th century?

The answer, of course must be a negative one: and not only for the obvious reason that more than 150 years had passed between the two polities. Even more important was the cultural, rather than purely ethnical, shift that the region had witnessed, in which sedentary, nomadic, and transhumant elements concurred in the development of a new identity for the Paristrian community, whose features were partly borrowed from an imperfectly remembered past, and partly from an autonomous and recent creation. This mixed, intertwined, diverse community formed the basis of the second Bulgarian State, and while its rulers were fully justified in searching for their legitimization in the memory of the old state, and the Bulgarian ethnic element was willing to revive its old traditions and recreate its polity "as it had been in the past," the Paristrian community as a whole was more than that, and its roots were also those of the *mixobarbaroi* that participated in the revolt be-

The same can be said of the battle fought between the Hungarian army and some Cuman chieftains who, according to an erroneous tradition, took control of Vidin during Boril's reign: see NIKOV 1912; ILIEV 1984; for a more correct assessment of the episode, see VÁSÁRY 2005, 58–60.

⁴⁶ Choniates 1975, 374.

⁴⁷ On the political use of the memory of the first Bulgarian State made by Peter and his successors, see DALL'AGLIO 2018; DALL'AGLIO 2020.

cause they were a part of their present community rather than because they wanted to revive a state whose memory was alien to them. Being aware of this influence can help us in framing Bulgaria, and the European Middle Ages as a whole, in a network of interconnections spanning across the continent and extending outside of the usual regions of interest and the usual distinctions between Europe and Asia, and sedentary societies and nomads, abandoning the traditional view of mutually exclusive worlds whose only interactions were violent or menacing. "A postcolonial Middle Ages has no frontiers, only heterogenous borderlands with multiple centres. This reconfigured geography includes Asia, Africa, and the Middle East not as secondary regions to be judged from a European standard [...] but as full participants in a world simultaneously larger and more fragmented -a world of intersecting, mutating, incommensurable times and places." 48

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⁴⁸ Cohen 2000, 7.

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Nomads against Knights: Cumans and Latins in the Military Campaigns in the Balkans (1205–1225)

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Abstract

The paper considers the clash between Cuman and Western Latin troops in the Balkans in the first two decades of the 13th century by focusing on the following questions. What was the role of the Cumans in the Bulgarian–Latin conflict of 1205–13? What was the real extent of nomadic involvement in the different stages of the war? Can we analyse this military conflict as a clash between the nomadic and Western, knightly warfare? Next, the study focuses on the Teutonic–Cuman conflict of 1211–25 in the Burzenland region of Eastern Transylvania. The paper analyses this war, drawing parallels with the Cuman–Latin clashes in the Bulgarian–Latin wars of 1205–13. In conclusion, the author presents a balanced assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Cumans and Latins in the Balkans in the first decades of the 13th century.

Keywords: Bulgarian–Latin wars, Latin Empire of Constantinople, Cumans, Teutonic order, medieval Burzenland, Medieval warfare, Nomadic warfare

The available written and archaeological sources provide seemingly sufficient but simple and at times unreliable information about the participation and the role of the Cumans in the Bulgarian wars with the Latin Empire in 1205–1211/13. What was the real strength of the nomadic involvement in the different phases of the war? To what extent were the Cuman troops controlled by the Bulgarian rulers during the war? Can this military conflict be regarded as an example of a collision between the nomadic and the Western, knightly warfare? Last but not least, what was the significance of the Teutonic–Cuman war of 1211–25 in Burzenland and the lands between the south-eastern Carpathians and the lower Danube? Usually, the

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authors focus on the Cuman activity, the seasonal nature of Cuman warfare, and other aspects of the conflict, but the issue of the clash between Latin and nomadic warfare has not been analysed in detail.¹ Most often, historians of medieval warfare present this collision as a clash of two radically different military systems. A view that Western knights did not realize the characteristics of nomadic warfare and did not adjust their tactics to the realities in the East and the Balkans is also popular among the medievalists. But is that correct? To what extent is the strength or weakness of both sides exaggerated or undervalued? What does the analysis of the Latin–Cuman clash in the Balkans of the early 13th century show?

Chronologically, the study covers about two decades: the time between the foundation of the Latin Empire in 1204 and the beginning of the Bulgarian–Latin war in 1205, and the end of the Teutonic presence in Burzenland, south-eastern Transylvania, in 1225. The paper considers the following issues: (a) composition, numbers, mobility, and logistics of the Cumans and the Latin Crusaders in the period 1205–25; (b) strategy and tactics of the Cumans and the Latins in the examined period; (c) the clash between the Cumans and Teutonic knights stationed in the Burzenland area; and (d) troop numbers, composition, mobility, and logistics of the Cumans and the Latins.

The Cumans

Most of the chroniclers exaggerate the number of Cuman troops. According to Niketas Choniates, they were numerous (even almost innumerable and legions of demons) and they usually operated in several directions at the same time, which could explain this impression of multiplicity.² Also, all the written sources identify Cumans as mounted bowmen, but some of the reports lead to the assumption that these bowmen were not only Cumans but mixed detachments that also included Vlachs and Bulgarians.

The archaeological map of the nomadic presence in the territories between the Dniester, the Carpathians, and the Danube over three centuries—from the 10th to the 13th century—can also be used as a source of information about the number of Cuman troops during the period under question. Based on the archaeological data, we are led to the conclusion that the total number of nomads in these lands hardly exceeded 100,000, which casts doubts on the written information that the number of Cuman armies in the military campaign in 1205 reached 14,000 or even 40,000 warriors. Most likely, Cumans from the closest territories of Cumania between the

¹ Cumans and their actions in the Balkans in the late 12th and early 13th centuries have been the subject of study by a number of historians. See: DIACONU 1978, GOLEV 2017, IONITA 2010, NIKOLOV 2008, PAVLOV 1989, PAVLOV 2002, PLETNEVA 2010, KNYAZ'KY 1988, RASOVSKY 1939, RUSSEV – REDINA 2015, TSANKOVA-PETKOVA 1978, DALL'AGLIO 2008-2009, DALL'AGLIO 2013, SPINEI 1986, SPINEI 2009, STOYANOV 2002, VASARY 2005.

² According to some researchers, written records of high numbers of Cuman armies may be considered credible (cf. PLETNEVA 2010, 144–5).

Dniester and the lower Danube took part in the military campaigns under question, but it is also possible that troops from farther Cuman clans east of the Dniester were involved as Bulgarian allies (or mercenaries).³

According to Henri de Valenciennes, there were numerous Cumans in Tsar Boril's (1207–18) troops at the beginning of the 1208 campaign against the Latin Empire.⁴ It remains unclear what part of these Cumans took part in the Battle of Philippopolis on August 1, 1208. Many of them may have left early in the summer, as they did during the campaigns of 1205, 1206, and 1207. The result of the battle of Philippopolis on 1 August 1208 suggests that the Cuman cavalry was not as numerous as in Kaloyan's (r. 1197–1207) campaigns of 1205 and 1206. The next clear account of Cuman involvement in the war dates to 1211 (or the previous 1210).⁵ In April 1211 (or 1210), Bulgarians and Cumans invaded south-eastern Thrace.⁶ Also,

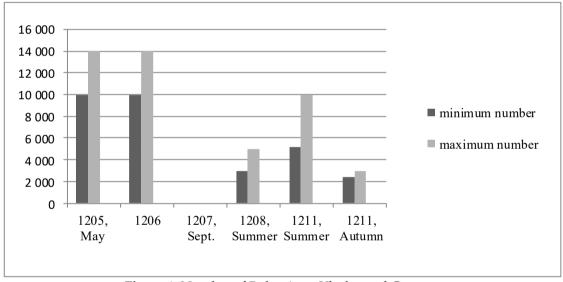


Figure 1. Number of Bulgarians, Vlachs, and Cumans

in the summer of 1211, Boril and his ally Strez were defeated by allied Latin-Epirote troops. Again, the number of Cumans in this campaign is not clear, but it can be assumed that it was lower than in the campaigns of 1205–8. In the same year 1211, Tsar Boril undertook a new advance to Thessaloniki, but it is hard to estimate the Cuman involvement in the campaign. Quite similar was the situation with the next Bulgarian march against the Latins and their ally Alexios Slav in 1213. The

³ Ionita 2010; Pavlov 1989; Pavlov 2006.

⁴ Valenciennes 2009, 35.

⁵ LONGNON 1978, 144.

⁶ Prinzing 1973, 413 (48–51).

failures of the last two campaigns lead to the assumption that Tsar Boril no longer relied on large Cuman contingents. Obviously, the highest number of Cuman allies (between 7,000 and 14,000) was reached in 1205–8. The above leads to the conclusion that there was a sharp change in the number of Cuman troops in military actions compared to the period 1205–8. The chart above is an attempt to represent and compare the numbers of Bulgarians, Cumans, and Vlachs in the campaigns of 1205–11.

The Latins

According to Geoffroy de Villehardouin, Emperor Baldwin I (1204–5) succeeded in mobilizing about 340 knights, with whom he arrived under the walls of Adrianople at the end of March 1205.⁷ Therefore, we can assume that the total number of Latin troops under Adrianople varied between 1,300–1,500 armed men.⁸ The fact that the siege actions were not related to a complete blockade of the town, but only to the blockade of two of the city gates, is also quite indicative of the number of Latin troops. If we calculate all the troops of the Latin Empire on the eve of the battle of Adrianople in 1205 as indicated by Geoffroy de Villehardouin, we will count about 4,000–5,000 armed men.

Apart from the Venetians, there were also Turcoples in the Latin army in the 1205–7 campaigns. Villehardouin mentions the Turcoples several times, implying that they had acted in a coordinated way with the crossbowmen, apparently as archers and as light cavalry for reconnaissance and other auxiliary purposes. Also, Geoffroy de Villehardouin states that the Latin army numbered 400 knights on 23 June 1206.9 Multiplying the number of knights by four to seven times we can reach an estimated total number of about 1,600–2,800 armed men. Based on the above, I would summarize that except for the early spring of 1205 – when the total number of Latin troops reached 5,000 – after the battle of Adrianople and by the end of the war of 1205–13 Latin military resources did not exceed 2,500 capable men at arms. At the same time, Latins, like their opponents, relied on allies and mercenaries.

⁷ VILLEHARDOUIN 1985, 104. According to Villehardouin, Emperor Baldwin left Constantinople with about 140 knights. The next day, nine leagues before Adrianople, he was joined by Marshal Geoffroy de Villehardouin and the number of Latin knights rose to about 200. They were later joined by the Venetian Doge Enrico Dandolo, who led as many as the knights of Emperor Baldwin and Count Louis de Blois, i.e. about 140. Therefore, we can conclude that the Latin army under Adrianople numbered about 340 knights.

 $^{^8}$ Calculating the Latin losses in this battle based on the written accounts of Villehardouin and Clari I have reached a number of about 220 knights (140+300 = 440, 440/2 = 220), excluding the number of those of lower social status who lost their lives. These losses were high not only in absolute numbers but also as a percentage of the total number: in this case, more than 60% of the knights of the army besieging Adrianopolis.

⁹ VILLEHARDOUIN 1985, 120.

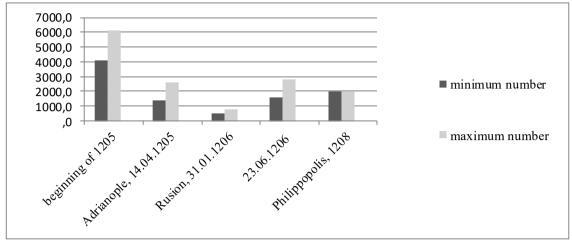


Figure 2. Number of Latin troops in the period 1205–13

Analysing the number of troops on each side relative to the number of successful campaigns, I would underline the following. The considerable numerical superiority of the Bulgarians, Cumans, and Vlachs, who had an overwhelming advantage in many clashes in the period 1205–8, does not coincide with the results of the quantitative analysis of victorious battles and successful campaigns in the period. Despite the considerable superiority of the Bulgarian-Cuman-Vlach coalition and the heavy losses of the Latins, the latter managed to organize their forces as effectively as possible.

Mobility of the opposing sides

Analysing the mobility of the opposing sides, I would note that the Cuman mobility was beyond doubt very good. As all written sources testify, Cumans were highly mobile both on the march, in attack, and in retreat. Their adversaries — the Latins and their auxiliaries — could not compare with them. Unfortunately, we do not have more specific data that allows us to determine the speed of Cumans' daily march, for example. However, such information on the speed of movement of Latin troops can be found in some written accounts. According to Villehardouin, the march from Fenepolis [Philippopolis] to Constantinople took about 9 (nine) days, or an average of about 45 kilometres per day, which was a remarkable speed for knights and sergeants. This means that in wartime conditions the speed of movement of the Latins was not to be underestimated, but the Cumans were faster. This may also explain why Tsar Kaloyan and Tsar Boril withdrew their infantry and siege equipment as soon as the main Latin forces approached.

¹⁰ VILLEHARDOUIN 1985, 104.

Cumans' and Latins' strategy and tactics

After the end of the Carolingian conquests and with the beginning of the Viking and Magyar attacks, the art of war evolved towards a defensive strategy, which finally developed in the period from the 11th to the 13th centuries. It brought defence and siege operations to the forefront and pushed open battles to the background as they were too risky and with an unpredictable outcome. The role of light cavalry and its effectiveness in dealing with heavy cavalry and infantry also increased. This necessitated counteracting measures against the light cavalry, through the wider use of bow and crossbow archers and spearmen. The strategy and tactical practices of the Cumans and the Latins in the first two decades of the 13th century can be analysed in this context.

It is not an easy task to differentiate the Cuman strategy in the military campaigns in question, as it was common to the allied Bulgarians, Cumans, and Vlachs. Both in Kaloyan's and Boril's campaigns, the strategy of scorched and depopulated land stands out, both in offensive and defensive actions. Niketas Choniates and Geoffroi de Villehardouin testify to the destruction of Thrace by Kaloyan and the Cumans in 1205 and 1206. The effect of the scorched-earth methods was also reported by Henry de Valenciennes in his description of the summer campaign and the battle of Plovdiv in 1208. Another characteristic of the strategy of the Cumans, according to Choniates, was being active in several directions at a time, which didn't allow the enemy to concentrate forces for effective resistance.

Analysing the Latin strategy, I would emphasize the information concerning logistics. Describing the siege of Adrianople at the end of March 1205, Villehardouin emphasizes the lack of food supplies for two reasons: the merchants did not follow the Latin troops, and providing food from the surrounding area was almost impossible because of the enemies' attacks. ¹³ The logistics of the Latin troops were the main problem in the campaigns of 1205–8, which was related to the strategy of scorched earth implemented by the Cumans, Bulgarians, and Vlachs. Also, Henry de Valenciennes testifies that the Latin troops didn't find food and wine for twelve days during the march of Emperor Henry I against Tsar Boril in the summer of 1208. Even the emperor had only crumbs to eat and some wine to drink, while many had nothing at all. It was due to the Bulgarians' attempt at luring the enemy into a completely depopulated and food-deprived territory. ¹⁴

Another important issue in both sides' strategy was the seasonal war, usually associated with the Cumans. However, I would like to consider the problem from a broader perspective. Some researchers have interpreted the information about the withdrawal of the Cumans during the summer months as directly related to their

¹¹ VILLEHARDOUIN 1985, 114, 117, 118, 123, 128; NIKETAS CHONIATES 1983, 77, 99.

¹² Valenciennes 2009, 34.

¹³ Villehardouin 1985, 105.

¹⁴ VALENCIENNES 2009, 30.

nomadic lifestyle and the relocation to summer pastures. No doubt, it is a reasonable approach, but I would emphasize two accounts of Cuman actions around Pentecost, i.e. in June. According to Villehardouin, just after Pentecost in 1205, the Cumans withdrew because they could not fight due to the summer, and Tsar Kaloyan directed his troops against the King of Thessaloniki, Boniface of Montferrat (1204-1207).¹⁵ On the other hand, Choniates testifies to a Cuman assault on St George's Day (in early May), and Valenciennes notes that the news of the invasion of Cumans and Vlachs had reached Emperor Henry I on Pentecost 1208.16 The Cumans not only did not withdraw but even started a large-scale campaign in the early summer. The report calls into question the total dependence of the Cumans on the seasonal nomadic movement and suggests that the withdrawal of the Cumans after May was not only provoked by the heat or the seasonal movement of the herds to summer pastures. There was probably another reason that was present in 1205-7, but not in 1208. It may be necessary to refer to Villehardouin's account that in 1207 Kaloyan called off the siege of Adrianople because of the departure of the Cumans, who decided to return to their homelands as they had accumulated enough booty.17

But the Latins were also dependent on climatic conditions and seasonal changes. Describing the campaign of 1206, Villehardouin reports that after the raid in the Bulgarian lands at the end of the summer and in the autumn of 1206, the returning Latin troops reached Adrianople and remained in its vicinity until the Feast of All Saints (1 November): a time when they could no longer fight because of winter. Additionally, the Latins weren't fit to fight in winter and early spring not only because of the cold but also because of the lack of fresh pasture and food supplies in the war zones.

However, if we summarize the information on the seasonal activity of the Cumans, a conclusion could be made that it was at its peak in the period January–May. As for the Latins, they were most active in the April–September period. It is clear that the Latin counter-raids and main success were mainly in the period June–September. There were two reasons behind this: the absence of Cumans in the summer and the autumn, as well as the better climatic conditions and logistical support for people and horses.

Cumans	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	Χ	XI	XII
Latins	Ι	II	III	IV	\mathbf{V}	VI	VI	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII

Figure 3. Seasonal military activity of Cumans and Latins

¹⁵ VILLEHARDOUIN 1985, 112.

¹⁶ NIKETAS CHONIATES 1983, 55; VALENCIENNES 2009, 28.

¹⁷ VILLEHARDOUIN 1985, 127.

¹⁸ VILLEHARDOUIN 1985, 124.

The above also raises a question of the effectiveness of the Cumans in the campaigns under consideration. Setting aside the descriptions of their fierce raids and widespread destruction, we can conclude that their role was really important, but not the only factor for the outcome of the war. We should not underestimate the fact that Cumans' direct involvement in the siege warfare was insignificant, because for most of the military campaigns in question sieges were much more common and decisive than open battles.

Some chroniclers testify to the Cuman tactics in their campaigns in the Balkans, with some specifics being highlighted. Niketas Choniates describes the Cuman warfare as a heavy bow shooting from a safe distance, followed by false retreat and decoying the enemy into pursuit, unexpected counterattacks and entering into close combat only after weakening or dispersing their adversaries. Another characteristic of the Cuman warfare, according to Choniates, was the ambush. A description of a Cuman attack on Messeni and Tzouroulos, which was taken by surprise on St George's Day in 1196, is also indicative of their tactics. The makeshift defence with carts proved to be effective and the attackers were forced to withdraw. Choniates himself explains this with the inability of the Scythians (Cumans) to besiege field and city fortifications.¹⁹

Next, detailed reports of Cuman tactics can be found in Latin written sources. Henri de Valenciennes testifies that in the battle of Beroia in June 1208, the Vlachs and Cumans shot ruthlessly at the Latin army, which provoked a knight named Lienard to break the battle formation and to attack the enemy.²⁰ This description also testifies to the strict discipline followed by the Latin troops after the defeat of Adrianople in April 1205. No one followed Lienard, and Emperor Henry himself was criticized for breaking the order. Next, Valenciennes's account that due to the perfectly flat terrain and the good weather the enemies didn't engage in battle testifies clearly to the Cuman tactics of avoiding an open battle against mounted Latins in such conditions. But despite the advantages of the terrain, the knights did not pursue the enemy for fear of traps and ambushes on August 1, 1208. Valenciennes also provides information on the formations of the Latins in this battle, describing the detachments and the battle plan for the coming fight. The chronicler describes a centre, two wings, and a split attack against the enemy.²¹

Cumans against Teutonic Knights in Burzenland

The issue of the knights' confrontation with the Cumans in military campaigns in the Balkans can be viewed from another perspective, namely, the establishment of the Teutonic Order in Burzenland and the war with the Cumans who lived in the territories beyond the Carpathian range, in present-day Moldova and the north-

¹⁹ NIKETAS CHONIATES 1983, 55.

²⁰ VALENCIENNES 2009, 31.

²¹ VALENCIENNES 2009, 32–3.

eastern part of the Wallachian lowland.²² Some charters issued in the name of the Hungarian king, Andrew II (r. 1205–35), in favour of the Teutons in Burzenland reveal the impact of the order on the Cumans between 1211–25. Most valuable for this research are the charters from 1211, 1212, and 1215, which describe the establishment of the order in Burzenland and the expansion of the Teutons in the Cumans' lands.²³ The first charter issued after May 1211 testifies to the Cumans' raids in south-eastern Transylvania and the direction of the Teutonic expansion beyond the Carpathians. This information is also supported by some of Pope Gregory IX's (1227–41) letters where the Cuman raids in the lands of Burzenland are mentioned as a reason for the Teutonic counter-attack and the occupation of trans-Carpathian territories. Moreover, King Andrew II permitted the Teutons to build wooden fortresses, both in Burzenland and in the newly occupied territories. The latter proved to be effective both in the defence of Burzenland and in the subsequent expansion and consolidation of the Order's new conquests beyond the Carpathians.

In the context of this study, the charters and letters under consideration testify to the characteristics of the Teutonic-Cuman war in 1211–12. It can be also assumed that, as a result, the Cumans in the lands between the Dniester and the lower Danube were seriously engaged in the war, and that this led to limited participation of Cuman troops in the military campaigns south of the Danube. Another charter of 1212 testifies that the Teutons had repelled Cuman attacks while subjecting themselves to mortal danger in defence of the Hungarian Kingdom. Another charter of the Hungarian ruler from 1215 notes that at that time the Teutons completely controlled Burzenland and the border territories, and also entered the lands of the Cumans. The last of these four charters, dating from 1222, reveals important information about the territorial expansion of the Teutons beyond the Carpathians.

This document confirms the Teutonic dominance over the former Cuman territories to the east and south-east of the Carpathians and testifies that the Cumans were under intense Teutonic pressure. Probably, in their further conquest after 1215, the Teutons cut off (in part or in full) the direct connection between the Cuman territories along the Dniester and those between the south-eastern slopes of the Carpathians and the lower Danube. The above testifies to the military effectiveness of the Teutonic Knights in their conflict with the Cumans and to results

²² The scope of research on Teutonic presence in Transylvania in the 13th century is impressive, but the focus is most often on Hungarian-Teutonic rather than Teutonic-Cumanian relations. See: IVANOV 2018, HAUTALA 2015a, HAUTALA 2015b, HAUTALA 2015c, GLASSL 1971, HUNYADI 2008, SHLOMO 2010, ZIMMERMANN 2000. Some sources must also be mentioned here. First, some royal Hungarian letters and some papal letters from Gregory IX and Honorius III testifying to the Teutonic actions against the Cumans in the period 1211–25 can be mentioned (ZIMMERMANN 2000, 168–9).

²³ ZIMMERMANN 2000, 162-193; HAUTALA 2015c, 80-9.

²⁴ ZIMMERMANN 2000, 164-5.

²⁵ ZIMMERMANN 2000, 169-172; HAUTALA 2015a, 23-4.

that were achieved only within a decade. What were the reasons for the knights' success in this conflict?

Based on the above analysis of the clash between the Cumans and the Latins in the campaigns south of the Danube and the Haemus, I would emphasize the strategy and tactics of the rival sides. Most importantly, the Teutons built an effective defence with a network of fortifications in Burzenland, transferring this practice beyond the Carpathians to the Cuman lands. As some chroniclers testify, the Cumans were ineffective against field and city fortifications. Last but not least, unlike the military campaigns south of the Danube, in which the Cumans fought in alliance with the Vlachs and Bulgarians, they were deprived of such support in the lands between the Danube Delta and the Carpathians. Therefore, the Cumans were far more effective and victorious against the Latins south of the Haemus than against the Teutons north of the Danube. Which, after all, could explain the close relations and the strong alliance between Cumans and the first Asenids in the late 12th – early 13th centuries.

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Ecology of Warfare: The Seasonal Campaigns of the Cuman-Qipchaqs in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

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Abstract

According to Dmirty Rassovsky, the Cumans never appeared south of the Danube to support the Asenids during the hot time of the year, and if it occurred in the course of a campaign they withdrew. Plamen Pavlov relativizes to a certain extent the too deterministic model introduced by Rassovsky, which is still relevant for the relations between the Cumans and the first rulers of the re-established Bulgarian state. Yet, the question whether this model is valid only for the period of a few decades of intensive military conflicts in the Balkans (at the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century) or had broader chronological and geographical implications remains unsolved. On the basis of various cases from the Balkan, Rus', Khwārazmian, and Mongol history examined in the present paper, it can be concluded that the *asymmetric seasonal military activity* of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs was by far not a unique feature of their military cooperation with the first Asenids. In fact, this phenomenon can be observed through the entire period of Cuman activities in

able comments and help with the translation of particular source passages, but bears alone

the full responsibility for any mistakes.

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the Balkans and Central Asia (11th-13th centuries). Yet, the Cuman asymmetric seasonal military activity was also not ubiquitous as it was not characteristic of the intensive contacts of these nomads with the Rus' principalities. By drawing synchronous and diachronous parallels with the activities of other Eurasian nomads, the author identifies the factors that stood behind these dynamics.

Keywords: Cuman-Qïpchaqs, climate, warfare, Byzantium, Second Bulgarian Tsardom, Rus', Khwārazm

Introduction

In the course of a nearly two-century-long domination in the steppes between the Irtish and the Danube (mid-11th-mid-13th centuries), the Cuman-Qïpchaqs regularly entered into the closer and even the more distant sedentary territories – both in Europe and in Asia. As a rule, the appearance of these stockbreeders outside of their steppe habitat (the so-called Dasht-i Qipchāq)1 was caused by an invariable desire for participation in military conflicts either in the usual form of nomadic raids or as sedentarists' allies/mercenaries, but always to their own advantage. Modern scholars explain this eagerness with the nomads' desire to supplement the products of the extensive steppe economy, as well as with the existence of a specific military know-how, which could be widely implemented in the territories of the so-called outside world.2 The numerous campaigns of the Cuman-Qipchaqs in the domains of their settled neighbours exercised significant influence over the latter's political history and therefore have been an object of research in multiple historical studies. Yet, despite the extant voluminous literature, only few scholars have paid the due attention to one peculiar feature of the Cuman military undertakings in the outside world - their seasonal rhythm.

Dmirty Rasovsky, a Russian scholar and white *émigré*, was the first to do that more than eighty years ago — in a study about the Cumans as a factor in the wars of the early Asenids with Byzantium and the Latin Empire. According to his observations, these nomads never appeared south of the Danube during the hot time of the year and if it occurred in the course of a campaign, they would leave the

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¹ I.e., "Qïpchaq Steppe", the Persian name of the Eurasian habitat of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs, referred to in the Rus' sources as "Pole Polovetskoe" and in the western sources as Cumania. Rasovsky was right to note that initially these terms did not overlap. Due to the enormous extent of the steppes controlled by the Cuman-Qïpchaq tribes, their sedentary contemporaries were initially unable to fully realize their size, and thus the various toponyms appeared as a designation to the steppes in the immediate proximity to the respective medieval authors, RASOVSKY 1937, 71–3. In the present text Dasht-i Qipchāq and its synonyms are used as a *terminus technicus* referring to the territories controlled by the Cuman-Qïpchaq tribes in the period of their domination in Western Eurasia.

² GOLDEN 1987-91, 68-73; see also GOLDEN 1991, 149. The term *outside world* is introduced by Anatoly Khazanov as a general designation of the non-nomadic societies (mostly agricultural and urban) with whom the nomads cohabitated and interacted, KHAZANOV 1994, 3.

Bulgarian army and withdraw to the steppes.³ Rasovsky supports his conclusions with a number of unequivocal source quotations and defines the period of Cuman activity in the Balkans as the late autumn, winter, and spring.4 Quite naturally, the Russian scholar explains this behaviour with the seasonal migrations of the nomads and the withering of the grass in the summer months. This concept is still relevant, but Rasovsky went too far in determining that the absence of the Cumans from the Balkans during the summer was mandatory. By pointing out some exceptional cases of Cuman presence in the summer months, the Bulgarian scholar Plamen Pavlov relativizes to a certain extent the model introduced by Rasovsky, assuming that only the allied contingents from the more distant steppe regions withdrew during the hot season.⁵ Indeed, one can add to the cases cited by Pavlov further evidence referring to Cuman activities south of the Danube during the summer.⁶ Thus, to summarize the present state of the field: Rasovsky's concept, relativized by Pavlov, is still absolutely relevant – the Cumans avoided appearing on the Balkan military theatre during the summer, but this does not mean that their presence during the hot season should be considered a priori impossible.

These important observations on the Cuman military activity south of the Danube raise interesting questions: is it possible to identify similar rhythms in the Cumans' military endeavours in other contact zones of Dasht-i Qipchāq with the outside world? Furthermore, is the model of Rasovsky applicable to the Cuman incursions in Byzantium's Balkan provinces before the restoration of the Bulgarian state in 1185/86? In other words, what was the geographic and chronological span of the phenomenon, which could be defined as *asymmetrical seasonal military activity* of the Cuman-Qïpchaq tribes? The answers to these questions can only be found through comparative research of the Cuman presence in various contact zones in Europe and Asia. Such an approach could often shed additional light upon the

³ RASOVSKY 1939, 203-11.

⁴ In this regard, it is curious to note the fragmentary preserved text of an undated Bulgarian stone inscription from Veliki Preslav. It mentions in an unclear context 10,800 Cumans and apparently lists six months, each of which fits within the referred seasons, in the following sequence: December, January, March, April, May, October, TOTEV 2007, 37-40. In an earlier publication, Totev reads the number of the Cumans as 10,300, TOTEV 1985, 158-69.

⁵ PAVLOV 1992, 34-5; PAVLOV 1990a, 19-20. Especially indicative is the participation of Cumans in the war with the Latin Empire in July-August 1208, pointed out by Pavlov, see Henri De Valenciennes/Burov 2009, 28-39.

⁶ Thus, the regent and future emperor of the Latin Empire Henry I (r. 1206–16) personally states that not all Cumans had left the Bulgarian army in the summer of 1205. He writes to his brother Geoffrey that Kaloyan's troops, which attacked and captured Philippopolis after the termination of the campaign in the region of Macedonia, were composed of "an infinite multitude of Vlachs and Cumans": "Ihoannicius cum infinita Blacorum et Commannorum multitudine ad prelibatam civitatem veniens, eam obsedit." (Ihoannicius [i.e. Kaloyan] arriving with an infinite multitude of Vlachs and Cumans at the aforementioned city [of Philippopolis], besieged it.), Henricus imperator/Primov 1981, 14.

behaviour of these medieval nomads by pointing to parallels or contrasts that would otherwise remain unnoticed in the research of Cuman actions in one particular geographical or geopolitical area.⁷ Thomas Allsen has introduced such a "holistic approach" in the studies of the much larger Mongol Empire,⁸ and there could be no doubt that a similar methodology would offer promising perspectives for those interested in the Mongols' far less known predecessors in Western Eurasia — the Cuman-Qïpchaq. Regarding the present subject, only after one has established whether the seasonal rhythms of the Cuman campaigns were characteristic of the Balkans, or on the contrary, they can be observed in other regions as well, one would be able to seek with greater confidence the reasons behind this phenomenon.

Byzantium

Despite the relatively scarce data, an examination of the sources for the Cuman military activity south of the Danube in the period of Byzantine domination over the Balkans (11th-12th centuries) allows for certain conclusions regarding its seasonal intensity. It is noteworthy that the first documented appearance of the Cumans on the Balkans, as allies of the Pechenegs during an incursion in the surroundings of Adrianople, apparently took place in the autumn or winter of 1078. According to Michael Attaleiates and the *Continuation of the Chronicle of John Skylitzes*, the attack occurred while the imperial troops under the command of the future emperor Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081–1118) were engaged in a military campaign against the rebel Basilakes in the area of Thessaloniki. Since Alexios was sent by Nikephoros III Botaneiates (r. 1078–81) against the pretender in the autumn of 1078, the advent of the Cumans and the Pechenegs in the vicinities of Adrianople must have taken place during the cold months that followed his departure.

Less than a decade later, another nomadic incursion into the Balkans in which the Cumans may have played a role followed. This was the campaign of the de-

⁷ GOLEV 2013a, 142–51; GOLEV 2018a, 89–126; see also two separate publications that examine the relations of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs with the urban centres in the contact zone with the outside world in two completely different and remote regions GOLEV 2018b, 23–107; GOLEV 2021a, 11–52.

⁸ Allsen 1987, 9-11.

⁹ Attaleiates/Kaldellis - Krallis 2012, 548-9; The Continuation/McGeer 2020, 184-5.

¹⁰ SKOULATOS 1980, 37. There is another mention of the Pechenegs and the Cumans during the reign of Botaneiates preserved only in the *Continuation of the Chronicle of John Skylitzes*. According to that source, a certain Leo Diabatenos—an imperial official—was dispatched to govern Mesembria and managed to arrange "a reconciliation and treaty" with them, The *Continuation*/McGeer 2020, 188–9). However, this seems to be a reference to a settlement of the aforementioned conflict in the vicinity of Adrianople, and not to another joint incursion of the nomads in the cold seasons, as I supposed earlier on the basis of a wrong dating and partial publication of the source text in Skylitzes – Kedrenos/Tapkova-Zaimova 1965, 340; see Golev 2021b, 9.

throned Hungarian king Salomon (1063–74), who attacked the European domains of Byzantium together with unidentified nomadic allies, but was defeated and perhaps killed. 11 A juxtaposition of Anna Komnene's *Alexiad*, where it is stated that the incursion started "after the arrival of spring" (Ἑαρος δὲ ἐπιφανέντος) and the account of *The Hungarian Chronicle of the 14th century*, according to which the invaders were defeated during the winter and Salomon's retreat was hindered by a heavy snowfall, suggests that the events perhaps took place in the first cold months of 1087. 12 Therefore, this campaign, too, apparently matched the seasonal cycles of the steppe nomads' military activity, regardless of the particular tribal affiliations of the protagonists.

In the spring of 1091, Cumans appeared in Thrace, where on April 29 they helped the Byzantine emperor, Alexios I Komnenos, to defeat the Pechenegs who roamed in his realm in the famous battle of Lebunion.¹³ The Cuman campaign in support of the so-called Pseudo-Diogenes ca. 1095 apparently also took place in the cold seasons. This is suggested by Ana Komnene, who states that after the final battle with the nomads near an unidentified passage of the Balkan Mountains, her father was forced to spend the night in the mountain "since there was a violent storm".¹⁴

Rumors about a Cuman incursion south of the Danube compelled the emperor to head with his troops towards his Balkan provinces in November 1114, but as far as one can judge from the unclear chronology of Anna Komnena, the assault itself took place in the next summer.¹⁵

¹¹ The Hungarian Chronicle from the 14th century refers to his allies as "Cuni", a generic term for eastern nomads, while Anna Komnene labels them in the archaic style typical for the Byzantine historiography: "a mixed [...] army [...] of both Sauromatians and Scythians" (σύμμικτον [...] στράτευμα [...] ἔκ τε Σαυροματῶν καὶ Σκοθῶν), for these accounts, see n. 12. Thus, it seems probable that at least some of the nomads who raided the Balkans with Salomon were affiliated to the Cuman-Qïpchaq tribal community although this cannot be established with certainty.

¹² Chronici Hungarici/Domanovszky 1999, 409–10; The Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle/West 1969, 128; Anna Komnene/Reinsch – Kambylis 2001, 203; Anna Comnena/Dawes 2000, 119; for the death of Salomon, see Bernoldi Chronicon/Pertz 1844, 446.

¹³ Anna Komnene/Reinsch – Kambylis 2001, 243–51; Anna Comnena/Dawes 2000, 142–7.
14 "ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς περὶ τὴν ἀκρολοφίαν τῆς Σιδηρᾶς Κλεισούρας παννύχιος διατελέσας, χειμῶνος ὅντος σφοδροῦ, αὐγαζούσης ἤδη ἡμέρας τὴν Γολόην κατείληφεν." (The basileus spent the whole night on the mountain ridge of the Sidera gorge, since there was a violent storm, and when the day dawned he reached Goloe.), Anna Komnene/Reinsch – Kambylis 2001, 295. All accessible translations render this passage in a different way, in the sense of a storm, bad or cold weather, Anna Comnena/Dawes 2000, 175; Ana Komnina/Lyubarsky 1996, 274; Ana Komnina/Voynov 1972, 112. Regarding the dating of this Cuman campaign, see the various opinions cited by Lyubarsky, Ana Komnina/Lyubarsky 1996, 556, n. 959.

¹⁵ Anna Komnene/Reinsch – Kambylis 2001, 454, 457, 458; Anna Comnena/Dawes 2000, 271, 273–4.

Another large-scale nomadic invasion, which apparently begun in the autumn, led to a war between the invaders and Emperor John II Komnenos (r. 1118–43) in the winter and spring of 1121/22 or 1122/23. In this case, the ethnic affiliations of the attackers are not clear—some scholars identify them as Pechenegs, other as Cumans. In all likelihood, this was a coalition of Berendeis, Uzes, and Pechenegs, but what is more important for the present topic is that a significant invasion like this also followed the seasonal pattern of nomadic military activity in the Balkans, which is by far not an exclusive feature of the Cumans.

New Cuman raids followed during the reign of the next emperor of the Komnenos dynasty-Manuel I (r. 1143-80). The first of them took place in 1148 and demanded the personal intervention by the ruler, who, according to John Kinnamos, even dared to personally chase the nomads beyond the Danube.²⁰ Modern scholars date the assault to the end of the winter or the beginning of the spring,21 and this hypothesis is fully supported by the narrative of the Byzantine chronicler. Indeed, Kinnamos reports that Manuel I set off towards the island of Kerkira, recently captured by the Normans, via a land route through the Balkans. But when the emperor arrived at Philipopolis, he was informed about the Cuman incursion and headed towards the Danube. While awaiting the arrival of ships from Constantinople, Manuel spent the time hunting through the Danubian Plain. But before the appearance of the vessels, the Cumans withdrew with their booty beyond the river and the emperor followed them with a detachment of five hundred men, with whom he crossed two more rivers before catching the nomads and defeating them. Yet, despite this significant detour, the emperor managed to reach the Adriatic coast "in the most suitable time" for sailing, and his plans for the siege of Kerkira in the same year were diverted only by the delay of the Byzantine fleet. The latter arrived in late autumn, when the sea was already dangerous.²² The fact

¹⁶ KINNAMOS/MEINEKE 1836, 7–9; KINNAMOS/BRAND 1976, 16–17.

¹⁷ See ZLATARSKI 1994, 369; MLADENOV 1931, 115–136; OSTROGORSKI 1998, 485; TAPKOVA-ZAIMOVA 1976, 104; SPINEI 2003, 150–1; SPINEI 2009, 125–6. In the latter book Spinei allows for the possibility that Cuman groups on the Lower Danube joined the invaders, who apparently were a combination of several tribes, but still affirms that the Pechenegs must have had the leading role in the incursion.

¹⁸ Diaconu 1978, 62–77; Fine 1989, 225, 234; Stephenson 2000, 106; Curta 2006, 312, 319.

¹⁹ See the argumentation in GOLEV 2013b, 358-64.

²⁰ Kinnamos/Meineke 1836, 93–5; Kinnamos/Brand 1976, 76–8; Choniates/van Dieten 1975, 78; Choniates/Magoulias 1984, 46; Theodoros Skoutariotes/Voynov 1972, 226–7; Johannes Tsetses/Yonchev 1980, 108; Bibikov 1981, 117–118.

²¹ Zlatarski 1994, 384–385; followed by Bibikov 1976, 18; Magdalino 2002, 53.

^{22 &}quot;ό μὲν γὰρ καίτοι τῶν Σκυθικῶν μεταξὺ περιεσπακότων ὅμως ἔφθη ἐπικαιρότατα τῷ χώρῳ ἐπιστάς, ὅθεν κὰι τὴν ἀπόπλοιαν ποιεῖσθαι ἐχρῆν· τὸν δὲ στόλον ξυνέβαινεν, εἴτε πνεύμασιν ἐναντίοις τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ πρόσω ἀνακοπέντα, εἴτε καὶ τῆ τοῦ δουκὸς περὶ ταῦτα ἀμαθίᾳ, ὀψὲ καὶ κατόπιν ἐλθεῖν τοῦ καιροῦ. ἔαρος γὰρ τῶν Βυζαντίων ἀναχθεὶς λιμένων, φθινούσης ἤδη τῆς ὥρας ἐς βασιλέα κατῆρεν ἐντεῦθέν τε τὰ Ῥωμαίων ἔσφηλε πράγματα. [...] πελάγη τε γὰρ

that Manuel I reached the Adriatic coast before the arrival of his fleet in the autumn as well as the reasonable assumption that he set off from Constantinople as early as possible suggest that the Cuman raid indeed must have taken place at the end of the winter or in the spring of 1148.

Two more Cuman incursions followed during the reign of the same emperor: ca. 1152-54 and less than a decade later. The latter was also the last one for which it can be assumed in what time of the year it has been conducted. The attack took place at the very end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh decade of the 12th century, when Manuel I led a campaign against the Seljuq sultan Kilij Arslan II (r. 1156-92). Kinnamos reports that the basileus concluded peace with the sultan and set off towards his own realm, but on the way he learned "that the Scythians [i.e. the Cumans] had crossed the Danube intending to ravage the land of the Romans".23 In order to face the raiders, Manuel I took a detour from the route to Constantinople and crossed the Dardanelles near Gallipoli heading directly towards them. When the nomads were informed about his approach, however, they retreated before the emperor reached the Danube.²⁴ Claude Cahen dates the beginning of the Seljuq campaign in the winter of 1160/125, and according to Özaydın the fights ended in the autumn of 1161.26 These rather general chronological assessments allow for the assumption that the Cuman incursion in question also took place in the cold time of the year, but due to the lack of more solid evidence one cannot reach beyond the sphere of conjectures.

Naturally, there are a number of other episodes during the Byzantine domination over the Balkans (11^{th} – 12^{th} century) when the Cumans appeared south of the Danube, but in all of them the sources do not provide any hints about the season of their activities. Yet, it is indicative that, as a rule, whenever the precise time of the year is mentioned or can be deduced from the context, it almost always falls within

ένταῦθα δεινῶς ἀχανῆ τέταται, καὶ ἔστιν ἐπιεικῶς κινδυνώδης ὁ πλοῦς καὶ μάλιστα χειμῶνος." (For, indeed, although in the meantime he [the basileus] had been diverted by the Scythians, nevertheless he arrived in the most suitable time [for sailing] establishing himself on the place, whence the navigation had to be made. Yet, it so happened that the fleet – either prevented to move forward by unfavourable winds, or due to the ignorance of the duke [i.e. the admiral] in the [maritime] affairs – arrived too late and after the favourable time [for departure]. For after [the fleet] had sailed from the Byzantine ports in the spring, it arrived to the basileus when the autumn was already coming to an end, and thus thwarted the affairs of the Romans. [...] Because the sea there stretched terribly wide and sailing is rather dangerous, especially in the winter.), KINNAMOS/MEINEKE 1836, 96; KINNAMOS/BRAND 1976, 78–9.

 $^{^{23}}$ "πυθόμενος δὲ Σκύθας τὸν Ἰστρον διαβῆναι ἐφ᾽ ῷ Ῥωμαίων καταδραμεῖσθαι", ΚΙΝΝΑΜΟS 1836, 201; ΚΙΝΝΑΜΟS / BRAND 1976, 153.

²⁴ KINNAMOS/MEINEKE 1836, 201-2; KINNAMOS/BRAND 1976, 153.

²⁵ Cahen 2001, 25-6.

²⁶ Özaydin 2002, 399.

the cold months of the year. The only exception is the summer incursion by the Cumans in 1115, mentioned by Anna Kommnena. Yet, even in this case the appearance of the nomads was initially expected during the cold months, which forced Alexios I Komnenos to gather his troops and to spend the winter of 1114/15 in Thrace. In fact, Anna's account of these events is too vague and obscure, which is not unusual for her writing style. But even if such a summer "precedent" existed, the disproportion with the significant number of documented incursions during the cold seasons strongly suggests that most of the undated Cuman raids during the period of Byzantine domination over the Balkans must have also taken place in the cold time of the year. Of course, such a tendency is not a deterministic one and does not mean that the nomads were absolutely absent from the peninsula during the summer. Such instances were simply much rarer as compared to the peaks of nomadic military activity in the Balkans during the cold seasons—just as it was during the later period of intensive cooperation between the Cumans and the Asenids (end of 12th and early 13th centuries) studied by Rasovsky and Pavolv.

Khwārazm

It is only logical that the present comparative research would include the most distant from the Balkans contact zone of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs with the sedentary societies—the Central Asian region that for thousands of years has been known as Khwārazm. Luckily, the medieval sources for the history of these lands provide some evidence that is directly related to the researched topic.

In the first place, the geographical features of Central Asia should be taken into consideration—the oases of agriculture in the region are dispersed amidst steppes and deserts, which makes the frontier between the habitats of nomads and sedentarists much more fluid as compared to Eastern Europe.²⁷ Due to this, the climate turned to be a decisive factor defining the access to the sedentary oases, which according to the medieval sources were inaccessible in some periods of the year. Thus, Bayhaqī (11th century) narrates that the Khwārazmshāh Hārun b. Altuntash (r. 1032–5), after his meeting with Shāh-Malik—the ruler of Jand near the Syr Darya—commented that the latter was only able to come in Khwārazm during the winter, when the desert is covered with snow.²⁸ This statement may be too deterministic, but there is no doubt that the winter was the most suitable season for military campaigns in the region. Due to the harsh natural conditions, this observation proved to be valid not only for the northern nomads, but also for the invading armies from the south, who customarily entered Khwārazm during the cold part of

²⁷ KHAZANOV 1992, 69-74; see also BAYPAKOV 1986, 7-12; BREGEL 2003, 2-3 and map 1.

 $^{^{28}}$ (and except in the winter, when this desert is covered with snow, it is not possible to arrive here from Jand), Bayhaqī/Khaṭīb Rahbar 1393/2014, vol. 3, 1116–1117; Beyhaqī/Bosworth 2011, vol. 2, 391-392; vol. 3, 395, n. 113; Bayhaqī/Arends 1969, 827.

the year, as evidenced by the campaigns of the Seljuq sultans Alp-Arslan (r. 1063–72)²⁹ and Sanjar (r. 1118–57).³⁰

Furthermore, in the case of the nomads their military activity was defined not only by the climatic conditions in the vicinities of Khwārazm, but also by the seasonal cycles of their own migrations. Owing to the aridity of the steppes, these migratory routes stretched over much longer distances in Central Asia as compared to Europe. As a result of these migrations, the steppes along the lower and middle course of the Syr Darya sheltered the winter camps of prominent nomadic groupings throughout the centuries. Thus, it is hardly surprising that the combination of the two aforementioned tendencies defined the peak of nomadic military activity in Khwārazm during the cold months of the year. In fact, the appearance of the steppe dwellers in the region was so rhythmical that the locals sedentarists also organized their campaigns against them in a strictly defined time of the year. This is revealed by al-Bīrūnī's account about annual early winter campaigns of the inhabitants of Khwārazm aimed at driving the Oghuz away from their borders.

The question of how the activities of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs in Khwārazm and its surroundings fit within this general model of nomadic behaviour arises. It is noteworthy that as early as 1133 the Khwārazmshāh 'Alā' al-Dīn Atsïz (r. 1127/8–1156) of the Anushteginid Dynasty (1097–1231) led a campaign from Jand in "the depth of Turkistān", where he "encountered a ruler and chief who was considered the most powerful among the infidels", managed to defeat him, and slew many of his followers.³⁴ Apparently this attack occurred in the winter or early spring of 1133,

²⁹ Mīrkhwānd 1339/1960, 274-6; MITT 1941, 466-7; İbnü'l Cevzî/Sevim 2011, 149-50; see also Turan 1993, 159; Bregel 2003, 28-9.

³⁰ IBN AL-ATHĪR/RICHARDS 2005, 348, 370; JUVAYNĪ/QAZVĪNĪ 1916/1334, 5, 7–8, 8–10; JUVAINI/BOYLE 1958, 280, 281–2, 282–4; BARTOL'D 1898, 44–7; BARTOL'D 1900, 347–8, 350–1; PAUL 2013, 81–129 (especially p. 103 for Sanjar's second campaign in Khwārazm).

³¹ See in general Krader 1955, 301–26; see also Golden 1987–1991, 78.

³² Thus, according to the anonymous author of Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam, as early as the late 10th century the *malik* of the Ghūz (i.e the Oghuz) wintered in Dih-i Naw, apparently identical with Yangikent in the river's delta, Ḥudūd Al-ʿĀlam/Sotoodeh 1340/1962, § 26, p. 123; Ḥudūd Al-ʿĀlam/Minorsky 1970, § 26, pp. 122, 371; for the connection between the two toponyms see Golden, who draws attention to this evidence, Golden 1992, 209.

³³ GOLDEN 1992, 211. Likewise, in the cold part of the year Alp-Arslan launched an expedition against Khwārazm (1065–6) and campaigned against the nomadic tribes from the steppes between the Caspian and the Aral Seas, some of whom apparently were Qïpchaqs, see the sources in n. 29.

[«]از جانب خوارزم چند ماه بود تا خوارزمشاه با لشکری عظیم از جانب ثغری که معروف و مشهور است و آن را جند خوانند 34 بقعر ترکستان فرو رفته بوده است و خطرها تحمل کرده و با ملکی و مقدمی که او را در میان کفّار بزرگتر دانند او را ملاقات افتاد و ایزد تعالی بلطف و فطل خویش نصرت و تایید ارزانی داشته تا آن کافر را بشکسته است و هزیمت کرده و خلق بسیار از (from Khwārazm: و غنایم و سبی و مال بی قیاس او را روزی بوده و در ضمان سلامت با مقرّ حویش رسیده» several months ago the Khwārazmshāh, with an immense army, entered the depth of Turkistān from a frontier, which is famous and glorious and is called Jand. [He] endured

since it is reflected in a letter from the summer of the same year, in which it is said to have taken place "several months ago". This must have been a successful raid against the nomadic camps beyond the Syr Darya and the prominent leader of the unbelievers was most probably one of the numerous Cuman-Qïpchaq chiefs. During his reign, Atsïz organized a number of campaigns against the steppes inhabited by the Cuman-Qïpchaq tribes, and although in the rest of the cases there is no preserved information about the season of fighting, one can assume that most of them must have taken place during the cold period of the year.

Yet, the relations of the nomads with the Khwārazmshāh were not limited exclusively to the sphere of mutual conflicts. The Cuman-Qïpchaqs apparently provided contingents for the troops of Atsïz, again in the cold seasons. This is revealed by the *fathnāma*³⁷ circulated by Sultan Sanjar after an autumn-winter campaign against the Khwārazmshāh, who also happened to be Sanjar's unruly vassal.³⁸ According to this document, in the defeat that he suffered under the walls of the Hazārasp fortress, Atsïz lost "nearly ten thousand men Turks, some [of them] from the infidels,³⁹ who were among the auxiliaries and allies of the governor who had gone astray [i.e. the Khwārazmshāh]".⁴⁰ Most probably, these infidels were members of the Cuman-Qïpchaq tribal community⁴¹ most of whom remained faithful to their traditional pagan religion until the very end of their domination in Dasht-i Qipchāq.⁴²

perils and encountered a ruler and chief who was considered the most powerful among the infidels. And the Most High God with His grace and justice rendered [His] assistance and support so that infidel was broken and defeated and many people from them [the infidels] were killed. He [the Khwārazmshāh] won an unprecedented [quantity of] booty, captives, and wealth and safely arrived at his residence.), BARTOL'D 1898, 37; see also BARTOL'D 1900, 347. ³⁵ See the source text in the above note and the arguments of Paul, who believes that the campaign probably took place during the winter of 1132/3, PAUL 2013, 93, n. 54.

- ³⁶ Jūzjānī/Habībī 1343/1964, vol. 1, 299; al-Juzjani/Raverty 1970, 236–7; Juvaynī/Qazvīnī 1916/1334, 10, 12; Juvaini/Boyle 1958, 284, 286; see also Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan 2010, 3.
- ³⁷ I.e., victory proclamation in Buniyatov's words, BUTINYATOV 1986, 10.
- ³⁸ This is the first of several campaigns that Sanjar led against Khwārazm trying to affirm his power in this isolated region. The Seljuq ruler started his expedition in the autumn of 1138 and came back to his capital Nīshāpūr in February 1139, see n. 30.
- ³⁹ In this regard, see Paul's thoughts: PAUL 2015, 145.
- .BARTOL'D 1898, 45 «قرب ده هزار مرد ترك بعضى از كفّار كه از انصار و اعوان مدير ضالٌ بودند» 40
- ⁴¹ PAUL 2015, 145.
- ⁴² GOLDEN 1998b, 223–6. Even as late as the 1180s, the Qïpchaq allies of the Khwārazmshāhs were still pagans, although they were already in-laws of the Anushteginids, PAUL 2015, 147; KAFESOĞLU 2000, 94, n. 76; see also: BARTOL'D 1900, 365; BIRAN 2005, 61. By the late 12th and early 13th century the contacts with the Anushteginid Dynasty led to the Islamization of some Cuman-Qïpchaq tribes and especially their elite. Yet, on the whole, the inhabitants of Dasht-i Qipchāq continued to follow their traditional beliefs until the arrival of the Mongols and even after that.

A letter by Atsïz's court poet, Rashīd al-Dīn Vatvāt, written soon after the death of the ruler, however, suggests that the appearance of the steppe nomads on Khwārazmian territory was by far not always connected with the duties of mercenary or allied troops. It seems "the infidels" did not always remain mere passive spectators to the Khwārazmshāh's numerous steppe campaigns. According to this source, the inhabitants of Khwārazm also had to bear the incursions of the said "unbelievers", which, unsurprisingly, occurred in the winter. In his letter, Vaṭvāṭ gives the following explanation for the Khwārazmian troops' failure to support Sanjar, who had just saved himself from Oghuz captivity:43 "in the winter, this frontier is fearful from the blows of the infidels (may God abandon them!), especially now when the lord, the late malik (may he rest in peace!) has passed in the proximity of the Almighty God, and the infidels became more confident due to his death."44 Vatvāt also notes that the Khwārazmian troops, who were still occupied with a campaign against the unidentified settlement of Saq, will arrive in Khurāsān "as soon as the winter passes away and the vanguard of spring becomes evident and secures the frontier of Khwārazm against the evil[doings] of the infidels (may God abandon them!)".45

Naturally, the court poet tried to excuse the Khwārazmian leadership's failure to provide help for their overlord in Khurāsān by using all kinds of arguments, and it is entirely possible that he overstated the problems caused by the nomads. Yet, despite this possibility, Vaṭvāṭ's letter undoubtedly refers to real or at least realistic political circumstances from the mid-12th century. Furthermore, the quoted passages leave the impression of regular nomadic incursions against Khwārazm during the winter and of a relief with the advance of the spring, which provided protection against "the evil[doings] of the infidels". Thus, the steppe dwellers' pressure had strictly defined (and hence predictable) seasonal intensity and the warming of the weather could limit it. Therefore, it was precisely the seasonal cycle that defined the dynamics of the conflicts between the Cuman-Qïpchaqs and their settled neighbours in Central Asia – both within the steppe and in the territories of the sedentarists.

The rule of the last Khwārazmshāhs was characterized by the growing importance of the Qïpchaq contingents for the successful expansion of the dynasty. The sources for this period continue to mark the seasonal intensity of the nomadic activities and become more specific as regards the tribal identity of the steppe

⁴³ By the end of his long reign Sanjar was defeated by his Oghuz subjects and spent three and a half years as their captive, TOR 2000/2010; ÖZAYDIN 2009, 510–11.

[«]بوقت زمستان، این خطَّهُ را از صدمات کفّار، خَذَلَهُمُ الله، خوف باشذ، خاضّه در ین وقت کی خداوَند، ملک ماضّی، بَرَّدَ الله ۹۷ «بوقت زمستان، این خطَّهُ را از صدمات کفّار، خوف باشد، وقت کی خداوَند، ملک ماضّی، بَرَّدَ الله کرده اند.» (VAṬVĀṬ/TŪYSIRKĀNĪ 1338/1960, 128. Jürgen Paul brings attention to this fragment of Vaṭvāṭ's correspondence, Paul 2013, 108.

^{45 «}چندانک زمستان بگذرذ، و طلائع بهار پیذا آیذ، و خطَّهٔ خوارزم از غوائل کفار، خَذلَهُمُ اللهُ، ایمن گردذ» که VAŢVĀŢ/TŪYSIRKĀNĪ 1338/1960, 128.

dwellers. First, several letters of Khwārazmshāh 'Alā' al-Dīn Tekesh (r. 1172–1200) to other Islamic rulers should be pointed out. They have been preserved in a collection of documents of the Khwārazmian senior administrative official al-Baghdādī. In these letters, it becomes evident that for at least two subsequent winters in the early 1180s the Qïpchaq in-laws of Tekesh—Alp Qara Uran⁴⁶ and his son Qiran—appeared with their troops in the surroundings of Jand. Their aim was to join the Khwārazmian contingents in this region and to head together with them against the territories of the Qara Khitai Empire (1124–1218) in the region of Ṭarāz.⁴⁷ Furthermore, in a letter to the *Atabeg* of Azerbaijan, Jahān Pahlvān (r. 1175–86), from November 1182 (written about a month after the evidence for the second appearance of Alp Qara Uran in the vicinities of Jand) the Khwārazmshāh boasts that he continues to enjoy the support of a numerous Qïpchaq army from the furthermost parts of Turkistān.⁴⁸

Although evidence for only two consecutive years is preserved, perhaps it reflects the existence of a long-lasting practice of seasonal military campaigns. The advent of the Qïpchaqs in the region of Jand in two subsequent winters coincides entirely with the seasonal migratory rhythm of the Eurasian nomads. In fact, the rhythmic appearance of their troops raises the questions whether Tekesh could afford to abort the seasonal campaign and what the alternative would have been for the large nomadic forces already situated on the border of his realm? Or, in other words, was Tekesh the initiator of the allied military activity or was he just trying to channel it in a politically favourable direction? Regrettably, the answers to these questions remain elusive.

The establishment of an alliance with the Cuman-Qïpchaq tribes and the successful Khwārazmian expansion in the basin of the Syr Darya did not guarantee a smooth coexistence with the nomads. The fear of the imminent nomadic menace that Rashīd al-Dīn Vaṭvāṭ mentioned decades earlier was apparently still to be felt in the Central Asian oases. It is hardly by chance that in the early 1180s Tekesh planned a campaign in Khurāsān "with great armies [...] from the remotest lands of Islam and the frontiers of the land of Khifjāq" precisely at the end of the win-

⁴⁶ Apparently, this was the leader of the powerful Q¨ipchaq grouping Uran, which has been mentioned as allied to the Khwārazmshāhs also by other sources, and from which—according to some medieval accounts—originated Terken Khatun, the wife of Tekesh, JUVAYNĪ/QAZVĪNĪ 1916/1334, 109, 198; JUVAINI/BOYLE 1958, 378, 465; see also: RASHĪD ALDĪN/RAWSHAN – MŪSAVĪ 1373/1994, vol. 1, 505–6; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/KARĪMĪ 1338/1959, vol. 1, 366; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/THACKSTON 1998–9, part 2, 250; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/SMIRNOVA 1952, 209–10; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN 2010, 33; MĪRKHWĀND 1339/1960, 407. For this tribal grouping see GOLDEN 1995-1997, 117–18; KÖPRÜLÜ 1943, 227–43.

⁴⁷ BAGHDĀDĪ/BAHMANYĀR 1384/2005-6, 158, 174-5.

⁴⁸ BAGHDĀDĪ/BAHMANYĀR 1384/2005-6, 180; see also BARTOL'D 1900, 366.

ter.⁴⁹ Indeed, early spring was the usual time of the year when the Khwārazmshāh departed with his troops towards this region.⁵⁰ And yet, there can barely be any doubt that the geographical conditions in Khurāsān were not the only reason for Tekesh's unwillingness to leave with his troops the core region of his realm before the end of the winter, which was also the peak season of nomadic military activity.

The letters in al-Baghdādī's collection reflect a period when the Qïpchaqs still arrived for seasonal campaigns and then retreated in the steppes, much like the Cuman allies of the first Asenids in Bulgaria. In the following decades, the nomads migrated permanently within the Khwārazmian territories and their participation in the imperial campaigns did not follow such a strict seasonal rhythm. But this was not the case with the usual conflicts between the Anushteginids and the Cuman-Qïpchaq tribes that—despite the strengthened partnership and the nomads' integration within the imperial military-political system—did not cease at all. As it seems, the campaigns of the Khwārazmshāhs in Dasht-i Qipchāq followed to a large extent the same natural cycle, perhaps driven by the necessity to deliver a blow upon the nomadic encampments in the time of the year when they were most vulnerable—both in terms of location and cattle condition.⁵¹

Events that took place in the late 12th century are indicative in this regard. After the winter of 1194/5 passed, Tekesh personally led an expedition towards "Sighnaq and its surroundings" with "the intention to wage *ghazā* against Qadīr Buqu Khan".⁵² After the Khwārazmian troops crossed the Qïzïl Qum and reached Jand, the nomadic chief started to withdraw while Tekesh chased him. The Khwārazmshāh, however, ignored the dangerous fact that among his troops were many warriors of the Qïpchaq tribe Uran, some of them in his own retinue. The latter contacted Qadīr Buqu Khan and promised him that if he faces Tekesh they will desert him on the battlefield. During the battle that followed on May 18, 1195 the Uranians kept their promise, thus causing the Khwārazmshāh's severe defeat.⁵³

Apparently, Qadïr Buqu Khan was a leader of a steppe grouping whose winter pasturages were situated in the surroundings of Sïghnaq, while Tekesh's move-

⁴⁹ (with great armies, which are ordered in the line of service from the remotest lands of Islam and the frontiers of the land of Khifjāq), BAGHDĀDĪ/BAHMANYĀR 148. According to Bartold, the letter was written in January 1182, whereas Kafesoğlu dates it to January 1181 on the grounds of its historical context, BARTOL'D 1900, 181; KAFESOĞLU 2000, 93, n. 69.

⁵⁰ As can be inferred from another letter of Tekesh, BAGHDĀDĪ/BAHMANYĀR 1384/2005-6, 175-6.

⁵¹ For the vulnerability of the animals in certain periods of the year, see below in the text.

 $^{^{52}}$ Juvaynī/Qazvīnī $^{1916/1334}$, 34 ; Juvaini/Boyle 1958 , $^{304-5}$; see also Rashīd Aldīn/Rawshan 2010 , 13 . For the various forms of this chief's name and its meaning, see Juvaynī $^{1916/1334}$, 34 , 13 , 12 , $^{$

⁵³ JUVAYNĪ/QAZVĪNĪ 1916/1334, 34-5; JUVAINI/BOYLE 1958, 304-5; see also RASHĪD AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN 2010, 13; MĪRKHWĀND 1339/1960, 375-6.

ments fit entirely within the classical seasonal model of sedentary campaigns against the Cuman-Qïpchaqs. Atsïz's campaign of 1133 apparently followed the same model of attacking the nomadic encampments during the winter or early spring, which is well attested also in the European parts of Dasht-i Qipchāq (see below). The fact that the decisive battle between Tekesh and his nomadic adversaries took place as late as May 18, 1195 perhaps should be explained with the prolonged period of time the preceding manoeuvres must have required—i.e. the retreat of the steppe troops and the chasing that followed.

Be that as it may, Tekesh apparently planned to avenge himself in the early spring of 1197, but according to Juvaynī, after hearing the news about the death of his heir Malik-Shāh, the broken monarch gave up his plans for ghazā'.54 Most probably, the unbelievers against which the aborted campaign was targeted were the Cuman-Qïpchaq tribes from the Syr Darya basin whose recent victory had shaken the positions of the Anushteginids in the region. Yet, the possibility that the expedition was aimed at the Qara Khitay cannot be completely ruled out. The military actions that took place in the next year represent a classical instance of the seasonal pattern of the Khwārazmian steppe campaigns. During Rabīʿal-Awwal (January-February) and Rabī al-Ākhir (February-March) AH 594 (AD 1198), Tekesh and his new successor-the future Khwārazmshāh 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad II (r. 1200-20) - took advantage of an internecine strife within the steppe. They intervened through a relatively brief-yet large-scale and successful-expedition against the nomads to the north of the Syr Darya.⁵⁵ During his own reign, Muhammad II also continued to lead campaigns against the Cuman-Qïpchaqs, but regrettably the sources do not give any information regarding the particular time of the year when this happened. On the other hand, the Mongol invasion in the Khwārazmian Empire followed the century-old seasonal pattern of the nomadic incursions in the Central Asian sedentary areas: the settlements along the Syr Darya were attacked during the cold months of 1219/20,56 while the siege operations against the

⁵⁴ Juvaynī/Qazvīnī 1916/1334, 39; Juvaini/Boyle 1958, 309.

⁵⁵ JUVAYNĪ/QAZVĪNĪ 1916/1334, 40-1; JUVAINI/BOYLE 1958, 309-10; see also RASHĪD AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN 2010, 14-15; MĪRKHWĀND 1339/1960, 378-9.

⁵⁶ RASHĪD AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN - MŪSAVĪ 1373/1994, vol. 1, 496; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/KARĪMĪ 1338/1959, vol. 1, 359; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/THACKSTON 1998-9, part 2, 245; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/SMIRNOVA 1952, 203; RASHĪD AL-DĪN dated the events a year later (BARTOL'D 1900, 399; see also the editorial comment in RATCHNEVSKY 1991, 257, n. 151; for the dating of the beginning of the Mongol invasion, see BARTOL'D 1900, 438), but what matters for the present topic are the seasons. In fact, Jand was attacked as late as April, but the original Mongol military plan (حساب), hisāb) had to be modified, JUVAYNĪ/QAZVĪNĪ 1912/1329, 68-9; JUVAINI/BOYLE 1958, 88-9.

Khwārazmian capital Gurgānj were commenced in the next autumn and continued until the city was conquered in the spring of 1221.⁵⁷

At any rate, the evidence examined so far reveals that the coexistence of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs and Khwārazm, and the military conflicts between them in particular, were defined to a significant extent by a seasonal cycle resembling the one noticed by Rasovsky with regards to the Cuman presence in the Balkans. In this case, too, the nomadic military activity was intensive during the cold part of the year (though, due to the moderate climate, the war season in Southeast Europe seems to have been longer, including the late spring and the early autumn). Again, it was the same period that witnessed the Khwarazmian expeditions against the nomadic encampments in the steppe, which, of course, had no parallel in the Balkans.⁵⁸

Naturally, exceptions to this clear pattern of warfare in the cold months were documented in Central Asia, too. In the mid-12th century, Atsïz started a rather late expedition officially aimed at Sighnaq on the left bank of the Syr Darya, in whose surroundings were the winter campgrounds of some Cuman-Qïpchaq tribes. Although these plans were nothing more than a pretext for the surprising conquest of the city of Jand, which was much closer to Khwārazm, it is still noteworthy that according to Juvaynī the Khwārazmshāh set off on the campaign as late as Muharram AH 547 (April-May AD 1152).59 Even more indicative is an episode from the reign of Atsïz's grandson Tekesh. As already mentioned, in 1198 the latter ruler interfered in a Cuman-Qïpchaq internecine strife and won a victory, which affirmed the position of his *protégé* within the steppes, while the chief who used to dominate before the conflict was brought to Khwārazm enchained. Yet, it soon turned out that the surviving followers of the defeated leader gathered around his rival, who had just been supported by Tekesh, and continued to challenge the Khwārazmian power in the Syr Darya basin. In the end, the Khwārazmshāh was forced to instigate the steppe inner strife again, but this time he backed the opposite site. Tekesh freed his noble captive and sent him to the steppes at the head of "a large army" while he himself set off towards Khurāsān and 'Irāq-i 'Ajam. What is important for the present topic is that according to Juvaynī the ruler came back to Khwārazm with the enchained chief in Rabī al-Ākhir AH 594 (February-March AD 1198), and the latter was freed before the Khwārazmshāh arrived in Khurāsān on 2 Dhū l-Ḥijjah AH 594 (October 5, AD 1198).60 Therefore, the twist in the behaviour of the Khwārazmian protégé must have taken place within this timespan and

⁵⁷ RASHĪD AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN - MŪSAVĪ 1373/1994, vol. 1, 513; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/KARĪMĪ 1338/1959, vol. 1, 371; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/THACKSTON 1998-9, part 2, 253; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/SMIRNOVA 1952, 215; see also AL-NASAVĪ/BUNIYATOV 1996, 131-3; SĪRAT-I DJALĀLUDDĪN/MĪNUVĪ 1986, 123-5.

⁵⁸ For further details, see below.

⁵⁹ Juvaynī/Qazvīnī 1916/1334, 10; Juvaini/Boyle 1958, 284.

⁶⁰ Juvaynī/Qazvīnī 1916/1334, 41; Juvaini/Boyle 1958, 310; see also Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan 2010, 15; Mīrkhwānd 1339/1960, 379.

his Qïpchaq followers must have menaced the Khwārazmian domains during the hot months of the year.

Exceptions could also be observed as regards the arrival of steppe nomadic allies in the Khwārazmian army, as indicated by other events during the reign of the same monarch. In his letter to the ruler of Ghūr from 1183, Tekesh mentions "50,000 sword-bearing Turks" in his troops during a campaign in Khurāsān. There can hardly be any doubt that such a massive number of warriors (even if exaggerated) could only be provided by the tribes of Dasht-i Qipchāq, and it is noteworthy that the expedition started in the first decade of *Rabīʿal-Ākhir* AH 579—i.e. at the very end of July or the beginning of August AD 1183.61 Thus, despite the unwillingness of the Central Asian nomads to fight during the hot months, the circumstances could demand military operations that saw the participation of steppe contingents during the climax of the heat in this harsh region.

All of these instances clearly indicate that in Central Asia, too, the climatic frame that defined the seasonal migrations of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs and the rhythm of their military activity should not be viewed as an absolutely deterministic factor for their behaviour.

Kievan Rus'

Prima facie, it appears that the similar seasonal peaks of the Cuman-Qïpchaq military activity in Central Asia and the Balkans must have been caused by similar reasons. Before proceeding with the analysis of the specific factors, however, one should examine the most thoroughly documented relations of these nomads with a sedentary power—their contacts with Rus'. It is hardly surprising that the Rus' chronicles have preserved the most detailed information regarding the seasons in which the Cumans conducted their campaigns, as is also the case with a number of other aspects of their history. The data is so abundant that in order to be properly illustrated it is presented in a table (see the Appendix). Its content is by no means exhaustive and further contextual investigation of every account of the Cumans in the Rus' sources would perhaps extend the source base. Yet, even at the present state of research the data is more than enough to allow firm conclusions regarding the seasons in which the Cumans waged war on Rus' territory—both as independent nomadic raiders and as allies of the Rus' princes.

The data in the table demonstrates that in certain periods of the nearly two-century-long Rus'-Cuman cohabitation, nomadic activity was more intensive in either the hot or the cold period of the year, but altogether it is impossible to outline a clear seasonal model. Contacts, mostly of a military nature, are documented in every period of the year and even in different seasons of the same year.⁶² Fur-

⁶¹ BAGHDĀDĪ/BAHMANYĀR 1384/2005-6, 200; see also BARTOL'D 1900, 367.

⁶² For example, s.a. 1095 (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 227–9; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 217–19); 1096 (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 231–4, 239–40; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 221–4, 229–30); 1107 (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 250,

thermore, in a number of cases the chronicles mention several different nomadic incursions in the Rus' lands under a given year, but only for one of them the precise time of the year can be identified. Hence, the Cumans were active also out of the season, which is specifically mentioned in connection with their appearance. Thus, their activities in the Rus' principalities did not follow a strict seasonal rhythm and—unlike the Balkans and Khwārazm—in this vast contact zone there was no clear correlation between their arrival and the time of the year.

Such a conclusion is supported by the fact that throughout their long domination in Dasht-i Qipchāq the nomads were ready to react ad hoc to the political reversals in the Rus' principalities. Thus, in 1093, 1113, and 1125, on learning about the death of the great princes ruling in Kiev (Vsevolod I Yaroslavich, Svyatopolk II Izyaslavich, and Vladimir II Monomakh, respectively), Cuman troops quickly set off to the Rus' lands.⁶³ In the same way, the nomads took advantage of a sudden political crisis in 1096,64 and when nearly a century later the notorious expedition of prince Igor Svyatoslavich ended in disaster (1185), the Cumans immediately organized a large-scale counteroffensive.⁶⁵ Particularly indicative for the absence of seasonal limitations on the Cuman activities are the events that, according to the compiler of the Kievan Chronicle, took place in the winter of 1193. The chronicler reports that the Rus' princes guarded their lands on the steppe frontier for a long time, but as soon as the word for their withdrawal spread, a nomadic attack followed. Therefore, the steppe dwellers patiently awaited the retreat of the princes' troops in order to take advantage of their absence.66 Undoubtedly, if there was a strict correlation between the nomadic activity and the time of the year, the Rurikids would have awaited on the border the arrival of the safety season, like the Khwārazmians were awaiting it according to Rashīd al-Dīn Vatvāt. Indeed, the conclusion that such a clear correlation between the season and the risk of attack did not exist is supported by the evidence in the Kievan Chronicle for the preceding

281–3; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 258, 259); 1136 (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 303–4; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 297–300; PSRL, vol. 3, 23–4, 208–9); 1149 (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 321–6; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 374–83, 386–93); 1196 (PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 695–6, 698–700; PSRL, vol. 3, 42–3, 235–6). It should be pointed out, however, that the chronology of the Rus' chronicles follows both the *March-style* and the *ultra-March style*, which is why not all events given under the respective years coincide with the modern years starting in January, and thus some of them may have in fact taken place in different years according to the Gregorian calendar. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that in the articles for the cited years the Rus' chroniclers registered Cuman activities in different seasons, consecutive or closely following each other.

⁶³ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 218, 250, 295-6; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 209, 276, 289-90.

⁶⁴ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 229-34; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 220-4.

⁶⁵ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 399; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 645-9.

⁶⁶ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 675–9 especially col. 679. Judging by the version of the *Laurentian Chronicle* for the events in 1185, the Cumans may have applied a similar manoeuvre in this case, too (PSRL, vol. 1, col. 399).

year, 1192. Under that year the anonymous chronicler reports that the princes gathered with their troops to guard "the Rus' Land", but this time they spent "the whole summer" on the steppe frontier.⁶⁷

In fact, if there is certain visible influence of the seasonal cycle upon the intensity of the military conflicts between the Rus' and the Cumans, it is related not to the nomadic campaigns in the sedentary territories, but on the contrary—to the expeditions of the Rus' princes inside the steppe. As modern scholars have already pointed out, the attacks of the Rurikids against the nomadic encampments were strictly related to the time of the year.⁶⁸ An examination of the chronicles reveals that these expeditions as a rule were organized during two periods of the year: the first was winter and early spring in particular;⁶⁹ the second was the beginning of April, but this month was chosen more rarely and it is noteworthy that most of the campaigns that started at that time were unsuccessful.⁷⁰ These two traditional seasons for expeditions in the Cuman steppe were separated by the spring muds of the so-called *rasputitsa* (ca. mid-March–April). It rendered military operations in the grasslands practically impossible⁷¹ and turned into a serious trouble for the

⁶⁷ PSRL, vol. 2, col. 673.

⁶⁸ RASOVSKY 1939, 210-11; see also the instances, pointed out by Rasovsky, RASOVSKY 1938, 168-1, 173-4; PLETNEVA 1990, 114; as well as the considerations for the Rus' seasonal campaigns discussed by Lev Gumilyov, who, however, wrongly attributed to the Cumans the practice of haying, GUMILEV 1992, 81.

⁶⁹ For example, s.a. 1109 (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 283–4; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 260); 1110 (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 284, 289; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 260; the expedition was aborted on reaching the steppe frontier and the exact time in which it took place is not specified, it is only mentioned that it was "during the winter"); 1111 (PSRL, vol. 1, col. 289; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 264–8, 273); 1152 (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 339–40; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 459–61); 1168 (PSRL, vol. 2, col. 532); 1170 (PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 538–41; PSRL, vol. 3, 32–3, 220); 1183 (PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 628–9); s.a. 1187 there are three reported Rus' campaigns in the steppe: one in spring and two in winter (PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 652–3, 653–4, 659); 1190 (PSRL, Vol. 2, cols. 670–2); s.a. 1191 two expeditions took place: one in an unspecified time and one in winter, (PSRL, vol. 2, col. 673); s.a. 1193 one futile attempt to organize a winter raid and another successfully launched incursion in the same season are reported (PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 676–8); 1202 (PSRL, vol. 1, col. 418); 1205 (PSRL, vol. 1, col. 420; PSRL, vol. 3, 240).

⁷⁰ During that time apparently started the successful raid by Roman Nezdilovich, noted by the *Kievan Chronicle* s.a. 1185 (PSRL, vol. 2, col. 637); the ill-fated campaign of Igor Svyatoslavich began on April 23, 1185 (PSRL, vol. 2, col. 637); Vsevolod the Big Nest started his expedition on April 30, 1199. He, however, was not able to catch the nomads (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 414–15, PSRL, vol. 7, 106–7). The expedition of the Rus' princes and the Cuman chiefs against the Mongols, which ended with the defeat near the Kalka River, also started in April 1223 (PSRL, vol. 2, col. 741).

⁷¹ As indicated by the events in the late winter and early spring of 1185. Then, the Rus' sent Kuntuvdey (one of the leaders of their steppe foederati known as the Black Hats) after the defeated Cuman chieftain Konchak, but the chasing was completely hampered by the *raspu*-

Rus' troops that were unwise enough to enter the plains during that time of the year. However, the aforementioned distinction between the starting seasons is purely conditional and perhaps depended on the climatic specifics of each year—there were Rus' expeditions that started at the apex of the *rasputitsa* in late March and early April. The spring snow-melt floods of the rivers (the so-called *polovod'e*) could also hamper a Rus' raid in the steppe. Yet, if the nomads turned to be on the wrong river bank, it could also cause their thorough defeat.

In fact, in the case of the Rus' steppe campaigns, too, the seasonal cycle was not entirely deterministic. There are some rather rare exceptions in the hotter part of the year,⁷⁶ but the tendency for campaigns against the Cumans during winter and spring is clearly visible in the sources.

The nomads migrated along the banks of the great Eastern European rivers — the Dnieper, Don, Volga, and Ural—looking for fresh pasture to the north in the summer and for sheltered camping grounds near the sea to the south during the winter. Such was Carpini's evidence for the early Mongol period, corroborated also by Rubruck.⁷⁷ It can be assumed with confidence that the same practice was fol-

titsa (PSRL, vol. 2, col. 636). It was again the *rasputitsa* that prevented Igor Svyatoslavich from joining the coalition of Rus' princes that defeated Konchak, PSRL, vol. 2, col. 637.

⁷² The eloquent description of Igor Svyatoslavich's unsuccessful attempt to join the rest of the Rurikids in the spring of 1185 is indicative in this regard (see the previous note).

⁷³ For instance, s.a. 1103 (PSRL, vol. 1, col. 277–9; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 253–5)

⁷⁴ For instance, s.a 1187 for the Dnieper (PSRL, vol. 2, col. 652). The period of the breaking of the river ice (the so-called *Ledokhod*) could also be an obstacle, for instance s.a. 1190 for the Dnieper (PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 670–2). It is noteworthy that in both cases the Cumans did not have troubles crossing the river under these harsh conditions.

⁷⁵ For instance, s.a 1183, PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 628–9.

⁷⁶ For instance, s.a 1183/1185 the Rus' chronicles report a large Rus' steppe campaign in the middle of the summer (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 394-6; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 630-2), and by the same time the Olgovichi launched their own raid (PSRL, vol. 2, col. 633). The ill-fated expedition of prince Igor Svyatoslavich, which ended with the defeat near Kayala in 1185, took place in late spring (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 396-8; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 637-44). The unfavourable for the Rus' outcome of the battle in its turn thwarted other princes' plans for a summer campaign in the steppe (PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 644-6). The aforementioned expedition of Vsevolod the Big Nest started in end of April and the prince returned to Vladimir as late as the beginning of June (PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 414-15; PSRL, vol. 7, 106-7). About the same time of the year, the Rus' princes and the Cumans launched their allied campaign against the Mongols, which ended with the disastrous defeat near the Kalka River on May 31, 1223 (PSRL, vol. 2, col. 741; PSRL, vol. 3, 63, 267). There is even some evidence for a futile attempt to organize an expedition in the steppes during the autumn (s.a. 1192, PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 673-4), but on the whole this season seems to have been the least suitable for such undertakings due to the fact that by that time the nomadic horses fattened up and the steppe dwellers were traditionally most prepared for warfare precisely during that part of the year.

⁷⁷ DI CARPINE/DAFFINÀ ET AL. 1989, 309; THE MONGOL MISSION/DAWSON 1966, 55; DI RUBRUK/CHIESA 2011, 66, 90, 292; DE RUBRUC/VAN DEN WYNGAERT 1929, 197–8, 212, 315–16;

lowed during the period of Cuman-Qïpchaq domination in the Western Eurasian Steppes. This is suggested by the account of Ibn al-Athīr for the existence of seasonal pasture grounds in Dasht-i Qipchāq at the time of the first Mongol appearance in Europe (1222-3), and it is noteworthy that according to him the winter pastures were near the seacoast.⁷⁸ Another Arabic chronicler, al-Nuwayrī, reports that the Qïpchaq tribes lived in tents and "spent the summer in one place and winter in another".79 Furthermore, the Eurasian nomads were very conservative in their approach to natural resources, 80 so there are no grounds to suspect that the Mongol invasion brought any lasting changes in the seasonal cycle of the nomadic migrations. Hypothetically, this would imply that by the time of the Rus' attacks in winter and spring, the Cuman camps were not in the nearest possible positions to the frontiers of the Rus' Land. Yet, in this regard, too, one should not adopt a deterministic approach: under 1187 the Kievan Chronicle reports that the Cumans were close to the Rus' frontiers during the spring and this led to the organization of a Rus' campaign,81 whereas the account of the steppe expedition of Vsevolod the Big Nest makes it clear that not all Cuman winter camping grounds were close to the sea.82

Be that as it may, the main factor according to which the moment for the attack was chosen was not the distance, but the vulnerability of the nomads in the winter and early spring. On the one hand, the relatively strict dependence of their migratory routes upon the seasonal cycle made their location rather predictable. On the other hand, the mounts and the cattle, which were not fed with fodder and survived entirely on pasture, were weakest at this particular time of the year, when

The The Mission/Jackson 1990, 109, 130, 258. Carpini explicitly states with respect to the Mongol chiefs, who migrated along the four great rivers: "Omnes isti in hyeme ad mare descendunt, et in estate super ripam eorumdem fluminum ascendunt ad montes." (All these [men] descend towards the sea in the winter and in the summer ascend towards the mountains along the bank[s] of the same rivers.), DI CARPINE/DAFFINÀ ET AL. 1989, 309; THE MONGOL MISSION/DAWSON 1966, 55; Rubruck is even more specific regarding the seasonal cycle: "A ianuario enim usque ad augustum ascendit ipse et omnes alii versus frigidas regiones, et in augusto incipiunt redire." (Indeed, from January until August he [Batu] and all the others ascend to the cold regions, and in August they begin to turn back.), DI RUBRUK/CHIESA 2011, 90, see also 66; DE RUBRUC/VAN DEN WYNGAERT 1929, 212, see also 197–8; THE MISSION/JACKSON 1990, 130, see also 109. Rasovsky was the first to note the seasonal nature of the Cuman migrations and to bring scholarly attention to the source passages referred to here and in the next note, RASOVSKY 1938, 166.

⁷⁸ IBN AL-ATHĪR 1884, 26; IBN AL-ATHĪR/RICHARDS 2008, 223; see the entire passage below, n. 156.

⁷⁹ AL-Nuwayrī 1884, 539–40.

⁸⁰ KHAZANOV 1974, 213-19.

⁸¹ PSRL, vol. 2, col. 652.

⁸² PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 414-15; PSRL, vol. 7, 106-7; see also: RASOVSKY 1938, 171.

their energy reserves lowered to a minimum.⁸³ This unfavourable combination reduced both the military potential of the nomadic groupings and their capabilities to manoeuvre with their families and herds, and given the harsh winter weather sometimes it could have devastating consequences for the inhabitants of the attacked camps.⁸⁴ Thus, it appears that the seasonal cycle could have been decisive when the nomads were the target and not the initiators of an assault, and it is not by chance that on the other edge of the vast Dasht-i Qipchāq the Khwārazmians launched their raids into the steppes during the same time of the year.⁸⁵

The opportunity provided by the winter-spring period was of such importance for the success of the undertaking that the Rus' princes insisted to campaign precisely in that time despite the objections of their retainers that the season is unsuitable for their own subjects due to its coincidence with the ploughing time. Ref On the other hand, missing the right moment could prove fatal for the raiders themselves. Due to this very reason the scouts sent to the steppes by the Rus' princes in May 1185 reported that they found the nomads with the following words: "either come quickly, or we should go home, since [now] it is not our time". Indeed, this campaign ended with a disaster. Hot weather and blocked access to fresh water also played a role in the following defeat of Igor Svyatoslavich's army near Kayala, but it seems that the main factor was the better organization of the Cumans during the warmer season. Perhaps this was what the scouts meant when they warned the princes that early May was not "their time". Paparently, in the late 12th century

⁸³ For the influence of the seasonal cycle upon the herds of the Eurasian nomads, see in general Barfield 1989, 22–3; Golden 1998a, 8.

⁸⁴ See, for instance, s.a. 1168 (PSRL, vol. 2, col. 532); s.a. 1205 (PSRL, vol. 1, col. 420; see also PSRL, vol. 3, 24).

⁸⁵ Nether the Rus' nor the Khwārazmians were the first sedentary peoples to recognize this weak point in the living cycle of the nomads and their herds as the most suitable moment to attack them. As early as the turn of the 6th century *Maurice's Strategikon* recommends: "[If] they are Scythians or Huns, they are to be attacked in the month of February or March, when [their] horses endure the hardship of the winter..." "Σκυθικὸν ἢ Ούννικόν ἐστι, περὶ τὸν Φεβρουάριον μῆνα ἢ Μάρτιον ἐπιτίθεοθαι, ὅταν οἱ ἵπποι ἐκ τῆς τοῦ χειμῶνος κακοπαθείας ταλαιπωροῦσι", Das Strategikon/Dennis 1981, 230; Maurice's Strategikon/Dennis 1984, 65.

⁸⁶ S.a. 1103, PSRL, vol. 1, col. 277; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 252–3; see also the article of the *Hypatian Chronicle* for the year 1111, which perhaps resulted from some contamination with the events described s.a. 1103, PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 264–5.

 $^{^{87}}$ "или поѣдете борзо . или возвороти[м]са домовь . æко не наше єсть верема", PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 638–9; PLDR 1980, 352–3.

⁸⁸ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 396-398; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 637-44.

 $^{^{89}}$ In contrast to the words of the scouts, another passage in the *Kievan Chronicle* (s.a. 1193) referring to the winter as the right time for campaigning in the steppes could be pointed out: "Тоие же зимы сдоумавше лѣпышии моужи в Черныхъ Клобоуцехъ . и приѣхаша к Ростиславоу к Рюриковичю . и почаша емоу молвити . поеди кнаже с нами на вежи

the Great Prince of Vladimir Vsevolod the Big Nest also missed the right time as he attacked the Cuman winter camping grounds between late April and early June 1199: the nomads withdrew towards the sea and he was unable to catch them. ⁹⁰ It is indicative, by the way, that in this instance the expedition was aimed precisely at the Cuman winter camps.

There may also have been other factors—unknown to the modern researcher—that led to the organization of steppe raids in April. It should be taken into consideration that the contact zone between the Rus' principalities and Dasht-i Qipchāq was a vast one, stretching for endless kilometres throughout Eastern Europe. Although the main conflict area was in the steppes along the riverbanks of the Dnieper and Donets, there were also expeditions starting in other regions to the northeast, as indicated by the incursions led by Vsevolod in 1199 and the princes of Ryazan in 1205.91 Therefore, the north-eastern location of the starting points could also have influenced the departure date of the Rus' troops. Yet, it is noteworthy that all along the steppe frontier the Rus' expeditions were generally organized during the winter and spring, and, as already mentioned, most of those that started in April were unsuccessful, including the one of the Rus'-Cuman coalition on the Kalka River in 1223.92

Thus, the best documented contacts of the Cumans with the outside world—those along the Rus' steppe frontier—reveal an absence of a correlation between the intensity of the numerous nomadic campaigns in the Rus' principalities and the seasons. On the other hand, there was a clear tendency in organizing the Rus' steppe expeditions at a precise time of the year—winter and spring. The state of the Rus'-Cuman contacts is in sharp contrast with the seasonal peaks of Cuman-Qïpchaq activity in the Balkans and Central Asia and this somewhat surprising observation undoubtedly demands an explanation.

Comparative analysis

Interpretation of the divergent data for the seasonal cycle's influence upon the intensity of the Cuman presence in the outside world is only possible if one considers the typology of the different contact zones along the periphery of Dasht-i

Половъцкые верема ти есть [...] а такого ти веремени иногда не боудеть . Ростиславъ Рюриковичь . оулюбивъ ръчь ихъ . сдоумавъ с ними [...] а по дроужиноу свою посла . рекъ дроужинъ своеи . верема нъ есть поъдъмь . на Половци" ("The same winter the notables of the Black Hats [i.e. the tribal nobility] held counsel and came to Rostislav Ryurikovich, and they started talking to him: 'Come, prince, with us against the Cuman camps, it is your time [...] and there will be no other such time for you.' Rostislav Ryurikovich was pleased by their words and held counsel with them [...] and sent to his retainers telling them: 'It is time for us to march against the Cumans'"), PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 676–7.

⁹⁰ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 414-15; PSRL, vol. 7, 106-7.

⁹¹ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 425.

⁹² Although in this particular case the defeat can hardly be related to climatic factors.

Qipchāq. In this typology, Rus' and Khwārazm occupy central positions, since these polities both shared a vast contact zone with the steppe and intensively interacted with various Cuman-Qïpchaq groupings. The nomads regularly appeared on their territory either as raiders or as partners and allies, and this proximity forced the Rus' and Khwārazmians to regularly launch their own campaigns into Dasht-i Qipchāq. This distinguished them from all other sedentary neighbours of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs. The Balkans, on the other hand, were a peripheral contact zone with a relatively limited direct access to the habitat of the Cumans. Under particular circumstances—such as the partnership with the Asenids—the nomads could often appear on the peninsula, but the intensity of this partnership could be compared with their presence in the Rus' principalities only for relatively short periods of time. It is not by chance that there are no records of expeditions of any Balkan power inside the steppes inhabited by the Cumans.

Thus, the typological similarities between Rus' and Khwārazm raise no doubts. If so, then what is the explanation for the fact that the seasonal peaks of the Cuman-Qïpchaq activity in Central Asia find parallels in the peripheral Balkans, whereas the Cumans intensively appeared in the Rus' lands all year round? Could this impression of asymmetric seasonal activity be simply a result of the disproportion in the source material, which is far more detailed as regards the Rus'-Cuman relations and not so abundant when it comes to the nomadic presence in Khwārazm and the Balkans? The answer to these questions is negative, since the contemporaries of the events both in the Balkans⁹⁵ and in Khwārazm⁹⁶ explicitly mention the existence of such asymmetric seasonal nomadic activity. Therefore, the reason for the contrast between Khwārazm and Rus' should be sought elsewhere.

As is usually the case with premodern societies and nomads in particular – the answer is related to geography. As previously mentioned, due to the arid nature of the Central Asian steppes the nomadic migratory routes in the region were far longer than those in Eastern Europe. This means that the winter and summer pas-

⁹³ GOLEV 2013a, 142-51.

⁹⁴ Except for one rather unclear evidence in the panegyric of Michael Rethor—written to celebrate the achievements of Manuel I Komnenos—which is viewed by some authors as an indication that the emperor initiated an expedition in the Azov area ca. 1152–3. For this source and its modern interpretations, see Golev 2018b, 64–5. When the Byzantines were forced to seek leverage over the Cumans, they rather looked for partners with a better location and more experience in fighting with the steppe tribes than they had. This was the case with the expeditions of the Rus' princes against the nomads in the early 13th century (see the sources in n. 104). The counterattacks of the Byzantines themselves were usually limited to chasing the retreating Cumans for some distance beyond the Danube, Anna Komnene/Reinsch – Kambylis 2001, 458; Anna Comnena/Dawes 2000, 273–4; Kinnamos/Meineke 1836, 93–5; Kinnamos/Brand 1976, 76–8.

⁹⁵ See the accounts of Robert de Clari and Geoffrey de Villehardouin cited below.

⁹⁶ See the evidence of Rashīd al-Dīn Vatvāt cited above.

ture grounds of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs in Central Asia were separated by a much larger space, in comparison to those of their counterparts in the European parts of Dasht-i Qipchāq. That is why for the Qïpchaqs in the east it was much harder (although not impossible) to reach the borders of Khwārazm in the warmer months of the year, when their camps were at a much longer distance from the sedentary areas. This specific feature of Asian nomadism coincides with the aforementioned fact that during the warm seasons the Central Asian steppes turn into almost impassable deserts, and undoubtedly would explain the much rarer appearance of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs during that part of the year. For comparison, the steppe zone of Eastern Europe is much narrower and much more humid than the one in Central Asia, and thus the migratory routes were far shorter, while the Rus' principalities were close at hand, regardless of the particular locations of the camps in any given season. This would explain the ability of the Cumans to react ad hoc to the political crises and the royal deaths in the Rus' principalities, which were mentioned above.

On the other hand, the growing partnership between the Cuman-Qïpchaqs and the Khwārazmshāhs in the last decades of their empire's existence led the nomads, who wanted to participate in the lucrative campaigns in Iran and the adjacent territories, to resettle within the imperial lands. Such a mass exodus had no analogue in the Rus' principalities, although the Cumans maintained traditional allied relations with many princely families. This migration could be interpreted as a corroboration of the observation that the extent of the nomadic routes in Central Asia forced the local Qïpchaqs to spend most of the year away from the zone of their interests in the Khwārazmian state. At the same time, the Cumans that neighboured Kievan Rus' as well as the Central Asian Qïpchaqs remained most vulnerable (and in Khwārazm also at their closest location to the sedentary territories) in the winter and early spring, which is why the expeditions against them were launched at that time of the year in both contact zones.

What was the position of the Balkans? As already mentioned, they were a relatively peripheral contact zone that was situated rather far from the main concentrations of Cuman camps in Europe along the course of the Dnieper and in the Don

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⁹⁷ Thus, according to Carpini many of Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's men died of thirst when travelling through the Central Asian steppes inhabited by Qangli on their way to the Mongol imperial court, DI CARPINE/DAFFINA ET AL. 1989, 313–14; THE MONGOL MISSION/DAWSON 1966, 58. Juvaynī reports that as a result of a battle with the Qïpchaqs on May 18, 1195, Khwārazmshāh Tekesh's "army of Islam was routed, many perished under the sword, and yet more were buried in the dust of the desert on account of heat and thirst" (شكر اسلام در انهزام افتادند بسیاری در زیر شمشیر هلاك شدند و بیشتری در بیابان از سبب گرما و تشنگی دفین خاك گشتند), JUVAYNĪ/QAZVĪNĪ 1916/1334, 35; JUVAINI/BOYLE 1958, 305. For the harsh natural conditions in Central Asia, see also Bayhaqī's evidence cited above, n. 28.

 $^{^{98}}$ Abū al-Ghāzī/Sablukov 1906, 34; al-Nasavī/Buniyatov 1996, 82; Sīrat-i \underline{Di} alāluddīn/Mīnuvī 1986, 62.

basin. Although in this case, too, the dimensions are not comparable to those in Central Asia, in the late 11th century the nomads still had to cover significant distances. According to Anna Komnena, the Cumans—who arrived in the Northern Balkans to support the Pechenegs against the Byzantines but were late for the battle—pointed out that they had travelled "such a long way".⁹⁹ A century later, at least part of the Cuman allies of the Asenids were coming from the steppes east of the Dnieper.¹⁰⁰ Yet, despite the distances, even in the times of the successful nomadic partnership with that dynasty there is no evidence of a mass Cuman migration into the Balkans which could be compared to the processes in Khwārazm. This indicates that for the steppe dwellers the abundant booty of the fertile Thracian fields remained rather close, although not as close as the Rus' principalities which immediately neighboured the Cuman steppe.

Two other questions still remain to be answered: what were the reasons for the pronounced seasonal intensity of Cuman activity in Khwārazm and the Balkans, and were they identical in both contact zones? Rasovsky associates the rhythmic appearance of the Cumans in support of the Asenids with the seasonal migration and the northward movement of their camps in the summer, which took them away from "the Danube region" during that part of the year. 101 By the way, he also noticed that the Rus' took advantage of the Cuman expeditions to the Balkans in order to launch their traditional attacks against the nomads' unprotected encampments.¹⁰² Indeed, sometimes the chroniclers specifically report that the Rus' and their nomadic foederati from the Black Hats seized the opportunity provided by the Cuman absence "on the Danube" in order to attack their camps, naturally during the cold time of the year. 103 In this regard, it is noteworthy that despite the Rus' custom to raid the Cuman encampments during winter and spring, the nomads continued to be active in the Balkans precisely in that time of the year and obviously their withdrawal in the summer was not related to these conflicts. When the Rus' raids were particularly devastating, the inhabitants of Dasht-i Qipchāq simply could not arrive to help the Asenids, as indicated by the events in the first years of

^{99 &}quot;οῖ [...] τοῖς ἡγεμόσι τῶν Σκυθῶν ἔφασαν ὡς «Ἡμεῖς μὲν τὰ οἴκοι καταλιπόντες εἰς ὑμετέραν ἥλθομεν βοἡθειαν τὴν τοσαὑτην ὁδὸν διηνυκότες ἐφ' ῷ καὶ τοῦ κινδύνου καὶ τῆς νίκης συγκοινωνοὶ γενἡσεσθαι." (They [the Cumans] [...] said to the chiefs of the Scythians [i.e. the Pechenegs] the following: "Indeed, leaving our deeds at home, we came to your aid, travelling such a long way, on the [understanding] that we will be partners both in danger and in victory.), Anna Komnene/Reinsch – Kambylis 2001, 216; Anna Comnena/Dawes 2000, 126.

¹⁰⁰ PSRL, vol. 2, col. 659, see also cols. 673-4.

¹⁰¹ RASOVSKY 1939, 205.

¹⁰² RASOVSKY 1939, 210-11.

¹⁰³ A successful winter campaign s.a. 1187 and a futile attempt to organize a raid in the autumn s.a. 1192, PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 659, 673–4.

the 13th century. 104 There is no evidence, however, that such attacks have caused mass retreat of the steppe contingents among the troops of the Asenids.

As regards Rasovsky's hypothesis that the withdrawal of the Cumans during the summer was a result of the movements of their camps to the north towards the summer pastures, it must be pointed out that, unlike Khwārazm, in the case of the Balkans the seasonal migrations could hardly influence nomadic activity south of the Danube. The peninsula is located far to the southwest of the main migratory routes along the courses of the great Eastern European rivers, and the variations caused by the seasonal movements must have not been of significance given that the distance between the Pontic steppes and Eastern Thrace is rather long anyway.

Therefore, the reasons for the seasonal intensity are related to natural factors, but these were of a different kind. It is noteworthy that the medieval authors themselves also gave "naturalistic" explanations for the seasonal activity of the Cumans. According to Robert de Clari: "During the summer in their land there are so many flies and midgets that they do not dare to get out of their tents until the winter draws near."105 The French knight adds that the Cumans launched their raids during the winter. 106 Such a naïve explanation suggests a discomfort during the hot months. However, there is no logic in the idea that such a discomfort should be connected to Dasht-i Qipchāq, since this would not hamper Cuman presence in the Balkans. 107 On the other hand, the account of Villehardouin—who was perhaps better informed of the real reasons behind the seasonal appearance of the nomads—leaves the impression that the Cumans twice left the army of the Bulgarian tsar Kaloyan (r. 1197-1207) under the walls of Adrianople due to the arrival of the summer at the theatre of operations. 108 And, indeed, everything seems to point that the effects of the summer heat stood behind the Cuman withdrawal both in Southeastern Europe and Khwārazm. As previously mentioned, the nomadic war season

¹⁰⁴ Choniates/van Dieten 1975, 522–3; Choniates/Magoulias 1984, 287; Theodoros Skoutariotes/Voynov 1972, 260; the expedition described s.a. 1202 in PSRL, vol. 1, col. 418; and maybe the expedition, mentioned s.a. 1205, PSRL, vol. 1, col. 420.

¹⁰⁵ ROBERT DE CLARI 2007, §LXV, 104–5; the English translation follows the Bulgarian one.

¹⁰⁶ ROBERT DE CLARI 2007, §LXV, 104-5.

¹⁰⁷ Yet, there is a grain of truth in de Clari's report about the presence of annoying insects in the steppes inhabited by the Cumans. Among the advantages of the Mongol seasonal migrations Marco Polo points out that in the "cooler regions" (i.e. mountains and valleys) in the summer "there are no horse-flies or gad-flies or similar pests to annoy them and their beasts", MARCO POLO/LATHAM 1958, 97.

¹⁰⁸ "When Pentecost [May 29, 1205] had come, Johannizza, the King of Wallachia and Bulgaria, had pretty well had his will of the land; and he could no longer hold his Comans together, because they were unable to keep the field during the summer; so the Comans departed to their own country", Memoirs of the Crusades/Marzials 1908, 102; see also the description of similar events in late April or early May 1207: Memoirs of the Crusades/Marzials 1908, 126.

in the Balkans was longer and included late spring and early autumn since the peninsula is located in the temperate climatic zone. On the other hand, in Southwest Asia the periods of high temperatures arrive earlier and last longer, making the harsh landscapes of Iran and Afghanistan particularly inhospitable during that part of the year. It was already noted that in the Khwārazmian case the influence of the longer migratory routes should be added to the temperature amplitudes. Stretched through the arid Central Asian steppes, seasonal migration caused movement of the nomadic summer encampments far away from the frontiers of the sedentary world, unlike the situation in the Balkans. Due to the effects of these factors, the nature of the Cuman-Qïpchaq presence in Central Asia and the Balkans, although similar, was not completely identical.

As regards the unwillingness of the nomadic armies to operate during the hot seasons, it was far from unique to the Cumans. The Mongol campaigns offer another typical example from the same historical period, although they usually were of a much larger scale compared to the Cuman incursions into the outside world. It was as early as the phase of strategic planning that the Mongol commanders took into consideration the seasonal cycle and strove to avoid the summer heat by scheduling the beginning of the operations in the early autumn – when the nomadic horses were fattened up and prepared for the incoming physical efforts. 109 The high temperatures in the summer also influenced the course of the ongoing campaigns. The entire Western campaign of Chinggis Khan (1219-23) was regularly interrupted by pauses in the summer seasons. It was as early as the stage of redeployment and movement toward the Khwārazmian borders that the Mongol army stopped along the Irtysh for the summer of 1219.110 After he conquered Utrār, Bukhārā, and Samarqand, Chinggis Khan (r. 1206-27) spent the hot months of the following 1220 encamped in the meadows near Nakhshab, and Juvaynī explicitly notes that as a result of their stay there "the mounts were fattened, and the troops rested".111 At the end of the spring of 1221, while he was besieging Tāliqān, the

^{109 &}quot;...on the fifth of the fifth moon, they hold an assembly with feasting [celebrating the beginning of the summer] and plan together against whom the campaign will be that fall. Then everyone returns to his domain to avoid the summer heat and raise their livestock [i.e. the horses]. When the eighth moon [roughly September] comes, they all gather at Yanjing and then set out.", [the translation of this passage has been slightly revised by Dr. Landa] FIVE CHINESE SOURCES 2021, 83; MENG-DA BEILU/MUNKUEV 1975, 68; see also the sources regarding the debate, which preceded Chinggis Khan's campaign against the Naimans in 1204, n. 155.

¹¹⁰ BARTOL'D 1900, 434; THE SECRET HISTORY/DE RACHEWILTZ 2006, vol. 2, 939; see also the information of the Chinese source *Sheng wu qing zheng lu*: BRETSCHNEIDER 1910, 291.

[«]بهار آن سال در كنار سمرقند بگذرانيد و از آنجا بمرغزارهای نخشب آمد تابستان بآخر رسيد و چهار پايان فربه و لشكر (Chinggis Khan] spent the spring of that year in the vicinity of Samarqand and from there arrived at the meadows of Nakhshab. The summer ended [there], the mounts were fattened, and the troops rested), JUVAYNĪ/QAZVĪNĪ 1916/1334, 102; JUVAINI/BOYLE 1958,

Mongol ruler sent a message to his youngest son Tului that he should cease the operations in Khurāsān and join him in the mountains of Afghanistan "before the weather turns hot". And, indeed, Chinggis Khan and the main Mongol forces did spend the summer of this year on the hills around the already captured Tāliqān, together with Tolui, as well as Cha'adai and Ögedei, who had just returned from the successful campaign against Gurgānj. Rashīd al-Dīn reports that during this pause the troops "rested and the mounts were fattened". In the spring of 1222, following the defeat of Jalāl al-Dīn Mingburnu's army on the right bank of the Indus (1221), Chinggis Khan commanded the operations upstream, whereas Ögedei was sent to capture the regions downstream and in the interior. After he conquered Ghazna, the prince asked his father to continue against Sistān "Chinggis Khan ordered: The weather has turned hot, you come back so that we will send other troops in order to besiege it'". The great conqueror him-

128–9; see also *Sheng wu qing zheng lu*: Bretschneider 1910, 291; The Secret History/de Rachewiltz 2006, vol. 2, 948; and the *Secret History of the Mongols*, where apparently there is a contamination with the events of the next year, The Secret History/de Rachewiltz 2006, vol. 1, § 259, pp. 191–2; vol. 2, 947–50. Rashīd al-Dīn dates the stay in Nakhshab in the autumn of the following year, 1221, but his account of this period is full of chronological inaccuracies (for them, see n. 56 above), Rashīd al-Dīn/Rawshan – Mūsavī 1373/1994, vol. 1, 517; Rashīd al-Dīn/Karīmī 1338/1959, vol. 1, 374; Rashīd al-Dīn/Thackston 1998–9, part 2, 255; Rashīd al-Dīn/Smirnova 1952, 217.

112 «و چينگگيز خان از طالقان ايلچى فرستاده بود كه فرزند تولوى خان پيش از آنكه هوا گرم شود باز گردد.» (Chinggis Khan had sent a messenger from Ṭāliqān [ordering] that his son Tului Khan should come back before the weather turns hot.), RASHĪD AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN – MŪSAVĪ 1373/1994, vol. 1, 519; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/SMIRNOVA 1952, 219; see also THE SECRET HISTORY/DE RACHEWILTZ 2006, vol. 1, § 259, pp. 191–2; Sheng wu qing zheng lu, BRETSCHNEIDER 1910, 292; THE SECRET HISTORY/DE RACHEWILTZ 2006, vol. 2, 949.

¹¹³ Or the foothills, according to Smirnova's interpretation, see her translation, referred to in the next note.

¹¹⁴ RASHĪD AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN - MŪSAVĪ 1373/1994, vol. 1, 521, 525; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/KARĪMĪ 1338/1959, vol. 1, 375; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/THACKSTON 1998-9, part 2, 256; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/SMIRNOVA 1952, 220, 223; YUAN SHI/KHRAPACHEVSKY 2009, 158; Sheng wu qing zheng lu, THE SECRET HISTORY/DE RACHEWILTZ 2006, vol. 2, 949; see also de Rachewiltz's commentary on p. 950.

الهم در پشته هاى طالقان تابستان كرده و آسوده گشته و چهار پايان فر به شده.» ([Chinggis Khan and his sons] together, along with their troops, spent the summer in the hills of Ṭāliqān, rested, and the mounts were fattened.), according to the fuller version from Rawshan and Mūsavī's edition and the translation by Smirnova, RASHĪD AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN – MŪSAVĪ 1373/1994, vol. 1,525; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/SMIRNOVA 1952, 223.

¹¹⁶ I.e. Zarang, the capital of that province.

-AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN - MŪSAVĪ 1373/1994, vol. 1, 529; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/KARĪMĪ 1338/1959, vol. 1, 377; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/THACKSTON 1998-9, part 2, 257; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/SMIRNOVA 1952, 225; see

self spent the summer in the steppes around Parvān.¹¹⁸ Since the Eurasian nomads tried to avoid large operations during the hot period of the year, the troops of the great conqueror broke their march during the summers even at the time of their withdrawal from the destroyed Khwārazmian empire towards Mongolia.¹¹⁹

The comparative material about the Khwārazmian campaign is of particular importance, as in the pre-Mongol period and in the age of the Mongol invasions many of the eastern Cuman-Qïpchaq tribes were active on the territory of this ephemeral empire, operating in the same or a very similar natural environment. This is illustrated by the actions of one of the most prominent Khwārazmian amirs and a leading member of the Cuman-Qïpchaq tribal elite — Amin Malik, the governor of Harāt. He planned to seek asylum from the troops of Chinggis Khan in Sistān, but the arrival of the heat forced him to give up his intentions. ¹²⁰

It must be emphasized, however, that the seasonal rhythm of Eurasian nomadic warfare was not a result of particular conditions in Central Asia. Therefore, similarities in the behaviour of the Mongols and the Cuman-Qïpchaqs can be observed far beyond this region. This is revealed by the course of other campaigns of Chinggis Khan and his successors in various geographical areas. Thus, according to the Chinese dynastic chronicle *Yuanshi*, in two consecutive years during his last expedition against the Tanguts the founder of the Mongol Empire retreated in mountainous regions for the summer in order to "hide from the heat". The ruler of the Iranian Mongols Ilkhan Ghazan (r. 1295–1304) aborted his campaign in Mamlūk Syria in February 1300 due to the warming weather. In the firman issued by him immediately before his withdrawal from Damascus, he states: "We will return to

also: Sheng wu qing zheng lu, Bretschneider 1910, 293; The Secret History/de Rachewiltz 2006, vol. 2, 950.

¹¹⁸ Rashīd Al-Dīn/Rawshan - Mūsavī 1373/1994, vol. 1, 529; Rashīd Al-Dīn/Karīmī 1338/1959, vol. 1, 377-8; Rashīd Al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-9, part 2, p. 257; Rashīd Al-Dīn/Smirnova 1952, 225; Yuan shi/Khrapachevsky 2009, 159; see also The Secret History/de Rachewiltz 2006, vol. 1, § 257, 258, p. 191; Sheng wu qing zheng lu, Bretschneider 1910, 293; The Secret History/de Rachewiltz 2006, vol. 2, 944-5, 947, 950; see also the account of the visit of the Daoist master Changchun in the camp of Chinggis Khan, Bretschneider 1910, 86.

¹¹⁹ Juvaynī/Qazvīnī 1916/1334, 110, 111; Juvaini/Boyle 1958, 139, 140; The Secret History/de Rachewiltz 2006, vol. 1, § 264, p. 196; The Secret History/de Rachewiltz 2006, vol. 2, 965.

^{120 (}ملک خان هرات، در وقت فرار بطرف سیستان رفته، چون هوا گرم شد، روی بطرف غزنین نهاد» (Malik Khan of Harāt, at the time of the flight [from the Mongols] had proceeded towards Sīstān, [but] when the weather became hot, he turned towards Ghazna), JŪZJĀNĪ/HABĪBĪ 1343/1964, vol. 2, 116, see also 117; AL-JUZJANI/RAVERTY 1970, vol. 2, 1013, see also 1015–16.

¹²¹ Yuan shi/Khrapachevsky 2009, 160, 161; see also The Secret History/de Rachewiltz 2006, vol. 1, § 266, p. 198; vol. 2, 971;

[this] country in the autumn." 122 And, indeed, next winter Ghazan launched a new campaign against Syria. 123

Even in the moderate climate zone the intensity of warfare during the long Mongol campaigns varied with the change of seasons. The Mongol invasion in the Kingdom of Hungary (1241-2), led by Batu and his fellow Chinggisids, offers a particularly useful parallel to the researchers of the Cuman behaviour in Southeastern Europe, as it developed in a region with similar climatic conditions to those in the Balkans. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, in this case, too, the Mongol troops chose a suitable area where they spent the summer - the riverbanks of the Tisza and the Danube.¹²⁴ Thomas of Spalato also reports that after they conquered the Hungarian territories east of the Danube, the invaders "settled in those places with the intention to spend the entire summer and winter there."125 The situation was similar with regards to the Mongol military activities during their first attack against the Rus' principalities in 1237-8, at an earlier phase of the so-called Great Western Campaign of 1236-42 (the same long expedition which led them in Hungary). After they ravaged Northeastern Rus' in the winter of 1237-8, the invaders managed to capture the town of Kozelsk, located in the principality of Chernigov. The Mongols had to besiege the town for two months before it finally fellperhaps by the end of May 1238. The Moscow-Academic Chronicle reports that "Batu took Kozelsk and went into the Land of the Cumans." 126 Undoubtedly, the Mongol troops withdrew to Dasht-i Qipchaq with the intention to spend there the approaching summer, 127 following a pattern of many other pauses in the summer season.

¹²² Amitai 2002, 259-60.

¹²³ Boyle 1968, 389.

رو شهزادگان بدین پنج راه مذکور رفته، تمامت ولایات باشغرد و ماجار و ساسان گرفته و پادشاه ایشان را، کلر، گریزانیده، ۱24 رو شهزادگان بدین پنج راه مذکور رفته، تمامت ولایات باشغرد و ماجار و ساسان گرفته و پادشاه ایشان در رودخانهٔ تیسا و ثنا کردند» seized all the regions of the Bashkirs, Magyars, and Saxons, and putting their ruler, k-l-r [kral (Slav.), király (Hung.), i.e. king] to flight, they spent the summer on the rivers Tisza and Danube), Rashīd Al-Dīn/Rawshan - Mūsavī 1373/1994, vol. 1, 678; Rashīd Al-Dīn/Karīmī 1338/1959, vol. 1, 483; Rashīd Al-Dīn/Boyle 1971, 70; Rashīd Al-Dīn/Thackston 1998-9, part 2, 332; Rashīd Al-Dīn/Verkhovsky 1960, 45.

¹²⁵ "Interea Tartarorum exercitus depopulata omni regione Transilvana, cesis ac fugatis Hungaris ex Transdanubialibus horis, composuerunt se in locis illis totam ibi estatem et yemem peracturi." (Meanwhile, the Tatar army, having ravaged the entire region of Transylvania, and having slayed and chased away the Hungarians from the areas of Transdanubia, settled in those places with the intention to spend the entire summer and winter there.), Thomas archidiaconus/Perić et al. 2006, 278–9.

¹²⁶ "Батыи* взем Козелескъ и поиде в земълю Половетцкоую", PSRL, vol. 1, col. 522. For the operations of the Chinggisids in the Rus' principalities in 1237–8, see Khrapachevsky 2005, 354–73; for the siege of Kozelsk, see also Kargalov 1967, 110–11.

 $^{^{127}}$ In that particular case this does not exclude campaigning against the Cuman-Q \ddot{i} pchaqs during that period.

Naturally, the summer was not the only season that the Mongols took into consideration while planning their campaigns. Thus, they often sought to spend the winter in regions with favourable conditions. And yet, unlike the summer pauses, arriving at the winter quarters did not necessarily diminish the intensity of Mongol warfare, which at certain moments quite surprised their enemies. ¹²⁸ Furthermore, sometimes these nomads intentionally planned to launch their campaigns in the cold time of the year in order to take advantage of the low temperatures. ¹²⁹ As a rule, neither the Cumans nor the Mongols demonstrated such preferences regarding the summer season. On the contrary, the instances referred to above illustrate these nomads' unwillingness to fight during the hot period of the year.

Reasons for the asymmetric seasonal military activity

What were, after all, the reasons for this unwillingness to campaign during the summer? It is noteworthy that this was not a matter of some personal discomfort of the steppe warriors. Nomadic armies, and those of the Cumans and Mongols in particular, were accompanied by a large number of horses, since every warrior brought at least several spare mounts which he rode in turns. Robert de Clari explicitly states regarding the Cumans: "Each one of them has ten or twelve horses and they are so well trained that they follow them everywhere where they want to lead them." 130 Mongol warriors, too, brought with them spare mounts whose number varied according to the circumstances. 131 Thus, even relatively small no-

¹²⁸ Juvaynī/Qazvīnī 1916/1334, 116; Juvaini/Boyle 1958, 147; Ibn al-Athīr/Richards 2008, 214–15.

¹²⁹ The Hungarian Dominican Julian reports: "Hoc tamen expectantes quod sicut et ipsi Ruteni, Ungari et Bulgari qui ante eos fugerant, viva voce nobis referebant: quod, terra, fluviis et palidibus in proxima hieme congelatis totam Rusciam toti multitudini sic facile est eis depredari, sicut totam terram Rutenorum." (Yet, [the Mongols], expect—as those Rus', [Eastern] Hungarians, and [Volga] Bulgars, who had run before them, were telling us with their own mouth—that after the land, rivers, and swamps freeze in the coming winter, it will be easy for the entire [Mongol] multitude to devastate all Rus' as well as the entire land of the Rus' people.), DÖRRIE 1956, 174; ANNINSKY 1940, 86; see also Khrapachevsky, who brings attention to this evidence, Khrapachevsky 2005, 355.

¹³⁰ ROBERT DE CLARI/MARKOV 2007, §LXV, pp. 104–5; the English translation follows the Bulgarian one.

¹³¹ "Equos ita bene habent edomitos, ut quotcumque unus habeat homo, omnes ipsum tamquam canes secuntur." (They have so well-trained horses that however many a man has they all follow him like dogs.), Thomas archidiaconus/Perić et al. 2006, 284–5. Similar evidence, perhaps containing inflated numbers, could be found in a letter from an anonymous Hungarian prelate to the Bishop of Paris ca. 1239–40: "et equi multi sequuntur ipsos absque ductore, ita quod quando dominus equitat, xx. vel xxx. equi sequuntur ipsum" (and many horses follow them without a leader, so that when [their] master rides twenty or thirty horses follow him), Annales Monastici/Luard 1865, 324. Regarding the horse training Meng-da beilu reports: "After the horses are dismounted, it is not necessary to hobble or

madic detachments of about 1,000 men would bring with them a large number of horses, 6,000–10,000, sometimes maybe even more. And when there were larger Cuman armies, such as the one at Lardeas (more than 7,000 horsemen according to Choniates); the nomadic allies of Kaloyan in the battle of Adrianople in April 1205 (some 14,000 according to Villehardouin); or the aforementioned 10,800 Cumans from the fragmentarily preserved Preslav inscription, the number of the spare horses must have been considerable, even if one assumes certain overstatements of the numbers reported by the medieval authors. 132

The fact that the Cumans and their Mongol contemporaries had at their disposal such a large number of spare mounts gave them a number of advantages. The Mongol practices in this regard are far better documented. Since both nomadic communities had a similar lifestyle and military traditions, the medieval sources for the Mongols provide rich contextual material for better understanding the Cu-

tether them, as they still do not run away, their nature being so fine and good.", FIVE CHI-NESE SOURCES 2021, 83; MENG-DA BEILU/MUNKUEV 1975, 69. Regarding the number of horses, Marco Polo reports that when the Mongols "are on military service, there is not one of them who does not lead with him six, eight, or more horses for his own use", MARCO PO-LO/LATHAM 1958, 152. In one version of the Venetian's account it is stated that there was an average of eighteen beasts to every man, but this evidence apparently resulted from an exaggeration or mistake, MARCO POLO 1903, 264, n. 3; MARCO POLO/LATHAM 1958, 100; Smith brings attention towards these passages, SMITH 1984, 314, 334). Marco Polo also reports that the Mongol horses are very well trained, MARCO POLO 1903, 260, 262; MARCO PO-LO/LATHAM 1958, 99, 101. In Meng-da beilu it is reported that every time the Mongols set off on campaign each of them has several horses, MENG-DA BEILU/MUNKUEV 1975, 69; FIVE CHI-NESE SOURCES 2021, 83. In the 1230s, the Southern Song envoy Peng Daya reported that each warrior has "either two-three mounts or six-seven mounts", HEI-DA SHILUE/KHRAPACHEVSKY 2009, 60-1; FIVE CHINESE SOURCES 2021, 117, n. 113; see also the evidence of his colleague Xu Ting: "When the troops set out, the leader rides one horse with five or six to three or four other horses following along. They regularly prepare thus for an emergency, and even without [so many backups] a man must have at least one or two extra mounts.", FIVE CHINESE SOURCES 2021, 117; see also HEI-DA SHILUE/KHRAPACHEVSKY 2009, 61. The following order «و ياسا شد كه چريك از هر ده نفر پنج بر نشينند . 300-1309 was issued for Ghazan's Syrian campaign in ا It was ordered that from) و هر نفری از لشکریان پنج اسب با ساز و عدت تمام و آزوق شش ماه مرتب کردانند» every ten men [subject to military duty] five should mount [their horses and present themselves in] the army and each person from the warriors should prepare five horses, fully ready and harnessed, and supplies for six months.), VAŞŞĀF 1269/1852-53, 373; VAŞŞĀF/ĀYATĪ 1346/1967, 223; John Mison Smith and Rouven Amitai bring attention towards this evidence, SMITH 1984, 329; AMITAI 2002, 229-30, see also 253-4.

¹³² CHONIATES/VAN DIETEN 1972, 8-12; CHONIATES/VOYNOV 1983, 95-9; MEMOIRS OF THE CRUSADES/MARZIALS 1908, 92; for the inscription of Veliki Preslav, see n. 4. Regarding the numbers of the Cuman allies of the Asenids, see also PAVLOV 1990b, 14; DALL'AGLIO 2008-9, 34-5, where other figures are also given.

man behaviour.¹³³ The large number of horses in these nomadic armies did not hamper their fast marches during campaigns, since usually the animals were not shod and were not fed with fodder,¹³⁴ which means that the classical nomadic military columns travelled without a baggage train. Furthermore, the possibilities of changing horses often during the march¹³⁵ and leaving the animals enough time to rest before they have to carry their rider again¹³⁶ actually allowed the nomads to

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¹³³ Indeed, the lifestyle and customs of Cumans and Mongols were so akin that their sedentary contemporaries could not clearly distinguish them when the Mongols first appeared in Central Europe, Rogerius/Juhász 1999, 566; Master Roger/Bak – Rady 2010, 172–3, n. 1; Continuatio Sancrucensis Secunda/Wattenbach 1851, 640–1. The proximity between the two communities could be traced also in the material culture, especially that of the Eastern Qïpchaq tribes. According to the Russian archaeologist Yuly Khudyakov, the Eastern Qïpchaqs' arrow set is most comparable with the Mongol one, Khudyakov 1997, 112.

¹³⁴ Contrary to de Clari's statement regarding the Cumans, ROBERT DE CLARI/MARKOV 2007, §LXV, pp. 104-5. Carpini explicitly states that "cum Tartari nec stramina, nec fenum nec pabulum habeant" (since the Tatars have neither straw nor hay nor fodder), DI CAR-PINE/DAFFINÀ ET AL. 1989, 305; THE MONGOL MISSION/DAWSON 1966, 52. Marco Polo, too, reports that the Mongol horses subsist entirely on grazing and there is no need to transport fodder, Marco Polo 1903, 260; Marco Polo/Latham 1958, 99. In Meng-da beilu (1221) it is stated that the Mongols graze their horses and never give them fodder, FIVE CHINESE SOURCES 2021, 83; MENG-DA BEILU/MUNKUEV 1975, 69. Peng Daya also reports that the Mongol "horses are pastured in the wild, without any hay or grains", FIVE CHINESE SOURCES 2021, 115; HEI-DA SHILUE/KHRAPACHEVSKY 2009, 58; see also the observations of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa for the Golden Horde in the 14th century, IBN BAŢŢŪŢA/GIBB 1995, 473; IBN BAŢŢŪŢA/TIZENGAUZEN 1884, 282. Thomas of Spalato also gives a valuable description of the Mongol horses: "Equos breves sed fortes, patientes inedie ac laboris more equitant rusticano, per rupes vero et lapides absque ferramentis ita discurrunt, ac si capre forent silvestres, tribus enim continuis diebus labore quassati parvo stipularum pabulo sunt contenti." (They ride in the rustic manner short but strong horses, able to endure hunger and toil. [The horses] run over rocks and stones without iron shoes in such a way as if they were wild goats. Indeed, exhausted by three days of continuous riding they are satisfied with a small meal of chaff.), THOMAS ARCHIDIACONUS/PERIĆ ET AL. 2006, 284-5. In the Georgian Chronicle of the Hundred Years it is reported with astonishment that the Mongols of Jebe and Sübe'etei Ba'atur rode mounts without horseshoes, Kartlis Tskhovreba/Matreveli et al. 2013, 337; Kartlis Tskhov-REBA/MET'REVELI - JONES 2014, 321-2. This practice, however, seems to not have been ubiquitous, since, according to Peng Daya, the horse hooves were vulnerable to the stones, and that is why the Mongols used some kind of iron or wooden horseshoes, FIVE CHINESE Sources 2021, 115; Hei-Da Shilue/Khrapachevsky 2009, 58.

¹³⁵ According to de Clari, the Cumans also rode "first one and then another" of their horses ROBERT DE CLARI/MARKOV 2007, §LXV, c. 104–5, the English translation follows the Bulgarian one.

¹³⁶ "et propter hoc debent vitare nimium cursum post eos, ne forte fatigentur equi eorum; quoniam nostri multitudinem equorum non habent. Sed Tartari illum equum quem equitant uno die, illum non ascendunt in tribus vel in quator diebus post hoc; unde non curant si fatigentur equi, propter multitudinem equorum quam habent." (and due to this [our men]

cover far longer distances in a shorter period of time as compared to most medie-val armies. ¹³⁷ This impressive mobility could be achieved mainly due to the ability of nomadic horses to sustain themselves entirely by grazing. The grass diet and the harsh natural conditions in the steppes turned the nomadic mounts into relatively small but very hardy ponies, which were inferior in terms of physical strength (yet not in terms of endurance) to the fodder-fed horses of the sedentary armies. ¹³⁸ Thus, the large number of spare mounts allowed the nomadic armies to move faster. Furthermore, the possibility of changing horses during battle provided the steppe warriors with a significant advantage on the battlefield. ¹³⁹ It was precisely this practice that allowed the Cumans (and the other Eurasian stock breeders) to wage their traditional mobile steppe warfare, "fighting in their ancestral and customary manner", ¹⁴⁰ so eloquently described by Choniates:

should avoid too long a pursuit after them, lest their horses be exhausted; since our men do not have a large number of horses. Yet, the Tatars do not mount the horse they have ridden for one day in the next three of four days; hence they do not care if the horses are exhausted—due to the large number of horses they possess.), DI CARPINE/DAFFINÀ ET AL. 1989, 298–9; THE MONGOL MISSION/DAWSON 1966, 47. In *Meng-da beilu* it is reported that every Mongol set on campaign with several horses, changing them every day, and that is why the animals were not exhausted, MENG-DA BEILU/MUNKUEV 1975, 69; FIVE CHINESE SOURCES 2021, 83.

- ¹³⁷ According to de Clari's report, which was undoubtedly stereotyped to a certain extent, the Cumans travelled "incessantly during the night and during the day. They move so fast that in one night and one day they cover the distance for six days, or seven, or eight." ROBERT DE CLARI/MARKOV 2007, §LXV, 104–5; the English translation follows the Bulgarian one.
- ¹³⁸ See, for instance, John Mason Smith's comments about the horses of the Egyptian Mamlūks and the Iranian Mongols, SMITH 1984, 331–2.
- 139 As can be seen in the description of the Cuman victory in the battle of the Kayala River, given by the Laurentian Chronicle: "изнемогли бо са баху безводьемь и кони и сами в знои и в тузъ и поступиша мало к водъ по . f . дни бо не пустили баху ихъ к водъ . Видъвше ратнии устремишаса на нь и притиснуша и к водъ и бишаса с ними кръпко и быс съча зла велми друзии конъ пустиша к ним съсъдше и кони бо баху под ними изнемогли и побъжени быша наши гнъвом Бжъимъ ." (Since due to the lack of water both the horses and [the Rus'] themselves were exhausted by heat and suffer, and they advanced a little bit towards the water, because they were prevented from reaching the water for three days. When the enemies [i.e. the Cumans] saw that, they rushed upon them and pushed them to the water, and fought with them fiercely, and there was a great slaughter. The others [i.e. the Cumans] galloped [their] horses towards them [the Rus'] after they changed them [with fresh ones], while the horses under [the Rus'] were exhausted and our men were defeated by the wrath of God.), PSRL, vol. 1, col. 398 see also the modern Russian translation, PLDR 1980, 369. Smith believes that the Mongols also changed their horses in the course of battle, without referring to a specific source, SMITH 1984, 319.

 140 "τὸν πάτριον αὐτοῖς καὶ ἡθάδα τρόπον μαχόμενοι", Choniates/Van Dieten 1975, 397; Choniates/Magoulias 1984, 218.

...[attacking, the Cumans] were discharging javelins and entering into fight with spears, and in short time again turning their onslaught into flight and provoking the opposite side to pursue them closely behind as [if they were] running away. Again, turning [their] backs like birds cleaving the air, they appeared before the eyes, [and] facing the attacking [enemies] they began to fight and were engaging into hand-to-hand combat with much greater bravery. And doing this many times, so that they were already prevailing over the Romans, they were no longer thinking about turning around, but drawing the swords and shouting some terrifying battle cry, they fell upon the Romans faster than a short thought; overtaking both the fighting one and the coward alike, they mowed [them] down.¹⁴¹

Therefore, the large masses of spare mounts were a key military resource that gave the nomadic armies, and those of the Cumans in particular, their main strategical (speed and manoeuvrability of the marching columns) and tactical (fresh horses in the climax of the fighting) advantages. But these advantages came at a cost—the presence of these resources imposed certain limitations on the nomadic armies, which influenced their behaviour on the theatre of war. 142

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^{141 &}quot;ἐπιόντες ἡφίεσαν βέλεμνα καὶ δόρασι προσεπλέκοντο, μετὰ βραχὺ δ' αὖ μεταβαλόντες τὴν ὁρμὴν εἰς φυγὴν καὶ καταδιώκειν ὁπίσω αὐτῶν ὡς φυγάδων τὸ ἀνθιστάμενον ἐρεθίζοντες, αὖθις ὡς οὐδὲ πτηνὰ τὸν ἀέρα τέμνοντα τὰ νῶτα εἰς τὴν τῶν ὄψεων μεταθέμενοι χώραν ἐνώπιοι τοῖς ἐπιοῦσιν ἐμάχοντο καὶ πολλῷ γενναιότερον συνεπλέκοντο. καὶ τοῦτο πολλάκις πεποιηκότες, ὡς ἤδη τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἦσαν ἐπικρατέστεροι, οὐκέτ' ἐμέμνηντο τῶν ἐλίξεων, ἀλλὰ τὰ ξίφη γυμνώσαντες καί τινα βοὴν καταπληκτικωτάτην ἐκρήξαντες μικροῦ καὶ ἐννοήματος τάχιον Ῥωμαίοις ἐνέπεσον καὶ τὸν μαχόμενον όμοίως καὶ τὸν δειλαινόμενον καταλαμβάνοντες ἐξεθέριζον.", Choniates/van Dieten 1975, 397; Choniates/Magoulias 1984, 218. Describing the same events in his orations Choniates notes: "those [Cumans] that remained in the front[lines] started hand to hand combat with our [men], retreating and at the same time attacking, as indeed [is] their custom to fight" (ἐν τοῖς ἔμπροσθεν οἱ λοιποὶ τοῖς ἡμετέροις συμπλέκεσθαί ἤρξαντο ὑποφεύγοντες ἄμα καὶ ἐπιτιθέμενοι, ὥσπερ δὴ τρόπος αὐτοῖς ἐν τῷ μάχεσθαι), Choniates/van Dieten 1972, 11; Choniates/Voynov 1983, 98.

¹⁴² Thus, s.a. 1190 The *Kievan Chronicle* reports that the Cumans rested their horses in the course of a campaign: "Половци [...] ѣхавше и легоша по Висемь и тоу перепочивше конемь своим и ѣхаша ко Боровомоу" (The Cumans [...] rode [away] and lied down [in camps along the rivers Velyka and Mala] Vis' and here they gave rest to their horses, and rode to [the town of] Borovy), PSRL, vol. 2, col. 669. The words of the Armenian chronicler Hayton of Corycus are perhaps the most eloquent description of the care that the Eurasian nomads took of their mounts: "Majorem enim curam habebant de equis quam de seipsis, quia, dum parvo et vili cibo sciant esse contenti, de seipsis quodammodo non curabant" (Indeed, they cared more for the horses than for themselves, because as long as they knew that they are satisfied with a small and modest ration, they were not taking particular care for themselves), HAYTONUS/KOHLER 1906, 321; Denis Sinor brings attention towards this passage, SINOR 1972, 178.

Perhaps the most important of these limitations derives from the aforementioned fact that nomadic horses depended mostly on the available pasture. It is not by chance that according to Meng-da beilu during the night breaks: "[The Mongols] graze them [their horses] in the steppe according the greening and withering of the grass."143 Even more eloquent is Maurice's Strategikon, which was written centuries earlier (late 6th/early 7th century): "The shortage of pasture hinders them [i.e. the nomads] due to the multitude of horses, which they bring with them..."144 It was this dependency that stood behind the nomadic unwillingness to wage war during the summer heats, and it was caused by a rather trivial circumstance – during the summer, the pasture grasses dry up under the scorching sun and their nutritional value for the animals considerably diminishes. In his letter to the French king Saint Lewis IX (r. 1226-70), the founder of the Ilkhanate, Hülegü (r. 1259-65), pointed to the lack of pasture among the reasons that caused the withdrawal of his main forces from Syria in 1260.145 This is why during the hot months the steppe armies were bound to particular areas where the natural conditions support the necessary amount of grazing, just like the troops of Chinggis Khan during the summers of his Khwārazmian Campaign. Thus, in summertime, especially when operating outside

¹⁴³ MENG-DA BEILU/MUNKUEV 1975, 69; FIVE CHINESE SOURCES 2021, 83.

^{144 &}quot;Εναντιοῦται δὲ αὐτοῖς ἔνδεια βοσκῆς διὰ τὸ πλῆθος ὧν ἐπιφέρονται ἀλόγων...", DAS STRATEGIKON/DENNIS 1981, 364; MAURICE'S STRATEGIKON/DENNIS 1984, 117. Slightly above the text states: "And a multitude of horses follows them, both male and female, [serving] at the same time, for nourishment and to make them look numerous [...] until the day of the battle, spread about according to clans and tribes, they continuously graze their horses in summer and winter.", "Ακολουθεῖ δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ πλήθος ἀλόγων, ἀρρένων τε καὶ θηλειῶν, ἄμα μὲν πρὸς ἀποτροφήν, ἄμα δὲ καὶ διὰ πλήθους θεωρίαν [...] μέχρι μὲν τῆς τοῦ πολέμου ήμέρας διεσπασμένως κατὰ γένη καὶ φυλάς, τοὺς ἵππους βόσκοντες διηνεκῶς ἔν τε θέρει καὶ χειμῶνι.", Das Strategikon/Dennis 1981, 362; Maurice's Strategikon/Dennis 1984, 116-117. 145 "Quia tamen nostri moris est caumatibus estiuis locis frigidis montanis niueis libencius adherere, supra dictis Halapensibus et Damaszenis deuastatis nec non uictualibus et herbariis pro maiore parte consumptis, placuit nobis uersus montana maioris Armenie paulisper redire, in dictis quidem locis paucos de nostris pro quorumdam residuorum castrorum Hassassenorum destructione dimittendo" (Yet, since in our custom it is more pleasant during the summer heats to settle in cool places in the snowy mountains - after we have ravaged the aforementioned inhabitants of Aleppo and Damascus, and also after we consumed for the greater part the provisions and the pastures - it pleased us briefly to return to the mountains of Greater Armenia, while leaving in the mentioned places a few of our men for the destruction of certain remaining fortresses of the Assassins), MEYVAERT 1980, 258; LET-TERS FROM THE EAST/BARVER - BATE 2010, 159; David Morgan draws attention to this evidence: MORGAN 1985, 231-5. Regarding this custom, see also the account of Marco Polo, MARCO POLO 1903, 251-2; MARCO POLO/LATHAM 1958, 97. Naturally, the seasonal cycle and the summer heats were hardly the only reason for the Mongol withdrawal, but there is no doubt that Hülegü chose to justify his actions with a real practice, notwithstanding the political rhetoric in the letter.

of the steppes, the nomads lost their main advantage over the sedentary adversaries—their mobility. Furthermore, they became easy to detect and vulnerable. ¹⁴⁶ In comparison, the winter did not cause such problems, even during intensive snowfalls, since as specifically noted by Plano Carpini, the hardy Mongol horses knew how to dig up the grass from under the snow in the steppes, ¹⁴⁷ and the Cuman mounts undoubtedly had the same skills. Naturally, the limited amount of available pasture, especially in regions whose geographical conditions in principle do not suggest the presence of abundant grazing, may influence the course of nomadic campaigns in other seasons, too. ¹⁴⁸ But for no other time of the year have the sources documented such a clear correlation as that between the arrival of the summer and the suspension of military activity by Mongols and Cumans in various regions located throughout the entire sedentary periphery of the Eurasian steppe belt. Thus, there can hardly be any doubt that the main factor behind the asymmetric seasonal military activity of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs in Khwārazm and the

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¹⁴⁶ In fact, due to the large number of horses, even in these cases nomadic armies could not stay at the same place for a long time since the grass would be consumed. This is indicated by Marco Polo's observations regarding the Mongols (Marco Polo/Latham 1958, 97), and as it seems such was also the case with the Cuman refugees of Kuten in Hungary in 1239, Rogerius/Juhász 1999, 554; Master Roger/Bak – Rady 2010, 138–41. It should be taken into consideration that both cases are related to nomads who migrated with all of their flocks. Yet, there could hardly be any doubt that while on a campaign, the steppe warriors faced similar problems, although perhaps to a lesser degree, if one keeps in mind that they were accompanied only by the horses necessary for the military operations (see, for instance, Smith 1984, 338–9). The need for a constant search for fresh grass made the manoeuvres of the steppe armies through regions with limited pastures during the summer rather predictable and hence they became vulnerable.

¹⁴⁷ "Qui responderunt nobis quod si diceremus in Tartariam equos illos quos habebamus, cum nives essent magne et nescirent fodere erbam sub nive, sicut equi Tartarorum, nec inveniri posset aliquid aliud ad manducandum pro ipsis, cum Tartari nec stramina, nec fenum nec pabulum habeant, morerentur omnes." (Who [the notables of Kiev] answered us that if we were to bring in Tartaria those horses which we had, they would all die, for the snows were great and they would not know how to dig up the grass from under the snow like the Tatar horses, neither could be found anything else to feed them, since the Tatars have neither straw nor hay nor fodder.), DI CARPINE/DAFFINÀ ET AL. 1989, 304–5; THE MONGOL MISSION/DAWSON 1966, 52.

¹⁴⁸ Such was the case with the arrival of the Mongol troops in Dalmatia in March 1242, described by Thomas of Spalato: "Ecce autem paucis diebus elapsis venit Caydanus cum aliquota parte sui exercitus, quia non erant herbe pro toto equitatu sufficientes, erat enim principium Martii asperis frigoribus inhorrescens." (And now, moreover, after few days had passed, Kadan arrived with a small part of his army, since there was not enough grass for the entire cavalry. Indeed, it was the beginning of March, bristled up with sharp cold.), Thomas archidaconus/Perić et al. 2006, 298–9. Denis Sinor reasonably assumes that in this particular case the shortage of grass was not only due to the harsh climatic conditions in March, "but also to the general bareness of the Karst mountains" in the region, Sinor 1972, 178.

Balkans was the insufficient amount of grazing for their horses in the hot part of the year, which in the former case coincided with the growing distance between the Central Asian operational theatre and the nomadic summer encampments within the steppes.

The adversaries of the nomadic peoples quickly realized the strategical importance of grazing for the movement of their armies and sought to hamper it by destroying this resource. The Egyptian Mamlūks developed the practice of burning the fields and pastures along the frontier regions in the course of a war with the Mongol Ilkhanate, which lasted for six decades in the second half of the 13th and the early 14th century. Sometimes the Mamlūks applied this strategy in an even more radical form, by setting on fire their own territories so that the horses of the invaders could not find grazing. Far away to the east, on the other edge of the Eurasian steppe belt, the officials of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) also set on fire the pastures along the imperial frontiers during autumn and winter in order to deter the Mongols from approaching Chinese territories. In Europe, Plano Carpini recommended the hay and straw to be burned or hidden before the ad-

¹⁴⁹ AMITAI-PREISS 1995, 205–6; AMITAI-PREISS 1999, 134; 138–9. The fields were burned in order to prevent the crops being used as fodder for the Mongol horses. Amitai notes that both known cases of setting fire in the frontier regions were in the autumn – i.e. the usual season for the Mongol advance in Syria.

¹⁵⁰ Hayton of Corycus reports that when the troops of Ghazan reached the Euphrates in 1303 with the intention of invading Syria: "Sarraceni quidem timuerunt de adventu Cassani, et dum in bello sibi diffiderent esse pares, totam terram eorum combusserunt ante faciem Tatarorum, ita videlicet quod, collectis frugibus et aliis in terra crescentibus ac animalibus, et omnibus in castris et munitionibus congregatis, residuum totum ignibus devastarunt, ut, cum Tatari venirent, victualia non invenirent neque pabula pro jumentis. Quando Cassanus intellexit ea, que fecerant Agareni, et qualiter igne dissipaverant totam terram, videns quod equi per terras illas taliter devastatas non possent modo aliquo sustentari, accepit consilium remanendi super flumine Eufrates illa hyeme, et, veris tempore veniente, dum herbe inciperent pululare, perficere iter suum." (The Saracens, indeed, were afraid of the advent of Ghazan, and since they did not consider themselves equal to him in war, they burned their entire land before the face of the Tatars – in such a way, indeed, that gathering the crops and [everything] else which grows from the land, as well as the animals, and concentrating them in fortresses and fortifications, they wasted everything else with fires, so that when the Tatars arrive they would find no provisions [for themselves] nor pasturages for the beasts. When Ghazan realized what the Hagarenes had done and how they had utterly destroyed with fire the entire country, seeing that the horses could not be sustained in any other way through these so devastated lands, he decided to stay on the Euphrates River this winter, and after the arrival of springtime, as soon as the grass begins to grow, to accomplish his march.), HAYTONUS/KOHLER 1906, 321; NIKOLOV 2017, 78. Sinor brings attention towards this evidence, SINOR 1972, 177-8. It seems that in this case, too, the Mongol offensive started in the autumn.

¹⁵¹ JAGCHID - SYMONS 1989, 205, n. 93.

vancing Mongols.¹⁵² Thus, the sedentarists practically tried to simulate to a certain extent the limitations which the summer heats imposed upon the otherwise manoeuvrable nomadic armies.

The scarcity of pasture in the sedentary territories during the summer coincides with another circumstance that perhaps also contributed to the sudden Cuman withdrawals towards the steppes in this season. Quite often in the sources for the summer pauses of the nomadic armies (the Mongol in particular) it is reported that during this season the steppe dwellers strove to fatten up their horses which had grown lean during the harsh winter months (or during the intensive campaigns in the cold seasons), and due to this reason, the beginning of the military operations for them traditionally fell within early autumn. It should be pointed out that the most suitable conditions for such summer grazing are to be found precisely in the Eurasian steppes. Furthermore, in this case it was not a simple fattening of the animals, but rather a special diet aimed at bringing the horses in optimal form for the forthcoming campaigns. Thus, the summer was a key period both in the living cycle of the animals and in the military calendar of their nomadic masters.

¹⁵² "Eis fugientibus de terra, debent fenum et stramina comburere vel fortiter occultare, ut equi Tartarorum minus inveniant ad comedendum." (Those [adversaries of the Mongols] who flee from their land must burn the hay and straw, or to hide them well, so that the Tatar horses would find less to eat.), DI CARPINE/DAFFINÀ ET AL. 1989, 300; THE MONGOL MISSION/DAWSON 1966, 48. It should be pointed out that the nomads did not practice having,

versaries.

but used such reserves when they were found gathered in the lands of their sedentary ad-

¹⁵³ Peng Daya notes about Mongolia: "Their country's 'crop' is wild grass, which begins to green in moon IV, becomes lush starting in moon VI, and in moon VIII withers again. Apart from grass, there is nothing else at all." FIVE CHINESE SOURCES 2021, 96; HEI-DA SHILUE/KHRAPACHEVSKY 2009, 32. Since the Chinese months roughly correspond to the Roman ones, according to Peng Daya the steppe grass was most nutritional precisely during the summer. For the quality of the steppe herbage in general see the observations of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, IBN Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb 1995, 473; IBN Baṭṭūṭa/Tizengauzen 1884, 282.

¹⁵⁴ Peng Daya reports: "Their horses are pastured in the wild, without any hay or grains. In moon VI [roughly July], they eat their fill of green grass and begin to fatten." Xu Ting gives more detailed information: "From early spring, after they call off the campaigns, all good horses that have been on campaign are released to enjoy water and pasture without being ridden or driven, until the west wind is about to come. The horses then are caught, bridled, and tied up near the tents. They are given only a little water and grass until a month has gone by and their fat has dropped. When ridden fully several hundred *Iĭ*, they naturally do not sweat, and thus they can endure the long distances of going on campaign.", FIVE CHINESE SOURCES 2021, 115–16; HEI-DA SHILUE/KHRAPACHEVSKY 2009, 58–9.

¹⁵⁵ This fact should not be viewed as over-deterministic. The campaign of Chinggis Khan against the Naimans in the summer of 1204, conducted against the opinion of most of his notables, demonstrates that under pressing circumstances the nomadic armies could carry out large-scale operations with insufficiently fattened horses, RASHĪD AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN – MŪSAVĪ 1373/1994, vol. 1, 415–16; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/KARĪMĪ 1338/1959, vol. 1, 303–4; RASHĪD

Having in mind the conservative nature of the traditional steppe military culture and the fact that the seasonal living cycle of the animals in the various parts of the Eurasian steppe belt did not differ significantly, it could be assumed that this conclusion is absolutely valid with respect to the Cuman-Qïpchaq tribes. Therefore, it seems very likely that the Cuman intention to prepare in the most suitable time their animals for the forthcoming cold months of prolonged military activity played a role in the withdrawal of their armies to Dasht-i Qïpchaq during the summer along with the withering of the grass in the sedentary regions under the scorching sun.

But why did the heat not prevent the Cuman activity in the Rus' principalities, where their presence was attested multiple times during the summer? It is hard to answer this question, but everything leads to the conclusions that it was a matter of geography. Unlike the Balkans and Khwārazm, the Rus' principalities were located to the north of Dasht-i Qipchāq, i.e. to the north of the Cumans' own summer pasture grounds where the grass remained nutritious during the hot season. Apparently, the sparsely populated Rus' territories, watered by dense river systems which had no analogue neither in the Balkans nor in Khwārazm, could provide pastures with sufficient nutrition even in the hot time of the year. This would explain the numerous incursions of the Cumans in the Rus' lands during the summer, especially in the areas near the steppe, which were most often a target of nomadic attacks. And yet, it is noteworthy that in 1238 the Mongols withdrew from

AL-DĪN/THACKSTON 1998-9, part 1, 201-2; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/SMIRNOVA 1952, 146-7; THE SECRET History/de Rachewiltz 2006, vol. I, § 190, 193, 194, pp. 112-113, 115-117; Yuan SHI/KHRAPACHEVSKY 2009, 144-5. It should be taken into consideration, however, that in this case the fighting took place within the Eurasian steppe belt, where the animals could be compensated for the insufficient grazing, at least partially, in the course of the campaign. ¹⁵⁶ In the 13th century Ibn al Athīr reports: "The Tatars remained in the Qipjaq lands, which are plentiful in pasturages summer and winter. There are places that are cool in summer with plentiful pasturage and others warm in winter, also with plentiful pasturage, the latter being wooded areas on the sea coast.", IBN AL-ATHĪR/RICHARDS 2008, 223; IBN AL-ATHĪR 1884, 26; see also AL-NUWAYRĪ 1884, 540. Jūzjānī also refers to the natural advantages of the steppes inhabited by the Cuman-Qïpchaqs without relating them to a particular season: «چون توشی که پسر مهتر چنگیز خان بودّ، هوا و آب و زمین قفچاق را بدید، دانست که در همه جهان زمین از ان نزه ترّ، و .When Tushi [i.e. هوائي از ان خوشتر، و أبي از ان لطيف تر، و مرغزارها و چراگاهها از ان وسيع تر نتواند بود» Jochi], who was the eldest son of Chingīz Khān, saw the climate of the Qifchāq land, he considered that in the whole world there could not be a healthier land than that, a climate better than that, a water pleasanter than that, meadows and pasture-lands more extensive than that.), Jūzjānī/Habībī 1343/1964, vol. 2, 150; al-Juzjani/Raverty 1970, 1101; Jūzjānī/Tizengauzen 1941, 14.

¹⁵⁷ Already Rasovsky pointed out the fact that the frontiers between the territories populated by the Cuman-Qïpchaqs and the habitat of the sedentary societies were rather fluid and not always clearly discernible. During their seasonal migration, the nomadic groups often ad-

Rus' in order to spend the summer in Dasht-i Qipchāq.¹⁵⁸ Apparently, strategical considerations for the further stages of the campaign stood behind this decision (the Chinggisids opened the next military season, i.e. the autumn of 1238, with operations against Caucasia, Crimea, and the Qïpchaq tribes),¹⁵⁹ and perhaps it was also influenced by the intention of the conquerors to fatten up their horses within the steppe during the summer.¹⁶⁰ Maybe the Cuman tribes never operated in the Rus' principalities in such large numbers and for such a long time as to be forced to conduct a mass exodus during the hot part of the year. In any event, the Cumans faced no difficulties in campaigning in Rus' during the summer in the previous two hundred years.¹⁶¹

Conclusions

Thus, it turns out that something as natural and trivial as the quality of the available grazing stood behind the *asymmetric seasonal military activity* of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs in Southeastern Europe and Central Asia, and influenced the political history of these regions. For it was the seasonal rhythm of Cuman warfare that forced the Bulgarian tsar Kaloyan twice to cede his dream of capturing Adrianople (1205 and 1207) while he was on the verge of conquering it. More than eight decades ago, Rasovsky apparently noticed the meaning of the sun-burnt grass around

vanced beyond the closest arable fields, whereas in the steppe there were sedentary enclaves, see RASOVSKY 1937, 71–85; RASOVSKY 1938, 155–78.

¹⁵⁹ RASHĪD AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN - MŪSAVĪ 1373/1994, vol. 1, 669; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/KARĪMĪ 1338/1959, vol. 1, 476-7; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/BOYLE 1971, 60; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/THACKSTON 1998-9, part 2, 327; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/VERKHOVSKY 1960, 39.

¹⁶⁰ Perhaps this was not the first time the Mongols spent the summer within the steppes of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs in order to fatten up their horses, as indicated by events that took place in the course of the same campaign. A year earlier, after the Qïpchaq chief Bachman was finally defeated, at least part of the Mongol troops headed by the future Great Khan Möngke (r. 1251-9) spent the summer of 1237 in Dasht-i Qipchāq, in the Volga region, RASHĪD AL-DĪN/RAWSHAN – MŪSAVĪ 1373/1994, vol. 1, 668; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/KARĪMĪ 1338/1959, vol. 1, 476; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/BOYLE 1971, 59; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/THACKSTON 1998-9, part 2, 326; RASHĪD AL-DĪN/VERKHOVSKY 1960, 38.

¹⁶¹ Apparently, such was also the situation in the Pontic steppes in later centuries. The Crimean and Nogai Tatars raided the Polish-Lithuanian and Muscovite territories in the Early Modern Age all year round. In a similar way to the Cumans, the Tatars were able to conduct a whole series of raids in one year. In contrast to such regular incursions, L. Collins considers that the campaign season for large Crimean forces lasted from early February to October (the period between February and August being the most suitable time, according to him). But even in this case there were exceptions of large-scale campaigns "in the depths of winter", Collins 1975, 264, 267, 268; Davies 2007, 20, 22; Khodarkovsky 2002, 17.

¹⁵⁸ See above in the text and n. 126.

Adrianople for the withdrawal of the Cumans. ¹⁶² But in his research the Russian scholar put the accent upon the seasonal migrations of the Cuman-Qïpchaqs inside the steppes. However, the problem of the availability of grazing on the battlefield should be examined and placed in the broader context of the traditional nomadic warfare, which was shaped by the seasonal asymmetry of the climatic factors.

There is no doubt that climatic conditions varied each year, while political and social factors could force some Cuman groupings to endure extreme stress campaigning during an unfavourable season. This explains the exceptions to the rule of the Cuman-Qipchaq seasonal activity in the Balkans and Khwārazm. Viewed in a broader perspective, the climate is nothing more than a fluid frame within which the human societies, and these of the nomads in particular, developed. Besides the moments of particularly harsh climatic extremes, the limitations of this frame could often be overcome and should not be viewed as an absolute determinant. Yet, in the long term the seasonal cycle continued to define the curve of Cuman-Qïpchaq activity in these zones and nature prevailed over politics. Even such a cataclysm as the Mongol invasion in Dasht-i Qipchāq and the resulting establishment of the centralized Golden Horde did not alter the asymmetric seasonal models of nomadic warfare in the Balkans. Those Cumans who survived under the shadows of the Chinggisids continued to support the Bulgarian tsar Michael II Asen (r. 1246-56) during the cold months, 163 whereas Pachymeres, describing events of 1282, explicitly reports that the Tatars "are accustomed to wage war in the winter". 164 Indeed, according to the Mamlūk chroniclers the joint incursion by the Bulgarian tsar Konstantin Tikh Asen (r. 1257-77) and the troops of the Golden Horde in Byzantine Thrace (which could be dated to 1263-4 and led to the liberation of the former Seljuq Sultan 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykāvus II (r. 1246-61, d. 1279/80)) took place in "the winter time". 165 The only nomads that managed to break from the seasonal cycle of

¹⁶² In the beginning of his article, Rasovsky comments on the sun-burnt grass in the steppes, but further in the text he seems to touch on the problem of the dried grass and the lack of pasture for the Cuman horses in the area of Adrianople, Rasovsky 1939, 203, 208.

¹⁶³ The described events took place at the end of 1255 and the beginning of 1256, ACROPOLITA/HEISENBERG 1903, 123, 124–6; AKROPOLITES/MACRIDES 2007, 297, 300–1; see also: THEODOROS SKOUTARIOTES/VOYNOV 1972, 292–4; Chronographia of EPHRAIM/GYUZELEV – LYUBENOV 1981, 93–4; ZLATARSKI 2007, 457–8, 462–3; DPI 1993, 59; PAVLOV 1996, 193, 197, n. 23. 164 This information is in the context of the campaign which Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (r. 1261–82) organized against the ruler of Thessaly Sebastokrator John I (ca. 1271–89): "Εὔκαιρον δ' εἶχε καὶ τὸν ἐφεστῶτα χειμῶνα – χειμῶνος γὰρ καὶ σύνηθες ἐκείνοις στρατεύειν –, ὃν καὶ προκαταλαβεῖν ἡπείγετο, ὡς ἔξω πόλεως συμβαλεῖν Τοχάροις." (And he also considered well timed the coming winter — because they are accustomed to wage war in the winter — and he was in a hurry to get ahead of it [the winter] in order to join with the Tocharians [i.e. the Tatars] outside the City [i.e. Constantinople].), PACHYMERES 1984, 658–9; PACHYMERES/KARPOV 1862, 484–5; for these events, see also VÁSÁRY 2005, 84; KRASTEV 2011, 95. 165 AL-ʿAYNĪ/TIZENGAUZEN 1884, 511. For the dating of the campaign, see MUTAFCHIEV 1973, 615–6. Ibn Bībī also reports that during this campaign the winter was so harsh that the Dan-

their activities in these contact zones were those who permanently left the steppes and settled within the outside world. Such were the Qïpchaq migrants who were pushed by the Rus' pressure to the Georgian Kingdom in the early 12th century; the Qïpchaqs who migrated to the empire of the Khwārazmshāhs-Anushteginids in the late 12th century; and the Cuman refugees who ended their odyssey in Nicaea during the 1240s.

Appendix: Seasonal activity of the Cumans in their contacts with the Rus'

The present table contains only cases when the season of the campaign is relatively clear. The events are dated according to the chronology of the chronicles, which often diverge by one or several years from the real dates. The year is given according to the leading chronicle, without referring to possible variants in the chronology of additional sources. Since the real dating of the listed events is not of primary importance for the present topic, the voluminous commentaries related to this issue are omitted with the exception of the cases when it is directly related to the season of the military activities. Years that, apart from the listed campaigns, also include reports of other military operations without specific information on the time of the year are marked with an asterisk (*) in order to indicate Cuman activities outside of the explicitly mentioned season. For the sake of simplicity, the reigning years of the Rus' princes in the various principalities are omitted.

ube froze and the Tatar army crossed over without difficulties, IBN BĪBĪ/MOTAḤEDDĪN 1390/2011, 553; İBN BIBI/ÖZTÜRK 2014, 590 (I am indebted to Dr. Delyan Rusev, who drew my attention to this evidence); see also Pachymeres 1984, 294–5; Pachymeres/Karpov 1862, 205.

166 As regards the latter, however, it should be taken into consideration that the frontiers between the nomadic and the sedentary habitat in Iran and Central Asia were much more fluid than in Eastern Europe due to the geographical specifics of these regions. Thus, the two modes of life often coexisted in the same zones located thousands of kilometres away from the Eurasian steppe belt.

Year	Cold Months	Hot Months
1 Cai	(October-April)	(May-September)
1061	The first Cuman incursion into the Rus' lands took place in the winter. 167	
1068	Attack against the Rus' principalities in the autumn: - The Battle of the Snov River (November 1); 168	
1078	The Battle of Nezhatina Niva (October 3); ¹⁶⁹	The Rus' princes Oleg Svyatoslavich and Boris Vyacheslavich attacked the Rus' lands with an allied Cuman army in the summer: - The Battle of the Sozhitsa River (August 25) ¹⁷⁰
1079	The winter of 1078–9(?): Cumans pillaged the area of Starodub and were subsequently defeated twice near Desna by Vladimir Monomakh and his own Cuman allies. ¹⁷¹	The Rus' prince Roman Svyatoslavich led an allied Cuman army against the Rus' lands in the summer and negotiated with his uncle Vsevolod Yaroslavich near Voin'. He was killed by the Cumans during the retreat through the steppes on August 2. ¹⁷²
1080-6 ¹⁷³	The following autumn Monomakh captured Minsk with allied Cuman troops. ¹⁷⁴	In the summer, Vladimir Monomakh persecuted the Cumans who had captured Goroshin before that. ¹⁷⁵

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¹⁶⁷ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 163; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 152.

¹⁶⁸ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 171-2; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 161.

¹⁶⁹ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 201–2; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 192–3. The participation of Cumans in this battle is not certain.

¹⁷⁰ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 200; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 191.

¹⁷¹ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 248.

¹⁷² PSRL, vol. 1, col. 204; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 195-6.

¹⁷³ The events during this period cannot be accurately dated by years.

¹⁷⁴ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 248.

¹⁷⁵ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 248.

	T	I
		Monomakh fought against significant
		Cuman forces in the environs of
		Priluk and Belaya Vezha (August 14–
		15). ¹⁷⁶
1092		A Cuman incursion after intense
1072		heat. ¹⁷⁷
1093		A large Cuman offensive in the spring and summer, started after Apri 14: - The Battle of the Stugna River (May 26); - The Battle near Zhelan' (July 23); ¹⁷⁸
		Oleg Svyatoslavich attacked Vladimir
		Monomakh in Chernigov with an
1094		allied Cuman army in the height of
1094		I
	In late sections the Course shiefs then	Chernigov to Oleg on July 24. ¹⁷⁹
	In late autumn, the Cuman chiefs Itlar	
	and Kitan arrived at Pereyaslavl' for	
	peace talks with Vladimir Monomakh.	
1095	After they were treacherously mur-	
	dered there, a spring Rus' raid in the	
	steppes followed. ¹⁸⁰	#TI :
		"The entire summer" the Cumans
		besieged Yur'ev. ¹⁸¹
		Intensive military activity of the Cu-
		mans against the Rus' principalities in
		spring and summer:
		- The Cuman Chief Bonyak at-
		tacked the environs of Kiev;
		- The Cuman Chief Kurya attacked
1096		the environs of Pereyaslavl' (May
		24); - Tugorkan besieged Pereyaslavl'
		(from May 30 until July 19) and
		was killed in the Battle of the
		Trubezh River (July 19);
		- Bonyak attacked the outlying dis-
		tricts of Kiev (July 20). ¹⁸³

¹⁷⁶ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 248-9.

¹⁷⁷ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 215; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 206.

¹⁷⁸ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 218-22; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 208-13.

¹⁷⁹ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 249.

¹⁸⁰ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 227-8; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 217-19.

¹⁸¹ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 229; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 219.

	In late winter (end of February), a Cuman named Kunuy with Cuman forces supported two of Monomakh's sons against Oleg Svyatoslavich in Northeast Rus'. ¹⁸²	
1099		Late April: Cumans headed by Bonyak took part in the Battle of the Vigor River (on an unidentified day between April 9 and June 12) on the side of David Igorevich against Yaroslav Svyatopolchich and his Hungarian allies; A second appearance of Bonyak's Cumans in support of David Igorevich after August 5.184
1101		Late summer: Large meeting for peace talks between many Rus' princes and Cuman chiefs in Sakov (September 15).185
1103	Rus' incursion into the steppes in late winter. 186	
1105	Bonyak attacked Zarub during the winter. ¹⁸⁷	
1106		Cumans attacked Zarechesk in the spring (before 24 June). ¹⁸⁸
1107	Peace negotiations between the Rus' princes and the Cuman chiefs (January	 Bonyak attacked Pereyaslavl' in May; Cumans besieged Lubno during the summer; The Battle of the Sula River (August 12).¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 231-4; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 221-4.

¹⁸² PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 239–40; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 229–30; PSRL, vol. 3, 19, 202. The chronology of the Rus' chronicles follows the *March-style* or the *ultra-March style*, and in both cases the New Year starts on March 1. Thus, the events in February described s.a. 1096 actually took place in early 1097 according to the Gregorian calendar. This is why in this and subsequent similar instances the events are displayed in the table after the description of the summer months of the given year.

¹⁸⁴ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 269–73; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 244–8.

¹⁸⁵ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 275; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 250.

¹⁸⁶ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 277-9; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 253-5.

¹⁸⁷ PSRL, vol. 2, col. 257.

¹⁸⁸ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 281; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 257.

	12).189	
1109	A Rus' winter incursion into the steppes. On December 2, the Rus' attacked the Cuman camps "on the Don". ¹⁹¹	
1110*	An unfulfilled Rus' campaign against the Cumans in the spring. ¹⁹²	An unsuccessful Cuman incursion. Two more undated Cuman incursions followed, at least one of which perhaps took place in the hot part of the year. ¹⁹³
1111	A spring Rus' campaign in the steppes, the Battle of the Salnitsa River (March). ¹⁹⁴	
1113		Cuman forces arrived after the death of Svytopolk on April 16. ¹⁹⁵ This unsuccessful incursion perhaps took place in late spring.
1125		After the death of Vladimir Monomakh (May 19), the Cumans attacked Pereyaslavl' in late spring or in the summer. ¹⁹⁶
1135	Cumans supported Vsevolod Ol'govich during the winter. ¹⁹⁷	
1136	Cumans supported the Ol'govichi in the winter (December and January). 198	Cumans supported the Ol'govichi in the summer (August). ¹⁹⁹
1137	Cumans joined the campaign of Svyatoslav Ol'govich (ruling in Novgorod) against Pskov in the cold part of the year (?). ²⁰⁰	

¹⁹⁰ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 250, 281-2; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 258.

¹⁸⁹ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 250, 282-3; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 259.

¹⁹¹ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 283-4; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 260.

¹⁹² PSRL, vol. 1, col. 284; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 260.

¹⁹³ PSRL, vol. 2, col. 260.

¹⁹⁴ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 289; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 264–8, 273.

¹⁹⁵ PSRL, vol. 2, col. 276.

¹⁹⁶ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 295-6; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 289-90.

¹⁹⁷ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 303; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 295-6.

¹⁹⁸ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 299-300; PSRL, vol. 3, 23-24, 208-9.

¹⁹⁹ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 303-4.; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 297-9; PSRL, vol. 3, 208.

²⁰⁰ PSRL, vol. 3, 210.

1146*	"Wild" Cumans supported Vsevolod Ol'govich in late winter or early spring. "Wild" Cumans supported Svyatoslav Ol'govich next January. In February, Svyatoslav Ol'govich allowed his Cuman allies to come back to the steppes. ²⁰¹	
1147	 Many Cumans swore an oath of alliance with Svyatoslav Ol'govich and Gleb Yur'evich (after Igor Ol'govich was killed in September, but before the rivers froze). Cumans supported the Ol'govichi and the Davidovichi after the rivers froze.²⁰² 	 Cumans supported Svyatoslav Ol'govich several times (between Palm Sunday and September).²⁰³ Izyaslav Mstislavich concluded peace with the Cumans (after July 27).²⁰⁴
1149	Yury Dolgoruky attacked with allied Cuman troops Izyaslav Mstislavich in Luchesk at the end of winter. After the arrival of spring, both parties conclud- ed peace. ²⁰⁵	Cumans flocked to the army of Yury Dolgoruky in July. After he met the Ol'govichi, they waited other Cuman troops for a month. The entire coalition participated in the Battle of Pereyaslavl' on August 23. ²⁰⁶
1150/1	•	Cumans arrived to support Yury Dolgoruky without being called and created troubles in the surroundings of Pereyaslavl' before the end of summer. ²⁰⁷
1151/2		Cumans arrived to support Yury Dolgoruky after Saint George's Day,

²⁰¹ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 319, 329, 333-5, 339.

²⁰² PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 353, 356-8, 359;

²⁰³ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 340, 341-2, 353.

²⁰⁴ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 315.

²⁰⁵ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 323-6; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 386-93.

²⁰⁶ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 321-2; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 374-83.

²⁰⁷ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 328-9; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 404.

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		suffered defeat, and withdrew to the
	C : 1, , , , , , D !	steppes before July 24. ²⁰⁸
1152	Cumans arrived to support Yury Dolgoruky in the autumn, and after that the rivers started to freeze. Around the end of winter, Mstislav Izyaslavich organized a campaign against the Cumans with "all the Black Hats". 209	
	At the end of autumn or the beginning of winter, Gleb Yur'evich attacked	A small Cuman party joined an unsuccessful campaign by Yury Dolgoruky in the summer(?). ²¹¹
1154	Mstislav Izyaslavich in Pereyaslavl' with a multitude of Cumans. In the winter, Gleb Yur'evich with a multitude of Cumans supported Izyaslav Davidovich against Rostislav Mstislavich near Chernigov. In the same winter, the Cumans plun-	
	dered the surroundings of Pereyaslavl'. ²¹⁰	
1154/5*	In the spring, Cumans attacked the territories around the Ros' river and were defeated by Vaslilko Yur'evich and the Berendei. ²¹²	
1158/9*	Cumans supported Ivan Rostislavich Berladnik in an unspecified moment. Cumans joined a campaign by Izyaslav Davidovich that ended in defeat in late autumn or early winter. ²¹³	
1159/60*		 Oleg Svyatoslavich defeated a Cuman force and killed a Cuman chief(?). Vladimir Andreevich, Yaroslav Izyaslavich, and troops from the Pricipality of Galicia defeated Cumans on Rus' territory and liberated many captives(?).

²⁰⁸ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 330-4; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 422-40, 443.

²⁰⁹ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 338-40; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 455-61;

²¹⁰ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 341-344; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 468-9, 471-6;

²¹¹ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 341; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 468.

²¹² PSRL, vol. 1, col. 345; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 479.

²¹³ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 348; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 497, 500-2.

	 Izyaslav Davidovich made an incursion into the Rus' lands with a multitude of Cumans (probably in the autumn?). A winter campaign of Izyaslav Davidovich with Cumans against Smolensk.²¹⁴ 	- Campaign by Izyaslav Davidovich with a multitude of Cumans against Chernigov (?). 215
1161	Many Cumans took part in the offensive by Izyaslav Davidovich against Kiev in February. ²¹⁶	A multitude of Cumans arrived to support Izyaslav Davidovich (maybe in August). ²¹⁷
1162*	The Cumans served as a vanguard for the troops of Izyaslav Davidovich in the winter. Izyaslav Davidovich was killed in a battle (March 6) and many Cumans were slain. ²¹⁸	
1168	A winter campaign of the Ol'govichi in the steppes against the Cumans. ²¹⁹	
1170	In early March, Mstislav Izyaslavich headed a campaign against the Cumans aimed at protecting the trade routes in the steppes. ²²⁰	
1171	In the winter, Cumans attacked the environs of Kiev. Mikhalko and Vsevolod Yur'evichi counterattacked with Berendei and Torki. ²²¹	

²¹⁴ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 350; PSRL, vol. 2, col. 508.

²¹⁵ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 349–50; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 504–8. These three conflicts are described by the chronicler after the meeting of Rostislav Mstislavich and Svyatoslav Ol'govich in May and before the fights in the winter. Therefore, perhaps at least some of them took place in the hot season.

²¹⁶ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 515–16.

²¹⁷ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 512, 514–15.

 $^{^{218}}$ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 517–18; PSRL, vol. 3, 31, 218. These events were part of a campaign that started in the previous year.

²¹⁹ PSRL, vol. 2, col. 532.

²²⁰ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 538-41; PSRL, vol. 3, 32-3, 220.

²²¹ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 362-3.

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	Cumans supported Gleb Yur'evich and his allies around Easter. ²²²	
1172		Gleb Yur'evich tried to lead parallel parleys with two Cuman groupings. He reached an agreement with one of them; the other pillaged the environs of Kiev but suffered defeat afterwards (between May and August?). ²²³
1177	In the winter, Cumans supported the Ryazan Prince Gleb Rostislavich against Vsevolod the Big Nest. Together with Gleb, the Cumans suffered defeat at the end of winter. ²²⁴	At the end of spring or the beginning of summer (the Green Week), Cumans attacked the Principality of Kiev, pillaged some settlements, and defeated the Rus' troops. After Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich entered Kiev on the Feast of the Prophet Elijah (July 20), he called the Cumans to support him. When the nomads learned that he had withdrawn from the city, they attacked the area of Tortsk (in late summer or early autumn?). ²²⁵
1181	Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich attacked Vsevolod the Big Nest with Cuman allies but retreated before the river levels rise in spring. ²²⁶	
1183	 In February, the Cumans, led by Konchak and Gleb Tirievich, attacked Rus'. The leading Rus' princes ruling the lands along the Dnieper marched on a retaliatory campaign but retreated and decided that it would be better to attack again in the summer. 	

²²² PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 548–50.

²²³ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 355, 357–61; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 552, 555–9. The negotiations and the incursion are described in the chronicle between events dated in May and August, respectively. The same Cuman activities are reported in the *Laurentian Chronicle* s.a. 1169.

²²⁴ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 383-5.

²²⁵ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 603-5.

²²⁶ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 388.

	- Igor Svyatoslavich launched a retaliatory campaign at the end of winter and ravaged the Cuman camps on the Khorol River. ²²⁷	
		A large Rus' steppe campaign that ended with a battle at the end of July and a victory over the nomads. A parallel campaign of the Ol'govichi about the same time, during which they confronted and defeated a Cuman host that was marching on a raid against the Rus' territories. ²²⁸
	Konchak marched against the Rus' territories bringing with him a Muslim specialist in siege warfare. A surprising Rus' counterattack and battle on March 1, 1185. The <i>rasputitsa</i> hampered the chase of the defeated nomads. In April, the <i>Voivode</i> Roman Nezdilovich with the Berendei attacked the Cuman camps. ²²⁹	
1184/5*	Canan camps.	Igor Svyatoslavich and other princes marched on a steppe campaign at the end of April and suffered a defeat in the Battle of the Kayala River in May. Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich had planned a campaign in the area of Donets for the entire summer, but his plans were thwarted by the defeat near the Kayala River. ²³⁰
1187*	A campaign of the Rus' princes and the Black Hats against the Cumans in spring. The Rus' were unable to chase the Cumans beyond the Dnieper because the water level rose quickly. An unsuccessful winter campaign of the Rus' princes against the Cumans. The same winter, Roman Nezdilovich and the Black Hats attacked the Cuman camps beyond the Dnieper since the	

²²⁷ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 628-9.

²²⁸ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 394-6; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 630-3.

²²⁹ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 634–7.

²³⁰ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 397–8; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 637–46.

	nomeds were on the Danube to see	
	nomads were on the Danube to support the Asenids. ²³¹	
	*	
1190	During the winter, the Cumans and the renegade Kontuvdey from the Black Hats often raided the frontier areas of the Principality of Kiev. A retaliatory expedition of two Rus' princes and the Black Hats against the Cumans at the end of winter. An unsuccessful Cuman raid at the end of winter. Another joint attack by the Cumans and Kontuvdey at the end of winter,	
1191*	which ended in defeat. ²³² A campaign of the Ol'govichi against the Cumans in an unspecified time. Another steppe incursion by the Ol'govichi during the winter. ²³³	
1192	In the autumn, the Black Hats wanted to attack the camps of the Cumans, who were on the Danube, but Ryurik Rostislavich did not allow them. An unsuccessful campaign of the Rus' princes and the Black Hats against the Cumans. Negotiations by Ryurik Rostislavich with Kontuvdey and the Cumans in the winter. ²³⁴	During the summer, the princes guarded the Rus' Land from the Cumans. ²³⁵
1193	Parallel unsuccessful peace talks with the Cumans in the autumn. The princes wanted to organize a winter campaign against the Cumans, but were unable to do so due to the poor harvest. A successful incursion by Rostislav Ryurikovich and Mstislav Mstislavich with the Black hats against the Cu-	

²³¹ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 652-4, 659.

²³² PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 668-73.

²³³ PSRL, vol. 2, col. 673.

²³⁴ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 673-4

²³⁵ PSRL, vol. 2, col. 673.

	mans. They came back on Christmas. Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich and Ryurik Rostislavich guarded for a long time the frontiers of the Principality of Kiev, but as soon as they withdrew the Cumans launched a winter incursion. ²³⁶	
1195	The "Wild" Cumans arrived to support Ryurik Rostislavich in the winter, but the campaign was aborted. ²³⁷	At the end of winter or in spring, Vsevolod the Big Nest summoned allied Cuman troops. ²³⁸
1196	In the autumn, the "Wild" Cumans supported the Ol'govichi against Vsevolod the Big Nest, whose troops also included Cumans. ²³⁹	The "Wild" Cumans supported Ryurik Rostislavich in the summer, until autumn arrived. ²⁴⁰ Cumans took part in a campaign by Vsevolod the Big Nest against the Ol'govichi, which perhaps started in the summer and continued until the autumn. ²⁴¹
1199		From the last day of April until the early June, Vsevolod the Big Nest led a steppe campaign against the Cumans. The nomads withdrew towards the sea and the prince traversed their winter pasture grounds, but was unable to catch them. ²⁴²
1202	In the winter, Roman Mstislavich attacked the Cuman camps. ²⁴³	
1203	In the winter, a coalition of Rus' princes, supported by Cuman allies, pillaged Kiev. ²⁴⁴	
1205	In the winter, Ryurik Rostislavich,	

²³⁶ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 675-9.

²³⁷ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 689–90; and retrospectively s.a. 1196, PSRL, vol. 2, col. 694.

²³⁸ PSRL, vol. 3, 42, 235; PSRL, vol. 1, col. 413.

²³⁹ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 698–700.

²⁴⁰ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 695-6.

²⁴¹ PSRL, vol. 3, 42-3, 235-6; PSRL, vol. 1, col. 413; PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 698-700.

²⁴² PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 414-15.

²⁴³ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 418.

²⁴⁴ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 418–19; PSRL, vol. 3, 45, 240.

	Roman Mstislavich, Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, and other princes attacked the Cumans. ²⁴⁵	
1206*	In the winter, the Cumans supported Vsevolod The Red and the Ol'govichi against Ryurik Rostislavich in Kiev. ²⁴⁶	
1217		On July 20, Cumans participated in the treacherous massacre of six princ- es in Ryazan organized by Gleb Vla- dimirovich. ²⁴⁷
1220	A winter campaign of Mstislav Msti- slavich, Mstislav Romanovich, and other princes with Cuman allies against the Hungarians in the Princi- pality of Galicia. ²⁴⁸	
[1221]	Cumans supported Mstislav Mstislavich in the Principality of Galicia (end of March). ²⁴⁹	
[1233]		Around the end of summer, Cumans supported Daniil Romanovich in one of his conflicts with the Hungarians over Galich. ²⁵⁰
[1235]		Izyaslav Vladimirovich attacked with his Cuman allies the environs of Kiev. They plundered the area and won a battle against Daniil Romanovich and Vladimir Ryurikovich soon after the Ascension of Christ (May 17, 1235). ²⁵¹
[1236]		In the summer, Mikhail Vsevolodovich and Izyaslav Vladimirovich summoned allied Cuman contingents against Daniil Romanovich. Later on, however, the Cumans refused to fight

²⁴⁵ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 420; PSRL, vol. 3, 240.

²⁴⁶ PSRL, vol. 1, col. 428.

²⁴⁷ PSRL, vol. 1, cols. 440-1; s.a. 1218: PSRL, vol. 3, 58.

²⁴⁸ PSRL, vol. 7, 128.

²⁴⁹ PSRL, vol. 2, col. 737; Kronika Halicko-Wołyńska/Dabrowski – Jusupović 2017, 79, for the dating see n. 267. The dates of the events described in the *Galician-Volhynian Chronicle* are given according to the real course of events and do not follow the chronology of the chronicle, which has been inserted much later in the original text in a completely random manner.

²⁵⁰ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 770–1; Kronika Halicko-Wołyńska/Dąbrowski – Jusupović 2017, 178–84; Hrushevsky 1901, 24.

²⁵¹ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 772-4; Kronika Halicko-Wołyńska/Dąbrowski - Jusupović 2017, 188-92.

		against Daniil and retreated after they had pillaged "the entire land of Galich". ²⁵²
[1245]		The Cumans took part in the Battle of Yaroslavl' on August 17 on the side of Daniil and Vasil'ko Romanovichi, and they were the first to cross a ford over the San River. ²⁵³
[1251- 1252]	In the winter, the Cumans took part in a campaign of Daniil and Vasil'ko Romanovichi against the Lithuanians. ²⁵⁴	

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²⁵² PSRL, vol. 2, col. 775; Kronika Halicko-Wołyńska/Dąbrowski - Jusupović 2017, 196-8.

²⁵³ PSRL, vol. 2, col. 802; Kronika Halicko-Wołyńska/Dąbrowski – Jusupović 2017, 276–7.

²⁵⁴ PSRL, vol. 2, cols. 818–19; Kronika Halicko-Wołyńska/Dąbrowski – Jusupović 2017, 326–9.

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Nomadic State in the Sedentary World: The Military Mode of Government of Conquered Lands in the Mongol Empire

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Abstract

The Mongols built their state around the essential institution of the army, which was the main instrument of control over the population. The Mongol Empire was thus characterized by a military-administrative system in which the administration was carried out by military commanders. This paper aims to show, with a special emphasis on the case of pre-Ilkhanid Iran and the Caucasus, that the Mongols first transposed this model to the conquered sedentary territories instead of using native administrators. In particular, it attempts to highlight the military character of the officials called *darughachin*, or *basqaqs*, sometimes hastily defined as civilian governors.

Keywords: Mongol Empire; Mongol army; Mongol administration; *darughachi*; *basqaq*

The dominant interpretative model for the relations between Eurasian nomads and their sedentary neighbours is that of a centre-periphery approach involving economic and political dependency of the former towards the latter, and where turbulent and anarchic nomadic tribes and clans subsist on the margins of central, bureaucratic, and territorialized states of sedentary societies. To face the establishment of powerful sedentary states, nomads would be forced to unite into large confederations, militarily powerful but internally decentralized, maintaining the tribal structure intact and relying on the consensus of tribal leaders towards the paramount leader, and thus not being states to the full extent of the term.¹

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¹ See especially Barfield 1989.

According to some, such would have initially been the case of the Mongol Empire. The Mongols, once they had made their conquests, would not have really known how to administer the numerous populations and immense sedentary territories that fell under their dominion. They would thus have been forced to rely on a sedentary administrative staff, especially Chinese or Persian.² This would correspond to the famous adage repeated by Yelü Chucai to Ögödei: "The empire has been conquered on horseback, but it cannot be ruled on horseback."³

This kind of interpretation is, however, grounded on a conception of the state based on typologies that have the modern (and mainly European) State as their model. Many recent studies have highlighted alternative approaches to the state that allow the expression of a greater variety of forms of political complexity and integration. In particular, the State should no longer be conceived as a centralized, territorialized, and bureaucratic extra-social super-structure, but rather as a system of codified social relations between a ruling stratum and subordinate populations.⁴ In my view, the framework for these relations and for the large-scale integration of subject populations is precisely the army. The army would therefore not only be an external manifestation of a rather loose confederal political form, but an organizational tool at the heart of what could be called the nomadic state. The case of the Mongol Empire is particularly telling in this regard. If a form of nomadic state existed, then it may be necessary to reconsider the idea that the Mongols needed the help of sedentary advisors recruited from among the defeated sedentary peoples to impose a coherent administrative structure on their empire.

The Yuanshi (the Mongol Yuan dynasty's official annals compiled in 1370–1 during the Ming dynasty) asserts quite bluntly and with much contempt that during the time of Chinggis Khan the administration consisted "only of commanders of ten thousand to command the army, and judges to enforce laws and sentences". It was only after the conquest of some Chinese territories that Chinggis Khan would have set up a proper administration, recruiting local Chinese and Jurchen officials. One should not take this tendentious account too literally and infer from this absence of bureaucratic apparatus, which raised the eyebrows of the Confucians, an absence of state organisation at all. Quite the contrary, the mention of the army commanders, the *noyad* (sing. *noyan*), as the sole agents of the early Mongol administration—along with the judges, called *jarghuchin*—points, in fact, to a mili-

² See for instance RACHEWILTZ 1966, 135–6; BUELL 1979, 131–2; MORGAN 1982, 134–6; MORGAN 2007, 94–6; ENDICOTT-WEST 1989, 17; KRADIN – SKRYNNIKOVA 2006, 115; AIGLE 2008, 67, among others. David Morgan revised his opinion in MORGAN 1996.

³以馬上取天下‧不可以馬上治; SONG LIAN 1976, 157.3688.

⁴ For a broad theoretical approach to the issue, see CHANDHOKE 1995, 49; JESSOP 2016, 53-90. For its application to nomadic contexts, see SNEATH 2007, 185-9, and, in a way, STANDEN 2018.

⁵ 惟以萬戶統軍旅,以斷事官治政刑; SONG LIAN 1976, 85.2119.

tary mode of government of populations, indeed alien to the Chinese and other sedentary state traditions.⁶

It is obvious from the many available sources that the famous decimally organized Mongol army was a much larger structure than just all the fighting men and that it included the entire population. Chinese sources indicate that all adult males from the age of fifteen were conscripted.⁷ Juvaynī (d. 1283), who devotes a long passage to the military organization of the Mongols in his *Tārīkh-i jahāngushā*, strikingly equates the army and the civilian population:

It is an army under the guise of a people, being liable in all manner of contributions, and rendering without complaint whatever is enjoined to them, whether *qupchur*, occasional taxes, the maintenance of travellers, or the upkeep of the *yam* with the provision of mounts and food therefor. It is also a people under the appearance of an army, all of them, great or small, noble, and base, in time of battle becoming swordsmen, archers and lancers and advancing in whatever manner the occasion requires.⁸

The *Yuanshi* expresses the very same thing in a much more lapidary way when it says that "mounted, they were ready for fighting; dismounted, they settled together to pasture animals". The purpose, however, is not to point out that the Mongol army was a people in arms, in accordance with the stereotype of the nomad as a natural warrior. The idea expressed here is that there was no distinction among the Mongols between the armed force and the people subject to authority and taxes. It refers to the incorporation of the entire population into a military-administrative system: not everyone was in arms, but everybody was conscripted. Not only men of fighting age, but also their families, the *a'uruq*, or encampments for women, children, and dependants who followed the army. The entire population was divided into the decimal units that composed the army, as Juvaynī writes: "They have divided all the people into companies of ten, appointing one of the ten to be the commander of the nine others."

⁶ The Qubilai era *Zhiyuan yiyu* thus translates *noyan* as *guanren* 官人, "official": ZHIYUAN YIYU 2006, 12; tr. LIGETI – KARA 1990, 263; KARA 1990, 313. We will see that in fact even the judges were not distinct from the military officers, but that on the contrary the *jarghuchin* were generally also army commanders.

⁷ Peng Daya 1962, 501 [19r]; tr. Olbricht - Pinks et al. 1980, 172. Song Lian 1976, 98.2508.

⁸ JUVAYNĪ 1912–1937, vol. 1, 22; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 1, 30, slightly modified. Persian text: لشكرى اندر شيوهٔ رعیّت كه احتمال صنوف مون كنند و بر اداي آنچ بریشان حكم كنند از قوبجور و عوارضات و اخراجات صادر و وارد و ترتیب یام و اولاغ و علوفات ضجرت نكنند، رعیّتی اندر زي لشكر كه وقت كار از خرد تا بزرگ شریف تا وضیع همه شمشیرزن و تیرانداز و نیز هگذار باشند بهر نوع كه وقت اقتضای آن كند

⁹ 上馬則備戰鬭‧下馬則屯聚牧養; SONG LIAN 1976, 98.2508.

¹⁰ SINOR 1981.

¹¹ Juvaynī 1912–1937, vol. 1, 22; tr. Boyle 1958, vol. 1, 31, slightly modified. Persian text: و نؤاب آن را معزول تمامت خلایق را دهده کرده و از هر ده یک نفس را امیر نه دیگر کرده

Using the expression "all the people" (tamāmat-i khalā 'īq), he makes it clear that it was not only men that were concerned. In the same way, the Secret History clearly shows how the symbolic birth of the Mongol State took place during the quriltai of 1206, when Chinggis Khan "sets the Mongol people in order" by creating the ninety-five mingghad ("thousands") of his army and assigning them areas of pastureland.¹²

The army was consubstantial with the State. As already mentioned, the state, especially in pre-modern times, was first and foremost the relation of power from a ruling class over individuals and social groups rather than a territorialized structure. This is what the Mongol notion of *ulus*, "state", or more precisely "people subject to the State", refers directly to.¹³ The *Yeke Mongghol Cherig*, the "Great Mongol Army", is in a way the practical application of the theoretical concept of *Yeke Mongghol Ulus*, the "Great Mongol State". The *ulus* is the state as the authority exercised over subjects; these subjects are the *cherig*, the army.

Juvaynī thus describes the apportionment of appanages among members of the Chinggisid family as a distribution of military units:

[Chinggis Khan] divided the houses $[qab\bar{a}'\bar{\imath}l]^{14}$ and peoples $[aqv\bar{a}m]$ of the Mongols and the Naimans and all the armies between the aforesaid sons; and to each of his younger sons and to his brothers and kinsmen he allotted their share of the army.¹⁵

All members of the imperial family had their shares, not of lands, but of the people and army altogether. The very same idea is expressed in the *Jāmiʿal-tavārīkh* of Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 1318) when he describes the repartition of the various *hazāras* (thousands) after the death of Chinggis Khan.¹⁶

The decimal units of the army, and especially the *mingghad* (sing. *mingghan*), thus constituted administrative divisions. They formed the framework within

¹² Secret History 1972, § 202, 114; tr. Rachewiltz 2004, vol. 1, 133.

¹³ Munkh-Erdene 2011, 218, 221; Atwood 2015, 25ff.

¹⁴ As I have argued in a paper entitled "The Mongol military system of government and its imposition in Iran as seen through the work of 'Alā' ad-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Juvaynī", given on September 10, 2019, at the 9th European Conference of Iranian Studies (Freie Universität, Berlin), a thorough examination of the use of the word qabīla (pl. qabā'īl) by Juvaynī shows that he does not mean it in the sense of "tribe", but in the much narrower meaning of a family, a household, and in particular of a noble house. See also remarks in SNEATH 2013, 178–80. Whether Juvaynī means in this instance all the nuclear families of the Mongol and Naiman peoples, as a kind of metonymic synonym of the following word (aqvām), or more specifically the noble lineages of the Mongols and the Naimans (to which aqvām were attached?) is ambiguous. Therefore, I translated qabā 'īl here as the neutral word "houses".

 $^{^{15}}$ JuVAYNĪ 1912–1937, vol. 1, 30; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 1, 41, slightly modified. Persian text: قبایل و اقوام مغول و نایمان و تمامت لشکرها بر پسران مذکور بخش کرد و دیگر پسران خردتر و برادران و خویشان هرکس را از لشکرها نصیب تعیین کرد

¹⁶ RASHĪD AD-DĪN 1395/2016, vol. 1, 530-51; tr. THACKSTON 2012, 207-13.

which Mongol power was exercised, whether it was the mobilization of men for war or the collection of taxes or the corvée labour, as illustrated, for example, by the testimony of Xu Ting recorded in the *Heida shilue* (which collects the reports of the two Song ambassadors, Peng Daya and Xu Ting, who travelled to the Mongol court in 1233 and 1235–6 respectively).¹⁷

In addition, both Juvaynī and the Song ambassador Zhao Gong (who visited the Mongol army's headquarters in Northern China in 1221) write that the decimal system, because of its rationality and efficiency, made it possible to do without written documents and civil servants:

The reviewing and mustering of the army has been so arranged that they have abolished the registry of inspection [daftar-i 'arz] and dismissed the officials and clerks.¹⁸

To mobilize several hundred thousand soldiers, they hardly need any registers. March orders are transmitted [orally] from the commander in chief to the commanders of thousands, hundreds, and tens.¹⁹

This is probably an exaggeration since there were most likely idiosyncratic Mongol equivalents of such registers. ²⁰ Thus, for example, the *Secret History* shows how Chinggis Khan gave to the *Yeke Jarghuchi* ("Great Judge") Shigi Qutuqu the task to write "in a blue register [köke debter] all decisions about distribution and about judicial matters of the entire population". ²¹ But what emerges from this depiction is that the Mongol system made it possible to do without civil servants and registers, that is, without the traditional administration of the sedentary state.

The Mongols had a rational and coherent state organization, the backbone of which was the army. It existed even before the conquests, and in fact predates the empire itself.²² It can therefore be assumed that it was first and foremost their own system of government that the Mongols tried to impose on the conquered lands. A most striking example of that is the infamous way the Mongols conscripted local

19 起兵數十萬·略無文書·自元帥至千戶、百戶、牌子頭·傳令而行; ZHAO GONG 1962, 445 [8r]; tr. OL BRICHT – PINKS et al. 1980, 53.

¹⁷ XU TING 1962, 489–90 [13rv]; tr. OLBRICHT – PINKS et al. 1980, 142. On decimal military sections as social and tax-paying units, see most notably ATWOOD 2012, 25ff.

 ¹⁸ JUVAYNĪ 1912-1937, vol. 1, 22; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 1, 31. Persian text:
 و عرضگه و شمار لشكر را وضعی ساختهاند كه دفتر عرض را بدان منسوخ كر دهاند و اصحاب و نؤاب أن را معزول
 ¹⁹ 起兵數十萬・略無文書・自元帥至千戶、百戶、牌子頭・傳令而行; ZHAO GONG 1962, 445 [8r]; tr. OL-

²⁰ Professor Christopher Atwood addressed this point in his lecture "Population Mobilization in Early Mongol Conquests", given at the EHESS Paris on May 17, 2019, as part of Professor Étienne de la Vaissière's seminar: Migrations et démographie en Asie centrale (IVe-XIe siècle).

²¹ SECRET HISTORY 1972, § 203, 116; tr. RACHEWILTZ 2004, vol. 1, 135.

²² I intend to demonstrate this in a work currently in progress.

vanquished populations into levies, which were decimally organised just as the regular nomadic army.²³

Another illuminating case to illustrate this point is that of pre-Ilkhanid Mongol Iran and Caucasus during the 1230s, which allows us to reconsider the establishment of a so-called sedentary and civilian administration after the conquest of these regions.

It was under Ögödei (r. 1229–41) that a large part of Iran came under the effective control of the Mongols, when at the end of 1230 he sent the general Chormaqan²⁴ at the head of four *tümed* (sing. tümen, i.e., a unit of ten thousand men).²⁵ In his wake, a first Mongol administration was established in Northern Iran, from Khurāsān to Āzarbāyjān and the Caucasus through Rayy and Hamadān. The bulk of this huge nomadic army, which was established as a *tamma* (frontier garrison) and included women, children, and herds, had its winter quarters in the large and fertile Mughān plain, from which it controlled the whole region.²⁶ Juvaynī gives a retrospective depiction of the essentially military nature of this Mongol administration in Iran, precisely when it tended to be replaced by a civilian administration including Persian officials under the action initiative of the Uyghur governor Körgüz after 1239:

When they arrived in these areas, they had many conflicts with the commanders of Chormaqan, until they freed these provinces from their control and set taxes. For every province had a *noyan*, and every city a commander $[am\bar{\imath}r\bar{\imath}]$, and they were content to give little to the $D\bar{\imath}v\bar{\imath}n$ and used to seize the remainder for themselves. It was all taken from them and [considerable] sums of money were drawn upon them.²⁷

²³ See Zhao Gong 1962, 445 [8r]; tr. Olbricht – Pinks et al. 1980, 53. Juvaynī 1912–1937, vol. 1, 70–1; tr. Boyle 1958, vol. 1, 92. Ibn al-Athīr 1965–1967, vol. 12, 367; tr. Richards 2006–2008, vol. 3, 209. Kirakos Ganjakeci 1986, 209–10. During the same lecture quoted above, Christopher Atwood showed that these levies included not only able-bodied men that served as soldiers, but also all their families, including women, children, and the elderly, who followed them and provided a workforce for corvées.

²⁴ Or Chormaghun according to Persian sources. His original name was Chorman though, Chormagan being a diminutive form of the latter, as stated by GRIGOR AKNERCI 1949, 300–1.

²⁵ Some sources, like Juvaynī, attribute to him only three *tümed*, but others, like Rashīd al-Dīn, indicate that he commanded four, and I think this is indeed the correct number. See discussion in BERGER 2021.

²⁶ The anonymous Georgian *Hundred Years Chronicle*, included in the compendium entitled *K'art'lis C'xovreba*, states that the four *tamach noins* (Mong. *tammachi noyan*), that is, the commanders of each of the four *tümed* of Chormaqan's *tamma*, ruled from Khorāsān to Anatolia: K'ART'LIS C'XOVREBA 2014, 345. On the *tamma* institution, and particularly on Chormaqan's army, see MAY 2012; BERGER 2021.

²⁷ JUVAYNĪ 1912-1937, vol. 2, 237-8; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 2, 501, slightly modified. Persian text:

Juvaynī describes this first military administration as dysfunctional, but it should not be forgotten that he was himself a representative of the Iranian administrative elite, and that his own father, Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad, was among Körgüz's envoys. A real administrative network appears nonetheless in the background of this depiction, since every province had a *noyan*, and every city a commander. This is consistent with what the Armenian author Grigor Aknerci (d. ca. 1335) describes for the Caucasus, saying that the Mongols "divided the countries among the one hundred and ten chieftains" under the command of Chormaqan. Other Armenian and Georgian sources have similar accounts of apportionments of conquered lands into administrative districts among military commanders. Moreover, a discourse that the same Grigor Aknerci attributes to Chinggis Khan—conflating him with his son Ögödei—clearly describes the administrative and economic tasks that were assigned to the *tamma* of Chormaqan:

It is the will of God that we take the earth and *maintain order*, and *impose the* (y)asax [jasaq, i.e., the law], that they abide by our command and give us $tz\gamma u$ [tuzghu, i.e, food offering], mal [land tax], $t'a\gamma ar$ [taghar, i.e., food requisition for the army] and $\gamma p'\check{c}'ur$ [qubchur, i.e., tax on livestock or crops].³¹

In a remarkably similar way, the *Secret History* shows that tax collection in Iran was indeed part of the responsibilities of Chormaqan's army:

[Ögödei] ordered as follows: "Chormaqan Qorchi shall reside at that very place [as a commander of] the *tamma* troops. Every year he shall make deliver yellow gold, *naq*-fabrics, brocades, and damasks with gilded [thread], small and big pearls, fine Western horses with long necks and tall legs, dark brown [Bactrian] camels and one-humped [Arabian] dromedaries, packmules and [riding] mules, and he shall send them [to Us]."³²

A further example is that of Molar Noyan, one of the Mongol commanders under Chormagan, who promised to build villages and to plant fields for those who

ایشان چون بدان ممالک رسیدند با امرای جورماغون بسیار مخاصمتها کردند تا وقتی که ولایات را از دست ایشان مستخلص کردند و مالها قرار نهاد چه هر ولایتی نوینی داشت و هر شهری را امیری و به اندک چیزی حصّهٔ دیوان قناعت کرده بودند و باقی بجهت خویش تصرّف می نمودند تمامت ازیشان بازگرفتند و مبالغ بریشان متوجّه گردانید

²⁸ Juvaynī 1912–1937, vol. 2, 237–8; tr. Boyle 1958, vol. 2, 501.

²⁹ Grigor Aknerci 1949, 302–3. See Bayarsaikhan 2016, 218–9.

³⁰ Kirakos Ganjakeci 1986, 229; Vardan Arevelci 1989, 214; K'art'lis C'xovreba 2014, 339.

³¹ GRIGOR AKNERCI 1949, 300–1, my emphasis. The fact that this speech is ascribed to Chinggis Khan might, however, be a hint that the dispatch of Chormaqan's army to the West was already decided at the end of his reign. The *Shengwu Qinzheng lu* shows that the decision to send Chormaqan (*Shuoliman* 捌力蠻, Chorman) to the West was discussed between Ögödei and Tolui as early as 1228, that is, before Ögödei's enthronement: Shengwu Qinzheng LU 1962, 201 [98r].

³² SECRET HISTORY 1972, § 274, 165; tr. RACHEWILTZ 2004, vol. 1, 205. On Mongol taxation, see Allsen 1987, 144ff.

surrendered.³³ All of this points to the fact that the *tammachi* troops based in Iran and the Caucasus were not a mere army of conquest but were also supposed to administratively rule and economically exploit the conquered lands.³⁴

Juvaynī depicts how Chormaqan's officers were drafted to represent the various Chinggisid princes, in accordance with the system of appanages that prevailed in the Mongol Empire:

And when the ruler of the world Qā'ān [Ögödei] appointed Chormaqan to the Fourth Climate and issued a *yāsā* stipulating that leaders and *basqaqs* on all sides come in person with levies and that they assist Chormaqan, Chin Temür came from Khwārazm via Shahristāna, and placed as companions [of Chormaqan] other commanders representing the princes. And Chormaqan also, in the same way, set up commanders for each sovereign and prince alongside Chin Temür: Kül Bolad for Qā'ān, Nosal for Batu, Qïzïl Buqa representing Chaghadai, and [Yeke] for Beki [Sorqotani].³⁵

One of them, Chin Temür, was Chormaqan's lieutenant in Khurāsān when the latter moved Westward in 1230. Either a Qara Khitai or an Önggüd, he was first appointed by Jochi in the city of Ürgench as a basqaq—which is the Turkic equivalent of the Mongolian darughachi, "overseer", often translated in Persian as shaḥna—before he became "basqaq of Iran". This figure is often portrayed as the first Mongol civilian administrator in Iran as opposed to the soldier Chormaqan, and his rise described as part of the natural development that occurred during Ögödei's reign, in which the early Mongol military and "tribal" administration had

³³ Kirakos Ganjakeci 1986, 208.

³⁴ Grigor Aknerci even goes on to say that Chormaqan was a "sage" leader, although his depiction of other Mongol commanders constantly extorting the Georgian princes is in line with that of Juvaynī: GRIGOR AKNERCI 1949, 319, 321. Kirakos has a similar statement about Chormaqan, saying he was "a judicious and just man" (according to Bedrosian's translation). Dashdondog Bayarsaikhan may be right to interpret this as Chormaqan being a judge, or *jarghuchi*, which would again reveal the administrative role of the military commanders: KIRAKOS GANJAKECI 1986, 237; BAYARSAIKHAN 2016, 220.

³⁵ JUVAYNĪ 1912–1937, vol. 2, 218–9; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 2, 482–3, slightly modified. Persian text:

و چون پادشاه جهان قاآن جورماغون را باقلیم رابع نامزد گردانید و یاسا رسانید که سروران و باسقاقان هر طرفی بنفس خوش بوشب خوش بخشر روند و معاون جورماغون باشند از خوارزم جنتمور بر راه شهرستانه روان شد و از جوانب پادشاهزادگان امرای دیگر در صحبت او بگذاشت و جورماغون نیز هم بر آن موجب از قبل هر پادشاه و پادشاهزاده امیری را با جنتمور نصب کرد و کلبلات از قبل قان و نوسال از قبل باتو و قزل بوقا از جانب جغتای و سکه از طرف بکی سرقوقیتی می کلبلات از SJUVAYNĪ 1912–1937, vol. 2, 218ff.; tr. BoyLE 1958, vol. 2, 482ff. RASHĪD AD-DĪN 1395/2016,

³⁶ Juvaynī 1912–1937, vol. 2, 218ff.; tr. Boyle 1958, vol. 2, 482ff. Rashīd ad-Dīn 1395/2016, vol. 1, 123, 591–5; tr. Thackston 2012, 50, 229–30. For *darughachi* and *basqaq*, see Doerfer 1963–1975, vol. 1, 319–23, vol. 2, 241–3; Allsen 1994, 373–4; Atwood 2004, 134; Jackson 2017, 107ff.; May 2018, 88ff.

to give way to a more sophisticated civilian one.³⁷ While such an interpretation is based on some reality, I believe it ought to be tempered.

Chormagan himself had appointed basqaqs in the wake of his campaign in Iran, among them Chin Temür, whom he dispatched to Khurāsān to deal with the threat caused by two officers of Jalal al-Din Khwarazmshah, Qaracha and Yaghan Songur.³⁸ These basqaqs were therefore, at least initially, part of the military administration of the region. Unaware that Chin Temür had been successful in quelling the rebellions which agitated Khurāsān, Ögödei had resolved to put an end to it by sending a new military governor, the tammachi noyan Dayir Ba'adur,39 who was charged with massacring the entire population of the province.⁴⁰ However, Chin Temür refused to step down and for the first time, in 1232-3, sent submissive local potentates to the court of Ögödei: the malik of Şu lūk, Bahā' al-Dīn, and the isfahbad of Kabūd Jāma, Nusrat al-Dīn. Delighted, the qa'an then confirmed Chin Temür as governor of Khurāsān and Māzandarān – and probably conferred to him the superior dignity of yeke darughachi - and officially endorsed the position of the two indigenous potentates. Most notably, Juvaynī writes that "the malik Bahā' al-Dīn was established as malik of Khurāsān, [that is] Isfarāyin, Juvayn, Jājarm, Jūrbad and Arghiyān, for at that time this was Khurāsān".41

One could see this passage as the devolution of the province of Khurāsān and Māzandarān to an indigenous administration, supervised by Chin Temür at the head of the $d\bar{v}d\bar{n}$ of Iranian civil administrators he had composed and which included Bahā' al-Dīn Muḥammad, among others.⁴² The strange definition of Khurāsān given by Juvaynī is thus explained by Boyle as the result of the Mongol devastation of the province, so that only the places mentioned here were not desolate at the time.⁴³ But he thereby interprets it as still referring to the whole of historical Khurāsān, over the entirety of which Bahā' al-Dīn's governorate would have extended. This seems highly unlikely. There were probably other small towns in Khurāsān spared by the conquest, but Juvaynī does not mention them here, and

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³⁷ BOYLE 1968, 336; BUELL 1979, 131–3, 141ff.; ALLSEN 1994, 374; JACKSON 1991, 567; JACKSON 2017, 107–10, 120–1; MAY 2018, 81–4, 104; WINK 2001, 295, among others.

³⁸ JUVAYNĪ 1912–1937, vol. 2, 219; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 2, 483. RASHĪD AD-DĪN 1395/2016, vol. 1, 591–2; tr. Thackston 2012, 229. Sayfī Haravī 1383/2004, 128. On these events, see Golev 2018.

³⁹ Cf. AUBIN 1969, 70, 75.

⁴⁰ Juvaynī 1912–1937, vol. 2, 221–2; tr. Boyle 1958, vol. 2, 485–6. Sayfī Haravī 1383/2004, 128–9.

⁴¹ JUVAYNĪ 1912–1937, vol. 2, 222–3; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 2, 486–7, slightly modified; my emphasis. Persian text:

ملکی خراسان و اسفراین و جوین و جاجرم و جورید و ارغیان بر ملک بهاء الدّین مقرّر فرمود و در آن وقت خراسان آن بود Rashīd al-Dīn adds Bayhaq to the list, but this seems to be a later interpolation not shared by all manuscripts: RASHĪD AD-DĪN 1395/2016, vol. 1, 593, vol. 3, 1593; tr. THACKSTON 2012, 229.

⁴² Juvaynī 1912–1937, vol. 2, 218–9; tr. Boyle 1958, vol. 2, 483.

⁴³ BOYLE 1958, vol. 2, 487, n. 19.

refers only to places situated in a specific circle located in the northwest corner of Khurāsān.⁴⁴ It is also wrong to affirm that this specific region had been spared, since in fact Isfarāyin had been massacred by Sübe'edei's troops in 1221.⁴⁵

Interestingly, in his Nuzhat al-Qūlūb Mustowfī Qazvīnī (d. ca. 1344) writes about Jājarm that at a distance of a one- or two-day's journey the city is surrounded by poisonous grass that prevents any army from passing through the area. 46 Considering that a full day of caravan travel represents up to a little less than forty kilometres, ⁴⁷ it can safely be assumed that this dangerous vegetation extended to a radius of at least fifty kilometres, encompassing all the western part of the Khurāsān defined by Juvaynī. No other source from the same time refers to these poisoned pastures, but they still seem to be known in the 1960s. 48 European travellers of the 19th century do not mention them, but Napier describes the salinity of the soils, the briny saltness of the few springs, and the scanty vegetation both north and west of Jājarm, while Houtun-Schindler explains that the place is so infested by sheep ticks (ixodes ricinus) that it is impossible to herd sheep there.⁴⁹ Although Mustowfī Qazvīnī might be exaggerating and even if this poisonous grass does not seem to have prevented circulations of nomads,⁵⁰ all in all the area was certainly not the best place to garrison nomadic troops with their families and herds. While on the contrary, immediately northeast of it lay the huge and excellent pastures of Rādkān:

When [Sübe'edei] came to Rādkān, the greenness of the meadows and the copiousness of the springs so pleased him that he did that people no harm and left a *shaḥna* there.⁵¹

Round Ṭūs lies a meadow known as the Rāykān [Rādkān] Meadow, twelve *farsakhs* in length by five across, and it is among the most celebrated in the world.⁵²

⁴⁴ On the cities of Isfarāyin, Juvayn, Jājarm, and Jūrbad, and the district of Arghiyān, see AUBIN 2018 [1971].

⁴⁵ JUVAYNĪ 1912–1937, vol. 1, 115; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 1, 146. In his parallel passage, Rashīd al-Dīn omits any reference to this massacre (RASHĪD AD-DĪN 1395/2016, vol. 1, 454; tr. THACK-STON 2012, 177), but the fact that Juvaynī had detailed and first-hand information about his home region—as evidenced by his mention of the devastation of the small village of Adkān, west of Isfarāyin and Jūrbad—leaves no doubt about the authenticity of this event.

⁴⁶ Mustowfī Qazvīnī 1381/2002, 184; tr. Lestrange 1919, 149.

⁴⁷ Cf. MINORSKY 1948, 293.

⁴⁸ Spooner 1965, 101, with no references.

⁴⁹ Napier 1876, 108-9; Houtum-Schindler 1877, 223.

⁵⁰ Cf. Spooner 1965, 101; Aubin 2018 [1971], 109.

⁵¹ JUVAYNI 1912–1937, vol. 1, 115; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 1, 146. Persian text: چون برادکان رسید خضرت مرغزار و انفجار عیون سبنای را خوش آمد آن جماعت را آسیبی نرسانید و شحنهٔ آنجا بگذاشت

⁵² Mustowfi Qazvīnī 1381/2002, 185; tr. Lestrange 1919, 149-50. Persian text:

This would require further investigation, but what Juvaynī means by Khurāsān is certainly only a small portion of the region that the Mongols were abandoning to an indirect civilian Iranian government, as it was not suitable for the nomadic way of life. The two malikates of Kabūd Jāma and Khurāsān were probably separated from each other by the road from Radkān to the *öleng* of Kharaqān, through the grazing areas of Charmaqān and Kālpūsh, forming a corridor of pastures that allowed nomadic troops to move back and forth between eastern and western Iran.⁵³ The two autonomous Iranian enclaves would therefore have been easily controlled from these grasslands that allowed for the stationing and movement of large numbers of nomadic soldiers.

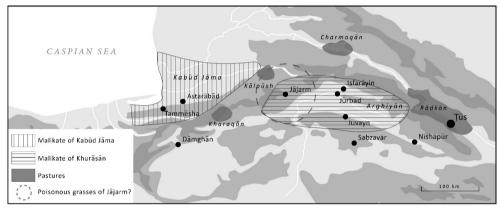


Figure 1. Khurāsān in 1232-3

The plain of Radkān undoubtedly served as the headquarters of Chin Temür, which will also be the case with his successor, Arghun Aqa,⁵⁴ and this is where he stationed his own troops, which, according to Sayfī Haravī, amounted to at least one *tümen*.⁵⁵ Several accounts indeed depict Chin Temür more as a military leader than as a civilian administrator, and it should be remembered that he was initially sent in Khurāsān to militarily quell the remnants of the Khwārazmian army. Juvaynī thus says that he "attacked and reduced with troops and brutality" territories that rebelled.⁵⁶ Sayfī Haravī (writing in 1322) even titles him *amīr* instead of *shaḥna*, and the *Shuʿab-i panjgāna* lists him among the commanders (*umarā*) of Ögö-

و در حوالی طوس مرغزاری است که آنرا مرغزار رایکان گویند طولش دوازده فرسنگ و عرضش پنج فرسنگ از مشاهیر جهان است

⁵³ AUBIN 2018 [1971], 102-5.

⁵⁴ JUVAYNĪ 1912–1937, vol. 2, 247; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 2, 510. RASHĪD AD-DĪN 1395/2016, vol. 2, 832, 873, 975; tr. Thackston 2012, 325, 343, 381.

⁵⁵ Sayfī Haravī 1383/2004, 129.

⁵⁶ JUVAYNĪ 1912–1937, vol. 2, 219; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 2, 483, slightly modified.

dei.⁵⁷ While Chin Temür was supposed to give way to Dayir Ba'adur, it is said that "Chormaqan also had sent *elchin* to summon him and the aforementioned *amīrs* to join him *with their armies.*" ⁵⁸

As we have already mentioned, he oversaw several commanders, such as Kül Bolad, whom we see essentially acting as a military leader.⁵⁹ In many ways, Chin Temür's administration in Khurāsān mirrored that of Chormaqan in Azerbaijan, although the former was headed by a *basqaq* or *darughachi*, and the latter by a *noyan*. Both were centred on vast plains well-suited to the encampment of numerous nomadic troops; both relied, at least partly, on a hierarchy of military commanders; and both would allow submissive local aristocrats, whether Iranian or Armenian and Georgian, to enjoy a degree of autonomy.⁶⁰ Both, finally, were examples of what might be called "ruling from the outside"⁶¹ and retained a significant military and nomadic component.

That Chin Temür was supposed to be replaced in Khurāsān by the *noyan* Dayir Ba'adur tells indeed a lot about the very nature of his government. As does the succession of Chin Temür that eventually took place after his death in 1235-6, by the aged Kereyid soldier Nosal: Juvaynī notably writes that he succeeded him not as *basqaq* but as *amīr*.62 Rashīd al-Dīn even tells that it was Nosal (whom he calls Noysal) who was initially mandated to rule the province of Iran as *amīr-i lashkar*, "commander of the army", and that Chin Temür came to Iran as his *nökör*.63 Obviously, Rashīd al-Dīn relies here on a source which contradicts Juvaynī's account. Although the latter was a direct witness, I already pointed out his "anti-militarist" bias, which might have led him to obscure any form of Mongol administration before its partial Iranization, and to insist on the role of the bureaucratic class to which he belonged.

Chin Temür's prominent military duties were not exceptional as compared to the role of other *darughachin* before and during his time: many of them performed

⁵⁷ SAYFĪ HARAVĪ 1383/2004, 128; I would like to thank Konstantin Golev for drawing my attention to this passage. RASHĪD AD-DĪN SP, f. 123v, where read Jin-Tämūr جنمور recte JTMUR.

⁵⁸ JUVAYNĪ 1912–1937, vol. 2, 221; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 2, 485, slightly modified; emphasis mine. Persian text:

و جور ماغون نيز باستحضار، او و امر اى مذكور ايلچى فرستاده بود تا با لشكر ها بدو پيوندد ⁵⁹ Juvaynī 1912–1937, vol. 2, 220; tr. Boyle 1958, vol. 2, 484. Sayfī Haravī 1383/2004, 129. Rashīd al-Dīn says he came along Chin Temür from Khwārazm as a *jarghuchi*: Rashīd AD-Dīn 1395/2016, vol. 1, 123; tr. Thackston 2012, 50.

⁶⁰ Cf. GRIGOR AKNERCI 1949, 303. See also references to *darughachin* as part of the military administration of the Caucasus in BAYARSAIKHAN 2016, 221.

⁶¹ DURAND-GUÉDY 2013.

⁶² Juvaynī 1912-1937, vol. 2, 224; tr. Boyle 1958, vol. 2, 488. Jackson 2017, 109.

⁶³ RASHĪD AD-DĪN 1395/2016, vol. 1 123; tr. THACKSTON 2012, 50, amended.

active military tasks.⁶⁴ A most telling example is the case of the Salji'ud *Chunjiqai in North China: a contemporary of Chin Temür, he was appointed "darughachi of the army and the people" [軍民達魯花赤] of the Yidu province by Ögödei in 1233, and as such, followed the general Taichu in taking Xuzhou. In 1237, he was transferred as head darughachi of Jingzhao but was soon replaced by Chaghan "as commander of the army of Henan" [代察罕總軍河南].⁶⁵

In Iran, it was only when Nosal and then Chormaqan were stripped of civil power in favour of Körgüz and retained only the command of the army, thus effectively separating the two spheres, that one can observe a real change in the Mongol administration. ⁶⁶ Before that, the mode of government in the conquered lands corresponded essentially to the nomadic administrative tradition, the cornerstone of which was the army. The institution of the *darughachin* was specific to the government of sedentary populations since it is never found in a steppe context. Nevertheless, it remained an integral part of the Mongolian military system, as evidenced primarily by the role of army commanders that the *darughachin* would always retain in addition to their role of supervising the census and taxation. This is also demonstrated by the importance of grazing areas in Mongol control in the conquered territories: it was from these pastures that the officers, whether *noyad* or *darughachin*, governed with their troops, which clearly illustrates the nomadic character of this administration.

Even after the 1240s, many features of the early military administration of the Mongol Empire remained, such as the territorial division of sedentary lands into *tümed*, which were not simply territorial units, but were still supposed to contain ten thousand households capable of contributing to the tax and the auxiliary troops: this nomenclature indicates how the Mongol imperial state primarily exercised power over individuals and social groups rather than territories, which is one of its original features. As the late Thomas Allsen has shown, changes occurred and native personnel were integrated into the state due to the Mongols' ability to pick and adapt, rather than imitate, their neighbours' technologies of governance. ⁶⁷ But they did not wait for a more learned sedentary elite to come and teach them how to administer the territories and people they had consciously come to exploit.

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⁶⁴ ENDICOTT-WEST 1989, 26–7, 35ff. See also Peter Jackson's prudent commentaries on the supposed civilian nature of *darughachin*: JACKSON 2017, 109–10.

⁶⁵ SONG LIAN 1976, 123.3030; ENDICOTT-WEST 1989, 33-4.

⁶⁶ JUVAYNĪ 1912-1937, vol. 2, 229; tr. BOYLE 1958, vol. 2, 493.

⁶⁷ Allsen 1997.

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Sarı Saltuk and the Nomads in 13th-Century Dobruja: Pre-Ottoman Sources and Realities

DELYAN RUSEV*

Abstract

study.

In his Oğuznāme ("Book of the Oghuz"), the 15th-century Ottoman historian Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī wove into the narrative of his main source, Ibn Bībī's Persian history of the Rūm Seljuks, a set of interpolations tracing the fate of a large group of Anatolian Turkmens. They reportedly followed the Seljuk Sultan 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā us II (r. 1246-61) after his flight to Byzantium in 1262 and settled in the region of Dobruja in the Northeastern Balkans under the leadership of the famous mystic Sarı Saltuk. This story has become the cornerstone of a longstanding historiographic discussion since the early 20th century, not least because of its supposed relation to processes of greater historical significance such as the formation of the 14th-century Principality of Dobruja and the genesis of the Gagauz, a population of Turkish-speaking Christians, in the area. As a number of questions remain unanswered in the light of the increasing acceptance of the truthfulness of Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's account in recent research, the present study aims to reignite the discussion and challenge some unfounded yet widespread conclusions by revisiting the relevant pre-Ottoman evidence, both written and material. It highlights the Tatar (Golden Horde) context of Sarı Saltuk's presence in late 13th-century Northern Dobruja and in the town of Sakçı (Isaccea) in particular, but casts serious doubt on his connection with the alleged Anatolian migrants as well as with Babadag, a town that was (re)established and associated with him in Ottoman times.

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Keywords: Sarı Saltuk, Turkmens, migration, Dobruja, Tatars, Golden Horde, Byzantium, Bulgaria, Gagauz, Sakçı (Isaccea), Babadag

After the death of their great leader [Sarı Saltuk] (in 1297-8, according to the contemporary Saradj) some of the Turks returned to Anatolia and settled in what then had just become the emirate of Karası, while others remained [in Dobruja], and entered converted to Orthodox Christianity Byzantine service. Under their leaders, the Despot Balık, Culpan, Balık's son Dobrotić and grandson Ivanko, they maintained their political independence from Bulgaria as the principality of Dobrudja, which existed from the 1330s till the final annexation by the Ottomans under Mehmed I in 1417. As a people they became known as Gagauz, a corruption of Kaykavus.¹

This passage shows the textbook reconstruction of the events that followed the supposed resettlement of a large nomadic group from Seljuk Anatolia to the region of Dobruja (in today's Northeastern Bulgaria and Southeastern Romania) in the early 1260s as summarized by Machiel Kiel in the Cambridge History of Turkey. The assumed unconditionality of the migration as a historical fact as well as of its causality with respect to later phenomena – such as the emergence of the Principality of Dobruja and the presence of Turkic-speaking Christians, the Gagauz, in the area – is representative for much of the abundant research on this century-old topic in historiography. Unfortunately, the same can be said about the attenuated attention to historical detail evident in the above quotation.² Besides the methodological imperfections and the political biases that have plagued the debate, it has also been hampered by the fact that the relevant written sources are both inconclusive and very diverse in terms of language, genre, and availability. Moreover, the possible relation of this historical (or historiographic) episode to several larger themes like the ethnic and political setup of the late medieval Balkans, the advent of Islam in the region and the famous Sarı Saltuk as the arguable originator of this process, the ethnogenesis of the Gagauz, etc., has led to its treatment in a boundless number of studies in a large variety of languages.3 All this has made it increasingly difficult for a single scholar to comprehend the accumulated body of information, let alone to offer a convincing narrative of the events without preconceived conclusions.

¹ Kiel 2009, 141.

² Balık/Balik did not hold the title of despot, which was only granted to Dobrotitsa, who was not Balik's son but his brother; accordingly, Ivanko was a nephew of Balik and not his grandson. As for the chronology of the principality's existence, it is only attested between the 1340s and the early 1390s, see, e.g., Atanasov 2009.

³ Key studies concerning the separate aspects are cited in the relevant sections of the text below. The major works focusing on the supposed migration itself are DIMITROV 1915; BALASCHEV 1930; DUDA 1943; MUTAFČIEV 1943; MUTAFČIEV 1973 (a Bulgarian version of the former with some minor differences); WITTEK 1952; DECEI 1968; KIEL 2000; MATANOV 2013; OCAK 2016, 39–59 (a revised and expanded version of OCAK 2002).

While the present paper does not pursue such an ambitious goal, it aims to offer a critical analysis of the relevant contemporary and near-contemporary sources, including the available archaeological evidence, and thus to judge the credibility of the narrative of the events as it appeared in the early Ottoman setting. Accordingly, later Ottoman sources will be used only marginally to the extent that they can corroborate the pre-Ottoman evidence. In view of the modern historiography, the aim here is to sift out the proven facts from the well-founded hypotheses and the pure speculations, which have often been reproduced on equal grounds.

Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's account

The main evidence regarding the appearance of Anatolian nomads in mid-13th-century Dobruja is provided by the secretary of the Ottoman Sultan Murād II (r. 1421–44, 1446–51), Yazıcıoğlu ʿAlī, in his *History of the Seljuk Dynasty*, alternatively titled *Oğuznāme* and composed in the 1420s or the 1430s.⁴ Following his main source, the Persian history of the Seljuks of Rūm by Ibn Bībī, Yazıcıoğlu recounts the fate of the Seljuk Sultan ʿIzz al-Dīn Kaykāʾūs II (r. 1246–61, d. 1279/80) after his flight from Anatolia under Mongol pressure and his refuge at the Byzantine court in 1262 together with his family and retinue.⁵ However, the Ottoman historian has made a number of interpolations to the original narrative including the following key passage:

One day, Sultan 'Izz al-Dīn and [his general] 'Alī Bahādur told the Basileus [Michael VIII]: "We are a Turkish people, we cannot bear staying in a big city. If there were a place and a home for us outside, we could bring from Anatolia the Turkish families bound to us, and we could set up our summer and winter camps there." The Basileus gave them as a place and a home the land of Dobrūca, which is a hunting field with nice water and air, and healthy for breeding good cattle. They secretly notified the Turkish clans in Anatolia who were related to them. Many Turkish families descended [from the mountains] to Izniķ under the pretext that they were going to their winter quarters and, in a short time, they migrated [to the European coast] through Üsküdār. Ṣaru Ṣaltuķ of blessed memory also crossed [the Bosphorus] with them. For a long time, there were two-three Muslim towns and

⁴ The most widely accepted dating of the work is 827/1423-4 (Duda 1943, 138; Wittek 1952, 646), but Paul Wittek has later proposed an alternative reading of the enigmatic chronogram as equal to 840/1436-7 (Wittek 1964). For the interchangeable use of the titles *Tārīkh-i āl-i Selçuķ* and (*Tevārīkh-i*) *Oğuznāme* in the available MSS, see their description in Yazicizāde ʿAlī/Bakir 2017, LIX-LXVIII.

⁵ For the dating and a reconstruction of the events, see Shukurov 2016, 99–105. For Ibn Bībī's account, see Ibn Bībī/Duda 1959, 282–5.

thirty-forty camps of Turkish clans in the land of Dobrūca. They would confront and crush the enemies of the Basileus.⁶

After this addition, Yazıcıoğlu paraphrases with a few minor yet significant changes Ibn Bībī's account of 'Izz al-Dīn's involvement in a conspiracy to overthrow the Byzantine emperor (in which, according to Yazıcıoğlu's interpolation, the plotters could rely on "ten to twelve thousand men", the resulting detainment of the sultan, his liberation by a military force sent from the Golden Horde, and his transfer to Crimea, where Berke Khan (r. 1257–66) grants him the cities of \$\overline{Sogdāk}\$ (Sudak) and \$\overline{Sulgād}\$ (Solkhat; present-day Staryi Krym). Most of the changes are meant to introduce two further interrelated plot lines developed later in the \$Oolde Sulfame* and missing in the Persian original. The first one traces the subsequent fate of those members of 'Izz al-Dīn's family who reportedly remained in Byzantium and were sent to Karaferya (Byz. Berroia, modern Veroia in Northern Greece) where one of his sons would become a governor and die as a Muslim, and so would his son. Their descendants would later accept Christianity, enter Ottoman service, and remain in the area until the time of Yazıcıoğlu, when two of them — Dīmitrī Sultān and Mīho Sultān—renewed their privileges at the Ottoman court.9

The other line of narration concerns the nomads who had settled in Dobruja and their leader Sarı Saltuk. On its way back, the Tatar army that liberated 'Izz al-Dīn reportedly drags them along, too, and brings them to Crimea.¹⁰ It is only after the former sultan's death eighteen years later that they are allowed to return to

⁶ For a facsimile and a Latin transliteration of the main MS (*Topkapi Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi*, Revan 1391), see respectively Yazıcızāde ʿAlī/Bakir 2014, 375a-b and Yazıcızāde ʿAlī/Bakir 2017, 631. For a printed reproduction and a German translation of the text in the Berlin MS (*Staatsbibliothek*, Ms. Or. Quart 1823), see Duda 1943, 143–4. For a Latin transcription of the passage in another Topkapi MS (Revan 1390), see Decei 1968, 88. The translation of the phrase "healthy for breeding good cattle" offered above is approximate, for the underlying Ottoman Turkish wording is both unclear and dissimilar in the different MSS and editions. The readings of Duda and Decei are rather unconvincing. Yet, the words "good cattle" (*eyü davār/ṭavār*), and "healthy" (*tendürüst*) are clearly identifiable in both MSS Revan 1391 and Berlin.

⁷ YAZICIZĀDE 'ALĪ/BAKIR 2014, 375b; YAZICIZĀDE 'ALĪ/BAKIR 2017, 631.

⁸ All relevant passages from Yazıcıoğlu's work are summarized in more detail by WITTEK 1952, 648–50, who has also highlighted the differences with Ibn Bībī's narrative and identified the separate plot lines.

 ⁹ YAZICIZĀDE ʿALĪ / BAKIR 2014, 376a, 415b-416a; YAZICIZĀDE ʿALĪ / BAKIR 2017, 632, 701; WITTEK 1952, 648-50. This subject has been studied extensively and has a rather marginal relevance to the migration story, so it will not be treated here: see WITTEK 1934; LAURENT 1956; ZACHARIADOU 1965; ZHAVORONKOV 2006, 168-74; SHUKUROV 2008; SHUKUROV 2016, 105-19.
 ¹⁰ DUDA 1943, 144 (text and German translation); DECEI 1968, 88 (transliteration). This ac-

count is omitted in MS Revan 1391 and A. Bakır's edition, apparently due to an error of the copyist.

Dobruja.¹¹ Sometime later, they are joined by another one of 'Izz al-Dīn's sons, who had remained in Constantinople, had been baptized and had entered the service of the Patriarch, but was released by him at the request of Sarı Saltuk. The latter converts the prince back to Islam, becomes his spiritual tutor, and gives him the name Barak ("the Dog") after he eats the sheikh's vomit. Yazıcıoğlu's account that Barak was later sent to the Ilkhanid capital city of Sulṭāniyya and was the spiritual progenitor of the Barakis makes it clear that the well-known early 13th-century mystic Barak Baba is meant here.¹² As for the Turks in Dobruja, pushed away by the Bulgarian reconquest of the region, they join a certain Khalīl Ece and cross the Straits to the land of Karasi in Anatolia. After the death of Sarı Saltuk, the descendants of those who remain in the Balkans become apostates and unbelievers (*akhriyān*).¹³

'Izz al-Dīn's supposed followers in Byzantine and Catalan service (1260s–1310s): Persian, Byzantine, Latin, and Slavic sources

'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs II's flight from Anatolia and his refuge in Byzantium were recorded in several contemporary and near-contemporary sources in Persian (Ibn Bībī and Aqsarāyī) and Greek (Pachymeres and Gregoras), but none of them mentions a largescale resettlement of Anatolian nomads to Dobruja or the involvement of the later famous mystic Sarı Saltuk in the events. Paul Wittek has explained the silence of Ibn Bībī (d. after 1285) and Aqsarāyī (d. ca. 1323–33) with the argument that the "chancery at Konya", where both authors were employed at different points of time, would and could not "care about nomad movements on a distant frontier". More recently, Andrew Peacock has challenged that proposition by demonstrating the considerable integration of the mostly Turkmen-inhabited border regions in the political, economic, and cultural structures of the Rūm Seljuk state. In another study, he has also shown that the Seljuk court maintained both a strong symbolic attachment to nomadic traditions and a close, albeit complex, relationship with its Turkmen subjects whom the sultans sought to appease, control, and exploit due to their vast demographic and military potential. 16

¹⁵ PEACOCK 2014, esp. 286: "If the frontier and its Turkmen rarely feature in our Persian historical sources, this has everything to do with the genre and intentions of the historian, and nothing to do with the limits of his knowledge."

¹¹ Yazicizāde ʿAlī/Bakir 2014, 411b, 414a; Yazicizāde ʿAlī/Bakir 2017, 695, 698–9; Wittek 1952, 649; Decei 1968, 89.

¹² YAZICIZĀDE ʿALĪ/BAKIR 2014, 415a-b; YAZICIZĀDE ʿALĪ/BAKIR 2017, 700-1; WITTEK 1952, 649-50; DECEI 1968, 89-90. The identity of Barak and his possible relation to the Dobruja story are discussed below.

¹³ YAZICIZĀDE 'ALĪ/BAKIR 2014, 444a-b; YAZICIZĀDE 'ALĪ/BAKIR 2017, 741; WITTEK 1952, 651; DECEI 1968, 90.

¹⁴ WITTEK 1952, 654.

¹⁶ Peacock 2013, esp. 214–15 with a focus on 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā' ūs II.

This ambivalent relationship was most obvious in the reign of 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs II himself and it is no surprise that the Turkmens do in fact feature prominently in Agsarāyī's narrative tracing the sultan's struggle for the throne and his ultimate flight to Byzantium. The historian notes that the men of 'Izz al-Dīn's brother and rival Rukn al-Dīn accused the former, in front of a Mongol envoy, of having allied himself with the "Turks of the frontier zone" (bā atrāk-i ūj muttafaq shuda) with the intention to rebel against his Mongol overlords. According to Agsarāyī, this was a false allegation (qāzūrāt, lit. "impurities") and 'Izz al-Dīn had actually left Konya in order to fight the rebellious "emir of the Turks of the $\bar{u}j''$ Muḥammad Beg, who ultimately defeated the sultan's forces "between Anṭāliya and 'Ala'iya" (mod. Alanya).17 The damage had been done, however, and a joint campaign of Rukn al-Dīn and the Mongols compelled 'Izz al-Dīn to seek refuge in Byzantium together with his family and some of his emirs.¹⁸ Noteworthy is Agsarāyī's account that after the sultan's flight and the enthronement of Rukn al-Dīn in Konya, the forces of the latter and the Mongol troops "entered the frontier areas (valāyat-i ūj) and mopped up the provinces up to the borders of the lands of Istanbūl of contending Turks and rebellious outlaws"; Muḥammad Beg and some other begs were captured and the subjugation (taskhīr) of the Turkmens was achieved, at least temporarily.19 This episode did not necessarily ensue from the links between the dethroned sultan and the nomads. The earlier struggle between 'Izz al-Dīn and Muḥammad Beg and the evidence provided by the Mamluk historian Baybars al-Manşūrī (d. 725/1325) both indicate that the Turkmen leader was acting on his own behalf and the Mongols had other reasons to detain him.²⁰

Nevertheless, Aqsarāyī further notes that in the same year (i.e. 660/1261–2) "the fearless emirs of the Turks [called] Qarāmān, Zayn al-Ḥāj, and Būnsūz" rose from Ermenāk and attacked Konya with 20,000 men out of fidelity (havādārī, lit. "affection") to 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs II, before they were also crushed by Rukn al-Dīn's army. Coupled with the reported purge of the frontier zone with Byzantium, this account adds some weight to Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's story but, on the other hand, it amplifies the question of why the Seljuk historians would ignore the mass nomadic migration that allegedly followed the sultan in exile. Moreover, the indicated areas of activity of the begs affiliated with 'Izz al-Dīn, namely the southern Anatolian coastlands, are far removed from the region of Nicaea (Iznik), where the Ottoman historian locates the departure of the nomadic migrants to Dobruja. It is worth noting in this regard that some scholars have attempted to identify the latter with a

¹⁷ Aqsarāyī/Turan, 66; Aqsarāyī/Işiltan, 53.

¹⁸ Aqsarāyī/Turan, 69–70; Aqsarāyī/Işiltan, 54–5.

¹⁹ Aqsarāyī/Turan, 71; Aqsarāyī/Işiltan, 55.

 $^{^{20}}$ For an English translation of al-Manṣūrī's account, see Peacock 2014, 283. On the Turkmen unrest at the Seljuk-Byzantine frontier in the early 1260s, see also Shukurov 2016, 123–4 and the studies cited there (n. 180).

²¹ AQSARĀYĪ/TURAN, 71-2; AQSARĀYĪ/IŞILTAN, 55-6.

particular tribal community, be it the Chepni Turkmens or a group of Cuman-Qïpchaqs arguably living in the region of Sinop.²² It is difficult to discuss these hypotheses as they are mainly based on equally speculative assumptions about the origin of Sarı Saltuk, whose relation to the supposed migration is highly dubious, as will be demonstrated below.

The contemporary Ibn Bībī pays less attention to the Turkmen involvement in the events surrounding 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs II's flight to Constantinople. He focuses on the activities of 'Alī Bahādur, one of the emirs who remained loyal to the dethroned sultan, and to whom Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī attributes an instrumental role in securing the nomad migration to Dobruja.²³ He attempted an attack on Rukn al-Dīn in Konya but was defeated and had to find refuge in the frontier zone (ū̄j) where, according to Ibn Bībī and in some contrast to Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's account, the emir did not feel comfortable and feared the "barbarism of the [local] Turkish tribes" (jahālat-i ṭavāyif-i atrāk). Consequently, 'Alī Bahādur joined 'Izz al-Dīn in the Byzantine capital with only "a handful of his retainers" (ba sharzima az ḥavāsh-i khvīsh).²⁴ While this evidence hardly speaks in favour of any significant Turkmen movement across the Seljuk-Byzantine border, Ibn Bībī's report that 'Alī Bahādur was later successfully employed by Michael VIII (r. 1259–82) against the enemies of the empire suggests that a certain military force may have followed him and 'Izz al-Dīn on Byzantine territory, but not necessarily to Dobruja.²⁵

Before proceeding to the Greek sources, which seem to support this hypothesis, it should be noted that the enrolment of individuals and whole contingents of Anatolian Turkish origin in the Byzantine army was a common practice dating back to the 11th century. Some of them became Byzantine subjects and settled in the Bal-

²⁴ IBN BĪBĪ/DUDA, 283–4, 342, n. 373; SHUKUROV 2016, 124. In fact, Yazıcıoğlu follows Ibn Bībī in describing 'Alī Bahādur's "fear of the wickedness of the frontier Turks" (*uç Türkleri şerrinden korkuyla yürüdi*) just before he adds the story of the Turkmens' resettlement to Dobruja: Yazıcızāde 'Alī/Bakir 2014, 375a; Yazıcızāde 'Alī/Bakir 2017, 631. 'Alī Bahādur's "uprising" (*khurūj*) and its suppression are also reported by Aqsarāyī, but he gives no information on the later fate of the emir: Aqsarāyī/Turan, 74; Aqsarāyī/Işiltan, 58.

²² The Chepni hypothesis was first put forward by KÖPRÜLÜ 1993, 15, n. 57 (originally published in Turkish in 1922) and has later been deemed probable by TOGAN 1981, 268 and OCAK 2016, 52, 92–3, 136. For the Cuman-Qïpchak link, see ÖZTÜRK 2013, 126–7.

²³ See n. 6 above.

²⁵ IBN BĪBĪ/DUDA, 284; SHUKUROV 2016, 125. 'Alī Bahādur could have participated in Byzantine military campaigns between 1262, when he arrived in Constantinople, and the winter of 1264–5, when he was executed on the accusation of having joined 'Izz al-Dīn's alleged conspiracy against the emperor (see IBN BĪBĪ/DUDA, 284; SHUKUROV 2016, 225). During this period, the Byzantines fought against the Bulgarian tsar Konstantin Tikh (r. 1257–77) in Thrace, against Despot Michael (r. ca. 1230–67/8) in Epirus, and against Guillaume de Villehardouin (r. 1246–78) in Morea. The relevant evidence is discussed below.

²⁶ See Brand 1989; Savvides 1993, 125-8.

kans.27 There is also evidence corroborating Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's claim that some of 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā' ūs' relatives lived in Berroia, or at least in the region, and it has been surmised that some of the personal and place names with Turkish or Muslim etymology attested in present-day Northern Greece in the second half of the 13th century may be related to Anatolian migrants who appeared there alongside the sultan's people.²⁸ Against this background, the silence of the contemporary historian George Pachymeres (1242-ca. 1310), a resident of Constantinople after 1261, about an influx of thousands of Turkmens to the Balkans ca. 1262 is rather puzzling, especially if Yazıcıoğlu's account of their itinerary through the Bosporus is true.²⁹ The version of the next-generation historian Nikephoros Gregoras (d. ca. 1361) has more points of intersection with that of his Ottoman counterpart. Gregoras similarly notes that when 'Izz al-Dīn arrived in Byzantium he requested from Michael VIII to either help him fight the Mongols or "allot him a piece of Roman land where he could live permanently with his people".30 According to Gregoras, however, the emperor judged both of these options to be risky and unwise, and therefore he let the sultan stay in hope without satisfying his request. To Pachymeres's first-hand account of the imprisonment of 'Izz al-Dīn's family members after his flight from Byzantium in the winter of 1264-5,31 Gregoras adds that the majority of the sultan's men "who were quite numerous and excelling at war", were baptized and incorporated into the imperial army.³² Gregoras's narrative of the period of ca. 1261-1308 is mainly based on that of Pachymeres, but his source for this interpolation cannot be identified. It is thus impossible to judge its veracity, but it is undoubtedly related to a much later episode, which will be dealt with below. It may also have to do with Pachymeres's statement that some Anatolian nomads (σκηνίτας), unwilling to submit to the Mongols, appeared on Byzantine terri-

²⁷ Eustathius of Thessalonike (d. 1195/6) claimed in 1178 that so many Turks ("Persians") had settled around Thessalonike that it could be called "New Turkey, or the European land of the Turks" (quoted from BRAND 1989, 13). See also the encomium for John III Doukas Vatatzes (r. 1222–54) hailing his policy of resettling Cumans from the Balkans to Anatolia and "substituting [them] for the sons of Persians" (quoted from BARTUSIS 1992, 26).

²⁸ On the fate of 'Izz al-Dīn's relatives in Byzantium, see the works cited in n. 9 above. For a study of Turkic onomastic material from the region of Macedonia, see Shukurov 2016, 128–31, 159–77. The evidence quoted in the previous note here suggests that some of the toponyms might have a much earlier origin.

²⁹ For Pachymeres' account of 'Izz al-Dīn's flight, see PACHYMERES/FAILLER, vol. 1, 180-5 (II, 24).

³⁰ Gregoras/Schopen, 82: ἢ συμμαχίαν κατὰ τῶν Σκυθῶν, ἢ γῆς Ῥωμαϊκῆς ἀποτομἡν τινα καὶ οἱονεὶ κληρουχίαν εἰς κατοικίαν μονιμωτέραν αὐτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν ἄμα αὐτῷ; Gregoras/van Dieten, 103-4.

³¹ PACHYMERES/FAILLER, vol. 1, 312–3 (III, 25).

 $^{^{32}}$ Gregoras/Schopen, 101: ὁ δὲ περὶ ἐκεῖνον ὅχλος, ἄνδρες δ' οὖτοι μάλα τοι πλεῖστοι καὶ κράτιστοι τὰ πολέμια, τῷ Χριστιανῶν ἀναγεννηθέντες βαπτίσματι, τῷ Ῥωμαίων συγκατελέγοντο στρατιᾳ; Gregoras/van Dieten, 114. Cf. the somewhat different translation by Mutafčiev 1943, 6.

tory and the emperor was eager to employ them as a shield against possible Mongol attacks despite the troubles they caused to the local population.³³ Although the historian does not link them explicitly to 'Izz al-Dīn, he has placed this information right after his account of the sultan's flight to Constantinople. It appears that these nomads were active in the Anatolian border zone, but further evidence reveals that Turkish detachments also participated in Byzantine campaigns in Europe during the period under consideration.

Pachymeres mentions Turks, or "Persians" as he calls them, as a part of the Byzantine army in Morea in 1263.³⁴ As pointed out by Rustam Shukurov, more information on them is found in the *Chronicle of Morea*. According to a not entirely clear passage from its Greek version, at the outset of the campaign Michael VIII "went to Turkey (Τουρκία) and hired the Turks; he hired a thousand of select troops and five hundred others, and around another two thousand Anatolians went with them".³⁵ Shukurov has further drawn attention to the *Chronicle*'s account that two years later, after the Turks had deserted the Byzantines and spent some time in service of Guillaume de Villehardouin in Morea, one of their leaders called Melik asked the prince for permission to return to his "patrimonies" (ἰγονικά), whereupon he "went to Vlachia".³⁶ Although he concedes the polysemantic meaning of *Vlachia* at that time and its possible relation to many locations in the Balkans, Shukurov assumes that it may refer to Dobruja and adds that, "[i]n any case, Melik's ἰγονικά was located in Europe, but not in Anatolia, which confirms that his

³³ PACHYMERES/FAILLER, vol. 1, 184-7 (II, 24). Cf. MUTAFČIEV 1943, 2; SHUKUROV 2016, 123.

³⁴ PACHYMERES/FAILLER, vol. 1, 273 (III, 16); SHUKUROV 2016, 125.

³⁵ CM/SCHMITT, 300 (vv. 4553-5); CM/LURIER, 203-4; I follow the more literal translation by SHUKUROV 2016, 126, n. 188. Shukurov wonders whether the term Tourkia denotes the Golden Horde or Anatolia, and whether "a Mongol or Cuman detachment is implied here or just two different groups of Anatolian Turks". His suggestion that "it is more likely that Tourkia denotes here Anatolia" is supported by another passage in the Chronicle where the steppe region to the north of the Black Sea is called "Cumania", although this account is related to an earlier period (CM/SCHMITT, p. 70, v. 1038; CM/LURIER, 97). However, Shukurov's insistence that "probably the Chronicle intends to draw up a distinction between the 1,500 mercenaries hired in Anatolia/Tourkia, and the 2,000 Anatolian Turks living in the Balkans, that is, Kaykāwus' Turks" is unconvincing. Actually, the meaning of the term "Anatolians" in the Greek text becomes clear from the French version of the Chronicle, which has the Byzantine army consisting of 1,500 Turks and "the Greek forces from the Levant who were used to how the Turks fought" (translation by CM/VAN ARSDALL - MOODY, 94; French text: CM/BUCHON, 154-5). That the "Anatolians" were actually Christian soldiers is further supported and specified by Pachymeres's account. He reports that the emperor dispatched to Monemvasia the Sebastokrator Constantine, who was in charge of the campaign, together with the Turks (τὸ Περοικὸν) and the "Romans from Magedon" (ἐκ Μαγεδῶνος Ῥωμαίων), i.e. from the Anatolian town of Magidion near ancient Saittai in Lydia: PACHYMÉRÈS/ FAILLER, vol. 1, 272-3 and 290, n. 2 for the identification of the town. Cf. also SAVVIDES 1992. ³⁶ CM/SCHMITT, 371 (vv. 5710-29); CM/LURIER, 236-7; SHUKUROV 2016, 125.

soldiers came from Kaykāwus' Turks".³⁷ In fact, the term *Vlachia* is used throughout the *Chronicle of Morea* with a consistent meaning denoting roughly Thessaly and some territories immediately to the north of it.³⁸ Moreover, according to the French version, Melik actually asked his master to let him "go to Vlachia, in order to find passage to go to Turkey", which is more compatible with the account of the Turks' recruitment from Anatolia quoted above.³⁹

Turkish detachments from Anatolia were apparently also used in the Byzantine campaign in Morea in 1270-2, when the imperial forces, including Greeks, Turks, and Cumans, were recruited from "the region of Nicaea" or "the East" according to the Greek and the French versions of the Chronicle of Morea, respectively. 40 Turks are also mentioned as members of the Byzantine troops in Albania (1281)41 and Epirus (1292)⁴², yet without evidence regarding their origin or geographical provenance. A little more specific is Pachymeres's account of "Persians" in the Byzantine army in Thessaly ca. 1275, when they were led by a certain Rimpsas. If he is identical with Nikephoros Rimpsas, mentioned by Akropolites as a Christian Turk who participated in the battle of Pelagonia in 1259, he was certainly not one of 'Izz al-Dīn's men.⁴³ This identification poses the question of whether the Turks under consideration were not descendants of earlier, pre-1261 Anatolian settlers in the Nicaean possessions in the Sothern Balkans of whose existence there are some hints in the sources. 44 Indicative in this regard, if correct, is also Gregoras's use of the designation Turcopoles (Τουρκόπουλοι, lit. "sons of Turks") for the Turkish detachment in the Thessalian campaign, although it may also imply a link to 'Izz

³⁷ Shukurov 2016, 125-6.

³⁸ See e.g. CM/SCHMITT, 70, 175, 232 (vv. 1031, 2588–9, 3504); CM/LURIER, 97, n. 69, 146–7, 175, where the context is quite conclusive. The translators of the French version have even rendered the original *Blaquie* as "Thessaly" (see e.g. the reference in the next footnote).

³⁹ CM/Buchon, 192; CM/Van Arsdall – Moody, 104. On the interrelations between the different extant versions of the *Chronicle of Morea*, which seem to derive from a now lost archetype, probably in Greek, yet partly represented better by the known French recension, see Shawcross 2009, 31–52.

⁴⁰ The Greek text actually reads "from the region of Lycia" (ἐκ τῆς Λυκίας τὰ μέρη) – CM/SCHMITT, 421 (v. 6490), which was translated as "from the region of Nicaea" by CM/LURIER, 257. In any case, an Anatolian toponym is meant. For the French version, see CM/BUCHON, 217; CM/VAN ARSDALL–MOODY, 114. On the campaign, see also VÁSÁRY 2005, 116; GEANAKOPLOS 1959, 229–30.

⁴¹ This evidence is provided by the Venetian Marino Sanudo Torsello in his *Istoria del Regno di Romania*, quoted in GEANAKOPLOS 1959, 332–3, n. 114.

 ⁴² See CM/SCHMITT, 589 (v. 9086); CM/LURIER, 321–2; CM/BUCHON, 310; CM/VAN ARSDALL – MOODY, 142. See also Vásáry 2005, 117–18.

 $^{^{43}}$ Pachymérès/Failler, vol. 2, 424–5 (IV, 31), and n. 4 there for the proposed identification with Nikephoros Rimpsas (see also PLP, no. 24292).

⁴⁴ See n. 27 above.

al-Dīn's Turks in particular (see next paragraph).⁴⁵ The dearth of details leaves all possible interpretations open, but it is least likely that the Turks came from a distant area out of direct Byzantine control such as Dobruja, all the more that according to Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's own version of the events by the 1270s the Anatolian nomads had long migrated to Crimea before returning to the Balkans towards the end of that decade or the beginning of the next.⁴⁶

Turcopoles appear again in the tumultuous events caused by the Catalan Company in the Southern Balkans in the early 14th century. They were present at the Byzantine camp in Adrianople in 1305 and deserted the imperial army during the Battle of Apros later in the same year to join the opposing Catalans and their Anatolian Turkish allies who were led, according to Gregoras, by a certain Khalil (Χαληλ).⁴⁷ Pachymeres introduces the term *Tourkopouloi* here as an alternative designation of the "Persian" detachment of old. 48 His rather vague statement suggests that the Turcopoles were the descendants of Turkish soldiers who had been fighting in the Byzantine army for a long time. Gregoras supports this notion by explicitly identifying them with 'Izz al-Dīn's soldiers who had remained in Byzantium and had been baptized after the sultan's flight to the Golden Horde.⁴⁹ Considering the chronology and the use of the designation *Tourkopouloi* itself, it is more reasonable to assume that these were rather the descendants of 'Izz al-Dīn's men, but it is also possible that such a connection never existed and the historian was just trying to link two unrelated events by scaling up the number of the sultan's following in the first place. In any case, this evidence alone gives no reason to identify the Turcopoles with the Dobruja Turks.

The Dobruja link seems to be reestablished by Pachymeres, who, in contradiction to his own earlier statement and that of Gregoras, describes the Turcopoles of 1305 as recently converted Christians who had joined the emperor "from the

⁴⁵ GREGORAS/SCHOPEN, 111 (IV, 9); GREGORAS/VAN DIETEN, 120; BARTUSIS 1992, 61–2; cf. Shukurov 2016, 126, n. 190, who argues that the term is used here retrospectively. The term *Tourkopouloi*/Turcopoles is attested since the 11th century to denote Christianized Turks or descendants of mixed marriages between Turkish men and Christian women, who occasionally served in the Byzantine army but were most widely employed in the Latin states of the Eastern Mediterranean, where the term gradually acquired a more common, technical meaning: see SAVVIDES 1993.

⁴⁶ See nn. 10-11 above and further below in the text, where the political situation in Dobruja is also discussed.

⁴⁷ GREGORAS/SCHOPEN, 232 (VII, 4); GREGORAS/VAN DIETEN, 183. For an overview and chronology of the events (contrary to the traditional dating of the Battle of Apros in 1307), see e.g. BARTUSIS 1992, 80–1; JACOBY 1979, 231. For the Catalan Company see JACOBY 2015 and the works cited there.

⁴⁸ PACHYMÉRÈS/FAILLER, vol. 4, 572–3 (XII, 23): τὸ ἐκ παλαιοῦ Περοικόν, οῦς καὶ Τουρκοπούλους ἀνόμαζον; cf. Shukurov 2016, 126, whose translation once again differs from that of Failler.

⁴⁹ Gregoras/Schopen, 229 (VII, 4); Gregoras/van Dieten, 182.

northern lands" not many years ago. 50 This somewhat obscure account, Gregoras's mention of the name Khalīl, and the Thracian conquests of the Bulgarian tsar Teodor Svetoslav in 1304–5 all seem to support Yazıcıoğlu's statement that the majority of the Dobruja Turks left the province and crossed to Anatolia under the leadership of Khalīl Ece after "the Bulgarian rulers had risen, overcome the Basileus, and taken most of Rumelia".51 Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that the reported "northern" provenance of the Turcopoles has been interpreted differently by some scholars. Besides Petar Mutafchiev's doubt about the accuracy of Pachymeres' account,52 Rustam Shukurov has identified these "northern Tourkopouloi" as "Cuman or mixed Cuman-Mongol groups". 53 Although Shukurov provides no specific argumentation for this interpretation, some sources seem to support it. Thus, Pachymeres states that the "Tatar Koutzimpaxis" (τὸν Κουτζίμπαξιν Τόχαρον), who had served as "chief magician" at Nogai's court before entering Byzantine service and being sent to Thrace to negotiate with the Alans and the Turcopoles, was "of the same nation and the same language" (ὁμοεθνεῖ τε καὶ ὁμογλώσσω) as the latter.⁵⁴ Pachymeres's last account of the Turcopoles concerns the defection of their leader Taghachar (Ταχαγτζιάρις) from the Catalans in the region of Tzouroulou (Corlu) some time in 1306-7.55 Taghachar is without doubt a Mongol/Tatar name, a famous and near-contemporary namesake being the mighty commander

1, 170-1; Krastev 2011, 62-73.

⁵⁰ Pachymeres/Failler, vol. 4, 626-7 (XIII, 4): Οὐ μὴν δὲ καὶ Ἀλανοῖς ἑτἑρωθεν, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τοῖς ἐξ ὑπογύου χριστιανοῖς Τουρκοπούλοις, οῖ δὴ καὶ οὐ πολλῷ πρότερον χρόνῳ ἐκ τῶν βορείων βασιλεῖ προσεφοίτησαν... From this passage it remains unclear if the Alans and the Tourkopouloi arrived from the "northern lands" together, since the "northern" provenance of the former is undisputed and attested by Pachymeres elsewhere – they had migrated to Byzantium shortly after Nogai's death: see Pachymeres/Failler, vol. 4, 336-9 (X, 16). Mutafčiev 1943, 84-5, n. 4 even assumes that the sentence may be syntactically imprecise and that its latter part (i.e. the account of the arrival from the north) is solely related to the Alans. ⁵¹ Rūm-ili'nde Ulgār begleri khurūc idūp fāsilyūs üzerine müstevlī olup Rūm-ili'nüñ ekserin almışlardı (Yazıcızāde ʿAlī/Bakir 2014, 444a; Yazıcızāde ʿAlī/Bakir 2017, 741). For the Bulgarian-Byzantine war and Teodor Svetoslav's conquests of 1304-5, see Laiou 1972, 160-

⁵² See n. 50 above.

⁵³ SHUKUROV 2016, 93. Elsewhere (pp. 124–5, 131), he seems to accept the truthfulness of the Dobruja story.

⁵⁴ PACHYMERES/FAILLER, vol. 4, 378–9, 602–3 (X, 30; XII, 32). On Koutzimpaxis, or Kocabahşı, see PLP, no. 13622; ZACHARIADOU 1978, 262–4; SHUKUROV 2016, 232–3. E. Zachariadou's interpretation that he was a Turk is hardly tenable in the light of his explicit description by Pachymeres as a *Tocharos*, a term used by the Byzantines to denote the Mongols/Tatars: see MORAVCSIK 1983, II, 329.

⁵⁵ PACHYMÉRÈS/FAILLER, vol. 4, 694-7 (XIII, 29). Cf. WITTEK 1952, 665, n. 4; PLP, no. 27546; MORAVCSIK 1983, II, 296.

and kingmaker of the Ilkhanate Taghachar Noyan (d. 1296). Finally, in the Serbian vita of Archbishop Danilo II (d. 1337) "Tatars" (tatari) are mentioned alongside the Alans (iasi) among the numerous peoples who attacked Mount Athos in 1307–11, including Franks (frugy), Turks (tur'ky), Almogavars (mogovari), and Catalans (katalani), i.e. the Catalan Company and its Turkish allies; according to the same source, numerous Tatars, Turks, and Alans (mnogyie voisky iezyka tatar'ska i tur'ska i iash'ska) later became mercenaries of the Serbian king Stefan Uroš II Milutin (r. 1282–1321) in the war against his brother Dragutin. It is difficult to identify these Tatars with the Tourkopouloi considering the latter's animosity towards the Alans as well as other related evidence (see next paragraph), but it is clear that Tatars also took part in the events in the early 14th-century Balkans. These were probably contingents close to Nogai who fled to the south after his death, much like those 3,000 men who accompanied his grandson Kara Kesek (or Keshek) in the service of Vidin's ruler Shishman. Pachymeres may well have confounded them with the Tourkopouloi when pointing to their "northern" provenance.

Gregoras and the Catalan chronicler and participant in the events Ramón Muntaner (d. 1336) are in general unanimous with regard to the actions of the Catalans and their Turkic allies—including ca. 1,000 Turcopoles (*Turcoples* in the Catalan text) under the leadership of a certain Melik⁵⁹—after their depredations in Thrace in 1305–7. Together they roamed along the Aegean coast to reach Thessaly, where the Anatolian Turks and the Turcopoles decided to abandon the Catalans in the spring of 1311.⁶⁰ According to Gregoras, the two Turkic groups under the respective leadership of Khalīl and Melik soon parted ways themselves. Melik and his men (here, 1,500) submitted to the Serbian king Stefan Milutin and settled in Serbia, while another 2,100 Turks under Khalīl returned to Thrace in order to find

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⁵⁶ See e.g. ATWOOD 2004, 525 (s.v. Ta'achar); HOPE 2016, *passim*. Other Mongol bearers of the name (in the form Tokuchar) include a son-in-law of Chinggis Khan (r. 1206–27) and a grandson of Ögedei Khan (r. 1229–41): see e.g. SHM/DE RACHEWILTZ, vol. 2, 940–1, 1031.

⁵⁷ Danilo/Daničić, 341-2, 359; Danilo/Mirković, 259, 273; Vásáry 2005, 108-10.

⁵⁸ On Kara Kesek/Keshek and his men, see the Arabic sources in Tizengauzen 1884, 94, 119, 140, 162. Cf. Vásáry 2005, 97–8; Uzelac 2015, 246–7.

⁵⁹ MUTAFČIEV 1943, 88 and WITTEK 1952, 665 have identified this Melik with 'Izz al-Dīn's son Melik Konstantinos whom Pachymérès/Failler, vol. 4, 674–5 (XIII, 22) mentions as a governor of Pegai (Biga) around the same time; other researchers have opposed this identification: see e.g. Laurent 1956, 361, n. 4; Shukurov 2016, 190; PLP, no. 17761–2. Indeed, the latter three publications show that the name/title Melik was adopted by many Turkish noblemen and military leaders of the time.

⁶⁰ Gregoras/Schopen, 244–8 (VII, 5–6); Gregoras/Van Dieten, 190–2. Muntaner/de Bofarull, 429–30, 436–58 (cap. CCXXVIII, CCXXXI–CCXLI, passim), Muntaner/Hughes, 109–10, 119–50 (passim). Muntaner mentions the leader of the *Turcoples* with the name/title of Melik (*Milich*) in the context of events datable to 1305: see Muntaner/de Bofarull, 404 (cap. CCXV); Muntaner/Hughes, 73. For the dating, see Jacoby 1979, 233–4; Oikonomides 1993, 161–2.

passage back to Anatolia before being annihilated by the Byzantines and their allies in Gallipoli in 1313.61 The Serbian vita of Danilo confirms both of these accounts and adds that after entering Stefan Milutin's service, Melik (Melekil) conspired against the king, whereupon he was captured and put to "violent death".62 A possibly related passage in the vita of Stefan Milutin himself, written by the same Danilo, narrates how a group of "godless Persians" (bezbozh'nii per'si) entered Milutin's service but soon rebelled and were defeated, with some of them killed, some exiled, and others enslaved.⁶³ If this account is indeed related to Melik's men, i.e. the Turcopoles, the designation "Persians" rather precludes their identification with the Tatars in Stefan Milutin's service mentioned above. 64 Their "godlessness" is also problematic with regard to their identification with the Turcopoles whom both Pachymeres and Gregoras depict as Christians. However, we should keep in mind both the hagiographic nature of the source, in which the "godless" adversaries of the Serbian king were utilized to underline his saintly image, and the likely superficial Christianisation of the Turcopoles, if Pachymeres was right about its recency. It is also possible that the ethnic and/or religious profile of the military commanders sometimes differed from that of their soldiers, like in the case of the Bulgarian Voysil, who was put in charge of the Alans and the Turcopoles in the Battle of Apros. 65 To be sure, the turbulent events of 1305-13 in the Balkans obviously involved so many different (but often similar) ethnic and religious groups, and such a frequent change of allegiances, that even the contemporary observers were prone to confusion.

⁶¹ Gregoras/Schopen, 254–8, 262–9 (VII, 8, 10); Gregoras/Van Dieten, 195–7; 200–4. Muntaner does not mention the parting of the *Turcoples* and the Turks but confirms that the latter were almost completely annihilated at Gallipoli when trying to cross the Straits back to Anatolia: see Muntaner/De Bofarull, 458 (cap. CCXLI); Muntaner/Hughes, 150–1. Another contemporary, the Venetian Marino Sanudo Torsello, notes that 1,800 cavalrymen *inter Turchos, turchopolos et mortatos* left the Catalans in Thessaly (*Blachia*) in 1311 and the majority of them were soon destroyed because they had separated from each other; later, some Turks tried to rejoin the Catalans: see Jacoby 1979, 232; Jacoby 2015, 160. On the *mortati/mourtatoi*, a term denoting an apostate from Islam (from Arabic *murtadd*) and applied to Christian Turks, see Bartusis 1992, 276–8. What differentiated them from the Turcopoles is unclear.

⁶² DANILO/DANIČIĆ, 354; DANILO/MIRKOVIĆ, 269.

⁶³ DANILO/DANIČIĆ, 143-4; DANILO/MIRKOVIĆ, 108-9.

⁶⁴ Cf. UZELAC 2015, 252–5, who has even suggested that the Tatars in question formed the personal guard of Milutin, which defeated Melik's people in Serbia. According to Uzelac, the same contingent numbering 2,000 Tatars was identical with the one sent against Khalīl's Turks in Gallipoli in 1313 at the request of Andronikos II as well as with the 2,000 "Cumans" (in John Kantakouzenos's words) whose return the Serbs demanded from the Byzantines in 1320. It should be noted, however, that the term "Persian" has also been used to denote the Tatar governor of Akkerman in another Slavic hagiographical work of the early 15th century: see Konovalova – Russev 1994, 79–80.

⁶⁵ PACHYMÉRÈS/FAILLER, vol. 4, 598-8 (XII, 32); MORAVCSIK 1983, II, 93; PLP, no. 2926.

Thus, even if we only pick out the contemporary evidence that seems to support Yazıcıoğlu 'Ali's story, namely Gregoras's account linking the Turcopoles to both 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs II and Khalīl as well as Pachymeres's statement about their recent arrival from the north, their identification with the Dobruja Turks still poses problems, most notably with regard to their later fate. Yazıcıoğlu maintains that they were able to cross back to Anatolia together with Khalīl Ece, while all contemporary sources agree, with minor differences in detail, that Melik's people, i.e. the Turcopoles, ended up in Serbia and Khalil's Turks were almost entirely exterminated in the region of Gallipoli. Paul Wittek has attempted to find a way around these contradictions by suggesting that "Dobruja Turks would have joined Khalīl rather during his first stay in Gallipoli, in 1307-8" (actually, 1305-7), and that they were probably able to transfer their kinsfolk to Anatolia during this time or during Khalīl's later sojourn on the peninsula in 1310-11 (actually, 1311-13).66 In fact, after the Battle of Apros the Alans routed the Turcopoles and seized a number of their women and children, but Wittek assumes that the Turcopoles were soon able to retrieve their families and send them to Anatolia, which would corroborate Yazıcıoğlu's version.⁶⁷ While this is not impossible, there is no clear evidence thereof, and it remains unclear why the Turcopoles (if identical with the Dobruja Turks) would willingly separate from their families and would then not even try to rejoin them in Anatolia in 1311 but go to Serbia instead. As a whole, Wittek's generally ingenious reconstruction of the events is tainted by a number of speculations, ambiguities, and factual inaccuracies, and can thus remain hypothetical at best.

Finally, scholars involved in the debate surrounding the events of 1262–5 have discussed the question of whether the Byzantine emperor could grant Dobruja as a place for settlement of the Anatolian nomads, as reported by Yazıcıoğlu ʿAlī, or not. It is noteworthy that in 1262–3 Bulgaria and Byzantium were at war, which led to substantial Byzantine territorial gains in Thrace. Pachymeres's explicit statement that these conquests were limited "to the south of the Haemus" (i.e. the Balkan Mountain Range) has given a reason for Petar Mutafchiev to conclude that the territories to the north were at the time—as well as later—firmly under Bulgarian control and not at the emperor's disposal.⁶⁸ In response to this claim, Vitalien Laurent provides some evidence of a Byzantine enclave in the Danube delta, which, according to him, was formed shortly after the reconquest of Constantinople in 1261, more precisely in 1262–3. He bases this assumption on a panegyric for Mi-

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⁶⁶ WITTEK 1952, 665–6. Since Wittek could only rely on Pachymeres's and Gregoras's information on the events, his chronology is largely inaccurate: cf. the chronology of JACOBY 1979, 230–4; JACOBY 2015, 150–6.

 $^{^{67}}$ WITTEK 1952, 665–6. For the Alan captivity of the Turcopole families, see PACHYMÉ-RÈS/FAILLER, vol. 4, 648–9.

⁶⁸ PACHYMÉRÈS/FAILLER, vol. 1, 278–9 (III, 18); MUTAFČIEV 1943, 18–23. For a more detailed study of the Bulgarian-Byzantine war of 1262–3, see Petrov 1956, 549–63; cf. Bozhilov – Gyuzelev 1999, 511–12.

chael VIII from 1273, which, however, only mentions the submission of "numerous Paristrian islands" to the emperor without providing a date.⁶⁹ Laurent refrains from taking a firm stance on the question of the nomadic migration to Dobruja, but concludes that it could have indeed taken place via the Byzantine possessions on the Danube.⁷⁰ His conclusion is later endorsed by Paul Wittek who further argues, rather arbitrarily, that Dobruja was then "nominally part of Bulgaria but in reality more or less a no-man's-land" used by the Tatars of the Golden Horde as a corridor for their incursions in the Balkans.⁷¹ As pointed out more recently by Georgi Atanasov, it was precisely the Tatar dominance and interest in these territories that makes the whole episode look unlikely. The fact that the Horde and the Bulgarian Tsardom were at that time engaged in an anti-Byzantine alliance, as evident from their joint campaign of 1264–5 that liberated 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs from Byzantine captivity, adds further doubt to Michael VIII's ability to establish his control over settlements in the Danube delta and transfer a large group of nomads in their hinterland as early as 1262–3.⁷²

Things changed in the early 1270s when Nogai consolidated his authority over the area and married an illegitimate daughter of the emperor called Euphrosyne, thus joining hands with the Byzantines.⁷³ It is theoretically possible to assume that the resettlement of the Anatolian Turks took place at that juncture, but this would mean to accept the key event of Yazıcıoğlu's story as a fact while reshaping it from the bottom up. The Ottoman historian actually dates the *second* appearance of the nomads in the Balkans to after the death of 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs II in 678/1279–80, when they requested to return "to their abode" (*yurdlarına*) in Dobruja—a rather strange designation given that they had only spent around two years there in the 1260s, according to the same author.⁷⁴ Yazıcıoğlu once again states that they were

⁶⁹ LAURENT 1945, 188.

⁷⁰ LAURENT 1945, 198.

⁷¹ WITTEK 1952, 654.

⁷² ATANASOV 2009, 30, 413–14. For details regarding the Tatar-Bulgarian campaign of 1264–5, see PAVLOV 1995, 123; PAVLOV 1997, 142–4; VÁSÁRY 2005, 74–7 (who dates it in 662/1263–4); UZELAC 2017, 380.

⁷³ PACHYMÉRÈS/FAILLER, vol. 1, 243 (III, 5). The dating of this marriage varies between 1272 (VÁSÁRY 2005, 79), 1272/3 (ATANASOV 2009, 30; UZELAC 2017, 380), and "ca. 1274" (PAVLOV 1995, 124). If a pre-1273 dating is accepted, it is possible that the reestablishment of Byzantine presence in the Danube Delta actually ensued from this diplomatic act (cf. n. 69).

⁷⁴ YAZICIZĀDE 'ALĪ/BAKIR 2014, 414a; YAZICIZĀDE 'ALĪ/BAKIR 2017, 698–9; WITTEK 1952, 649; DECEI 1968, 89. According to YaZICIOĞIU 'Alī, the nomads gained Berke's permission to return to Dobruja. As this passage is located after the account of 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs's death (in 678/1279–80) and Berke died in 1266, the latter's name is either used anachronistically or as a common noun for the khan of the Golden Horde, cf. WITTEK 1952, 656–7, who nevertheless accepts the authenticity of the second migration. According to TOGAN 1981, 268–9, the Turkmens' return from Crimea to Dobruja took place in 1280 in the context of Nogai's campaign against the Byzantine towns of Anchialos and Mesembria on the Western Black Sea

led by Sarı Saltuk. As will be seen, there are enough grounds to accept that Saltuk did indeed arrive in Northern Dobruja sometime in the 1270s–1280s and carried out his missionary activities there in the context of the Tatar dominance in the area under Nogai, a recent convert to Islam. The near-contemporary Arabic authors who provide the main evidence thereof, however, are silent about the supposedly large Anatolian following of the sheikh, which further undermines its historicity.

The historical Sarı Saltuk and Barak Baba: Arabic sources

The identities and activities of Sarı Saltuk and his disciple Barak Baba have found some reflection in Arabic sources from the first half of the 14th century. The earliest among them is Tashwīq al-arwāh wa'l-qulūb ilā dhikr 'allām al-ghuyūb, a Sufismrelated book with diverse contents composed between 703/1303-4 and 715/1315-16 by Ibn al-Sarrāj al-Dimashqī (d. ca. 747/1347), who spent most of his career as a judge in Mamluk Syria and Southeastern Anatolia. The most detailed account on Saltuk is found in the third part of the work, which seems to have circulated separately and survives only in two self-contained manuscripts under the title of Tuffāḥ al-arwāḥ wa-miftāḥ al-arbāḥ.75 In Tuffāḥ, Ibn al-Sarrāj retells the miraculous deeds of various Sufi saints one of whom is called Saltua al-Turkī and is without doubt identical with Sarı Saltuk of the Ottoman tradition. It should be noted that the relevant account was first made known to and almost exclusively utilized by modern scholarship through its shortened version in the similarly structured work of Yūsuf al-Nabhānī (1842-1932), who has paraphrased Ibn al-Sarrāj's information, leaving out some of the anecdotes and important details.⁷⁶ The additional data on Saltuk contained in parts of the *Tashwiq* other than the *Tuffāḥ* has also been largely ignored.⁷⁷

It is beyond the purpose of this paper to analyse the fabulous tales depicting Saltuk as an ecstatic sheikh transcendentally involved in battles with the infidels,

coast, and the campaign was even incited by the Anatolian nomads under his authority. This reconstruction of the events is untenable as it is based on a wrong dating of Nogai's incursion—it actually took place sometime between 1271 and 1273, before his rapprochement with Byzantium and the death of 'Izz al-Dīn: cf. PAVLOV 1995, 124; VÁSÁRY 2005, 71; ATANASOV 2009, 30; UZELAC 2017, 380.

⁷⁵ On Ibn al-Sarrāj and his works, see ÖZTÜRK 2013, 11–21; SARIKAYA et. al. 2013, 76–9. A printed edition and a Turkish translation of *Tuffāḥ*'s account on Saltuk are provided in SARIKAYA et. al. 2013, 95–108. I have mainly relied on the Turkish rendering but have compared the key passages discussed here to the Arabic text with the help of Prof. Pavel Pavlovitch, for which I express my gratitude to him.

⁷⁶ To my knowledge, the first modern researchers to mention this source were TOGAN 1981, 269–70, n. 385, and via that study, YÜCE 1987, 89, 99. A partial German and a more reliable English translation of al-Nabhānī's text were published by KIEL 2000, 261–5 (transl. by B. Radtke) and NORRIS 2006, 58–61, respectively.

⁷⁷ These accounts are summarized or quoted in Turkish translation in ÖZTÜRK 2013, 122–39 and SARIKAYA et. al. 2013.

conversion to Islam, healing, and other lifetime and posthumous miracles.⁷⁸ It suffices to point out that some of the characteristic features of his image in later narratives composed in the Ottoman lands can already be found in this early source either in embryo or fully developed: his ghazi vocation, his proselytizing ability, his cult's appeal to both Muslims and Christians, and his many graves. It is also worth mentioning that Ibn al-Sarrāj's main objective was to defend Saltuk's provocative lifestyle and unorthodox spiritual practice from the accusations of the contemporary Ulama who apparently saw them incompatible with the Sharia and even likened the dervish to the Devil. What is of greater interest here, however, is the factual information provided by Ibn al-Sarrāj. He cites as his main authority on Saltuk the latter's disciple Sayyid Bahrām Shāh al-Ḥaydarī whom the author claims to have met twice in Behisni (Besni) and Damascus in 703-4/1304-5.79 The text even suggests that in his youth Ibn al-Sarrāj had a personal acquaintance with Saltuk in Damascus before the latter left for the "northern countries".80 Considering that the author's youth can hardly be dated earlier than the 1270s or the 1280s,81 this would mean that Saltuk moved to the region of the Northern and Northwestern Black Sea only in the last decades of the 13th century. This account invites some suspicion, particularly with Ibn al-Sarrāj's claim to have "advised" the significantly older Saltuk, but if true, it would largely disprove Yazıcıoğlu's story of the sheikh's migration to the Balkans with Sultan 'Izz al-Dīn's Turks in the 1260s.

In the $Tashw\bar{\imath}q$, Saltuk is said to have settled within the walls of a town and to have established a dervish lodge ($z\bar{a}wiya$, Tur. $z\bar{a}viye$) after a long vagrancy "in mountains, vales, and deserts". ⁸² The town is more concretely specified in $Tuff\bar{a}h$. It bore the name of $Saj\bar{\imath}$ "in the Qipchaq language" ($bi-l-qifj\bar{a}qiyya$) and was located a month's journey—two thirds of it by sea—to the west of a big city called $Aqh\bar{a}kerm\bar{a}n$. ⁸³ Despite the somewhat unfitting distance between the two sites, there can be little doubt that the city of Akça Kerman/Akkerman (Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi) at the

 $^{^{78}}$ These aspects of his image have been thoroughly studied: see e.g., YÜCE 1987; OCAK 2016; Aleksiev 2012; Karamustafa 2015.

⁷⁹ SARIKAYA et. al. 2013, 95, 100, 103, 107.

⁸⁰ SARIKAYA et. al. 2013, 100, 107. The Turkish translators have rendered the impersonal expression "in the time of youth" (في زمن الشبية) as referring to the youth of Saltuk, but this is difficult to accept as he was apparently a generation older than Ibn al-Sarrāj (on Saltuk's age and time of death, see below).

⁸¹ Ibn al-Sarrāj's time of birth is unknown, but he died ca. 747/1347 and the earliest information about his career dates from the early 14th century: see ÖZTÜRK 2013, 12–13.
82 ÖZTÜRK 2013, 129.

Dniester Estuary and the town of Sakçı (Isaccea) on the Lower Danube are meant here. According to Ibn al-Sarrāj, Saltuk died in 697/1297–8 at the approximate age of 70, and his tomb (*turba*, Tur. *türbe*) lied three hours away from *Ṣajī*. His large *zāviye* with a capacity of 300 people was "still standing" at the time of writing—as explicitly stated, some eighteen years after the sheikh's passing—under the guidance of Saltuk's disciple Talak (*Ṭalāq*), whose "Qïpchaq" name Ibn al-Sarrāj translates in the Arabic as "white".85

Machiel Kiel has suggested that at least two of the fabulous anecdotes in *Tuffāh* featuring Saltuk also contain a "historical core". One of them relates how the sheikh miraculously released and converted to Islam a Christian merchant who had been taken captive by "the Franks". Indeed, this story may reflect a real incident between a member of the local Christian Orthodox population and the western, mostly Genoese colonists in the ports of the Danube Delta. According to the second episode, Saltuk correctly prophesized that a ruler would appear seven years after his death and ask for a valuable rosary that previously belonged to the sheikh. Ignoring the warnings of Saltuk's disciples, the ruler would take the rosary and thus cause great troubles such as war and disorder. Machiel Kiel has linked this account to the Bulgarian tsar Teodor Svetoslav (r. 1300-22) and the abovementioned war with Byzantium that he started in 1304, seven years after the date of Saltuk's death as reported by Ibn al-Sarrāj.86 Although this interpretation seems appealing, there are a number of reasons to be cautious with it. First, the symbolic meaning of the number seven needs no explanation and, as will be seen, other contemporary sources provide a different date for Saltuk's death. Second, Tuffāḥ has Saltuk involved in other similar stories, which bear no possible trace of real events-such as the one relating how he prophesized the arrival of "one of the rulers of Istanbul" five years after the sheikh's death in order to claim his corpse and bring it to the Byzantine capital as an object of veneration.⁸⁷ And third, the Bulgarian-Byzantine war of 1304 took place to the south of the Balkan Mountains,

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⁸⁴ In the extant Arabic text, the puzzling expression <code>gharbī</code> al-qawm (غربي القوم) is added next to the name of <code>Aqḥākermān/</code> Akça Kerman. The editors of the text have translated it into Turkish as "the population is western" (<code>Halk Battlıdır</code>). Albeit grammatically unconvincing, this translation could make sense in the light of the abundant evidence of "western" (mostly Genoese) presence in that city at the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries (see e.g. Konovalova – Russev 1994, 75–82; Gyuzelev 2021, 428–33). However, the grammatical construction suggests it is more likely that a copyist's error has confused the original reading <code>gharbī</code> al-qiram, "to the west of Crimea", which perfectly describes the location of Akça Kerman. I owe this observation to Prof. Pavlovitch.

⁸⁵ SARIKAYA et. al. 2013, 100-1, 107-8.

⁸⁶ KIEL 2000, 265-6. For the two anecdotes, see KIEL 2000, 263-4 and SARIKAYA et. al. 2013, 98, 105-6.

⁸⁷ SARIKAYA et. al. 2013, 97, 105. This story is absent in the translation published by M. Kiel.

i.e. at a significant distance away from the presumable location of Saltuk's activities and resting place near the Danube Delta.

Finally, Ibn al-Sarrāj provides some information about Saltuk's most renowned disciple, Barak Baba, both in the *Tuffāḥ* and elsewhere in the *Tashwīq*. The author claims to have personally seen Barak, apparently without establishing personal contact, as well as to have benefitted from the knowledge of one of the Baba's descendants. However, he reproduces little more than the type of fabulous tale about the saint's miraculous involvement in religious purification of the Muslim community in Syria and, anachronistically, in the 1250 Battle of Manṣūra against the Crusaders.⁸⁸ This information hardly allows any verification of Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's later account of Barak Baba other than the *ex silentio* argument that Ibn al-Sarrāj mentions nothing about his alleged royal lineage.

Other Arabic sources, including the historical work of the contemporary al-Birzālī (d. 739/1339), are much more specific. They report how Barak Baba impressed Ghāzān Khan (r. 1295-1304) and received high esteem at the Ilkhanid court in Sultāniyya, which he retained under the next Ilkhan Öljaitü (r. 1304-16). In 706/1306, he visited Damascus as a member of a Mongol delegation to the Mamlukes, accompanied by a number of his followers. It was apparently on this occasion that Barak Baba was noticed by Arab authors. They provide detailed descriptions of the dervishes who impressed the Damascene population with their eccentric look and unorthodox behavior.⁸⁹ Al-Birzālī identifies their leader as a disciple of Sarīq al-Qirīmī (i.e. "the Crimean") who is said to have died in 692/1292-3.90 Despite the unrecognizable, likely corrupted, first name and the different year of death as compared to the above-cited account by Ibn al-Sarrāj (i.e. 697/1297-8), there is no doubt that Barak Baba's spiritual link with Sarı Saltuk is meant here —a link corroborated by other near-contemporary sources. 91 Furthermore, al-Birzālī also retells the story of how the dervish had eaten his sheikh's vomit and had therefore been called Barak, the "Qïpchaq" word for "dog".92

This is, however, where the parallels with the relevant account of Yazıcıoğlu ʿAlī end. According to al-Birzālī and later authors, Barak Baba was a native of a village near Tokat, his father being a local notable and his uncle—a renowned

⁸⁸ ÖZTÜRK 2013, 139-44.

⁸⁹ GÖLPINARLI 1936, 40-7; OCAK 1989, 106-9; OCAK 2002, 81-3.

⁹⁰ GÖLPINARLI 1936, 39; OCAK 2002, 65; OCAK 2016, 91. Both authors refer to a MS of al-Birzālī's history kept at the Topkapı Palace Library, III. Ahmed, no. 2951, II, fol. 105b.

⁹¹ These include a verse by Yunus Emre (presenting himself as a member of the same spiritual genealogy) and a saying attributed to Barak himself: see Gölpınarlı 1936, 24, 47–8; OCAK 2002, 78; OCAK 2016, 113–14. Some later Arabic authors such as Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Taghrībirdī attach the byname al-Qirīmī to Barak, too, probably due to his sojourn in Crimea together with his sheikh: see OCAK 1989, 106; GÖLPINARLI 1936, 40. GÖLPINARLI 1936, 39–40 has tried to explain the corruption of Saltūq to Sarīq.

⁹² Gölpinarli 1936, 39.

scribe. 93 Although some researchers are not eager to give preference to this account over Yazıcıoğlu's version, its greater chronological proximity to the events and its less legendary nature both speak in its favour. Moreover, the contemporary author al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) and other sources report that the dervish was killed at the age of forty during another mission to the ruler of Gīlān in 707/1307–8, whereupon his remains were buried in Sulṭāniyya. 94 Even if the reported age is approximate and chosen for its sacred connotations, Barak Baba would not have been born much earlier than 1267. As his alleged father 'Izz al-Dīn fled from Byzantium in 1264–5, he could not have left his (presumable) still unborn son there as maintained by Yazıcıoğlu. All this evidence suggests that the latter invented the family link between the Seljuk sultan and the renowned mystic in order to entangle the story of Barak Baba (and hence Sarı Saltuk) in that of 'Izz al-Dīn and the Anatolian migrants to Dobruja.

Two long known and disputed accounts that may or may not have a relation to the legacy of Sarı Saltuk in Northern Dobruja in the first decades after his death belong to the Arabic authors Abū'l-Fidā' (d. 732/1331) and Ibn Battūta (d. 770/1368-9 or 779/1377-8). The geographic work Taqwin al-Buldan, completed by Abū'l-Fidā' in 721/1321, contains an entry on the town of Ṣaqiī "in Wallachia and the lands [under the control?] of Constantinople" (min al-Awlāq wa bilād al-Qustantīniya). Saqjī is said to be a middle-sized town located on the southern bank of the Danube, at a distance of ca. twenty days from Constantinople and ca. five days from Aqjā Karmān, which itself was on the Black Sea, "in [the lands of] the Bulgarians and the Turks" (min al-Bulghār wa'l-Turk). The population of Aqjā Karmān was partly Muslim and partly Christian, while the majority of Ṣaqjī's inhabitants were Muslim.95 Once again, it is clear that the modern towns of Isaccea (Sakçı) and Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi (Akkerman) are meant here, and some scholars have interpreted the attested Muslim presence in the former as a possible consequence of the settlement of Anatolian nomads and the activities of Sarı Saltuk in the area as reported by Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī.96

It should be noted that the Turkic/Muslim names of the two towns have led Petar Mutafchiev to doubt the authenticity of this account, suggesting that it was a later interpolation to the original text of Abū'l-Fidā'. Alternatively, he proposed that Sakçı could have been called after an otherwise unknown person by the name of Isḥāq, possibly a Muslim Tatar warrior who died there in the second half of the 13th century. 97 Mutafchiev's hypotheses have been disproved by written and mate-

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⁹³ GÖLPINARLI 1936, 40 and n. 1; OCAK 1989, 105-6; OCAK 2002, 80; OCAK 2016, 115.

⁹⁴ GÖLPINARLI 1936, 46-7; OCAK 1989, 107; OCAK 2002, 81-2.

 $^{^{95}}$ Abū L-Fidā'/Reinaud – di Slane, 212–13 (text) and Abū L-Fidā'/Reinaud, 316–17 (French translation).

⁹⁶ See e.g. ALEXANDRESCU-DERSCA BULGARU 1978, 447; İNALCIK 1991; KIEL 2005, 285.

⁹⁷ MUTAFČIEV 1943, 75–80.

rial evidence that has emerged since his study was published in 1943. Albeit equally preserved in later manuscript copies, Ibn al-Sarrāj's above-cited work on Saltuk clearly testifies to the existence of the town names Sakçı (or Ṣajī in his rendering) and Akça Kerman (Aqjā Karmān) at approximately the same time when Taqwīn al-Buldān was completed. The contemporary Mamluk historian Baybars al-Manṣūrī (d. 725/1325) also mentions Ṣaqjī (sic) to indicate the lands that Tokta (r. 1291–1312), the khan of the Golden Horde, gave to his son Tukul Bugha after the death of Nogai in 1299.98 Most notably, the name is attested in both Arabic (Sāqchī) and Latin (the letters S/A/T/Y surrounding a cross) inscriptions on coins with Tatar tamghas, which were issued there in the late 13th and early 14th centuries and demonstrate the complex political and ethnic relations in the area.99

As for the origin and etymology of the name Sakçı, Mutafchiev's suggestion to link it with the Muslim name Ishaq cannot be entirely discarded, particularly in the light of the 19th-century evidence about the existence of a türbe in the town attributed by the local population to a certain Ishāq Baba. 100 Much more probable, however, is the name's derivation from the Qïpchaq word sakçı, which can be found (in the composite form sakçılı yol) in a 14th-century Turkic-Arabic lexicon with the meaning of "guard, warden" and perfectly fits the location of the town at the most convenient place for crossing the Lower Danube in the Middle Ages. 101 The Muslim or, more likely, Turkic/Tatar etymology of the name does not mean that Sakçı was founded by the Tatars or the Anatolian settlers who, according to Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī, built "two-three Muslim towns" in Dobruja. Archaeological excavations have shown that a medieval fortress existed there without interruption since the 10th or 11th century, on (or near) the site of the ancient Novioudunum. It probably bore the original Bulgarian name of Obluchitsa, which is preserved in numerous sources from the 15th-18th centuries parallelly to the "official" Ottoman name of Sakçı. 102 Thus, the questions remain of when did the latter form appear and whether it had

⁹⁸ TIZENGAUZEN 1884, 93 (text), 117 (Russian translation).

⁹⁹ OBERLÄNDER-TÂRNOVEANU 1995/6, 199–200; OBERLÄNDER-TÂRNOVEANU 2004; For the interpretation of this numismatic material, cf. Atanasov 2009, 30–8.

¹⁰⁰ MUTAFČIEV 1943, 78.

¹⁰¹ I have borrowed this etymology from SARIKAYA et. al. 2013, 81. For the relevant entry in the lexicon, see İZBUDAK 1936, 38. The lexicon was written in the margins and between the lines of a 735/1335 copy of the *Kitāb al-'idrāk li-lisān al-'atrāk*, another Turkic–Arab lexicon and grammar composed in the early 14th century: see İZBUDAK 1936, 4, and ERMERS 1999, 24–8, 41–3.

¹⁰² KUZEV 1981; MUTAFČIEV 1943, 79–80. Some researchers have also argued for the identity between Sakçı and the town of Vicina, attested in numerous Latin and Greek sources from the 13th–14th centuries: see e.g., KONOVALOVA – RUSSEV 1994, 82–9 and n. 66 there. If this identification is correct, it would add an interesting facet to Saltuk's presence there, since Vicina was also a metropolitan seat under the Patriarchate of Constantinople (see KONOVALOVA – RUSSEV 1994, 84–6).

any possible relation to the alleged settlement of Anatolian nomads in the area. The likely Qïpchaq provenance of the name rather invites a negative answer to the second question. The first one, on the other hand, cannot be definitively answered, but a so far neglected detail in Abū'l-Fidā''s account may give an idea. The abovecited information he provides about Sakçı is perhaps based on contemporary informers of his, but he has also indicated a specific written source for the town's coordinates: the Aṭwāl.¹0³ This title refers to one of the main sources for his geographical tables, the anonymous and unfortunately unpreserved Kitāb al-Aṭwāl wal-ʿurūḍ li-l-Furs, whose exact dating is unknown but certainly earlier than the mid-13th century.¹0⁴ If Kitāb al-Aṭwāl did indeed refer to the town with its Qïpchaq name of Sakçı, as it seems probable, then this appellation appeared prior to the Mongol invasion in Eastern Europe and should have been introduced by the Cumans who regularly crossed the Danube since the late 11th century for plundering and involvement in the Balkan military theatre.¹05

Finally, Abū'l-Fidā''s statement that the population of Sakçı was predominantly Muslim around 1321 can hardly bear any relevance to the reported settlement of Anatolian nomads in the area some sixty years earlier. If anything, it contradicts Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's account that the majority of these settlers migrated back to Anatolia and those who remained in Dobruja apostatized from Islam shortly after the death of their leader Saltuk. Even if we accept that the *Tourkopouloi* from the Byzantine sources were indeed descendants of the same people, Pachymeres and Gregoras are also unanimous that they had already accepted Christianity by the early 14th century. Thus, Abū'l-Fidā''s information about Sakçı is certainly related to the town's being an outpost of the Golden Horde on the southern bank of the Danube and the likely presence of Muslim Tatars among its population. This situation is probably also the key to understanding the next piece of evidence about Saltuk authored by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa.

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's famous travel-book (*riḥla*) contains a very puzzling description of his journey from the Golden Horde to Constantinople via the Northeastern Balkans, probably in 1334.¹⁰⁶ Twenty-nine days after his departure from Astrakhan with the large caravan of one of Khan Özbeg's (r. 1313–41) wives, a Byzantine prin-

¹⁰⁴ See KING 1999, 42–3, 156–61 who offers a dating in the 12th or early 13th century. In the mid-13th century, *Kitāb al-Aṭwāl* was also used by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) – see KING 1999, 43–4.

¹⁰³ Abū L-Fidā'/Reinaud - di Slane, 212.

 $^{^{105}}$ The presence of the name $Saqj\bar{i}$ in $Kit\bar{a}b$ al- $Atw\bar{a}l$ is even more likely because it appears in two later Persian works, which seem to have used this source independently from Abu'l-Fidā': see the references in Kennedy – Kennedy 1987, 303. I could only consult one of these works, the 16^{th} -century \bar{A} $\bar{i}n$ -i $Akbar\bar{i}$ in H. Blochmann's edition, where the town is given as $Saqj\bar{i}$ "near the Sea of Pontus" ($qar\bar{i}b$ -i bahr-i Buntus): 'AllāMī 1877, 46.

¹⁰⁶ For the chronology and the itinerary of this journey, see in most detail HRBEK 1962, 468–9, 473–83 who refutes the generally accepted dating in 1331–2.

cess, and after an alleged detour to Sudak in Crimea that sounds unlikely as it would have unnecessarily prolonged the trip, the traveller reports his arrival at a town called $B\bar{a}b\bar{a}$ $Salt\bar{u}q$, which he describes in the following way:

We came to the town known by the name of Bābā Salṭūq. $Bāb\bar{a}$ in their language has exactly the same meaning as among the Berbers [i.e. 'father'], but they pronounce the b more emphatically. They relate that this Salṭūq was an ecstatic devotee, although things are told of him which are reproved by the Divine Law. This town is the last of the towns possessed by the Turks, and between it and the beginning of the territory of the Greeks is [a journey] of eighteen days through an uninhabited waste, for eight days of which there is no water. 107

The caravan then proceeded through the wasteland and eighteen days later reached the unidentified fortress of Mahtūlī located "at the beginning of the territory of the Greeks". The remaining journey to Constantinople lasted twenty-two days and passed through the ruins of a fortress named after the early Islamic hero Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik and lying "at the foot of a mountain beside a tumultuous river called *Iṣṭafīlī*"; then came three large channels (sixteen days after *Mahtūlī*), and, on the bank of the last one, another town called al-Fanīka. 108 On his way back to Astrakhan after more than a month spent in the Byzantine capital, Ibn Battūta once again passed through Bābā Saltūq, but he provides no further details about the town in this context. 109 Researchers have tried hard to make sense of this itinerary and identify the obscure toponyms without being able to arrive at convincing conclusions. Some have situated the town of Bābā Salṭūq in the Northern Black Sea region, particularly in Crimea or near the lower Dnieper (without a specific identification), while others accept its identity with present-day Babadag in Northern Dobruja proposed already by J. von Hammer-Purgstall.¹¹⁰ Since the latter hypothesis has gained an increasing scholarly support in more recent studies, it deserves some greater scrutiny. As dwelling on Ibn Battūta's obscure itinerary can only lead

¹⁰⁷ Translation from IBN ВАТТŪТА/GIBB, 499–500; Original text in IBN ВАТТŪТА/DEFRÉMERY – SANGUINETTI, vol. 2, 416.

¹⁰⁸ IBN BATTUTA/DEFRÉMERY - SANGUINETTI, vol. 2, 417-24; IBN BATTUTA/GIBB, 500-3.

¹⁰⁹ IBN BAŢŢŪŢA/DEFRÉMERY - SANGUINETTI, vol. 2, 445; IBN BAŢŢŪŢA/GIBB, 514.

¹¹⁰ For a summary of the scholarly opinions up to the mid-20th century, see MUTAFČIEV 1943, 66, and Hrbek 1962, 479. Mutafchiev (1943, 67-9: in Crimea) and Hrbek (1962, 479: "somewhere west of Odessa") are among the proponents of the town's northern location, and so are e.g. Gibb in IBN BAŢŢŪŢA/GIBB, 499, n. 310 and SMITH 1982, 216, n. 1. For Bābā Salţūq's identification with Babadag see e.g. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru 1978, 448-9; Konovalova – Russev 1994, 98; Kiel 1978, 2005; Sarikaya et. al. 2013, 82, 93; Ocak 2016, 59, 139. For some only partially convincing attempts to unriddle the other toponyms and the general route of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa through the Eastern Balkans, see the notes to Gibb's translation (p. 500–3) and Norris 1994.

to another dead end, it makes sense to put his account in the context of the earlier evidence discussed so far, some relevant sources from Ottoman times, and the available archaeological data about Babadag and its region.

Bābā Saltūq, Babadag, Isaccea and the archaeological evidence

The most obvious argument for the identification of Ibn Battūta's town of Bābā Salţūq with Babadag is the still existing mausoleum (türbe) of Sarı Saltuk in that town in modern Romania. The türbe was first examined systematically by Machiel Kiel in the late 1960s and the 1970s. The simple construction of the present building has led him to the assumption that it is "either of very ancient date, built immediately after the death of Sarı Saltuk, i.e. 1300, or it is a reconstruction from after the time of the Russian invasions, when the lack of economic resources prevented the construction of a building of greater quality". Some logical deductions and architectural elements (such as the use of pendentives) have made him "more inclined towards a later date, somewhere in the 18th century", but unable to reach a firm conclusion.¹¹¹ Notwithstanding the dating of the building itself, Kiel fully accepted the veracity of Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's story of Sarı Saltuk's appearance in Dobruja with the Seljuk Turks of Sultan 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā' ūs and argued that Babadag is identical with the town of Bābā Salţūq mentioned by Ibn Baţţūţa as well as "the real place where Sarı Saltık lived and worked". 112 The latter statement was mainly based on Evliva Çelebi's 17th-century account of the reconstruction of the sheikh's türbe and the erection of a large religious complex around it ordered by Sultan Bāyezīd II (r. 1481-1512) on his return from the victorious campaign in Moldavia in 1484. Kiel has further argued for the credibility of Evliya Çelebi's statement that Saltuk died in Babadag by pointing to the two earlier but now lost (if they ever existed) sources cited by the famous traveller: a book of the saint's exploits (menākıb) written by the 15th-century Sufi author Yazıcızāde Mehmed of Gelibolu and a Saltuknāme composed by Ken'ān Pasha, a governor of Özi (Ochakov) in the 1630s, on the basis of Yazıcızāde Mehmed's treatise and the otherwise unknown Fütūhāt-i Tohtamış Hān, apparently a work on the conquests of the Golden Horde khan Tokhtamish (d. 1406).113

In two later studies, Machiel Kiel has drawn on the abovementioned work of Ibn al-Sarrāj to substantiate his thesis that Sarı Saltuk was indeed buried in Ba-

¹¹¹ Kiel 1978, 218-19.

¹¹² Kiel 1978, 214-15.

¹¹³ KIEL 1978, 214–15; EVLIYA ÇELEBI/KAHRAMAN – DAĞLI, 190–4 (p. 192 for the source citations). The existence of these earlier sources and the nature of Evliya Çelebi's account in general will be discussed in more detail in my forthcoming study on the memory of Sarı Saltuk in Ottoman writings. It suffices to say here that Evliya's information should be treated with the utmost reservation. For his sources on Saltuk, see also ANETSHOFER 2012, 295–6.

badag and this town was the one which Ibn Battūta attributed to Bābā Saltūq.¹¹⁴ Kiel pretends to quote, but actually summarizes Ibn al-Sarrāj's account of the saint's resting place via its rendering by Yūsuf al-Nabhānī (see above) as follows: "Saltuk at-Turki was a dervish performing magnificent miracles. He lived in the town of İsakçe in the Land of the Qıpçak, died in the year 697 (AD 1297/98) and was buried near the mountain where he had his retreat, some distance away from İsakçe. His followers erected a zawiye around his grave." Kiel further clarifies that al-Nabhānī (and likewise Ibn al-Sarrāj) actually indicated the distance between Sakçı and Saltuk's grave as "three hours", but this is assumed by the Dutch scholar to be "a slip of the pen for the correct three days". He also claims that "the only mountain in the wide surroundings of Isakçe is the 'Mountain of the Baba' at Babadağ". 115 The conclusions regarding the location of Saltuk's original tomb and zāviye are self-evident: they were located at Babadag. The problem is that these conclusions are based on M. Kiel's wishful interpretation and manipulation of the source text. Unfitting pieces of evidence cannot be branded as a "slip of the pen" without any argumentation and, moreover, neither al-Nabhānī nor Ibn al-Sarrāj locates the *türbe* in a mountain. 116 Even if they had done so, the hills at Babadag (ca. 60 km away from Isaccea) actually form part of a low mountain range crossing the whole of Northern Dobruja, another part of which (with an even greater altitude than that at Babadag) is located in the immediate hinterland of Isaccea, the socalled Niculițel Hills (Dealurile Niculițelului).117 All of this makes Machiel Kiel's conclusions rather unconvincing.

¹¹⁴ Kiel 2000, Kiel 2005. I pay special attention to these studies because later research has mainly used Ibn Sarrāj's evidence on Saltuk through their mediation.

¹¹⁵ All quoted passages are from KIEL 2005, 286. In the German translation of al-Nabhānī's text provided by Kiel the distance between Isaccea and Saltuk's resting place is even given as "three days" without any notice that the original text actually reads "three hours": KIEL 2000, 264. Furthermore, in both of Kiel's publications the Arabic expression *ba-l-qifjāqiyya* ("in the Qïpchaq [language]") is wrongly rendered as "in the Land of the Qıpçak" (or "in Kiptschakien"). For a correct English translation of the passage, see NORRIS 2006, 60–1. For the Arabic original of Ibn al-Sarrāj, see SARIKAYA et. al. 2013, 107.

¹¹⁶ The only reason for such a hypothesis can be one anecdote, according to which "when he was seated upon the prayer rug of his authority (sajjāda), after a long period of long residence and contemplation in the mountains [ba-l-jibāl], and within his isolated retreat, [Saltuk] was visited by a certain person. The Shaykh spoke to him, saying, "Cast your mind back to that time when you came to me in a mountain named such and such, and when in a lowly state." (transl. by NORRIS 2006, 60, from al-Nabhānī, whose text here closely follows that of Ibn al-Sarrāj: cf. SARIKAYA et. al. 2013, 98, 106). As pointed out by Norris (2006, 143, nn. 23–4), "the 'mount' (dağ) at Babadag cannot be excluded", but "this story may relate to Sari Saltik's life at some distance from the Dobrudja region, possibly in Anatolia, or in the southern part of the Crimean peninsula".

¹¹⁷ This fact has already been pointed out by ALEKSIEV 2012, 21, who was misled by M. Kiel's introduction of a mountain in Ibn al-Sarrāj's account.

In the 1990s, archaeological excavations were carried out on two sites in Babadag: around the present-day türbe of Sarı Saltuk and in the courtyard of the 'Alī Ghazi Pasha Mosque built in 1610 and located ca. 200 m away from the türbe, on the opposite bank of the brook passing through the town. The earliest structures were located at the latter site and dated to the late 10th and the first half of the 11th century on the basis of the deposited ceramics.¹¹⁸ This layer has been significantly damaged by the foundations of a much later monumental building, which existed next to the mosque until the early 20th century and was contemporary with it. The building was apparently constructed as a part of the same early 17th-century pious foundation and has been identified with one of the eight inns seen by Evliya Celebi when he visited Babadag several decades later. 119 Meanwhile, the excavations around the türbe of Sarı Saltuk have confirmed the late emergence of the present building, probably after the town's desolation in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-9, but have also revealed the remains of two earlier phases of the tomb's existence. One was contemporary to the 'Alī Ghazi Pasha Mosque and the adjacent inn, i.e. datable to the 17th-18th centuries, while the earliest level marked the erection of the original türbe and the religious complex around it by Sultan Bāyezīd II in the late 15th century. No earlier traces of occupation of the site have been found on that side of the brook.¹²⁰ This contradicts Evliva Çelebi's legendary story of how Bāyezīd, after a miraculous dream on his way through Babadag, unearthed a marble sarcophagus with the name of Sarı Saltuk written on it "in the Tatar script" and built there the new mausoleum. 121

Thus, although the archaeological evidence is limited, it suggests that a Byzantine settlement existed on the territory of present-day Babadag from the late 10th to the mid-11th century, when it seems to have been destroyed by the nomad incursions from the north. ¹²² It was only four centuries later that Bāyezīd II revived it by building a pious complex devoted to Sarı Saltuk on bare soil. A new settlement grew around it and soon expanded towards the site of the old one, on the other side of the nearby brook, where a new commercial centre of the town emerged in the early 17th century around the newly built mosque of ʿAlī Pasha.

The limited scope of the archaeological excavations leaves the possibility open that the original late 13^{th} -century tomb and $z\bar{a}viye$ of Sarı Saltuk were still located somewhere in the vicinity of present-day Babadag, but this can only remain a hypothesis. The specific ideological motivation behind Bāyezīd II's "reconstruction"

¹¹⁹ VASILIU 1996b, and especially p. 206 for the identification; EVLIYA ÇELEBI/KAHRAMAN – DAĞLI, 192.

¹¹⁸ VASILIU 1996a.

¹²⁰ IOSIPESCU – IOSIPESCU 2004, 321–2. I am grateful to Dr. Aurel-Daniel Stănică for drawing my attention to that study as well as to some of the other archaeological materials used in this section.

¹²¹ EVLIYA ÇELEBI/KAHRAMAN - DAĞLI, 193.

¹²² VASILIU 1996a, 178.

of the mausoleum will be discussed elsewhere, but the "rediscovery" of sacred places related to earlier Muslim presence in Rūm was a characteristic feature of the Ottoman expansion. It suffices to remind of the equally miraculous discovery of the tomb of Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī after the conquest of Constantinople by Meḥmed II (r. 1444–6, 1451–81), an act that his son Bāyezīd was surely eager to replicate in the context of his own victorious campaign in Moldavia in 1484.¹²³ As for the choice of location and its possible relation to the name of Babadag (if it had existed earlier as claimed by Evliya Çelebi), one should keep in mind that the tomb of another "Baba" is still to be found, even more fittingly, on the hill overseeing the town—the tomb of Koyun Baba. As things stand, it is impossible to find out when this shrine was established and if it is dedicated to an otherwise unknown local saint or the more famous Koyun Baba (d. 873/1468) who was buried in the Anatolian town of Osmancık but, like Sarı Saltuk, is venerated in other places, too. ¹²⁴

While the archaeological evidence is insufficient to confirm the original location of Sarı Saltuk's tomb, it is much more conclusive regarding the non-existence of any notable settlement at Babadag between the mid- 11^{th} and the late 15^{th} centuries. This once again brings us to the question of the identification of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's town of $B\bar{a}b\bar{a}$ $Salta\bar{u}q$, if we put aside the unverifiable hypothesis about its being a now non-existent settlement somewhere in the steppe. The traveller's statement that it was "the last of the towns possessed by the Turks", as he calls the Tatars throughout the narrative of his journey in the Golden Horde, 125 coupled with the incontestable evidence about Tatar sovereignty over Sakçı (Isaccea) and Saltuk's residence there in the late 13^{th} century, makes that town the most suitable candidate for the Tatar town of $B\bar{a}b\bar{a}$ $Salta\bar{u}q$. Indeed, the generally confused itinerary of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's travel through the Eastern Balkans and the unrecognizable place names that he provides suggest that he was writing out of memory some time after the journey itself. He must have simply reproduced what he remembered about the town in question, i.e. its links to the locally famous saint Saltuk. The latter's name may

¹²³ Cf. ALEKSIEV 2012, 62; VEINSTEIN 2005, 516-17 and passim.

¹²⁴ On this saint and his cult, see OCAK 1999, 94–6; ŞAHIN 2002; DOĞANBAŞ 2015. Koyun Baba's *velāyetnāme* mentions nothing about Babadag or Dobruja, but the 15th-century vita of his contemporary Otman Baba (d. 1478) retells how Koyun Baba miraculously helped the latter cross the sea at Terkoz and thus it suggests Koyun Baba's presence in the Balkans: OBV/KILIÇ, 22. (Perhaps by chance, the next episode features Otman Baba as a reincarnation of Sarı Saltuk: OBV/KILIÇ, 23.) Shrines by the name of Koyun Baba can also be found in a number of other places in Anatolia as well as in Edirne and near present-day Tetovo in Northern Macedonia: see GÜREL 2019.

¹²⁵ IBN BAŢŢŪŢA/DEFRÉMERY – SANGUINETTI, vol. 2, 363–4, 372, 375, 379, 484, 489, 496, etc.; IBN BAŢŢŪŢA/GIBB, 473–4, 478–9, 481, 484, 489, 496, etc.

have even been informally attached to the settlement by the traveller's Tatar/Muslim informers. 126

A relevant, albeit later, source for the location of Sarı Saltuk's activities in Northern Dobruja is the Saltuknāme, a book of the saint's miraculous exploits, originally composed by Abu'l-Khayr-i Rūmī between 1473 and 1480 for the Ottoman prince Cem (d. 1495). The earliest dated manuscript copies were made in 985/1577 and 1000/1591, respectively, and scholars have noted that the now-available text of the work was reshaped in the 16th century to accommodate a number of allusions to the Sunni-Shia strife between the Ottomans and the Safavids after the rise of Shah Ismā'īl (r. 1501-24).¹²⁷ Much work remains to be done in order to disentangle the numerous historical, hagiographic, epic, and mythological layers of this voluminous source as well as to establish their origin, but it is relatively safe to believe Abu'l-Khayr-i Rūmī's own statement that he compiled much of the information on the basis of oral accounts circulating in Ottoman Rumelia in the 1470s-notably, before Bāyezīd II gave rise to the Ottoman town of Babadag in the next decade. 128 Although the narrative traces Saltuk's encounters with people – mostly to-be-Islamized "unbelievers" – and supernatural creatures in various parts of the thenknown world and beyond, Crimea and the Balkans stand out as his most traversed areas, with several settlements (e.g. Adrianople and Kaffa) more specifically associated with his exploits. One of them is a place called Tūnā Baba, i.e. "[the town of the] Baba on the Danube", which some researchers tend to identify with Babadag. 129 Theoretically, this identification is not impossible considering Babadag's relative proximity to the Danube (ca. 35 km), but a closer reading of the text once again makes present-day Isaccea the better fit. First of all, Tūnā Baba is where Prince Cem reportedly arrived after hunting down a monstrous wolf and, hearing about Sarı Saltuk's glorious deeds from the sheikh's followers (mürīdler) living

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¹²⁶ A similar case can be found in the same itinerary, where Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mentions a "fortress of Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik", somewhere in the Southern Balkans, "at the foot of a mountain beside a tumultuous river called Iṣṭafīlī": see IBN Baṭṭūṭa/Defrémery – Sanguinetti, vol. 2, 419; IBN Baṭṭūṭa/Gibb, 501. The name of the river and some other considerations have led H. Norris 1994, 218–9 to reasonably identify the place with the town referred to by the 12^{th} -century geographer al-Idrīsī as Istilīfinūs — an Arabicized form of the Byzantine name (ἡ Στίλβνος) of present-day Sliven in Bulgaria: cf. Nedkov 1960, 87, 105, 144. Whatever the identification of the town, it is impossible that it bore the Muslim hero's name in the first half of the 14^{th} century, when the region was firmly under Christian control.

¹²⁷ MÉLIKOFF 1994, 232–3; KARAMUSTAFA 2015, 363. On the MSS, see YÜCE 1987, 5–15; SMITH 1982, 217; and the forewords to the 3-volume edition cited below. I have also consulted a copy of MS Hazine 1612 from the Topkapı Palace Library in Istanbul.

¹²⁸ EBÜ'L-HAYR-I RÛMÎ/AKALIN, vol. 3, 365–6; Hazine 1612, fol. 616a. For a discussion of the historical layers in the *Saltuknāme*, see KÖPRÜLÜ 1992, 43–51. Unfortunately, M. F. Köprülü's announced monograph on the topic was never published.

¹²⁹ See e.g. ALEXANDRESCU-DERSCA BULGARU 1978, 448, n. 27; OCAK 2016, 86, 95–6, 139. A. Y. Ocak strangely seems to equate Babadag with Isaccea or at least with Ibn al-Sarrāj's Ṣajī.

there, commissioned Abu'l-Khayr-i Rūmī to collect and write down all the stories (menāķīb) about him. 130 The author was apparently a man of Cem's entourage and thus should have had first-hand knowledge of the place in question, if we accept the veracity of his account. On several occasions in the text, he refers to the town as being "on the banks of the Danube" (Tūnā kenārında), while other episodes also suggest its immediate juxtaposition to the river.¹³¹ Most telling is the story about how it acquired its name: On his way from the Balkans to Kaffa in Crimea with a thousand men, Saltuk charged one of them with the task to hurry forward and find a place for an "easy" (āsān) crossing of the Danube. On "this" (i.e. the southern) side of that place, there was a fortress whose ruler welcomed the sheikh and offered him his allegiance. His name was Pāpā Dīmītrī, but Saltuk called him Ibrāhīm and left three hundred of his men with him. The town itself acquired the name of Baba and the local church was turned into a masjid where the Friday prayer was held.¹³² This description leaves little doubt as to the identity between the town of Tūnā Baba and Sakçı, with the latter located at one of the most suitable fords on the Lower Danube in the Middle Ages. If any further argumentation is needed, it ought to be noted that no possible form of the name Sakçı is encountered throughout the text, i.e. there is no reason to assume that there was a place of that name different from Tūnā Baba. As a side note, the account of three hundred men left there by Saltuk is the closest to a possible Turkic/Muslim colonisation in the area to be reported in the Saltuknāme-an account that hardly corroborates Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's story of a mass migration of Anatolian nomads. To be sure, extracting any reliable historical information from a work of that kind is a risky task requiring a systematic analysis of the text, which is impossible to conduct here. What is obvious, however, is that in Abu'l-Khayr-i Rūmī's terms Tūnā Baba was identical with Sakçı and not with Babadag.

The evidence discussed so far suggests that until the late 15th century there was no town in Dobruja associated with Sarı Saltuk other than Sakçı/Isaccea. What was, then, the location of his original tomb, built at a distance of "three hours" away from that settlement according to the contemporary Ibn al-Sarrāj? Even if we take this account as an approximation, it is reasonable to locate the *türbe* in the close vicinity of the Danubian town. In fact, it was long before Ibn al-Sarrāj's narrative became known to modern scholarship that Petar Mutafchiev drew attention to the frequent identification of Sarı Saltuk with the Christian saint Nicholas in a number of Ottoman-era sources and holy sites (especially in the Eastern Balkans), on the one hand, and the fact that the present-day village of Niculiţel, ten kilometres to the south of Isaccea, probably drew its name from a now non-existent monastery devoted the St Nicholas and attested in 16th- and 17th-centrury sources (as a

¹³⁰ Ebü'l-Hayr-i Rûmî/Akalin, vol. 3, 365-6; Hazine 1612, fol. 616a.

¹³¹ EBÜ'L-HAYR-I RÛMÎ/AKALIN, vol. 2, 58, 62, 68, 186; EBÜ'L-HAYR-I RÛMÎ/AKALIN, vol. 3, 266.

¹³² EBÜ'L-HAYR-I RÛMÎ/AKALIN, vol. 1, 153–4; Hazine 1612, fol. 95a.

place called "Monastery" only), on the other. 133 Later archaeological research at the nearby site of an early medieval earthen rampart has revealed the remains of a monastic complex datable, according to Petre Diaconu, to the second half of the 12th century. 134 A reconsideration of the numismatic finds has led Ernest Oberländer-Târnoveanu to shift the dating to the first half of the 13th century and to suggest that the destruction of the complex, and the small trefoil-plan church in particular, was caused by a late Cuman incursion or the Mongol invasion of 1241. However, Oberländer-Târnoveanu also points to a Golden Horde coin "from the 13th-14th centuries" demonstrating that the place was still inhabited some time after the disappearance of the Christian monastery. 135 This scarce evidence, coupled with the widespread practice of Sufi shrines appropriating former Christian sanctuaries in the Balkans—a practice particularly pronounced in the cult of Sarı Saltuk-suggests that the area of Niculitel was indeed a good candidate to house the sheikh's tomb and the dervish lodge founded around it.¹³⁶ Needless to say, the proposed location cannot but remain hypothetical until the discovery of further written or archaeological evidence.

The consequences and the (lacking) evidence

Considering the shaky grounds of Yazıcıoğlu ʿAlī's story of a largescale migration of Anatolian Turks to 13th-century Dobruja demonstrated so far, it is unnecessary to enter here into a detailed discussion of that migration's supposed consequences. A note is due, however, on some theses circulating in scholarship without sufficient argumentation, such as those in the opening quotation of this paper. Most striking in this regard is the representation of the 14th-century Principality of Dobruja as a state formation of the Anatolian migrants from the previous century. To begin with, it should be highlighted that there is no direct evidence regarding

¹³³ Mutafčiev 1943, 54–9; On the identification of Sarı Saltuk with St Nicolas see also Hasluck 1929, vol. 1, 51, 54–6; vol. 2, 429–34, 576–9; Rohdewald 2017, 85–8; Ocak 2016, 143–6; Mutafova 2008.

the possible relation of Niculițel to the activities of Sarı Saltuk has also been hinted at, on the basis of Ibn al-Sarrāj's account, by Costan 2014, 109, n. 29; Costan 2016, 22–3. G. Costan's (mostly mediated) use of the sources is at times questionable, but his idea to search for some connection between the still-standing 14th-century church of St Athanasius in the village of Niculițel itself and the reintroduction of Christianity in the area is noteworthy, albeit perhaps far-fetched (see Costan 2014). For the church of St Athanasius, cf. Moisescu 2000. This thesis was first developed by the Bulgarian historian G. Balaschev (1930) and did later enter some standard reference works such as TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (Karpat 1994b, 1996) and The Encyclopaedia of Islam (Zajączkowski 1991). In the latter, it acquired absurd dimensions in denial of all available sources: according to W. Zajączkowski, the principality was founded by 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā' ūs II himself in the 13th century. See also Kiel 1994, 166–7; Kiel 2009, 141.

¹³⁴ DIACONU 1972, 312-15 and passim.

¹³⁵ Oberländer-Târnoveanu 1980.

the origin of the short-lived dynasty that ruled the principality. Its first three known representatives, the brothers Balik, Dobrotitsa, and Theodor, first appear in the sources in the mid-1340s. In 1346, the latter two were sent by "Balik, the archon of Karvona" (the first capital of the principality to the north of Varna) in support of the Byzantine regency led by the Empress Anna of Savoy in the internecine war against John Kantakouzenos, who actually provides the evidence. 138 Attempts to establish the origin of the brothers have been primarily based on their names as well as on those of Dobrotitsa's son/s Ivanko and Terter-probably denoting one and the same person¹³⁹ – and the notable Cholpan (Jolpani), who is only attested alongside a certain Kosta (Costa) as a diplomatic representative of Ivanko (Iuanchus) in his 1387 treaty with Genoa. 140 The available onomastic evidence is in fact quite conclusive that the dynasty and some part of the ruling elite in the principality had a Cuman origin. The most compelling proof thereof is the rare name of Terter¹⁴¹, which is identical with that of the Terterids who ruled as Bulgarian tsars in the late 13th and the early 14th centuries. The originator of that dynasty, George I Terter (r. 1280-92), was explicitly referred to by Pachymeres as being "from the Cumans" (Τερτερῆς ἐκ Κομάνων ἦν), and was probably related to the Cuman clan of Terter-oba, one of whose leaders is attested in a Rus' chronicle among the participants in the battle of Kayala River (somewhere in present-day Eastern Ukraine) in 1185.142 Balik and Cholpan are more common Turkic names, which may happen to appear in an Anatolian/Oghuz context as well, but onomastic compendia show that they were particularly widespread in Eastern Europe (especially Moldavia), Central Asia, and, in the case of Cholpan, in the Mamluk lands - all places with considerable Cuman or Tatar presence in the period under consideration here. 143 Furthermore, on the basis of the Slavic/Bulgarian name of Dobrotitsa and the Christian/Greek names of Theodor and Ivanko-the latter in a Bugarianized di-

¹³⁸ Kantakouzenos/Schopen, 584; Kantakouzenos/Fatouros - Krischer, 389-90; Atanasov 2009, 90-1.

¹³⁹ See BILARSKY 1992, 18-21.

¹⁴⁰ Among the notable studies on this matter, see MUTAFČIEV 1927, 1931; IORGA 1928; BILIAR-SKY 1992, 6–7; DIACONU 1994; ATANASOV 2009, 26, 82–3, 112–13, 183–4, 421–2 (and other works cited in n. 1 on pp. 9–10 there). For the text of the 1387 treaty, see GYUZELEV 1995, 127–132. ¹⁴¹ This name is attested in a Byzantine short chronicle (no. 22 in SCHREINER 1975, p. 182/19) and some coins (see BILIARSKY 1992, 3–6; ATANASOV 2009, 291–5 and the works cited there). ¹⁴² PACHYMERES/FAILLER, vol. 3, 290–1 (IX, 26); PSRL, vol. 2, c. 641. See also RÁSONYI 2006, ¹⁴³ COLDEN 1005, 7, 110; MORLINGEN 1002, H. 2007, 7, Legal de liberte through Dr. Mornaudeline.

¹⁴² PACHYMERES/FAILLER, vol. 3, 290–1 (IX, 26); PSRL, vol. 2, c. 641. See also RÁSONYI 2006, 247; GOLDEN 1995–7, 119; MORAVCSIK 1983, II, 306–7. I would like to thank Dr. Konstantin Golev for his useful observations on that matter.

¹⁴³ See RÁSONYI – BASKI 2007, vol. 1, 117, 208; RÁSONYI 2006, 174, 198–9. On the etymological evolution of the Turkic word *çolpan* with some further examples of its usage as a name, see ŞIRIN USER 2014. Since the 14th–15th centuries, *Tatar* became a common designation for the heterogeneous Turkified population of the western steppes and the Northern Black Sea region, demographically dominated by the remnants of the Cuman-Qïpchak tribes: see e.g. GOLDEN 1992, 297–302, 317, 388–9.

minutive form—it is safe to conclude that they were all descendants of a Cuman family well integrated in the Bulgarian elite of the time by means of cross-marriages, very much like the royal dynasties of the Terterids and the Shishmanids (1323–96) who may have been their kinsmen.¹⁴⁴

Two more vague arguments of ecclesiastic and archaeological nature, respectively, have been put forward to substantiate the alleged link between the Principality of Dobruja and the 13th-century migration. The first of them, most thoroughly developed by G. Balaschev, is based on the fact that for some time in the 1320s and, ultimately, since 1340 the territories that came to be consolidated under the control of the principality and the metropolitan seat of Varna and Karvuna were subjected to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. While the secession from the Bulgarian Church has rightfully been interpreted in scholarship as an indication for the chronology of the principality's formation, that hardly gives any clues about the dynasty's origin or allegiance. This process was typical for the separatist tendencies that dominated political life in the Balkans in the 14th century and has its most obvious parallel in the Tsardom of Vidin, whose ruler Ivan Sratsimir (r. ca. 1356–96), a brother of the Bulgarian tsar in Tarnovo Ivan Shishman (r. 1371–95), also subjected the local church hierarchy to Constantinople.

The dubious archaeological evidence consists of two stone plates with reliefs that once decorated the entrance to the fortress of Kaliakra, which served as the principality's capital under its second ruler Dobrotitsa and housed a *zāviye* associated with Sarı Saltuk in Ottoman times. ¹⁴⁸ One of the reliefs depicts a fight between two riders, while the other one has a horseman holding a mace or a sceptre with a bull head on the top. Their discoverer Maria Yosifova has seen in them a Seljuk tradition on the basis of some partial parallels with 12th-14th-century stone reliefs from the Caucasian town of Kubachi (Dagestan) and 13th-14th-century engravings

¹⁴⁴ The name of Dobrotitsa's son Terter suggests a probable link to the Terterid dynasty, while the location of the principality also allows to hypothesize the kinship between Balik's family and that of the Shishmanid tsar of Bulgaria Ivan Alexander (r. 1331–71). The latter's father was half-Cuman, half-Bulgarian, while his mother is attested in a 1337 letter by Pope Benedict XII (1334–42) as "ducisse Carnonen", which some researchers have rendered as "duchess of Karvona", the later domain of Balik: see Duychev 1937; Atanasov 2009, 78–83.

¹⁴⁵ BALASCHEV 1930, 15-17.

¹⁴⁶ See e.g. Atanasov 2009, 67–72, 76–8.

¹⁴⁷ BOZHILOV - GYUZELEV 1999, 651.

¹⁴⁸ For the *zāviye*, see Hasluck 1929, vol. 1, 51; vol. 2, 578; Kiel 2000, 281–2; Dimitrov 1994, 76–88; Ocak 2016, 142–3. It is attested since the 16^{th} century, but 15^{th} -century sources such as the *Saltuknāme* and the *velayetnāme* of Haci Bektaş also feature Kaliakra (*Keligra*) as a place where Sari Saltuk performed some of his miracles: see Ebü'l-Hayr-i Rûmî 1988, II, 31–2; Gölpinarli 1990, 46. See also Yüce 1987, 33–4, 197; Aleksiev 2012, 43–9, 55, 58; Ocak 2016, 70–5.

on metal objects from Mosul (Iraq).¹⁴⁹ These locations, which can be deemed peripheral to the Rūm Seljuk cultural sphere at best, as well as the lack of identified parallels from Anatolia proper, both speak against any relation to the supposed Turkmen migration to Dobruja. Moreover, Georgi Atanasov has convincingly argued for a significantly later, Ottoman-era dating of the plates.¹⁵⁰ The lack of any other archaeological material that can be related to pre-Ottoman settlers with Anatolian, let alone Seljuk, background in the generally well-studied medieval settlements along the Danube and Black Sea coasts of Dobruja is also telling.

Despite the absence of the 13th-century Anatolian migrants from the archaeological map of the region, a number of researchers have argued that they had a lasting impact on its ethnodemographic setting by presenting them as forefathers of the Gagauz—a Turkic-speaking Christian population that was mainly based in Dobruja until the late 18th and the early 19th centuries, when a large share of it migrated to Bessarabia and Southern Ukraine in the context of the Russian-Ottoman wars.¹⁵¹ Besides Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's statement that some part of Sarı Saltuk's men remained in Dobruja after his death and apostatized, i.e. became Christians, the main arguments underlying this theory rest on the name "Gagauz" itself, which some see as a derivative of "Kaykā'ūs", as well as on some linguistic features of the Gagauz language. The etymology of "Gagauz" is an object of numerous alternative interpretations that cannot be dealt with here, but it ought to be noted that the name appears in no pre-19th century source.¹⁵² This is surely not to say that it did not

¹⁴⁹ Yosifova 1978.

¹⁵⁰ Atanasov 2013. His main arguments are the continued use of the Kaliakra fortress until the 18th century; the stylistic parallels with reliefs from other Ottoman fortifications in the region such as Silistra and Hârşova; and the strong resemblance between the depiction of the sceptre-holding horseman and miniatures from a 16th-century copy of Firdausi's *Shāhnāma* as well as with a number of similarly dated physical sceptres with bull heads from museum collections in the Middle East. With respect to the last argument, it could be added that the Persianate miniature art of the *Shāhnāma* style, and copies of the *Shāhnāma* itself, gained tremendous popularity among the Ottoman elite in the 16th century: see e.g., Schmidt 2012; Uluç 2012.

¹⁵¹ The first one to propose this thesis was once again G. BALASCHEV (1930, 19). See also WITTEK 1952, 668; WITTEK 1953; DECEI 1968, 108–11; İNALCIK 1991, 610; ZAJĄCZKOWSKI 1991; KARPAT 1994a, 1994b, 1996; GÜNGÖR 1996; KIEL 2009, 141; GANGLOFF 1998, 14–22, who also provides a relatively comprehensive bibliography.

¹⁵² The first known mention of the designation "Gagauz" dates from 1837 in the context of the largescale Christian migrations from Ottoman Dobruja to the Russian Empire. Moreover, a number of 19th and early 20th-century observers have noted that this name was originally an exonym with pejorative connotations: see MATEEVA 2006, 20, 73–5. Its alternative interpretations usually go hand in hand with the various theories about the origin of the Gagauz. For an outline of the major theses, see MATEEVA 2006, 23–36; SHABASHOV 2006, 8–14; ATANASOV 2009, 401; GUBOGLO 2011; KAPALÓ 2011, 58–63 (in English, with some useful ob-

exist in earlier times, but it is risky at best to link it to a particular 13th-century personality that, moreover, in no way survives in the well-researched historical memory of these people.

As for the linguistic arguments, they are entirely based on the classification of the Gagauz as belonging to the Oghuz subgroup of the Turkic languages as well as on a study published in 1933 by Tadeusz Kowalski, who argued that the Gagauz of Dobruja and the Muslims in the neighbouring Deli Orman region spoke a common tongue, termed by him "Danubian Turkic". He rather cautiously proposed a threestage chronology of the evolution of this language: "the earliest [layer] was formed by the remains of a northern Turkic people, the second - by a strong southern group going back to a time before the arrival of the Ottomans, and, finally, the third layer was established by Turkic colonists and Turkified elements from the Ottoman age."153 The second layer, which, in Kowalski's view, imposed the "southern" (i.e. Oghuz) linguistic character on that Turkic dialect, has naturally been interpreted by some later researchers as stemming from the 13th-century "people of Kaykā'ūs" who reportedly settled in Dobruja. However, while Kowalski provides numerous examples of "northern" (mostly Cuman-Qïpchak) elements in the Gagauz tongue, he gives no particular argumentation for the "second layer" other than the inference that it cannot have been brought by Ottoman-era settlers, part of whom (the Gagauz) would then become Christians by the 19th century. Indeed, mass Christianisation was hardly thinkable in a Muslim state, but a pre-Ottoman migration from Anatolia is not the only possible scenario for the "Oghuzisation" of the Gagauz language. Kowalski actually admitted in a later study that the Gagauz may be descendants of "Turkic elements who came from the north, from beyond the Danube", but oddly maintained that the neighbouring Muslim Turks of the Deli Orman migrated to the Balkans in pre-Ottoman times and, in time, their language mingled with that of the northern settlers. 154 In fact, the steppe nomads who repeatedly entered Dobruja from the north in the Middle Ages included Oghuz groups while, on the other hand, Ottoman archival sources have made it clear that the majority of the Turkish speaking Muslim population in Dobruja and the Deli Orman was formed in the late 15th and the 16th centuries by means of Turkmen colonisation from Anatolia, either directly or via the previously colonized Southern Balkans. 155 The question of which elements of the highly eclectic Gagauz tongue can be deemed "original" and which were a product of "exter-

servations on the national/political biases underlying some of the theories). For arguments against the Gagauz–Kaykāʾūs theory and an alternative hypothesis, see also CAHEN 1982.

¹⁵³ KOWALSKI 1933, 27.

¹⁵⁴ KOWALSKI 1938, 73.

¹⁵⁵ See DIMITROV 1997-9; ANTOV 2017, esp. 115-24. Given that a large share of the settlers migrated from Eastern Anatolia in the context of the Ottoman-Safavid struggle, it probably accounted for the parallels between the "Danubian Turkic" and some dialects from Northeastern Asia Minor, identified by KOWALSKI 1933, 24-5.

nal" influences remains in the hands of the linguists who have actually proposed theories for its evolution differing from that of Kowalski. 156 Undoubtedly, this purely linguistic issue cannot be isolated from the abundant ethnographic and historical scholarship on the Gagauz in which the thesis presenting them as "the people of Kaykāvūs" is neither the only nor the dominant one.

Conclusion

Returning to the goals of this study as outlined in the introduction, it may be useful to first highlight the undisputed historical data that can be extracted from the diverse source material discussed so far. The most obvious fact is that a dervish called (Sarı) Saltuk was active in the region of the Danube Delta in the last decades of the 13^{th} century. More precisely, he was based in the Danubian town of Sakçı (present-day Isaccea), which was at the time under direct Tatar control. Sakçı was most likely the "town of $B\bar{a}b\bar{a}$ $Salt\bar{u}q$ " visited by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in the 1330s. Attempts to identify the latter with present-day Babadag have been proven futile by the written and archaeological evidence, according to which no noticeable settlement existed on that site between the 11^{th} and the 15^{th} centuries.

The pre-Ottoman sources unanimously locate Sarı Saltuk in a "Qïpchaq" environment, i.e. an environment dominated demographically, culturally, and politically by the Tatars of the Golden Horde, including the Crimean Peninsula where he undoubtedly spent some time. It is clear that this saintly figure was involved in the Islamisation of the Horde and its southwestern section under the autonomous ruler Nogai, in particular.¹⁵⁷ There is also enough contemporary evidence, mainly of Arabic provenance, to prove that the equally famous mystic Barak Baba, who ended up at the Ilkhanid court, was Saltuk's disciple. He was, however, not a son of the former Seljuk Sultan 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs II. This link seems to have been invented by Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī in an attempt to incorporate the two saints in his story of a largescale migration to Dobruja of Anatolian nomads associated with the sultan. Indeed, it was already Paul Wittek who convincingly showed that the passages featuring Sarı Saltuk formed one of four plot lines artificially stitched together by the Ottoman historian and the sheikh's figure was interpolated in the migration

¹⁵⁶ For an outline of the various theses, see MATEEVA 2006, 36–42.

¹⁵⁷ The Golden Horde has already been highlighted as the main environment of Sarı Saltuk's missionary activities by MUTAFČIEV 1943, 34–63 and TOGAN 1981, 267–70, although the latter accepts the veracity of the migration story. The Tatar link is further evident in the wide-spread legends (e.g. in the *Saltuknāme* and Evliya Çelebi's *Seyāḥatnāme*) about Saltuk's exploits in places with significant Tatar and no Anatolian-Turkish population such as Poland and Lithuania: see e.g. NORRIS 2006, 64–6; ROHDEWALD 2017. Sarı Saltuk's association with the lands of the Golden Horde and the significant intertextuality between his legendary cycle (esp. the *Saltuknāme*) and Tatar narratives of conversion are explored by DEWEESE 1994, 207–8, 251–6.

story, itself likely based on oral accounts.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Wittek accepted the general reliability of the narrative and later researchers have tended to view it as a homogeneous entity. Ensuing attempts to identify the Dobruja nomads with a particular Anatolian tribal community such as the Chepni Turkmens as well as to present Sarı Saltuk as their tribal chief are therefore highly speculative and have no footing in the pre-Ottoman sources.¹⁵⁹

The relation of Sarı Saltuk to the supposed Anatolian settlers in Dobruja, and indeed the authenticity of the migration story itself, can at this stage remain in the sphere of the hypotheses only. The contemporary and near-contemporary sources are quite inconclusive in this regard. The Seljuk historians mention nothing, while the information of the Byzantine authors is rather circumstantial. The most relevant accounts concern the origin of the so-called Tourkopouloi who, according to Gregoras, were descendants of the Turks who came to Byzantium together with 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs, and, according to Pachymeres, had been recently Christianized when they joined the tumultuous events in Thrace of the early 1300s from "the northern regions". While this evidence may indeed be related to a group of Anatolian nomads who had settled in Dobruja, this is not the sole possible interpretation and, moreover, the accounts of the Byzantine authors contradict each other as well as that of Yazıcıoğlu in a number of details. The latter is also tainted by factual inaccuracies, 160 apparent manipulations (e.g. the ancestry of Barak Baba), and internal contradictions such as his statement that the nomads were sent to Dobruja due to their unsuitability to urban life and need for pastureland, but when they arrived there, they not only established their camps but populated "two-three Muslim towns" as well.

Despite the outlined shortcomings of Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī's account, some of its elements do sound more trustworthy. He certainly had some relatively reliable information on the fate of 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs's descendants in Byzantium extracted from people who were, or claimed to be, among them. There is also no obvious reason for him, as a Muslim historian, to record the apostasy of the Muslim Turks who remained in Dobruja after the death of Sarı Saltuk if there was no grain of truth in the story. As noted, however, there is a problem of a geographical-cumchronological nature with some researchers' attempts to identify these apostates with the *Tourkopouloi* of the Byzantine sources: it is exactly in the late 13th and the early 14th centuries that contemporary evidence attests to Muslim presence in some settlements of Northern Dobruja as well as to the area's location in the Tatar sphere of influence. This was certainly not a suitable environment for the Christianisation

¹⁵⁸ WITTEK 1952, 652–3. According to Wittek, the amalgamation of the four stories resulted in what he called a "Destān of 'Izzeddīn's and his people's exile in the Dār ul-Ḥarb" (WITTEK 1952, 667).

 $^{^{159}}$ The image of Sarı Saltuk as a tribal chief is most thoroughly developed by OCAK 2016, 92–8. 160 See e.g. n. 74 above.

of a significant portion of the local population. Nevertheless, it is still possible that Yazıcıoğlu 'Alī only developed and exaggerated a genuine core of information about a group of Anatolian Turks who accompanied either 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs or Sarı Saltuk in the Golden Horde and ended up in Dobruja. One should also keep in mind the possibility that the Ottoman author manipulated or invented the migration story in order to explain the presence of Turkish-speaking Christians in the Northeastern Balkans, if such a population already existed in his time.

Whatever the truth, the relation of the supposed migration to the Gagauz is equally hypothetical. *If* such a migration did in fact take place and some of the Turkish settlers in Dobruja were baptized, it is logical to assume that they played a certain role in the ethnogenesis of these people but were hardly the decisive element in it. Historical, linguistic, and ethnographic data all show that this was a complex process spanning multiple centuries and involving a substantial northern Turkic substratum. Against this background, the conception of the 14th-century Principality of Dobruja as a state formation of the Anatolian Turks is a fiction that runs counter to the scarce evidence about the origin of the ruling dynasty.

At the present stage of research, it is impossible to provide a definitive solution to the puzzle set up by Yazıcıoğlu. What is clear is that his interpolations to the original narrative of Ibn Bībī form a masterful compilation of historical facts and personalities, dubious oral traditions, and outright historical mystifications. The particular motivation behind this compilation and its intended message as well as its reception and developments in later times deserve a separate study within the context of Ottoman politics and historiography.

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Experiencing Alterity: Italian Merchants and the Local Population in the 14th Century Venetian Azov Sea Changes and Continuity

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Abstract

After the Fourth Crusade (1204), Western merchants began to frequent the Black Sea basin. Genoa and Venice established commercial settlements in the region called emporia, which over time became an indispensable reference point for travellers from both Western Europe and from the East. The commercial history of the two Italian cities soon intersected with the rapid formation process of the Mongol Empire that by the mid-13th century extended from China to Eastern Europe. The constitution of a homogeneous and vast political entity facilitated communications and partly promoted them, guaranteeing Western merchants a "safer" space within which to move and cover distances previously unimaginable. In the emporia founded on the Black Sea – and in this context – the Western urban mercantile class encountered the local element and other migrants from substantially unknown geographical areas. This paper examines relationships between Venetian citizens and foreigners as well as the local population who lived in Tana on the Azov Sea. Tana was the easternmost settlement of the entire Latin trading system and is studied here from the mid-14th century until the end of the century, a period that was both politically and economically problematic and characterized by international tensions, economic crises but also extraordinary opportunities for commercial expansion and profit.

Keywords: Venice, Mongol Empire, Nomads, Azov Sea, Tana, Golden Horde, Eurasian trade

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1. The 14th-century Venetian merchant: growth, crisis, and consolidation

Between the 11th and 14th centuries, Western Europe experienced demographic and economic growth that is traditionally associated with the concept of "commercial revolution". This phenomenon, whose breadth varied from region to region and did not affect all social classes equally, changed western society just as much as the industrial revolution did in the 18th and 19th centuries.¹ The expansive tendency was general and rearranged the social hierarchies without upsetting the order preordained by divine will.² The protagonists of this new course were the Italian cities and, in particular, those that, for a number of reasons that are out of the scope of our investigation here, were better prepared to take advantage of the opportunity: Genoa, Milan, Venice, and Florence.

Genoa and Venice's maritime power reached its acme in the 13th century. After the Fourth Crusade, both city-states established trade posts on the Black Sea coasts and their merchants regularly travelled to the Pontic regions. The two cities experienced very different historical trajectories, and their governing sought to dominate the Mediterranean and Levant maritime routes. If in Genoa the private initiative took precedence, in Venice the State supervised everything without overwhelming or depressing the capabilities of the individual by limiting their opportunities. Especially after the Serrata del Maggior Consiglio (February 1297),3 Venice's aristocratic government organized the market by centralizing its control. In Venice, trade was the primary source of wealth since the birth of the city. The nobility was personally engaged in commerce, but the humble classes were never entirely excluded from it. The State financed the shipbuilding industry, controlled the navigation routes, and assigned the ships to private auctions: a system called incanto. The State regulated the navigation calendar and managed the convoys voyages (conserva) to ensure the ships' safety. The State supervised the contracts with which a company was established. The State also deterred the creation of monopolies and guaranteed high wages even to the popular professions. Finally, the State regulated the flow of goods in and out of Venice, from the cheapest to the most valuable merchandise.

From the middle of the 13th century, and in some areas of Europe even earlier, the dominant classes increased their prosperity and the nouveaux wealthy (*gente nova*) pushed up the demand for luxury and exotic products. The changes in the mercantile profession represented a natural outlet to this condition. Merchants specialized, professionalized, and created increasingly sophisticated tools to maximize their business profits while reducing risks. In the 14th century, the merchant gradually became a sedentary entrepreneur at the head of a company capable of producing profits in far regions, counting on a well-organized and consistent workforce. Accountancy and banking techniques were developed, and new forms

¹ Gies - Gies 1972; Lopez 1976, 103ff.; Lopez 1955, 46-7; Cipolla 1980, 142-62; Pounds 1978.

² See for example KEDAR 1976, esp. ch. 2, and SPUFFORD 2006.

³ Raines 2003, 6ff.

of association created. There was no law in Venice that excluded the individual from commercial activity. The filter consisted of the resources available. That is why the nobility represented the majority in the Venetian *emporia* of the Levant. Nonetheless, the aristocracy completely belonged to the urban mercantile class that populated all the late medieval Italian cities.

Venetian exceptionalism was also expressed in the relative closure of the city towards foreigners. In Venice, one could enter, live, and trade, but the authorities imposed strict control on the activities of non-citizens. It is not a surprise that there was a closed and well-controlled German factory (*Fondaco dei Tedeschi*) just as it is no coincidence that the first Jewish ghetto in Europe was established in Venice. Still, in the first decades of the 14th century, it was necessary to reside in the city for twenty-five years to obtain Venetian citizenship.⁴ This rigidity was an obstacle to Venice's commercial development.⁵ The restrictions that applied to foreigners in the Black Sea emporia were somewhat more flexible, in particular in Tana, where all those who travelled on Venetian ships and resided in the Venetian quarter were considered part of the community.

The Black Sea region was central to the Eurasian trade system. Most of the leading international transit routes, both before and after the Mongol conquest, passed through the Pontic area. However, the Mongol Empire's formation in the 13th century stretched the barycentre of international trade further eastwards. The Mongols created the conditions for the integration of the Mediterranean and Pontic (from the Volga to Tabriz) trade systems. Whether we believe in the so-called Pax Mongolica or not, there is no doubt that the Mongol Empire guaranteed coherent political interlocutors and an efficient and secure communication system over unprecedented distances for at least fifty years.⁶ From the second half of the 13th century, Italian merchants penetrated deeper and deeper into Asia, and Muslim merchants from Transoxiana frequented the Pontic markets assiduously. It is also worth pointing out that goods travelled more than people, both in frequency and distance. The extraordinary experiences described in celebrated works by Marco Polo, Plano Carpini, or Giovanni di Montecorvino were exceptions and not the rule. The Black Sea ports became crucial junctions of this international trade system, which—in the face of the 14th-century downturn in the continental economy constituted the indispensable prop of a new process of economic "bilateral" expansion. The Italian "colonization" did not have a dominant actor that imposed its rhythm on local politics, but two subjects that dialogued to exploit the commercial activity from which both drew profits.

This balance underwent a crisis starting in the 1330s and travelling over long distances became increasingly difficult. To overcome the impediments, the mer-

⁴ MUELLER 1992, 37-8; MOLA 1994, 36-44.

⁵ LOPEZ 1955, 49.

⁶ DI COSMO 2009, 99-100.

chants invested more and more in local intermediaries and transitional stages. Trade was a primary resource for the nomads both for subsistence and the reproduction of their social hierarchies. Latin and Asian merchants were the two faces of the same coin, bearers of two similar exigences that met halfway. The encounter of the Western urban mercantile class with the nomads gave life to new economic cooperation that also developed into human and social interactions.

2. Venice, the Azov Sea and the "levels" of interactions

The Italian frequentation of the Black Sea ports began right after the Fourth Crusade. The Venetian conquest of Constantinople of 1204 led to the Eastern Roman Empire's dismantling, sealed in the *Partitio Romaniae*. Venice used the port of Sudak/Soldaïa in Crimea as a trade hub, but it was only in 1261 that the Italians planned to settle on the Black Sea shores. The Treaty of Nymphaeum, stipulated in March 1261 between Emperor Michael VIII (r. 1261–82) and the Genoese authorities, shifted the political balance in favour of the Tyrrhenian city, ensuring the possibility of exploiting the Pontic region, a centre between the Christian West and the Eastern markets. The stipulation of the treaty and the subsequent political fortunes of the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII put Venice in a condition of inferiority in relation to its rival. For decades the city tried to overcome the disadvantage. After alternating clashes, negotiations, and compromises, Venetian diplomacy concluded peace with the Byzantine emperor Andronicus II in 1310. Venice could expand in the Black Sea region once more.

Tana was located on the Don's left bank, within the vast delta that the river forms when it flows into the Sea of Azov. Built near the ancient Muslim Azak, the settlement was for almost two centuries the easternmost outpost of the Latin maritime cities' entire Eastern trading system. Since the second half of the 13th century, Tana obtained extraordinary economic and strategic importance. Here, interactions between the indigenous element (Turkic-Cuman and Mongol) and the Latin merchants was constant. Tana became one of the major centres for the supply of slaves and a crucial hub for Eurasian commerce, being on the route to the major Eurasian trading centres: Astrakhan, Saray, Urgench, Bukhara, Samarkand, and of course, China.

According to the sources, the first Latin officer who worked in Tana is the Genoese consul Ansaldo Spinola, active since 1304.¹⁰ The first mention of commercial galleys sent by the Venetian Senate to the Black Sea (*Galee di Romania-Mar Nero*) is in 1306.¹¹ Western merchants resided and worked in Tana from the second half of

⁷ Carile 1965, 129–35; Carile 1965-6, 168–9.

⁸ Balard 2017, 529-32.

Karpov 1995, 225–8; Papacostea 1979, 205–7; Bratianu 1969, 160-5; Skržinskaja 1968, 3–10;
 Berindei – Veinstein 1976, 110–11.

¹⁰ Balard 1978, 151; Lopez 1986, 463.

¹¹ STÖCKLY 1995, 105.

the 13th century until 1308, when the khan of the Golden Horde, Toqta (r. 1291–1312), expelled all the Westerners from the region. In this period, Tana grew and became an important international trade centre, benefiting from a relatively peaceful international context.

Venetian Tana's history began its second phase characterized by the Genoese return to Crimea and the Sea of Azov in 1315 and continued until the 1350s Genoese-Venetian war. The Venetian Senate expressly forbade their merchants to dock in Tana as late as 1330.¹² In fact, Venice established its organized community on the Azov Sea coast in 1332, after a long and exhausting negotiation with Özbeg Khan (r. 1313–41).¹³ These decades marked the culmination of the Italian presence in Tana; Genoa and Venice settled in the Northern Pontus permanently and with a stable administrative structure.

A third phase goes from the expiry of the ban to frequent Tana (*devetum Tane*), imposed by Genoa on its rival after the peace of Milan (1358), until the attack of Timur (1370–1405) in 1395. In between, there were the well-known clashes of 1343.¹⁴ In these years, the Venetian galleys resumed their journeys to both the Black Sea and the Azov Sea. The frequentation of the settlements was slowly re-established, and the internal transit routes towards Transoxiana were exploited again. In the second half of the 14th century, Tana did not lose its strategic and economic importance.

Throughout the 14th century, relations between Venice and the local authorities evolved on three levels, often overlapping each other. A first institutional level consisted of dialogue at the highest state level: the Venetian Senate on one side and the Mongol Khan of the Golden Horde on the other. A second institutional level on which the local authorities, the Venetian consul in Tana, and the Mongolian governor of Solgat interacted with one another. Finally, there was a personal level of daily relations between Venetian citizens and the local population. Commercial transactions and personal ties were part of this type of relationship.

3. Interactions: from political to personal

On June 19, 1347, the Venetian Senate sent two ambassadors to Tana, to whom a third ambassador was added directly from the *bailo* of Constantinople.¹⁵ The Venetian diplomats obtained from Janibeg (r. 1342–57), through the mediation of the Mongol governor of Solgat Sichilbey, the confirmation of the concessions made by Özbeg in 1332.¹⁶ Furthermore, Janibeg allowed the Venetians to use a plot of land

¹² STÖCKLY 1995, 106; CESSI 1937, 233.

¹³ Thomas 1880, 243-4; Tafel - Thomas 1964, 243ff.; Heyd 1913, 751.

¹⁴ Karpov 1994, 121-6; Balard 1978, 154; Pubblici 2017: 25-47; Di Cosmo - Pubblici 2022: 113-122.

¹⁵ Thiriet 1958, n. 201. Janibeg agreed to let the Venetians return to Tana, but the concession was ratified only in December 1347. Thomas 1880, 311.

¹⁶ On the treaty between Venice and Özbeg, see Pubblici 2005, 447–8.

separate from the Genoese, where they could trade.¹⁷ Janibeg confirmed the judicial prerogatives to the Venetian consul in Tana, but exclusively for the community he presided over. Any non-Venetian citizen was excluded from his jurisdiction. Judicial disputes should be held in the *curia*, where on September 9, 1363 the consul Niccolò Basilio threatened to fine the banker Pietro Bembo if the latter did not pay 1,800 besants he owed to him.¹⁸

Janibeg confirmed a large area (ca. 12 square kilometres) where the Venetians could reinstall their neighbourhood. The Mongol khan granted the Venetian community living and operating in Tana a tax reduction of 5% to 3%, while gold and silver were exempted altogether. The consul had to manage a potentially dangerous situation due to the tensions between Venetians and the local population; maybe that is why the officer received a substantial salary increase from the 30 grossi in 1334 to 70. Furthermore, the Venetian Senate established that the consul should receive a 1% on commercial transactions from all Venetian merchants or those "qui pro Venetis tractarentur". The levy was justified by the onerous expenses incurred for the frequent embassies that the Venetian Comune had to sustain in recent years and the expenses related to the restoration of damaged infrastructure and the construction of new houses.

The surviving notarial deeds contain precious information about restoration and new construction. The Venetian community in Tana was eager for a new start.²⁰ In their neighbourhood, the Venetians constituted a stable community. They had built a hospital,²¹ a public bath, and several churches. One of them was dedicated to Santa Maria and run by the Franciscans²² and so was a church dedicated to San Francesco.²³ Another church was named after San Marco²⁴ and hosted

¹⁷ «Luogho diviso da quello de Zenoessi, da poder far le suo mercadantie»: THOMAS 1880, 311.

¹⁸ Archivio di Stato di Venezia (from now on ASV), Cancelleria Inferiore (from now on CI), Notai 181, fasc. 5, f. 68r. Pucci Donati 2019, 163. I have personally studied most of the documents cited. Where I did not see the original, I cite from the excellent and precious work conducted by F. Pucci Donati (2019).

¹⁹ Thomas 1880, 243; Pegolotti 1936, 24: «Oro e argento e perle non pagano né comerchio né tamuga né nullo diritto alla Tana». The Mongols always encouraged the commerce of precious stones and metals.

²⁰ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 42v.

²¹ Dedicated to S. Antonio. ASV, CI, Miscellanea Notai, 20, carta 361; Notarile, Testamenti, Testamenti 924 of 30 July 1364; ASV, CI, Notai, 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 19v.

²² ASV, Notarile, Testamenti, Testamenti, 361, fasc. 32°, f. 129r; ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 3, f. 3r-v; 5v-6v; 6v-7v; 13v-14r; 18r-19r; 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 20r.

²³ ASV, CI, 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, c. 31bis; Miscellanea, Notai, 22, c. 774; Pucci Donati 2019, 206, n. 592.

²⁴ ASV, CI, Notai, 19, fasc. 7, reg. 3, f. 1r-v; 4v-5v; 9r-11r; 14v-15r; ASV, CI, Notai 117, fasc. Marco Marzella, f. 2r. Pucci Donati 2019, 154, n. 435; 170, n. 481 and 178, n. 487. In hist testament, the Venetian Primasio di Ragusa writes that it was customary for the Venetians to

the confraternity of Santa Maria and San Antonio.²⁵ A church of San Giacomo was popular, too.²⁶ Most of the religious buildings had a *fabrica* in charge of renovations and restorations, such as the church of San Domenico.²⁷

The church of San Marco in Tana was damaged at least until May 1363 when the merchant Benedetto di Romagna dictated his testament and left two silver sums for its restoration. He also left one sum for the *fabrica* of the churches of San Domenico and Santa Maria. On July 1364, Gerardo di Castello left the *fabrica* of Santa Maria (where he wanted to be buried) three sums.²⁸ In general, it was up to the consul to cover all the costs for the city "remittendo residuum Venecias per incantum dominio vel officialibus furmenti".²⁹

In the late 1340s, tension between Venice and Genoa increased. It was the prelude to the Venetian–Genoese war of the 1350s. On May 19, 1348, the Venetian Senate ordered Giustiniano Giustiniani, captain of Romania's galleys, to take shelter.³⁰ The State auctioned the Romania-Black Sea galleys that year, but only on the condition that a prohibition to pass the straits was put in place.³¹ All the attempts to avoid the war failed, and on August 28, 1350, the Venetian Senate ordered the consul in Tana to send a negotiator to Janibeg and warn the merchants who were still in Caffa, controlled by Genoa, to secure themselves in the areas under Venetian authority.³²

leave one silver sum to the *fabrica* of the church of S. Marco in Tana: PUCCI DONATI 2019, 179, n. 488.

²⁵ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 3, ff. 7v-8v; 12r-13r; Pucci Donati 2019, 171, n. 482.

²⁶ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 3, f. 2r-v; 7v-8v; 20r-23r; PUCCI DONATI 2019, 140, n. 413.

²⁷ Pucci Donati 2019, 142, n. 415 and 18, n. 489.

²⁸ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 3, ff. 25r–26r; ASV, CI, Notarile, Testamenti 924, 30 luglio 1364; Pucci Donati 2019, 170. The sum (*sommo*) was the most diffused means of exchange among the merchants who operated in the *Ulus* of Jochi and constituted the unit of measure of monetary reference and weight. The sum was the expression of the partially monetized economy of the Golden Horde and consisted of an ingot of silver of variable weight but settled around 200 grams (at the time of Pegolotti the *sommo* weighed 206 grams). It circulated also in China and was produced by local mints. Pegolotti 1936: 41. See on this Mueller – Lane 1985: 163 and n. 6; Kuroda 2009: 261.

²⁹ ASV, Senato Misti, XXIV, f. 114; THOMAS 1880, 340-1.

³⁰ ASV, Secreta, reg. B, ff. 7v e 8r; Thiriet 1958, n. 211. Tension is confirmed by another document of November 1349, in which Pietro Tagliapietra, captain of Bitici Niddo's galley, is condemned in Venice because he had attacked the Mongols in the port of Varango (Varangolimen in Western Crimea). Tagliapietra believed that those Mongols had robbed his ship, but he was wrong (Karpov 2000, 181).

³¹ THIRIET 1958, n. 239.

³² In August 1349 the notary Marino Grifoni was active in Tana, where he stipulated a contract between Nicoletto Gato and Bonavere Albani (ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, ff. 25.v-26r). THIRIET 1958, n. 247. On the Venetian-Genoese war see also ASV, Procuratori di San Marco, Misti, Commissarie, busta 2: it contains letters and receipts by Marco Nani. They are

The war between the two republics lasted for five years with alternating phases. After the battle of the Bosporus, in early 1352, the two fleets met for the final clash in 1354. In Portolungo, near Modone on the Peloponnese, the Genoese admiral Paganino Doria defeated the Venetian galleys of Nicola Pisani. Genoa and Venice signed the peace treaty in Milan in 1355 (Genoa was under the Visconti rule). The Peace of Milan decreed that Venetians be expelled from the Black Sea region for three years, but Genoa proved incapable of imposing its conditions despite having won the war.

At first Genoa and Venice respected the agreement reached in Milan³³ and avoided sending their merchants to Tana. Nevertheless, it was too expensive for both of them. The massive investments made in the region to guarantee an infrastructural system adequate for their communities and the considerable profits from the trade with the Levant forced the two Italian republics to re-establish contact with the Mongol authorities.

On July 28, 1355, Venice sent an ambassador to the Mongol *noyon* Ramaḍān, who supervised the region's affairs. The Venetian diplomats asked to return to Soldaïa, and also for the confirmation of the commercial taxes at 3%, and the liberation of two Venetian merchants arrested by Ramaḍān.³⁴ Janibeg was cold in the response and granted only the small port of Provato, west of Tana and too close to Caffa to represent a gain on the Venetian side.³⁵ However, the Venetian ambassadors had no other choice but to accept, and the captain of the galleys was entrusted with controlling the territory of Provato where the Venetian emporium would rise. It was a situation still in evolution, and the Senate forbade the galleys of Romania-Black Sea, auctioned in May 1357, to cross the straits.

Venice and Genoa returned to Tana only in 1358, after the expiry of the *devetum*. Both cities benefited immediately from the problematic political situation within the Golden Horde. Janibeg had died in 1357, and his successor was his son Berdibeg (r. 1257–9) who was well disposed towards Westerners.

Berdibeg confirmed to the ambassadors Giovanni Quirino and Francesco Bono the concessions made by Özbeg and Janibeg and renewed them,³⁶ but increased taxation on commercial transactions to 5% for everyone. Equally, the 5% tax remained in force for all goods to the weight (*per cantaro*). Every ship entering the port had to pay three silver sums to the Mongol governor.³⁷ To avoid further problems with the Venetian community Berdibeg reduced the judicial prerogatives of

very interesting because Nani, a merchant with a prevalence of interests in Cyprus, was captain of Pancrazio Giustiniani's galley during the war.

³³ F. Thiriet 1953, 219-45; Thiriet 1959, 176-7; Balard 1978, 85-6.

³⁴ Thiriet 1958, n. 273; Thomas 1880, 24.

³⁵ THIRIET 1958, n. 299; the concession is dated March 1356. Ramaḍān confirms to the Venetian the port of Provato «che a nome Citade Nova»; see also THOMAS 1880, 25.

³⁶ THOMAS - PREDELLI 1899, 47-51; BALARD 1978, 154; THIRIET 1958, n. 311.

³⁷ THOMAS - PREDELLI 1899, 50.

the consul who, in case of a conflict, had to consult first with the Mongol governor of Solgat ("lo signor de la tera e lo consolo insembre"). In May 1358, the Senate auctioned Romania's galleys that this time were allowed to cross the straits and enter the Black Sea. It was the first time after almost a decade.³⁸ The captain of the galleys sent to the Black Sea in September 1359 was Giovanni Priuli.³⁹

The new consul in Tana was most likely Leone Bembo⁴⁰ who was replaced in the next year by Pietro Caravello. The Venetian consul in Tana worked with his *familia*⁴¹ and a modest military garrison capable of guaranteeing the consular prerogatives, among which the administration of justice and public order were prominent. The *familia* consisted of an interpreter, a *cellarius*⁴², one or more *bastonarii*⁴³, one or more *famuli*, a council,⁴⁴ a nuncio (*commandador*),⁴⁵ and a doctor (*phisicus*).⁴⁶ The interpreter was a crucial function in Tana as the consul needed to communicate with the local population. In 1359, the function was performed by Guglielmo Bon.⁴⁷

The communities living in Tana had their own living quarters, with the Venetians and the Genoese having a fenced or fortified area under the consul's authority. In the 1360s, in Tana there were a Jewish, Armenian, and even an Alan neighbourhood.⁴⁸ Merchants from other regions were allowed to settle in the Venetian

³⁸ THIRIET 1958, n. 328. This time the *incanti* were expensive, more than 160 liras of grossi, while the average was rarely above 50 liras in 1348). Maybe the Venetian merchants participated in the auction because the Mongol concessions had generated optimism.

³⁹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, ff. 4r of 16 September, 5v of 19 September and 6r of 20 September 1359.

⁴⁰ ASV, CI, Notai, 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 5r of 18 September 1359.

⁴¹ One of Caravello's *famuli* in December 1359 was Giacomo Furlan, son of Francesco di Valvasone who was related to the consul. Giacomo replaced Marco Grimani, a Greek from Crete, and received a salary of 130 aspers. ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 14r.

⁴² In 1359, this important task was carried out by Francesco de'Garfaldi di Bologna. ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, fol. 12r of 30 October 1359. In 1383, the interpreter of the Venetian *Curia* in Tana was Pietro detto Gata (ASV, CI, Notai 130, fasc. 7/B; PUCCI DONATI 2019, 184.

⁴³ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 5r of 18 September 1359.

⁴⁴ In 1359, the Council consisted of eight nobles: Giacomo Contarini, Giovanni Bembo, Niccolò Renier, Bartolomeo Loredan, Leonardo Falier, Andreolo Bragadin, Luca Contarini, and Guglielmo Bon, who was also the interpreter. ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 13v of 14 December 1359.

⁴⁵ In 1360, the *nuncio* of the Venetian *curia* in Tana was Benedetto di Romagna.

⁴⁶ ASV, CI, Notai 181, fasc. 5, f. 66bis; Pucci Donati 2019, 159.

⁴⁷ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 4v; 7v; 8v and 12v.

⁴⁸ In September 1360, the *tabernarius* Ianixinum lived near the Alan bath (ASV, CI, Testamenti 17). The Alan bath is also mentioned in the testament of the Genoese Andalò Basso, drafted in Tana in November 1362 (ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 3, ff. 20r-23r.). A *contrata iudaorum* is mentioned in a document from July 1366. ASV, CI, Miscellanea, Notai Diversi, busta 134bis, Contratti di schiavi, Notaio Francesco di Boninsegna di Strada di Mantova and Pucci Donati 2019, 174, n. 485. A *contrata arminorum* is mentioned in two documents: ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 36r and Pucci Donati 2019, 158, 441.

neighbourhood. In September 1360, Ser Marco di Ser Viviano sold a house in Tana for an exuberant amount of money: 24 sums. The property bordered an Armenian's house. Coza Azillyas, *Saracenus*, gave for rent a plot of land with a cellar (*fovea*) to Niccolò Cornaro. The property was next to Azillyas's house.⁴⁹

Consul Caravello travelled to Tana with his son Luca.⁵⁰ It was customary for the Venetian merchants to travel with their sons and teach them the profession they would have inherited from their fathers. On September 25, 1364, Lucia Zabacha entrusted her son Andrea to Giacomello Marino to teach him the mercantile profession. Giacomello undertook to provide the young man with food, accommodation, clothes, and footwear for ten years.⁵¹ The Florentine merchant Brandaia di Brandaia, Venetian resident and living in Tana, made a testament on August 7, 1359. He wanted his two sons Cristoforo and Domenico to frequent the *scholae gramamticae*, to learn how to read, write, and do accounting.⁵²

For the Venetians, it was necessary to dialogue with a "coherent" interlocutor. The assassination of Beridibeg in 1359 opened a political crisis within the Golden Horde, culminating with the coup of Nawrūz in February 1360.⁵³ The Venetian authorities became concerned and worked to obtain guarantees from the Mongols on the settlement's safety. In December 1359, the consul's council nominated two nobles, Giacomo Contarini and Giovanni Bembo, as representatives to Taydula Khatun, grandmother of Berdibeg.⁵⁴ Contarini and Bembo were charged to address the empress to obtain guarantees on the settlement's security and the annulment of the penalty imposed as a condition to return to Tana.⁵⁵ In September, Giacomo Cornaro is mentioned as ambassador to "the Tartar khan".⁵⁶

Despite the difficult political situation, the Venetian return to Tana in the late 1350s revived trade. The volume of business set up by the merchant communities in Tana and the growing difficulties of travelling East of the Volga required the exploitation of local resources and collaboration became inevitable. The notarial deeds produced in Tana contain numerous cases of contracts stipulated between Latin merchants and locals or Muslim merchants, likely from Transoxiana and the Ilkhanate. The latter were the majority, together with the Armenians. On July 31,

⁴⁹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, carta sciolta.

⁵⁰ ASV, CI, 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 7r of 21 September 1359 and f. 9r of 22 September 1359. On the same day, Luca nominated his father procurator of all his business (*omnia sua negotia*) in Tana. *Ibid.*, f. 9r. In 1362, the new consul was Giacomo Contarini. ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 3, f. 20-23r.

⁵¹ ASV, CI, Notai 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 15r.; Pucci Donati 2019, 189-90, n. 528.

⁵² ASV, CI, Notarile, Testamenti, Testamenti, 361, fasc. 32°, f. 129r.

⁵³ Karpov 2018, 532.

⁵⁴ Taydula was Özbeg's wife. Thomas – Predelli 1899, 47–50; De Nicola 2017, 149; Favereau 2016, 45.

⁵⁵ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 13v.

⁵⁶ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 43r.

1360, the Avar Corthoha del fu Manzar from casale Balgima in imperio Gazarie was sold to the forty-five-year-old Paduan Michele Coperi.⁵⁷ On August 25, 1360, Coza Mansuth Saracenus sold to the Venetian Pietro Penzi 870 "salted" and 348 dried cowhides.⁵⁸ As we have seen above, on September 13, 1360, Coza Azillyas Saracenus and habitator in Tana rented to Niccolò Cornaro a house, a cellar (fovea), warehouses, and a plot of land. Among others, the property bordered with another Muslim merchant's home, Coza Monsafil, whose land "is not cultivated". Another Muslim, Coza Mansuth, received a share of the income generated by the property.⁵⁹ On September 18, 1360, the Venetian Giovanni di Pistoia purchased some fabric from Urgench (Organza) from Muslim merchants who were selling it in a public bazaar.60 On September 21, 1360, Ziachmach Thoulu, Saracenus and habitator in Tana, sold to Pietro Bembo a twelve-year-old Tatar slave.⁶¹ In his will, the Genoese merchant Andalò Basso nominated an Armenian from Solgat, Gabrieto Balochzi, as his partner.⁶² On September 13, 1363, Macometh Coza, Saracenus, sold to Niccolò Basilio a big property consisting of a non-cultivated land and a bath in Tana's Venetian neighbourhood.63

On July 21, 1365, Costanzo di Lodi di Candia dictated his last will and testament to the Venetian notary Nascimbene Scarena in Tana. He had a credit of 50 aspers with Tolach and Mansafir *Saracenos* for some cowhides.⁶⁴ In August 1365, an Alan named Satalario received a loan of 100 sums from Pietro della Fontana, Venetian consul in Tana, to purchase merchandise.⁶⁵ On August 14, 1365, Usuf *Saracenus* sold a cellar (*fovea*) to the Venetian Giovanni.⁶⁶ Naturally, cases of solidarity between people with a common ethnic background were frequent. On August 12, 1365, a Jewish man called Thomas nominated his procurator Calli Bila, another Jew, to collect 100 aspers from a certain Anastasio Pangalo, his debtor.⁶⁷ On September 12, the same Anastasio Pangalo gave a loan of 3 sums to Mosé Calazi; both were Jewish.⁶⁸

⁵⁷ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 29v. Pucci Donati 2019, 65.

⁵⁸ Cuoia salate and vaccine. ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 34r.

⁵⁹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, carta 36bis.

⁶⁰ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 37v.

⁶¹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 38r.

⁶² ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 3, ff. 20-23r.

⁶³ ASV, CI, Notai 181, fasc. 5, f. 68v.; Pucci Donati 2019, 164. Basilio bought the property for a total of 130 sums and sold it almost immediately (22 September) to the Venetian consul in Tana Pietro della Fontana for the same amount: ASV, CI, Notai 181, fasc. 5, f. 69r; Pucci Donati 2019, 165.

⁶⁴ ASV, Notarile, Testamenti, Testamenti, 924, 21 luglio 1365; PUCCI DONATI 2019, 172 n. 483.

⁶⁵ Pucci Donati 2019, 160 n. 451.

⁶⁶ Pucci Donati 2019, 161 n. 454.

⁶⁷ Pucci Donati 2019, 161, n. 452.

⁶⁸ ASV, CI, Notai 181, fasc. 5, f. 68v; Pucci Donati 2019, 164 n. 464.

Intermediation among merchants of diverse origin and cooperation was frequent not only for buying commodities but also for renting facilities. On April 28, 1360, Ser Grava di Stanzi, from Samsun, gave his boat with 21 sailors for rent to the Venetian Giovanni Bembo. Giovanni needed the boat to go to the charger port (caricatoio) called Aziachon to load 460 moggia of grain and trade them in Pera.⁶⁹

Trade between Latins and local merchants was widespread, but non-Venetians preferred to have a fellow citizen or coreligionist in front of the notary. On July 22, 1360, Marino de Ruosa agreed to pay the loan he had with Eza Aly *Saracenus*. Two Venetians and three *Saracenos de Tana*: Adula, Coza, and Azibey were witnesses to this act.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, the friction between Venetians and the local population did not completely go away. In the testament she dictated to the notary Benedetto Bianco on August 11, 1360, Elisabetta Alban destined two sums for the liberation of her son Giovanni, indebted to certain *Tartari* who had captured him.⁷¹

In 1363, the commercial activity in Tana focused more and more on slave sales. In particular, the sales of slaves by locals to Venetian merchants intensified. On August 17, Donna Erda, widow of the Tartar Bephramir, sold to the Venetian merchant Sandro Lovato, a twelve-year-old slave. The next day, the Jewish merchant Burdoch del fu Nodin sold a twelve-year-old Tartar slave on behalf of Ser Giovanni Selvaggio to Lovato. On the same day, the Tartar Brunach del fu Zerzi sold a Tartar slave to a Venetian merchant whose name is not readable in the document.⁷² On August 20, 1363, the *Tartarus* Chonach del fu Chotluboga sold his twelve-year-old daughter to Sandro Lovato.⁷³

In these years, the Muslim merchants appear to be the most active as intermediaries in the sales of slaves. On September 26, 1362, Chalil Charchaulli Choicholba, *Saracenus*, sold a Circassian girl to Lorenzo Querini.⁷⁴ Zarubey del fu Emin, *Saracenus*, sold an eleven-year-old Tartar slave to the Venetian merchant Stefanello Bonfiglio.⁷⁵ On September 4, Assam del fu Audul, *Saracenus*, sold a seven-year-old Mongol slave (*genere mongalorum*) to the merchant Francesco del fu Bruzese from Rimini.⁷⁶ Ramadan del fu Cusma, *Saracenus*, sold a whole Mongol family – father, wife, and a six-year-old child – to the Venetian merchant Giovannino Bembo.⁷⁷ On September 6, Adia, widow of Audul, *Saracenus*, sold a thirteen-year-old Tartar

⁶⁹ The freight is established in 940 *perpers* payable within twelve days from the arrival of the grain in Pera. ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 18r.

⁷⁰ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 27v.

⁷¹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, carta 31bis.

⁷² ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 1r.

⁷³ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 36r.

⁷⁴ ASV, CI, Notai 117, reg. Marco Marzella, f. 2r.

⁷⁵ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 1v.

⁷⁶ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 4v.

⁷⁷ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 4v.

slave to the Venetian merchant Niccolò Barbo.⁷⁸ On September 8, Cheder del fu Azo Saracenus sold a sixteen-year-old slave to Enrico Barbarigo, who was a Venetian.79 On September 9, Baziman del fu Bachomuth, Saracenus, sold a ten-year-old Tartar slave to the Venetian merchant Fantino Zorzi.80 On September 10, Adia, widow of Charchibas, Saracenus, sold a fourteen-year-old slave to Marco Carlo; the same day, Besboga del fu Siaban Saracenus sold a fifteen-year-old slave to Pietro Bon.81 On September 11, Jaylmis del fu Hacboga, Saracenus, sold a ten-year-old boy to Ser Tommaso Falier.82 On September 17, Macometh del fu Ozi Saracenus sold an eleven-year-old Tartar boy to Giovanni di Vidor. The same day, Abdura Coman del fu Mamussia Saracenus sold four slaves, two girls and two boys, in four separate documents to the Venetian merchant Niccolò Baseggio, for a total sum of 1,375 aspers.83 Chotur del fu Chozuboga, Saracenus, sold an eleven-year-old boy to Bonaccorso di Vanni.84 On September 18, Monsafor del fu Azibey, Saracenus, sold a twelve-year-old boy to Niccolò Baseggio.85 On September 19, Hachboga del fu Siansadin, Saracenus, sold a fifteen-year-old girl, a ten-year-old boy, and a fourteenvear-old girl – all Tartari – to Niccolò Baseggio.86

Venetian merchants and local people often came into contact during the sale of slaves not only with professional traders, but with families in the necessity to sell their children to alleviate the hardship they lived in. In notarial documents the cases are numerous. On June 3, 1360, a Russian woman, Ocholinato, married to Dmitrij (*de casale Insbleymamat de Rusia*), sold her fifteen-year-old daughter to the Venetian merchant Bertolino Magnamosto.⁸⁷ On June 29, Apanas, a Tatar woman, sold her thirteen-year-old sister to Marco Contarini.⁸⁸ On July 2, Anecoza, a Tatar who lived in the *Tuman* Melicheli just outside Tana (*in districtu Tane*), sold a four-teen-year-old son to Marco Zaccaria.⁸⁹ Bech del fu Thuboga sold his fourteen-year-old niece to Albertino de'Conti.⁹⁰ Donna Cotlucaton del fu Zaccaria di Tabriz and Sarchi del fu Cherin sold their twelve-year-old son to Giorgio Colito from Thessaloniki.⁹¹

⁷⁸ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 5r.

⁷⁹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 6r.

⁸⁰ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 7r.

⁸¹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 7v.

⁸² ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 8v.

⁸³ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 14v and 15r.

⁸⁴ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 15v.

⁸⁵ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 16v.

⁸⁶ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 18v, 19r, and 20v.

⁸⁷ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 21v.

⁸⁸ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 23r.

⁸⁹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 23v.

⁹⁰ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 17r.

⁹¹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 12v.

The Venetians who were established for a longer period in Tana bought servants. They generally "rented" the services of a young boy or girl from locals in need of money. For example, on October 16, 1359, Anchau and Daniele, both defined as *Alani*, received 300 aspers from Giovanni Bembo for a young person who was described as being "protected" by Anchau for the time Giovanni would stay and work in Mongol Crimea (*in imperio Gazarie*).92 Elya, *Alanus*, received from the Venetian merchant Andrea Armino a 300 aspers loan for which he left his fifteen-year-old son as a pledge. The boy had to stay in service in Andrea's house until the loan was repaid.93

Mixed marriages were not too frequent but occurred in Tana and all over the Latin settlements in the Black Sea region. The Genoese Giorgio, resident in Soldaïa, married Teodora, who was Greek. 94 Francesco di Bonavere Alban, Venetian citizen, married Cotlu. 95 On April 14, 1385, an Armenian named Antonio declared that he had received the entire dowry of his wife, Bartolomea di Graziano from Treviso. 96 On October 21, 1385, Domenico Balta affirmed that he had received the entire dowry of his wife, whose name is Beymolich. 97

The mouth of the Kuban river and the entire area around the Kerch Strait had been of fundamental importance since the time of the Greek colonies. For centuries, Kievan Rus' exploited the fluvial arteries (the Dnepr above all) for international trade with the Byzantine Empire to the south and the Baltic markets to the north. For the Georgian kingdom, the Black Sea outlet was, together with the land routes to Persia, a formidable instrument for commercial development.

The area around Solgat was known for wine and the Venetian merchants purchased it in Tana from local producers or intermediaries and resold it in Venice. On December 14, 1359, Perino d'Ognibene bought two barrels of wine *mosti de sorcati* from Coza Macomuth di Sadradin, from Solgat.⁹⁹ On March 2, 1360, the Greek Giorgio di Enno agreed to pay back a loan of 220 aspers within three months

⁹² ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 12r.

⁹³ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 23v.

⁹⁴ It is not surprising that the witnesses of the document are all Greek: Marco Grimani from Crete, Giorgio Colito from Thessaloniki, and Sana di Caraboga Paraschiva from Trebizond. ASV, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 14v.

 $^{^{95}}$ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, c. 31bis; Pucci Donati 2019: 69. The woman was likely baptized, since here name changed into Elizabetta.

⁹⁶ ASV, CI, Notai 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 15v; Pucci Donati 2019: 193.

⁹⁷ ASV, CI, Notai, 130, fasc. /B, f. 17v; Pucci Donati 2019: 201. They had a daughter named Culmelich.

⁹⁸ From October 2 to 15, 1362, the Venetian galleys were docked in the port of Kuban, where the notary Marco Marcello drafted seven documents: ASV, Notai 117, reg. Marco Marzella, ff. 2v–3r; 3v; 4r and 4v.

⁹⁹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 13v.

to Teodoro, a merchant from Solgat, for a certain quantity of wine he had bought. 100

Despite the difficulties and the scarce convenience of long journeys some merchants went further and settled deeper into the Golden Horde, entrusting on intermediaries the purchase of merchandise farther East. Marco dell'Orsa was a very active merchant in Tana, but lived in Saray.¹⁰¹ On September 24, 1360, Giovanni Barozzi declared in front of the notary Benedetto Bianco that he had left precious goods in Saray at the merchant Coza Azi, who was a banker. Among the commodities, there were silk, pearls, and jewels.¹⁰² On May 22, 1362, Benedetto di Romagna dictated his will to notary Benedetto Bianco on the occasion of his journey to Saray.¹⁰³ In August 1378, Niccolò d'Arpino – a Venetian merchant active in Saray – sold honey and slaves for a total value of 840 besants to Marco Nani, Venetian as well, who was supposed to sell it in Tana. Marco had paid only 251 besants, but never paid the rest to Niccolò. The consul, after having evaluated the case, condemned Marco to the payment of all his debts and expenses for a total of 689 besants.¹⁰⁴

It was uncommon for the Venetian merchants to travel farther than the capital of the Golden Horde. Nonetheless, in the 1380s they still had business in the Volga area and used intermediaries to transport their merchandise. In his will drafted in Tana on May 14, 1384, the Venetian merchant Primasio di Ragusa arranged for a consignment of carobs to be sent to Astrakhan with the first available caravan. ¹⁰⁵ In March 1383, the Venetian merchant Giovanni Servodio resided in Astrakhan. ¹⁰⁶ Another interesting case is that of the Venetian merchant of Florentine origin Domenico, who purchased and sold a lot of slaves. One slave, an eleven-year-old girl, was from China (*genere cataynorum*). ¹⁰⁷

Sometimes things went wrong and merchants could lose everything. On September 23, 1359, Ser Micheletto Emo, merchant in Tana, appointed as his procurator Ludovico da Molin, his fellow citizen. Ludovico had to manage the seizure of Micheletto's goods, who had lost everything in the shipwreck of the galley of Ser Nicoletto Bernardo. ¹⁰⁸ In his rich testament, the Genoese merchant Andalo Basso mentioned a bottomry stipulated for 50 sums with Cosma *dello Levante*, likely a Greek shipowner. The ship charged to transport the commodities to Constantino-

¹⁰⁰ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 16r.

¹⁰¹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 24r-v.

¹⁰² ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 40r.

¹⁰³ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 3, ff. 25r-26r.

¹⁰⁴ ASV, CI, Notai 189, n. 5, 24 aprile 1380; PUCCI DONATI 2019, 176 n. 486.

¹⁰⁵ ASV, CI, Notai 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 19v.; Pucci Donati 2019, 179, n. 488.

¹⁰⁶ ASV, CI, Notai 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 13v.; Pucci Donati 2019, 184, n. 505.

¹⁰⁷ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 3r.

¹⁰⁸ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 9v.

ple shipwrecked and all the cargo was lost. ¹⁰⁹ On September 18, 1363, Ser Marco Mariga nominated Pietro Morosini as his procurator to recover all his goods from the shipwrecked cog named *Dolfina*. ¹¹⁰ According to the document mentioned above, the Muslim banker Coza Azi Aza had to guard Giovanni Barozzi's goods (silk, pearls, and jewels) and transport them from Saray to Tana, but during the trip he was robbed of everything for a total value of 50 sums. ¹¹¹

The political difficulties within the Golden Horde affected the life of the communities living in Tana. The Mongol defeat at Kulikovo in 1380 at the hands of coalition of Rus' principalities marked the beginning of a process of internal weakening that did not stop in the years to come. The Mongols gradually lost the regular inflow of money from the tributes paid by Russian princes. Yet, as we have seen from notarial documents in the 1360s, the Venetian community in Tana along with the others who used to interact with it was still well organized and lively. The situation changed, however, in the following decade.

After the expulsion of all the Westerners from Tana by Janibeg in 1343,¹¹² the navigation in the Black Sea was interrupted; in this period the problems accumulated after the war between Genoa and Venice in the 1350s. When, after 1358, the voyages resumed, the average price of the *incanti*, after an initial enthusiasm, was maintained on an average level (about 60 liras), but already in 1363 it increased considerably (with more than 94 liras on average for each galley).¹¹³ In 1368 and 1369, the galleys directed to the Black Sea diminished from 6 to 5, and the following year from 5 to 4, which were eventually auctioned.

The central power of the Horde, led in these years by Mamai, imposed a 4% tax on merchandise to the Venetians, whereas the Genoese paid 3%. On June 3, 1369, the Venetian Senate sent the consul of Tana to the Mongols asking for fair treatment. To deal with the political instability, the Venetian authorities in Tana increased their defence expenses. In July 1370, the Senate decided to send arms and money to the consul to have the *lobia* repaired and the fortifications restored. Furthermore, he was given 36 sums to pay for an interpreter. Between 1374 and 1376, the entity of the *incanti* collapsed; the news of poor security within the borders of the Golden Horde had probably reached Venice and the participants in the auctions.

¹⁰⁹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 3, ff. 20-3r.

¹¹⁰ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 4, f. 18r.

¹¹¹ ASV, CI, Notai 19, fasc. 7, reg. 1, f. 40r.

¹¹² Pubblici 2017: 25-47.

¹¹³ THIRIET 1958, n. 540 and 561; STÖKLY 1995, 110-11 and 371-4 / tables); KARPOV 2000, 91.

¹¹⁴ Thiriet 1958, n. 476.

¹¹⁵ Thriet 1958, n. 488.

¹¹⁶ KARPOV 2000, 102; for a general description of events, see KARPOV 1978, 102–9.

The 1370s were also marked by tensions between Venice and the Empire of Trebizond, the other fundamental port for the Venetian Black Sea trade. 117 A new conflict between Genoa and Venice worsened the situation. The war, known as the war of Chioggia, lasted from 1376 to 1381 and ended with the peace of Turin. 118 In this period, navigation in the Black Sea was almost completely interrupted. In June 1377, only 3 galleys were auctioned in Venice. Only two of them were assigned, but on August 7 the Senate decided not to let them leave because it was considered too dangerous. 119 Nonetheless, Venice maintained its community in Tana whose consul in April 1380 was Donato Moro. 120 According to the agreements signed in Turin, Genoa and Venice imposed a blockade of navigation in the Black Sea for three years, 121 but already in 1382 the ban was broken by Venice, which sent two armed galleys across the Straits. The trips to Tana resumed regularly only from 1383. 122

On July 24 of that year the Venetian doge sent two ambassadors to the Tartar Governor of Crimea ("excellentissimum dominum Imperatorem Tartarorum") to ask for confirmation of the agreements still in place formally. The diplomats had the order to obtain a reduction of the *commerchium* to 3% and if this was not possible, to fix it at maximum 5%.¹²³

Relations between Venetian merchants and the local community in the 1380s were regular, with a marked prevalence of the buying and selling of slaves. In December 1383, Karomerot, *habitator in imperio Gazarie*, sold a Russian girl to Pietro Premarin. ¹²⁴ In July 1384, Caterina Alana was hired by the Venetian merchant Giovanni Vettori as his servant. ¹²⁵ Giovanni wanted to open a tavern and put Caterina there to work. Venetians and locals continued to collaborate for many diverse businesses. On September 5, 1384, Francesco Catalano from Barcelona rented his boat (*grippo*) to three Circassian merchants—Giorgio Laterano, Sgromalio, and Caloiano—for 70 perpers. According to the deal, once the caravan with caviar and salted fish arrived in Tana, they had to load 200 *foschi* of caviar on Francesco's ship (*grippo*) within ten days. ¹²⁶ On January 16, 1385, the Circassian Reboga and a Tartar

¹¹⁷ Karpov 1986, 99-101.

¹¹⁸ See the *Chronicle* of Daniele Chinazzo: CHINAZZO 1958, in particular 200–35.

¹¹⁹ THIRIET 1958, nn. 588, 589 and 593. The previous year, the galleys of *Romania* had to be escorted to Tana by the galleys of Marco Giustiniani, who then waited for their return to Constantinople; between September and October 1376, the *casus belli* that would cause the war of Chioggia was being created: CHINAZZO 1958, 19–20.

¹²⁰ ASV, CI, Notai 189, n. 5, documento del 24 aprile 1380; PUCCI DONATI 2019, 176.

¹²¹ Chinazzo 1958, 209-10.

¹²² ASV, Senato Misti, XXXVIII, f. 34v; THIRIET 1958, n. 649; KARPOV 1986, 101.

¹²³ THOMAS - PREDELLI 1889, 188-90.

¹²⁴ ASV, CI Notai 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 13vr; Pucci Donati 2019, 184, n. 502.

¹²⁵ ASV, CI Notai 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 14r; PUCCI DONATI 2019, 187, n. 518.

¹²⁶ ASV, CI, Notai 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 14v.; Pucci Donati 2019, 188-9, n. 524.

merchant whose name is illegible in the document signed a contract to deliver to Matteo Bugari from Crete five thousand *maghrebi* (salted fish) for 15 aspers per one hundred. The payment is divided into two parts: half now and half in a month.¹²⁷ On January 16, 1385, Sich Achsicoza and Assan, both Tartars, sold 2000 *maghrebi* to Matteo Bugari of Candia. The price was 15 aspers per 100. Temir Colunzach and Bonzos, both Tartars, sold to Matteo Bugari of Candia 2000 *maghrebi* for 15 aspers per 100. On May 15, 1385, Cozichar, son of Susut, and his brother Ianbas sold to Giovanni de Besagna a relative of theirs as a servant for seven years.¹²⁸ On August 16, 1385, the Florentine merchant Matteo bought a property from Donato di Porto, a Venetian. The property was located outside the Venetian district in Tana, by the moat, and it bordered, among others, with the homes of Chotulboga, evidently a Mongol.¹²⁹ In 1386, the consul was Francesco Bragadin and the interpreter Pietro Gata. The service of Bragadin ended in the summer of 1386.¹³⁰

The analysis of the documents shows a progressive localization of relations in the 1380s. Interactions between Venetians and Mongols continued to be steady and fruitful on a personal level but became increasingly complicated on an institutional one. In these years the trips of the galleys were regular, and the amount of the *incanti* confirm a lively interest in trade with Tana. Timur's attack on the settlement in 1395 disrupted everything again, but did not discourage the Western merchants who rebuilt their area and continued to frequent Tana until the Ottoman invasion of 1475.

Conclusions

The encounter of the "new ethical system" of the Italian medieval mercantile class was particularly fruitful with those peculiar realities whose ethnic and cultural diversity was more accentuated, for example, in Spain, where "the Islamic world... was mediator between Christianity and Judaism". The dominant culture of Christian-Roman Europe was both the source and the limit of the new mercantilist tendencies. In the Pontic region, a hinge between cultures, where an ethnic complex coexisted, the consequences were even more differentiated. The merchant's utilitarian conception, a predominant element of Western emigration to the East, was faced with peoples whose cultural background was extremely fragmented. The nomadic element coexisted with the Muslim merchant from Central Asia; the Minorite and the Dominican lived in convents in the heart of the Steppe, etc.

The Western merchant was confronted with this stratification. It was mainly the emerging urban bourgeoisie—in Venice, often families of ancient noble origin—

¹²⁷ ASV, CI, Notai 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 15r.; Pucci Donati 2019, 191-2, n. 537.

¹²⁸ ASV, CI, Notai 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 15v.

¹²⁹ ASV, CI, Notai 130, fasc. 7/B, f. 16v.

¹³⁰ ASV, CI, Notai 130, fasc. 7/B, ff. 17v and 18r.

¹³¹ Fumagalli 2003, XII.

who emigrated to the East, and they had nothing in common with the steppe peoples and their traditional roots. In the Levant came the *cives*, citizens, with their urban associative model.

Nomadic solidarity—based on the clan—found itself in front of a new associative principle in turn based on the city of origin. Western merchants, representing the urban growth of the late 13th century, gathered around the consul (or *podestà*) as the representative of that collective power in which they identified themselves and drew the synthesis of their status as *cives*. In comparison, in the nomadic model there was a heterogeneous social fabric in which the "unstable" dynamic element was closely linked to that of the atavistic bond of descent; in both cases, it was a constructed model.

The merchant of the 14th century was professionally prepared and equipped to live away from home. The Eurasian nomads knew the trade well. The establishment of the Mongol Empire brought Asia closer to Christian Europe and attracted new capitals from the East. From the second half of the 13th century, the Asian trade system, with its western centre of gravity in the Black Sea region, became increasingly integrated into the Mediterranean trade system. The construction of *emporia* on the coasts of the Black Sea and the travels of Venetian merchants to distant lands brought people with different histories and cultures into contact. Communities lived together peacefully, traded, met, married, fought, and widened each other's horizons. After the 14th century, the Eurasian continent would never be the same again.

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Some Preliminary Notes on the Aftermath of the Eurasian Steppe's "Mongol Moment"

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Abstract

The paper singles out the decades following the Great Chinggisid Crisis, i.e. the period between the later 14th century and the early 15th century, as a "transition phase" between the Mongol and post-Mongol eras of Eurasian history. Looking at the political, religious, and ethnogenetic characteristics, the paper on the one hand attempts to stress the transitory nature of this specific period of time and, on the other, to assess the role of the Mongol Eurasian age in the history of the Eurasian Steppe belt.

Keywords: Mongol Moment, Great Chinggisid Crisis, post-Mongol Eurasia, Steppe ethnogenesis, 14th–15th centuries, Eurasian Steppe belt

Starting with Temüjin's unification activities in the Mongolian steppes in the early 13th century, Eurasia entered a new historical phase. Around the mid-14th century this phase came to an end. The last decades of Mongol Eurasia, often called the Great Crisis, are usually defined as ranging from the 1330s to ca. 1370s, depending on the geographical location. The turmoil started in the Ilkhanate in November 1335, triggered by the death of Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd (r. 1316–35), the last Abaqaid ruler, who had no male descendant. The Ulus Chaghatai was split into two parts in 1347, and this marked the beginning of the political division of the Central Eurasian Steppe for more than three centuries, until it was eventually split up between the sedentary superpowers starting in the late 16th century. In 1259, the death of Berdibek (r. 1257–9), the last confirmable Batuid khan, destabilized the Jochid *ulus* in the north. In the early 15th century, this process, known in the Russian *letopisi* as

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"Velikaya zamyatnya" (Great Turmoil), entered a qualitatively new stage following the death of the last Jochid unifier, Tokhtamysh (r. 1378–1406). The Qa'an *ulus*, ruled by the Qubilaid Yuan dynasty (元朝, 1271–1368/70) in China, Mongolia, Tibet, and Korea, collapsed in 1368. The death of the last Yuan Emperor Toghon Temür (r. 1333–70) from dysentery in 1370 and the rise of Temür (Tamerlane, r. 1370–1405) in Central Eurasia finalized the Crisis.¹ Mongol Eurasia was no more, even though the Chinggisid families continued to play a role in the Steppe and, partly, in the adjoining regions in the following centuries.²

As part of the general reassessment of the Chinggisid influence and relevance for Eurasian history, this paper singles out the decades that followed the Great Crisis up to the early 15th century as a separate historical phase, structurally different both from the Mongol Eurasian period and from the early modern period of history from the 15th (or, according to other perspectives, from the 16th) century onward.³ The paper aims to provide some very initial remarks on approaching the highly complex "Mongol Moment's" impact on the Eurasian steppe belt's history through a perspective that focuses on the immediate aftermath of the Great Crisis.⁴ Concentrating on the territorial stretch from today's Mongolia to the northern steppes of the Black Sea, it aims to single out the major features characterizing the aftermath, the "transition phase", while underlining Chinggisid Eurasia's relevance for the historical developments that followed its disintegration. Due to the limited scope of the publication, the discussion will highlight developments in three domains: geopolitical, religious, and ethnic. All of the issues discussed below were rooted in the pre-Crisis history of the Chinggisid domination in Eurasia and some of them became visible or prevalent in the Steppe and the adjoining areas also before the Crisis. For our discussion, however, it is important that it was mainly during the "transition phase" that those issues and developments could be observed better, with the Chinggisid rule either absent or struggling for survival.

One of the basic hypotheses underlying the following arguments is that during most of its existence Chinggisid Eurasia could be characterized as a sort of the "Mongol Commonwealth" (another term would be "Pax Mongolica"), in which the blood relations of the ruling families, trade, and the circulation of knowledge and religious personnel provided an intricate network uniting (politically and ideologically) the various domains in one geopolitical whole.⁵ Despite the differences be-

¹ For brief depictions of the Crisis see MORGAN 2009; ALLSEN 2015a.

² E.g. McChesney 2009; Veit 2009, 165-8.

³ See, e.g., Subrahmanyam 1997, 736-7; for a broader discussion see Goldstone 1998.

⁴ For the term "Mongol Moment", see Subrahmanyam 1997, 737, as far as I know, the first one to discuss it. Subrahmanyam uses it in order to stress the singularity of the period of Mongol conquests and rule in Eurasian history. While he does not explicitly include the Crisis decades in this term, it seems reasonable to do so.

⁵ For a broader discussion, see KIM 2009; note also KHAZANOV 1993, 467 and the discussion in KOTKIN 2007, 503–8.

tween the areas under Chinggisid control, the ruling branches shared, at least nominally, the same Chinggisid political ideology. Similar political institutions were present in the various Chinggisid polities. The co-existence of different economic models under one imperial rule, the tension between hierarchical and collective rulership as well as the importance of the nomadic military characterized the Chinggisid space. One major common feature of the post-Crisis Steppe was the preservation of the Chinggisid priority to rule: the "Chinggisid principle", to use Miyawaki's term.⁶ This was not the case everywhere, and outside of the Steppe this principle was mainly replaced by the (at least seemingly) non-Chinggisid legitimacies. But the Steppe areas have also witnessed a number of variations and deviations from the principle's "pure form" (in which a ruler of Chinggisid origin possessed real power).8 Especially the decades after the Great Crisis were dominated by such variations of rulership and control across the Steppe that co-opted elements rooted in both Chinggisid and non-Chinggisid ideological and political realities. These developing forms included, e.g., the model in which the Chinggisid puppet khans were installed by a certain military commander or a group of commanders. The Chaghadaid *ulus* can serve as a specific example. The case of Temür and his Chinggisid puppet khans, the Ögedeid Soyūrghatmīsh b. Dānishmanjī and his son Sultān Maḥmūd, is well-known.9 Somewhat similar developments can be observed in the Eastern Chaghadaid domains, the so-called "Moghulistan", 10 where a group of powerful Dughlat commanders enthroned a number of Chinggis-

⁶ E.g. MIYAWAKI 1992; note also AMITAI – BIRAN 2015, 6.

⁷ Such were, e.g., the cases of the Ming in China, Ottoman Anatolia, the Muzaffarids and Injuids in southern Iran, and the Sarbadarids in Khurasan. Note, however, that in some cases, e.g. under the early Ming dynasty, the anti-Chinggisid rhetoric coexisted with the new powerholders' usage of the Chinggisid legitimacy for their own rule (e.g. ROBINSON 2020, 129–57).

⁸ Surely, the rule of the Chinggisid khan was dependant on the support of the powerful military commanders even before the Crisis, during Chinggisid Eurasia's heyday. In some cases, these commanders, many of whom were Chinggisid sons-in-law, served as kingmakers, somewhat similarly to the situations during and after the Crisis. At the same time, while the usage of puppet khans became a political norm during and especially after the Crisis, it was more of an exception before that.

⁹ On Temür, see Manz 1988, 110 (on the name of Soyūrghatmīsh's father, see Muʿizz Alansāb, fl. 44b-45a; note further Manz 1998, 23; Jackson 1990, 400-1; Sela 2004, 28); on the further Timurid matrimonial connections with this Chinggisid lineage, see, e.g., Woods 1993, 28, 33. Generally speaking, in this regard Temür followed the example of his predecessor in Western Central Asia, the Qara'unas commander Qazaghān, who became the factual ruler of the *ulus* in 1347 and enthroned two Chinggisid puppet khans, Soyūrghatmīsh's father Dānishmanjī and Bāyān Qulī, Du'a's grandson (Muʿizz Al-Ansāb, fl. 44b-45a; Al-Yazdī, 1957: 22; Jackson 2018, 98).

¹⁰ On the name note KIM 1999, 290, fn. 1.

id khans throughout the decades following the Chaghadaid split of 1347.11 Looking further eastward, to the Mongolian steppes, one should also not ignore the longterm relations between the Oyirads and the first khans of the Northern Yuan, who, in contrast with the Yuan Qubilaids, were connected to the descendants of Qubilai's younger brother and contender for power, Arigh Böke. 12 Often, the commanders behind the Chinggisid puppets claimed a relation to the Chinggisid family as well. In many cases this was based on a (real or invented) marriage with a Chinggisid female, through which one rose to the prestigious position of a güregen, a Chinggisid son-in-law.¹³ This type of power acquisition was especially typical in the areas centred in the Steppe or adjoining it, the best-known example again being Temür of the Barlas tribe.14 It is often overlooked that he was not alone. Similar cases could be observed in Crimea and the western Steppe in general, where various power actors were either married to Chinggisid women or faked connections with such, as well as in Moghulistan, the Eastern Chaghadaid realm, where a certain Namun, a Chinggisid in-law of unclear tribal origin, made an attempt to enthrone the Chaghadaid Gunashiri in cooperation with the Ming in the end of the 14th century.15

The appearance of the mixed form of ideological post-Chinggisid (or, perhaps, more correctly, Chinggisid-related) authority claims is closely connected with another issue, namely a change in the composition of the ruling elites, especially the military. The Crisis shattered the ruling establishment of the Chinggisid khanates across Eurasia. Deliberate purges (as in the Jochid and the Chaghadaid cases), in migrations, and refugee waves (as in the case of the Yuan collapse), various bigger and smaller warfare conflicts, in which most of the Chinggisid military was involved, as well as epidemics and the early beginning of the so-called "Little Ice Age", which coincided with the Crisis processes: all these factors arguably led to

¹¹ PISHCHULINA 1977, 41–60 (but note the Soviet Marxist perspective of her discussion); BIRAN 2009, 59–60.

¹² On the Northern Yuan, see, e.g., HONDA 1958, esp. 247-8.

¹³ On the Chinggisid güregens, see LANDA 2016a, 2018b.

¹⁴ Manz 1988, 110.

¹⁵ Thus, e.g., Mamai, one of the most powerful Jochid military commanders of the Turmoil period, appears to have married Berdibek's sister (IBN KHALDŪN 1865, vol. 5, 538); on Namun, see KIM 1999, esp. 291–9.

¹⁶ On the purges of the early 1360s in the Jochid domains, see, e.g., NAṬANZĪ 1957, 85–6; on Qazan Sulṭān (r. 1343–7), the last "bad" Chaghadaid ruler of the united *ulus* (a perspective on which we do not possess any alternative opinion of the contemporaries), see AL-YAZDĪ 1957, 21; BIRAN 2009, 59.

¹⁷ On the ex-Yuan domains, see e.g. ROBINSON 2012, 113ff.

¹⁸ On the early phase of the so-called "Little Ice Age", the cool phase that started around the mid-14th century, and its interplay with the "Black Death" epidemic, see, e.g., BROOKE 2014, 380–90.

the disappearance of a significant part of the elite layers and to the restructuring of power hierarchies in a short period of time. It is in this context that we observe the appearance of new power actors in all post-Mongol Eurasian domains. While, as noted above, the "Chinggisid principle" generally kept its importance across the Steppe, especially in the Mongolian areas, a number of attempts to distance oneself from it can be observed since very early. Such attempts can be seen in the Crimea-Azov area, where Mamai, the omnipotent Jochid beglerbegi¹⁹ of the Qiyat, arguably made an attempt to proclaim himself khan very early, around 1361;20 in the Volga Bulgaria and the Moksha-Narovchat areas, where a number of (predominantly) copper coins indicate attempts by certain personalities to establish themselves as local rulers with and without references to the Batuid legacy;²¹ in Hajji-Tarkhan, today's Astrakhan, during the 1360s, where a non-Chinggisid legitimacy was claimed by a certain Hajji-Cherkes and, later on, by Salchey.²² While those attempts were less visible in the beginning of the "transition phase", during which the Chinggisid "principle" and its power claim remained broadly accepted, the Chinggisid puppet khans became quite a burden for a number of charismatic personalities towards the early 15th century. While Temür himself kept his Chinggisid rulers, his descendants started regarding them as unnecessary shortly after the founder's death in 1405.23 The same happened in the Manghit realm in the Lower Volga and Yaik basin, where Edigü's descendants developed their own ruling legitimacy, connecting themselves in their power rhetoric both to Baba Tükles, the famous Sufi converter of the Steppe, as well as to the Righteous Caliph Abū Bakr.²⁴ Nevertheless, even if many of the new elites and power groups did (partially or fully) break with the Chinggisid legacy and legitimacy, their very appearance and power acquisition was in many cases still connected with the pre-Crisis decades and their ancestors' position at the Chinggisid courts. The Jalayirids, one of the important Ilkhanid in-law families, who ruled in Tabriz during the second half of the 14th

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¹⁹ On *beglerbegi*, i.e. the *amīr-i ulūs*, one of the leading positions in the Jochid administration, see TREPAVLOV 2014.

²⁰ Note PACHKALOV 2012; for a contesting opinion, see, however, PETROV 2013, 184–5.

²¹ On Taghay Bek, the Mokhsha ruler, see, e.g., PAVLIKHIN 2014, 36–7; on the Volga Bulgarian ruler Bulad-Temür, see, e.g, SAFARGALIEV 1960, 118–9 (note also POCHEKAEV 2019, 353, fn. 494).

²² IBN KHALDŪN 1865, vol. 5, 538–9; PSRL, vol. 11 [*Nikonovskaya letopis'*], 24. On the discussion of these two personalities and their possible identification, see ZAYTSEV 2004, 17–21.

²³ Manz 1998, 35. The final break with the practice of appointing a puppet khan did not occur until Ulugh Beg's rule (note Sela 2004, 28, fn. 41).

²⁴ DEWEESE 1994, 336, 386-7; TREPAVLOV 2020, 109-10; also, LANDA 2020, 99.

century²⁵, and the Sufi-Qonggirad ruling family in Khwarazm²⁶ are two examples.²⁷

As a rule, the geopolitical changes of the "transition phase" showed a stronger tendency towards dissolution of power. This was not a linear development, as the very idea of the unification of the domains under the (ex-)Chinggisid rule remained during the second half of the 14th and early 15th centuries. It was only after the death of two major unifiers, Temür and Tokhtamysh, that the ex-Chinggisid areas were further decentralized both in Central Asia and in the western Steppe. At the same time, moving to our second point of interest and observing the religious dimension of the "transition phase", we cannot but notice that the collapse of Mongol Eurasia impacted Central Eurasia's religious landscape quite differently. In general, the religious diversity in the Steppe and the adjoining areas observable in the previous centuries (also during the Chinggisid phase) was greatly reduced during the 14th century. There were winners, of course. The Chinggisid conquest of Eurasia led to a remarkable spread of Islam. Supported both by state and non-state (mainly Sufi) authority and conversion channels, various forms of Islam spread from west to east during the Mongol Eurasia period, both via land and maritime routes, replacing or pushing aside other religious forms and movements.²⁸ Starting with the end of the 13th century, multiple power actors across Western and Central Asia turned to the Islamic legitimacy; this development becomes even more visible with the Great Crisis and during the "transition phase", when a broad number of non-Chinggisids turned to Islam in order to reinforce (or justify) their rule by and through Islamic rhetoric. But this was not only a question of power acquisition. The "Mongol Moment" helped Islam spread across various societal layers throughout the Eurasian Steppe belt, becoming one of the most important identity markers towards the beginning of the 15th century.²⁹

Islam was not the only winner. The Orthodox Church in the Rus' principalities (knyazhestva) was another one. Surely, its impact and dispersion area were much smaller than that of Islam, and its primary domains lay way to the north of the

²⁵ E.g., WING 2016, 101-146.

²⁶ LANDA 2018a.

²⁷ But there were more, even though the other cases have been studied less. Thus, the Oyirad support of several Northern Yuan rulers during the second half of the 14th century was possibly connected to the high position the Oyirads of the Altai Mountains held in the Ögedeid *ulus* of Qaidu about a hundred years before (see below; on the relations between the Western Mongolian Oyirads and Arigh Böke, see OKADA 1987, 185; on the relations between presumably the same Oyirad groups and Qaidu, see BAI 2006: 8). A similar situation can also be observed in Hajji-Tarkhan. One of the apparent rulers of the mid-1370s, Salchey of Hajji-Tarkhan, mentioned above, seems to have originated from the in-laws of the Jochid Özbek (MUSTAKIMOV 2009, 123–5 and see above, p. 271, fn. 22).

²⁸ For a general introduction to this process, see DEWEESE 2009.

²⁹ For a detailed discussion, see LANDA 2022.

Steppe, but it is important to keep in mind that the Church significantly profited from the Chinggisid rule. The Chinggisids famously followed a rather practical attitude towards the multitude of religious groups in their domains.³⁰ Only in the aftermath of a conversion fever did they sometimes persecute other religions or limit them in their rights.³¹ The exemption of the religious personnel from taxation also strengthened their position; the Orthodox Church was no exception.³² During the first half of the 14th century the prerequisites for the growing power of the Church and its tightening relations with Muscovy were developed further. Thus, the metropolitan seat was transferred from Vladimir to Moscow in 1325, only 25 years after it had been moved to that location from Kiev in 1300.33 Generally, starting with the 1310s, the continuous (though not without setbacks) rise of the Muscovy princes (knyazes) can be observed together with their status vis-à-vis the Jochid authorities and the other knyazhestva.34 Notably, this process started with the Great Knyaz Yuri Danilovich (r. 1303-25), who became a güregen, an imperial inlaw, through his marriage to Konchaka, Özbek's (r. 1313-41) sister, in the 1310s.35 Even though no further marriages were concluded after Yuri's death in 1325, it is highly plausible that in the Chinggisid eyes the high status of the family was transferred to the following generations.³⁶ It is also in this context that we should understand the rise of Muscovy during the 14th century. The Great Crisis and, especially, the "transition phase", did not immediately entail the breaking away from the Jochids of the Rus' principalities in general or that of Muscovy in particular, neither militarily nor politically. Indeed, the Great Knyazes and Metropolitans were still obliged to get the Horde's endorsement for their appointment. This period witnessed a gradual estrangement of Moscow from the Jochid domains. Dmitry

³⁰ JACKSON 2005.

³¹ The first years after Ghazan's (r. 1295–1304) conversion (1295) are a good example: the Ilkhanids seem to have suppressed non-Islamic faiths up to some degree. These events are often attributed to the influence of the powerful commander and son-in-law Nawrūz, who possessed an exceptionally impressive influence on Ghazan up until the former's execution in 1297 (e.g., DASHDONDOG 2011, 197).

 $^{^{32}}$ For a general discussion of the Chinggisid impact on the position of the Church in the Rus' domains, see Galimov 2016; on the ambiguous relations between the two, see also Halperin 1987, 113–6.

³³ Borisov 1999, 209; Borisov 2017.

³⁴ See, e.g., HALPERIN 1987, 53-6.

³⁵ Such is, at least, the claim of the chronicles (e.g., PSRL, 10 [Nikonovskaya letopis'], 180).

³⁶ As it happened, e.g., with the Jalayirid family of the Ilkhanid commander Aq Buqa, a supporter of the Ilkhans Aḥmad Tegüder (r. 1282–4) and Geikhatu (r. 1291–5). Aq Buqa was himself a *güregen*, as he married Öljetei, Ilkhan Arghun's (r. 1284–91) eldest daughter, who was later given to Aq Buqa's son Ḥusayn (the one whose son Ḥasan-i Buzurg became the founder of the Jalayirid dynasty). On Aq Buqa's marriage, see RASHĪD AL-DĪN 1373/1994–5, vol. 2, 1153; on that of his son, see RASHĪD AL-DĪN 1373/1994–5, vol. 2, 1153; further see WING 2016, 63–73.

Donskoy's (r. 1359-89) attempt to mint his own coins, known as den'ga moskovskaya, during the mid-second half of the 14th century is one clear sign of this.37 Importantly, the coins include a reference to the Batuid legacy, arguably citing Özbek's name and including the issuer in the broader hemisphere of Chinggisid legitimacy. They did not connect the Knyaz to the contemporary developments in the Steppe, however, and should be seen as a clear sign for Muscovy's carefully increased autonomy.³⁸ The Battle of Kulikovo Field (September 8, 1380) is well known, and even though it certainly did not lead to a major systemic change in the Rus'-Horde relations, it also clearly indicates that changes were imminent. The personality of the (ethnically Bulgarian) Metropolitan Cyprian (ca. 1330-1405), one of the most important and powerful Orthodox Metropolitans of the 14th and 15th centuries, a major opponent of the Jochids and a protégé of St. Sergy Radonezhsky (1314-92), is beyond our discussion, but the very appearance of such a figure in the Great Moscow Knyazhestvo during the "transition phase" (even though Cyprian entered Moscow as late as May 23, 1381)39 indicates the increasing role of the Church in supporting the Muscovy positions vis-à-vis the Horde and in general. While the Chinggisid legacy remained crucial in the Muscovy ideology for the next centuries, so did the Byzantine political tradition and tzardom ideology as well, provided and strengthened by the Church; it was the mixture of both ideological trends that formed the forthcoming Russian imperial ambitions and selfrepresentation.40

There were also losers. One was Buddhism. As we know, it was deeply entrenched in the Chinggisid political landscape, both in the Steppe and beyond, throughout the 13th century. The primary sources tell us about the richness of the

³⁷ The issue remains complicated. Starting with the 13th century and until the mid-14th century at the earliest the Rus' *knyazhestva* went through a period known as "bezmonetnyi" (i.e. "without the usage of coins", see SPASSKY 1962, 53–4). While many authors suggest that Dmitry began to mint his own money around the Battle of Kulikovo Field (i.e. around 1380), Gaydukov stresses that the Great Knyaz was not the first one to issue his own coins. Various copies and imitations of the Jochid coinage appeared in the Rus' territories since the early 1360s, i.e. since the beginning of the Turmoil in the Jochid *ulus*. Later on, the imitation coins appear with the *tamghas* of the Rus' knyazes, i.e. various identifying signs similar to the Chinggisid *tamghas* (on this, see Petrov 2005), with such a usage clearly being an imitation of the Jochid monetary policies. Further on, the Rus' knyazes, the most important of them being Dmitry Donskoy, started issuing their own coins; parts of their legend were clearly an imitation of the Chinggisid coins, notably not of the last Batuids or the contemporary khans, but those of Özbek, Yuri Danilovich's long deceased brother-in-law (for the further discussion, see GAYDUKOV 2007).

 $^{^{38}}$ On the first Muscovy coins of the second half of the $^{14\text{th}}$ century, see, e.g., Gaydukov 2009. 39 Obolensky 1978, 91.

⁴⁰ On Cyprian, the "Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus" since 1375, see Obolensky 1978; DMITRIEV 1963, esp. 216–28. On the Muscovy ideology and its post-14th-century Chinggisid-Byzantine mixture, see, e.g., CHERNIAVSKY 1959; HALPERIN 1976.

Buddhist monasteries in Azerbaijan and Northern Iran under the first Hülegüids.⁴¹ As stressed by Elverskog, the figurative depictions of the Prophet Muhammad, the first ones in the history of Islam, occurred not least under the influence of the Ilkhanid Buddhist tradition.⁴² On the other side of the continent, Buddhism played an important role in connecting the Qubilaids of the Yuan and the populations of China. The new Tibetan teaching, until then alien to the Chinese Buddhism movement, was brought to China by the Chinggisids and rose in power, both extending the support networks for the dynasty and creating frictions inside the local Buddhist establishment.⁴³ The 14th century changed the rules of the game, even though not on the same scale and in the same way everywhere. Buddhism did not disappear from most of Central Eurasia immediately, but the religious landscape gradually changed. We do not hear anything about Buddhism in the late Ilkhanate or, in any form, during the "transition phase" (but at least we know that most of the Ilkhanid *bakhchis*, the Buddhist holy men, were either expelled or converted to Islam in the early 14th century following the Ilkhanid conversion in 1295).⁴⁴

Moving northward and eastward, to the areas of our primary interest, we witness a much more complex and much less clear picture. On the one hand, despite the conversion of both the Jochid and Chaghadaid *uluses* to Islam, and despite the persecutions against Buddhism, the latter remained in some form in the northern Steppe and in Central Asia.⁴⁵ It was especially in Moghulistan that the Buddhist presence can be traced also after the Crisis and until the early 15th century. A number of recently published late Chagatai (Moghul) decrees reveal not only the preservation of Buddhism in Eastern Turkestan,⁴⁶ but also mention intensive Buddhist pilgrimage and trade routes between the Chinese Dunhuang (敦煌, in today's Gansu province) and the Moghul centres of the late 14th century.⁴⁷ We also possess valuable descriptions of a Buddhist temple in Turfan in the early 1420s, preserved in the diary of a Timurid diplomatic mission to the Ming court, and are aware that it was only in the 1430s that the city of Turfan was completely purged of Bud-

⁴¹ Note Prazniak 2014, esp. 661. For an example regarding the alleged Ilkhanid Buddhist temple to the east of the Ilkhanid city of Sulṭāniyya, see Hatef Naiemi 2020, 23–5.

⁴² ELVERSKOG 2010, 162–74. See KADOI 2009 for a detailed discussion of the Ilkhanid awareness of the Buddhist art tradition and its influences on the Iranian cultural heritage.

⁴³ For the general discussion on the relations between the Yuan dynasty and the Tibetan Buddhist establishment, see Petech 1983; Petech 1990, esp. 5–84; for the developments in the Yuan South and the Yuan Buddhist administration, see WANG 2015.

⁴⁴ Rashīd al-Dīn 1373/1994-95, vol. 2, 1259, 1356; Amitai 1999, 41.

⁴⁵ On the Jochid conversions to Islam, see, e.g., DEWEESE 1994, 90–142; on those of the Chaghadaids, e.g., BIRAN 2002.

⁴⁶ On this terminology, see LANDA 2020b, 507, fn. 5.

⁴⁷ E.g. DAI 2008.

dhists.⁴⁸ The "transition phase" witnessed Buddhism's continuous retreat in most of Central Eurasia. It was only in the Mongolian steppes where its Tibetan variation was revived during the 16th century, already after the "transition phase" came to its own end.⁴⁹ During the second half of the 14th century, however, one could clearly see the process that started, depending on the location, probably a couple of decades before that—Buddhism was slowly losing its attractiveness for the broader populations and the powerholders when the old Chinggisid power hierarchies that had kept it alive, or at least tolerated it, disappeared.

Buddhism was not alone. The Church of the East, also (wrongly) known as the Nestorian Church, went through its last significant revival during the Chinggisid rule, especially in the early Ilkhanate and under the Yuan, but suffered large-scale setbacks and disappeared almost everywhere, except for a number of locations in Western Asia (primarily Mosul and the adjoining areas), after the Great Crisis at the latest.⁵⁰ In contrast with Buddhism, it never succeeded in finding a new patron. In the Ilkhanate, the Church suffered severely starting from the late 1320s. Saint John the Baptist Monastery near Maragha was desecrated and converted into a mosque in the last years of the Ilkhanate.⁵¹ Of primary importance for us are the following decades, coinciding with the pontificate of the Syrian Patriarch Denha II (1336-81).52 While the Church was tolerated by the Jalayirid rulers of parts of Iran and Iraq in Denha's time, the East Syrians almost completely disappeared from Central Asia and, it seems, North China.⁵³ Up to some degree the devastation of the Syriac communities started with the plague (a "Black Death" outbreak), that wiped out multiple areas in the Semirechye in the late 1330s.54 The last known Syriac tombstones, found near today's Chinese-Kirgiz border, are dated to the early 1370s.55 The Castilian ambassador Clavijo, who visited Temür's Samarkand in the early 15th century, claims to have seen East Syrians among the citizens. Judging from the available data, however, those were most probably merchants from West-

⁴⁸ The embassy arrived at Turfan at the end of Jumada al-ʾĀkhir 823 AH, i.e. the end of July 1420 (ḤĀFĪZ-I ABRŪ 1993/1372–73, 821); note MUSTAFAEV 2015, 105 on the embassy, as well as ELVERSKOG 2010, 203 and KIM 1996 for the broader discussion. The Buddhist-Islamic contacts became of relevance again much later, since the 16th century at the earliest (on this see, e.g., SELA 2014).

⁴⁹ VEIT 2009, 170-73, further see KOLLMAR-PAULENZ 2003.

⁵⁰ For the post-Chinggisid history of the Eastern Syriac Christianity in West Asia (until 1552, the year of the Church's major split over the question of the patriarchate), see WILMSHURST 2000, 346–48.

⁵¹ BORBONE 2017, 118.

⁵² WILMSHURST 2000, 18-19.

⁵³ WILMSHURST 2000, 19.

⁵⁴ Halbertsma 2015, 67; Slavin 2019.

⁵⁵ Note Kokovtsov 1906, 196; also, Slavin 2019, 86, as well as esp. Spyrou et al. 2022; Slavin 2022.

ern Asia, and not the remnants of the native Syriac communities.⁵⁶ We see a similar picture towards the east. Despite the flourishing of the Syriac populations (still as a minority faith) under the Yuan, especially in today's Inner Mongolian areas, their further destiny is very unclear. Some scholars claim that the East Syrians were forced to leave the Ming domains after the dynastic change.⁵⁷ A contrary position holds that its communities could have merged with the other (more dominant) religious movements, such as the Daoists and Buddhists, in the decades following the collapse of the Yuan.⁵⁸ Be that as it may, as far as I am aware, no Nestorian graveyard dated after the early 1370s has been found on the territory of today's China, and it is plausible (even though not completely confirmed) that the Yuan's Syriac settlements in today's Inner Mongolia were abandoned during the second half of the 14th century at the latest.⁵⁹

The "transition phase" from the Mongol to the post-Mongol Eurasian Steppe was characterized by political fragmentation, a multiplication of legitimacy channels as well as a reduction of religious diversity. It was, at the same time, not characterized by an immediate division between the "old" and the "new", but by a gradual process with multiple setbacks, most of which can be only partially reconstructed from the sources. The same can also be said about the phase's third dimension of interest for this discussion, namely the gradual change of the Central Eurasian ethnic landscape that became visible during the Crisis and especially in the following decades of the "transition phase". Indeed, these periods of the Central Eurasian history witnessed the revival of multiple old nomadic identities across the Steppe and the adjacent regions. 60 The Jalayirids in Iran, the Oyirads in Iraq, Iran, and Western Mongolia, the Qonggirad of Khwarazm, the Timurid Barlas, Temür's multiple commanders, originating from the Merkit, the Naiman, the Sulduz, the Qipchaq, the Moghul Dughlats - a multitude of tribal ethnonyms are found in the primary sources narrating the "transition phase".61 In fact, the use of ethnonyms was not new. When one compares two major genealogical compendia,

⁵⁶ DE CLAVIJO 2009, 171; note DICKENS 2015, 30.

⁵⁷ E.g. WILMSHURST 2000, 19; VAN MECHELEN 2001, 97; also, HALBERTSMA 2015, 68–9, who does not come to any conclusive suggestion. Note HALBERTSMA 2015, 67, who suggests that the East Syriac Christianity did not survive in Central Asia also due to conflicts with Islam. This argument is given by the author without any confirmation and, though plausible, remains open for discussion.

⁵⁸ E.g. WANG 2014 and note HALBERTSMA 2015, 145 (in this regard note also a much older hypothesis of WILLIAMS [1883, 289] that the Eastern Syrians could have converted to Islam and Buddhism following the collapse of the Chinggisid Yuan).

⁵⁹ HALBERTSMA 2015, 145 (citing GAI 1991, 394ff. that I was not able to reach); further see KLEIN 2000, 56, 283–9 for the detailed discussion.

⁶⁰ A process termed "retribalization" by Togan (1998, 13), further see LANDA 2017, 1203, esp. fn. 81.

⁶¹ Note, e.g., the description of Temür's commanders, found in the Mu'IZZ AL-ANSĀB, fl. 97a-99a.

Rashīd al-Dīn's *Shu'ab-i Panjgāna* and the anonymous *Mu'izz al-ansāb*, that have about one hundred and fifty years in between, one cannot but stress the explicit attention the compilers paid to mentioning the tribal ethnonyms in their discussion of both the Chinggisid and Timurid military.⁶² This is not surprising. The major steppe vocabulary was directly connected to the differentiation between various "tribes", and while "tribal identity" and "tribe" themselves were surely very flexible and unstable categories, one cannot simply curtail the complexity of the traditional steppe power lexicon, tribal in its core, only to the existence of the aristocratic lineages of the nomadic elites, as David Sneath has done in his famous and controversial research.⁶³ The tribal vocabulary itself is not peculiar. What is especially interesting is the reappearance of the tribal ethnonyms as major identity markers for new powerholders and military elites in the "transition phase". On the local levels, these often replaced the Chinggisid ones. As a rule, notably, those of the tribal identities that had flourished during the Chinggisid rule survived the Chinggisid period and were reinforced after its end (e.g. the Qonggirads, the Oyirad, etc.).⁶⁴

Connecting this point to the discussion of the post-Crisis political elites, we should stress that Mongol Eurasia became a watershed for the ethnic history of the Steppe, both in Mongolia and in the Turkic world up to Crimea. The post-Chinggisid history of the Steppe, including the periods beyond the first transition decades, witnessed the appearance of multiple new tribal and ethnic identities that had not existed before the Chinggisid unification of the Steppe or before its end. The 15th and 16th centuries witnessed the formation and development of several new identities, such as the Crimean and Volga Tatars, the Yaik Manghits, the Uzbeks, the Kalmyks, etc. While the roots of many of these developments can be traced way back, in many cases to the heyday of the Mongol Empire, it is mainly during the Crisis and the transition decades that many of them became visible. In this sense, the "transition phase" stands between the Chinggisid and the post-Chinggisid periods in terms of the tribal and ethnic history of the Eurasian Steppe. It is in this period that we witness both the preservation of old, but still relevant tribal and ethnic markers, and the first stages of the formation of new ones. The disappearance of the Batuid lineage and the dramatic decline in power of the Jochid Right Wing led to a significant rise of the Blue Horde, ex-Orda domain, the future key area of the Uzbek ancestors.65 According to a Mamluk source, the Blue Horde also became known as the bilād uzbek already during the second half of the

⁶² Cf. e.g. the lists of Chinggis Khan's commanders in both sources (RASHĪD AL-DĪN (n.a.), fl. 105b–106a and Muʿizz AL-ANSĀB, fl. 13b–17a).

⁶³ SNEATH 2007. Sneath is supported e.g. by ATWOOD 2015, esp. 16–17 and MUNKH-ERDENE 2011, 212; for critical voices, see, e.g., ABASHIN et al. 2009, KHAZANOV 2010, DURAND-GUÉDY 2011, KRADIN 2012.

⁶⁴ E.g. Landa 2016b, 168-176; Landa 2018a.

⁶⁵ For the overtaking of the Jochid Left Wing by the Toqa-Temürid descendants during the 1360s, see e.g. VÁSÁRY 2009.

14th century.66 Similarly, Niẓām al-Dīn Shāmī called Urus Khan "Urūs Khān-i Ūzbīkī".67 While it is quite clear that the Uzbeks as a fixed tribal identity or people did not exist at that time, the appearance of this political marker, in the future an ethnic one, is characteristic for the "transition phase" from the old world order to the new one.68 Another interesting case, that of the Yaik Manghit, shows us a different development, namely how a new ethnic formation was constructed around the old tribal one. It cannot be completely repudiated that the Yaik Manghit identity was constructed not only around an old respectable ethnonym, but also based on the nucleus of the "original" Manghit of Mongol origin, who underwent Turkification and settled between the Yaik and Emba towards the end of the 14th century.69 Again, this process exemplifies the formative nature of the "transition phase", during which the old Chinggisid characteristics and processes developed independently in the absence of the strong unifying Chinggisid rule.

Another point to keep in mind is that the rise of the "old" and "new" tribal markers in the Steppe lexicon around the "transition phase" is closely connected to the cross-Eurasian migrations of the nomadic groups that took place both during the heyday of Mongol Eurasia and following its decline since the mid-14th century. It is in this context that both the "retribalization" issue as well as the appearance of the new tribal and ethnic identities in the post-Crisis Steppe get their special importance as parts of a much broader question of ethnic continuity and change in the Eurasian Steppe during the 13th and 14th centuries. It is a well-known fact that the famous military reform of Chinggis Khan broke the borders of many tribal groups and gathered various peoples under one military unit. With time, it seems, many of those military units became major reference points for the peoples involved, and so the new ethnic-military groups, such as the Negüderi-Qara'unas in Chaghadaid Afghanistan or Ja'un-i Qurban in the post-Ilkhanid Khurasan, came to life. The Importantly, however, not all tribal structures were broken or eliminated.

⁶⁶ Thus, e.g, AL-QALQASHANDĪ (n.a.), fl. 69v [today's MS Qq. 36, Cambridge University Lib., see Brown 1900, 113], as quoted in Tiesenhausen 1884, 402 (the manuscript was not available to me). One wonders whether the name "Uzbek" is more than a reference to Özbek Khan, who was long dead at that time.

⁶⁷ Shāmī, 1363/1984-85, 75.

⁶⁸ Cf. AKHMEDOV 1965, 15–16, who insists on calling the Turkic speaking population of the whole Desht-i Qipchaq "nomadic Uzbeks" (*kochevye uzbeki*) already during the period under discussion. Most probably this should be seen as a political (but much less, if at all, an ethnic) identity marker (for a more careful but not completely contradictory approach, see GOLDEN 1992, 330).

⁶⁹ Note Trepavlov 2020, 67–85; Landa 2020, 98.

⁷⁰ Note esp. Allsen 2015b.

⁷¹ E.g. BIRAN 2007, 41-3.

⁷² For the first ones, see JACKSON 2018, for the second ones PAUL 2011; LANDA 2016b, 171-2, 174-5. Golden points out the very personalized nature of the new ethnic formation process-

In some notable cases, especially when the specific tribal elite became involved in matrimonial relations with the Chinggisids and got the status of imperial in-laws, the tribal framework and affiliation seem to have been preserved even after the tribes were dispersed across Eurasia.⁷³ Surely, we cannot claim that the post-Mongol Eurasian Qonggirad, Oyirads, Jalayir, Manghit, etc. had any substantial connection with the old groups with the same ethnonyms. The very survival and also the dispersion of the Chinggisid ethnonyms all across the Steppe after the 14th century suggest, however, the lasting relevance of the Chinggisid domination for the post-Chinggisid nomadic Eurasia.⁷⁴

The paper suggested to single out the first decades of the Eurasian Steppe history after the Great Crisis, i.e. the second half of the 14th through the early 15th century, as a separate phase, the analysis of which might highlight the historical developments that took place amid the decline or disappearance of the Chinggisid power. This "transition phase" of the Eurasian Steppe history is different from Chinggisid Eurasia, as it came after the Crisis decades that shattered the Chinggisid dynasties in all four major uluses. Though partly overlapping with it, this phase is also different from the Crisis as such, facing already the new political realities that followed the major breakup of the Chinggisid power. It is, however, also different from the post-early-15th century historical realities, as many of the actors and the political structures participating in the developments of this phase were born or already appeared during the heyday of Chinggisid Eurasia. Three dimensions of change have been addressed, the geopolitical-ideological, the religious, and the ethnic. As shown, all these dimensions combined the examples and precedents based on the Chinggisid principle and/or the historical contexts of Mongol Eurasia with the developments mirroring both the Crisis of the Chinggisid rule and new, alternative modes of power applied by both the non-Chinggisid and Chinggisid actors across the Steppe. Still not completely "new", but also not completely "old", the historical events of the first decades after the Great Crisis make up a unique period for research, during which the decline and the transformation of the old Chinggisid realities coincided both with radically new historical processes, as well as with circumstances that intricately encompassed both pre-Crisis and post-Crisis realities, institutions, and actors.

es in the aftermath of the Crisis. In many cases the self-naming of the new entities was related to specific "tribal or confederational names of clearly anthroponymic origin" (e.g. Nogays, Chaghadai, Uzbek, etc., see Golden 2000, 39). Golden connects this development to the importance of the <code>nökör/nöker</code> and <code>keshig</code> institutions in Chinggisid Eurasia (Golden 2000, 38–41; on the <code>nökör</code> [companions], see Doerfer 1963, 521–26, § 388; on the <code>keshig</code>, see Doerfer 1963, 467–70, §331–34). I thank Dr. Golev for bringing my attention to this phenomenon.

 $^{^{73}}$ For some examples, see Landa 2016b, 164–71.

⁷⁴ For a broader discussion, see, e.g., LANDA 2017, 1201–5.

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The Oriental Coin Hoard from Ružomberok, Slovakia

MICHAL HOLEŠČÁK*

Abstract

A unique find of five copper coins was unearthed during the Second World War north of the city of Ružomberok in Slovakia. It consists of four identified coins, minted from the 9th to the beginning of the 15th century mainly in Central Asia, and one unidentified coin. The composition and nature of the hoard, as well as the described circumstances of its discovery, point out that the coins were not in monetary circulation, but rather a souvenir with sentimental value, and they prove some kind of connection between the Hungarian Kingdom and the polities of Central Asia at the beginning of the 15th century. The present paper attempts to localize the find and connect it with known historical sources about the diplomatic relations of King Sigismund of Luxembourg with the Tatars, Turcomans, and Timurids.

Keywords: coins, Sigismund of Luxembourg, Hungarian Kingdom, Aq Qoyunlu, Shāh Rukh, diplomatic relations, Central Asia

Circumstances of the finding

A coin hoard got into the Institute of Archaeology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences under peculiar circumstances. In 1961, during a research stay in the Federal Republic of Germany, A. Točík, who was at that time the head of the Institute, acquired through his acquaintances a set of coins together with a letter describing their origin. It was found by K. Wendel, a soldier in the German army during the Second World War, while digging a trench in the vicinity of the city of Ružomberok on the right bank of the Váh river in 1944. The city of Ružomberok is located in northern Slovakia, in the region of Liptov, surrounded by the mountain ranges of

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the Greater Fatra and the Low Tatras. The hoard was found at a depth of ca. 1.6 m in a burned layer together with the remains of some kind of leather, possibly part of some kind of a pouch around them. The finder took the coins with him back home, but his conscience troubled him and he tried to contact someone from Czechoslovakia so that he could return them to their place of origin after the war ended. The credibility of this statement can be doubted, but the general identification seems to be believable, since there is no obvious motive for K. Wendel to lie and therefore it can be accepted as truth. After their return to Czechoslovakia, the coins were identified by J. Štěpková from Prague and stored in the treasury of the Institute of Archaeology in Nitra. They were published in the catalogue of numismatic finds from Slovakia, but without further inquiry. Recent re-evaluation of the coins confirmed their provenance, produced up-to-date pictorial documentation, and analysed the composition of the metal by spectrometry.

Description of the coins

Chronologically, the first coin (Fig. 1: 2) was struck in Samarkand by the amir of Khurāsān Ghassān b. 'Abbād during the reign of the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 813–33) in 205 AH (820–1 AD).² The main components of the metal are copper (89%), zinc (8%), and lead (2%). The diameter of the coin is 19 mm, its weight — 2.576 g. It bears a little wear on the averse, and the reverse side is well preserved.

The second coin (Fig. 1: 3) was minted in Bilär in 373 AH (983–4 AD) by the Sāmānid amir Nūḥ II b. Manṣūr (r. 976–97), bearing the name of the 'Abbāsid caliph al-Ṭā'i' (r. 974–91).³ The metal composition is mainly copper (93.5%), lead (3%), and tin (2.6%). It has a diameter of 28 mm and a weight of 4.436 g. The coin bears a little wear on both sides.

The third identified coin (Fig. 1: 1) was struck in the name of Khan Janibeg (r. 1342–57 AD). The reverse is not fully readable, but the closest analogy is a Khwārezmian $p\bar{u}l$ from 757 AH (1356 AD).⁴ The metal composition is nearly pure copper (99.3%). It has a diameter of 17 mm and a weight of 3.183 g.

The fourth coin (Fig. 2: 2) was previously not identified, but it is possible to connect it with the coin of Shāh Rukh (r. 1405–47), struck in Samarqand AH 819 (1416–7 AD).⁵ Although heavily worn, it seems that it bore the three-circle sign of Timur (r. 1370–1405) (Fig. 2: 2b).⁶ The metal composition is again nearly pure copper (99.5%). It's shape is oval, with a diameter of 28x23 mm and a weight of 3.358 g.

¹ Kolníková – Hunka 1994, 114.

² NÜTZEL 1898, 379, cat. nr. 2212.

³ TORNBERG 1848, 241, cat. nr. 577.

⁴ Fedorov-Davydov 2003, 185, cat. nr. 175.

⁵ I express my gratitude to the late V. Novák from the Náprstek Museum for the help with the identification: DAVIDOVICH 1983, Fig. 4: 5; https://www.zeno.ru/showphoto.php?photo=181149 ⁶ KADOI 2010, 149–51; NYAMAA 2005, 82.

The last coin (Fig. 2: 1) is countermarked, with the original coin being heavily worn out. The only visible feature is the hexagram with a dot in each point, not an uncommon sign on the Jochid coinage. The countermark (Fig. 2: 1b) is unreadable, but it was identified by J. Štěpková as belonging to Ariq Böke (r. 1259–64) of the Toluid family. The tamgha of Ariq Böke is usually found on the coins of Berke, struck in Bulghar or sometimes in Chagatayid mints,⁷ but not on countermarks, according to my knowledge. Also, this specimen is currently too damaged to be read and the original identification unfortunately lacks any reference to scholarly literature to corroborate this claim. The coin is almost purely copper (99.4%) with a diameter of 25 mm and a weight of 3.715 g.

As all the coins are of oriental provenance, which makes them rather unique for the region they were found in, there is no doubt that they were buried in this particular place in one deposition, regardless of their wide time span. The earliest date of the hoard deposition can be based on the youngest identified coin in the set. If the unidentified coin is not younger, the latest coin is the Timurid $p\bar{u}l$ of the early 15^{th} century, possibly connected to Shāh Rukh. The attempts at finding a plausible context in which they got to the area of the Hungarian kingdom, specifically to Ružomberok, are therefore focused on this time period. Also, as all of them are made of copper, they most likely weren't part of the currency in use, as their value would have been minimal. It can be assumed, therefore, that they had a more symbolical or personal value than an economic one.

Localization of the hoard

According to the finder of the hoard, the coins were found on the right bank of the river Váh, close to Ružomberok, a free royal town and a semi-important merchant hub in the region, established at the beginning of the 14th century by German colonists from the surrounding areas.8 The city itself lies on the left bank of the river, so the possible location of the find lies to the north of it. For the purpose of the localization, we must also consider the military activities of the German army in 1944, when the hoard was uncovered. The political situation was very complex as it happened during the Slovak National Uprising, an anti-fascist movement against the Slovak Republic, a client state of Nazi Germany. The uprising started by the Soviet-supported local guerrillas fighting mostly in the hilly areas of the central, northern, and eastern parts of Slovakia, followed by a part of the Slovak army turning rebellious, which led to the arrival of the German army, whose ranks probably included the finder of the hoard. Ružomberok was liberated from the small number of Germans deployed in the city even before the official beginning of the uprising, and the rebel forces continued towards the east to assist in the liberation of the city of Liptovský Mikuláš. After the uprising officially erupted, these forces had to

⁷ Nyamaa 2005, 63-5.

⁸ Ružomberok 2009, 44.

turn back, as they expected a German offensive led by a full SS battalion from east and north. The first major battle was at the village of Lisková and continued through Martinček, after which the Germans took the city of Ružomberok very quickly. After that, they effectively blocked the approach of the rebellious forces from the north, possibly in the vicinity of the village of Likavka. When the situation stabilized, German forces focused on destroying the guerrilla outposts and hideouts in the hills around, mainly to the northeast of the city.⁹

Unfortunately, there are no archaeological excavations in the described locality, with only two sites worth mentioning as exceptions to this trend. The first one is on the prehistoric hill fort Konislav in the cadastre of Lisková. The excavations revealed pottery shards from the 14th - 15th centuries 10 which corresponds with the timeline of the possible deposition of the hoard. The presence of the German army may be explained by the anti-guerrilla operations in the woods, as the hill fort is situated on a hilltop rising 735 metres above sea level. It is, however, questionable if the Germans dug trenches in such a terrain and circumstances. The second, more plausible location is the cadastre of Likavka. During the archaeological survey caused by the need of highway construction, a circular feature identified as possible WW2 military entrenchment was spotted, but not excavated.¹¹ It is very possible that the digging of the entrenchment was connected to the German garrison of Ružomberok blocking the passage of rebellious troops from the north. The current village of Likavka lies under the castle of Likava, an important defence and control point on the crossroad of north-south and east-west commercial roads built in the first quarter of the 14th century. Likava was conquered by the Hussites in 1431 through the treachery of the castle warden, and a Hussite garrison stayed there until the end of 1434, despite the attempts of its official owner Queen Barbara of Cilli to gather an army and retake it. The city of Ružomberok and its surroundings were threatened by two more Hussite armies passing through the region at this time. The castle of Likava was then given to John Hunyadi, who started a massive reconstruction, followed by Peter Komorowski, whose rebellion against King Mathias Corvinus led to open military activity in this region and the capture of the castle of Likava among others.12

Contacts between Hungary and the Orient at the beginning of the 15th century

The Hungarian Kingdom had a major clash with the powers of Central Asia during the Mongol invasion of 1241–2, preceded by the missions of Friar Julian to search for the eastern Magyars, which were also caused by the growing Mongol threat. After the establishment of the western part of the Mongol Empire, the Ulus of Jo-

⁹ Ružomberok 2009, 119-21.

¹⁰ Hanuliak 1976, 122.

¹¹ Bartík et al. 2011, 27.

¹² Ružomberok 2009, 51–2.

chi, at the border of the Hungarian Kingdom, the contacts of both military and diplomatic nature continued. However, the policy of the Hungarian kings of the House of Árpád was focused more on the regional struggles of the European powers than on the areas behind the vast steppes to the east. The situation slightly changed with the coming of the new Anjou dynasty, 13 but a real diplomatic connection was established only during the rule of Sigismund of Luxembourg (r. 1387-1437). It was caused by the rise of the Ottoman Empire, against which the king was trying to find allies, the Tatars being one of them. 14 Tatar and other non-Christian emissaries were received in Hungary as well as by the Polish king in 1412, and a Hungarian embassy was sent to Crimea later that same year, however this time mainly focused on another enemy, the Republic of Venice. This embassy was led by three ambassadors, Nicolaus of Geretz, Ladislaus of Salimavar, and Jacob of Haugar. They travelled to Kaffa to ask the Genoese merchants for help in the negotiations with the son and successor of Khan Tokhtamysh Jalāl al-Dīn (r. 1411-12), unfortunately with an unknown result, since by that time the khan could have been already dead.¹⁵ A Tatar delegation was also present at the Council of Constance (1414-19). The next eastern embassy was led by the brothers Johannes and Conrad Fisher in 1418, members of an important merchant family with possessions also in Košice, in today's eastern Slovakia. Merchants of Košice, or Cassa, as it was called, had strong trading connections with Crimea at the beginning of the 15th century. 16 Merchants and diplomats once again travelled to Kaffa with the aim of firmly establishing eastern trading routes that would bypass the Venetians.¹⁷ The coins, however, originate from much farther east than the Crimean Peninsula and these lands were reached a year later by two adventurers and diplomats, Nicolaus the Saracen and Joseph the Turk. In a royal diploma issued in the city of Trnava in 1428, they were rewarded for their diplomatic mission to the eastern steppe and Asia Minor.¹⁸ Nicolaus of Geretz, who had already participated in the first mission, was called "the Saracen" due to his twelve-year captivity after the battle of Nikopol (1396).¹⁹ He was an envoy to the Turcoman state of Aq Qoyunlu, which was ruled at the time by Qara-Yülük (r. 1378-1435), who was an ally of Timur and also of his son, Shāh Rukh, with whom he attacked the Ottomans.²⁰ Joseph, called "the Turk", was a diplomat of Turkish or Turkic21 descent who was

¹³ TARDY 1978, 5-6.

¹⁴ TARDY 1978, 10-11.

¹⁵ Gulevich - Khautala 2018, 200-2.

¹⁶ TARDY 1978, 49-50, ref. 13.

¹⁷ GULEVICH - KHAUTALA 2018, 203.

¹⁸ TARDY 1978, 12.

¹⁹ ÁGOSTON 1995, 273.

²⁰ TARDY 1978, 14-15.

 $^{^{21}}$ He later became the Judge of the Cumans in Hungary and was a practicing Muslim. TARDY 1983, 14.

sent as an envoy to Ulugh Muḥammad (r. 1419–23, 1428–37), one of the strongest rulers of the slowly decentralizing Golden Horde. Two years later, in 1430, a letter from Qara Yülük to Sigismund speaks about his successful dealings with Shāh Rukh and mentions again Nicolaus and Joseph, who evidently went on a second diplomatic mission after the success of the first one.²² The diplomatic relations between the two rulers continued, and Qara Yülük's envoy Johannes Tartarus, or John the Tatar, reached the city of Pozsony (nowadays Bratislava) probably via the Danube, from where he went to meet the king in the city of Tyrnau (nowadays Trnava) in 1435.²³ Another famous traveller who was captured at the battle of Nikopol, Johann Schiltberger, visited the eastern steppe as well as Siberia, while in service of Timur, Shāh Rukh, and the Tatar prince Chakra. On his return from captivity in 1427, he passed close to the Hungarian borders, travelling from Moldavia, through the city of Lviv, where he fell ill for three months, then further through Cracow to his native Germany.²⁴

After the death of King Sigismund, the Orient became distant and the threat of the Ottomans grew even closer. The next chapter of the fight with the Turks was overseen by the already mentioned John Hunyadi, who for a short time owned the castle of Likava north of Ružomberok – from 1435 to 1449 at the latest. ²⁵ The full-on war with the Ottoman Empire hampered the attempts to maintain contacts with Central Asia, and the few allies of Hungary were now to be found mostly among the local European powers.

Conclusions

The presented coin hoard is unique on many levels, even though the circumstances of its acquisition are not entirely clear. There is, however, no apparent motive for the alleged finder to lie about the situation of the find, and the fact that he looked after it after its discovery in 1944 and before handing it over to the officials of the Institute of Archaeology in 1961 makes his statements seem rather reliable. There are no analogous compositions of coins from the region of Central-Eastern Europe. The absence of other coins from the closer geographical area and the fact that the coins were all made of copper makes it possible to say that they were not part of a monetary exchange or a source of precious metal that got to the region for its economic value. The composition of coins spanning from the 9th to the 15th century can be interpreted as some sort of a collection, again underlining the sentimental character of the deposition.

No definitive conclusion can be made regarding the origin and the meaning of this hoard, but the hints described in the present paper make the following hy-

²² Tardy 1978, 15-17.

²³ TARDY 1978, 24-5, ref. 40-1.

²⁴ SCHILTBERGER 1966.

²⁵ Ružomberok 2009, 51.

pothesis the most plausible one in light of the current state of research. The coins were acquired by the person who deposited them in Ružomberok right in their place of origin, in Central Asia at the beginning of the 15th century, based on the terminus post quem of the youngest identified coin. Even though the contacts of the Hungarian Kingdom and specifically its north-eastern part, with the Crimean cities, mainly Kaffa, are well documented, since there is no identified coin from the Pontic area the hypothesis that they came from this milieu can be doubted. As there are records of more than one exchange of ambassadors between the powers of the Middle East and Central Asia and the Hungarian Kingdom during the reign of king Sigismund of Luxemburg, it is more possible that the collector of the hoard was taking part in at least one of them. People mentioned in diplomas, such as Nicolaus of Geretz and Joseph the Turk, had no specific ties to the region of Liptov, but it is very possible that they did not travel alone and that the royal embassy coming from Hungary consisted of more people and hired local guides or translators on their way. One of these people could have resided in Ružomberok, bringing with him a souvenir from his travels – not economically valuable, but for sure a sentimentally important memento of his journey – in the form of exotic coins. The hoard was buried possibly during the military clashes with the Hussite armies or Peter Komoriwski during the 15th century, when the danger of armies in the vicinity of Ružomberok and the villages north of the Váh River may have forced the owner of the coins to hide them from the enemy. Centuries later, they were uncovered by a German soldier digging a trench during a punitive expedition of the Nazi army against the rebels of the Slovak National Uprising. Only further archaeological excavations in the area can bring forth more data, either for or against this hypothesis. A possible identification of the last of the coins by analogies can also change the current view on this unique find.

The present article aims at gathering the whole available archaeological and historical information about the coin hoard and put it in the scope of the relations between Europe and Asia in the 15th century, when it was most probably deposited in the ground. It does not dare to fully examine the coins from a numismatic point of view, but an important facet of the study is the publication of photographical evidence of the coins, previously unpublished in a graphical way, with the aim to present them to the professional scientific community. Also, the identification of the last coin could provide valuable information, as it is evidently an original coin that was later countermarked. Last but not least, a spectroscopic analysis in the future could add to the research on the metallurgical aspect of the oriental coins.

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Figures

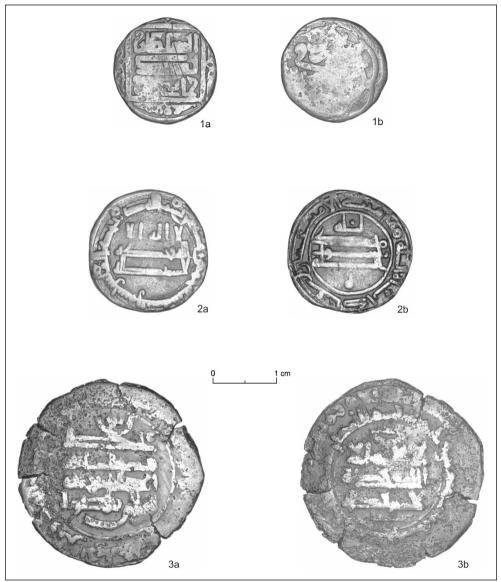


Figure 1. Coin hoard from Ružomberok: 1. Janibeg; 2. Ghassān b. 'Abbād; 3. Nūḥ II b. Manṣūr



Figure 2. Coin hoard from Ružomberok: 1. unidentified countermarked coin; 2. Shāh Rukh

Rakb al-Ḥajj al-Shāmī: Relations between Nomads and Pilgrims during the Mamluk and Ottoman Periods

HATIM MAHAMID & CHAIM NISSIM*

Abstract

This paper deals with the relations between nomads (Bedouins) and the pilgrimage caravans from Syria to the Hijaz (*Rakb al-Hajj al-Shāmī*) in the Late Middle Ages and the early Ottoman period. It tries to follow the changes and developments in the relations between nomads and pilgrims on the road between Syria and Mecca. Before Islam, agreements and alliances (*īlāf*) were made between rulers of Mecca and Bedouin tribes in Arabia to preserve security and safety in the area. In Islamic times, these norms continued and even developed. In the Mamluk era and then under the Ottomans, many arrangements for securing the pilgrimage routes and the pilgrims' stay in Mecca were renewed. The Bedouins' dealings with pilgrims ranged from peace and security to aggression and looting, according to the political and economic arrangements that prevailed between the Bedouins and the ruling authorities.

Keywords: nomads/Bedouins, *Rakb al-Ḥajj* (pilgrim caravans), Syria (*al-Shām*), Mecca, raids, Mamluks, Ottomans

Historical background: relations between nomads and others in Arabia

Since the building of the Ka'ba, which Islamic tradition ascribes to the Prophet Ibrāhim and his son Ismā'īl, the people of Arabia, and then all Muslims, have continued to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, which developed as an important religious and commercial centre in the area. Even for the pre-Islamic period, the

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Quran mentions riḥlat al-shitā' wal-ṣayf (travel of winter and summer). The roads to Mecca pass through mountainous and desert areas inhabited by scattered Bedouin tribes. According to the accepted custom, those who controlled the holy sites in Mecca were responsible for order and security. In pre-Islamic times, it was agreed that the pilgrimage seasons would be a period of peace and security called the sacred months (al-ashhur al-hurum), during which wars were forbidden in Mecca and its surroundings. But sometimes, fighting and conflicts broke out among local tribes, and they were known as "the sinful wars" (hurūb al-fujjār), because they violated the sanctity of the sacred months. (In the Islamic period, the Prophet Muḥammad turned Yathrib [Medina] into a sacred [haram] land as well.) To that purpose, the people of Mecca in the pre-Islamic centuries had ensured the peace of visitors to the city, both pilgrims and merchants, in three main areas: water supply (siqāya), food (rifāda), guarding and security (hijāba/sadāna).2 Therefore, the central tribe that controlled Mecca at the time (Quraysh) had good relations with the Bedouin along the routes to Mecca, drawing up mutual agreements in which the Bedouin received money and livelihood in return for peace and security.³ With the rise of Islam, these relations between Mecca and the pilgrims were maintained, expanding to include other visitors for religious and commercial purposes, as indicated in the Quran.4

The desert and arid geographical region of Arabia, between Yemen and the Levant (Syria and Iraq), affected the nomadic population in the region both in lifestyle and customs. The ancient customs continued to influence the lives of the nomads after their conversion to Islam, whereby the patterns of attitude toward "the other" were still enshrined in past traditions. Some habits of raiding on agricultural and settled areas or raids on the trade routes to obtain property held by merchants or pilgrims to the holy places in the Hijaz continued. During the Islamic times, and without respect to religious considerations, the Bedouins continued to carry out attacks on trade and pilgrimage routes, exploiting periods of drought or weak government.⁵

¹ On al-ḥaram in Medina, see AL-SIJISTĀNĪ 2009, 3, 378-83.

² See AL-AZRAQĪ 1983, 155, 197, 200.

³ On the *hajj* before Islam, see WEBB 2013, 6-14.

⁴ See the Quran, *sūra* 106 (Quraysh). There were two journeys to and from Mecca: the winter one to Yemen and the summer one to Syria (*al-Shām*).

⁵ Quranic verses mention the habits and behaviour of the Bedouin, such as: "The a 'rāb ('urbān/nomads) are the worst of disbelief and hypocrisy and should not know the limits of what God (Allah) has revealed [...]". "(?)While among the a 'rāb (Bedouins), there are those who consider what they spend in the cause of God (Allah) [...]". See Surat al-Tawba, (Chapter 9), no. 97–8; In this sense, a saying of the Prophet says: "man sakana al-bādiya fa-qad jafā, wa-man ittaba 'a al-ṣayd fa-qad ghafal". That means that whoever sits in the desert remains dry, and whoever hunts without attention focuses on the reward, so he neglects good deeds. See AL-Albānī 2002, 213–14.

All roads lead to Mecca

Even before Islam in Arabia there was a famous saying: "the people of Mecca know its routes best" (ahl Makka adrā bi-shi 'ābihā).6 This hinted at the difficulty of coming to Mecca, accessing it, and identifying its ways, due to the desert area. This made strangers vulnerable to wandering and possibly getting lost. So, pilgrims needed assistance and used to travel accompanied by guides from Mecca or from among the Bedouins of the area. As Islam spread outside Arabia, the need for access to pilgrimage routes to Mecca increased. The importance of these routes was in line with the changing political centres of Muslim rule and the centre of the Caliphate from Medina to Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, and Istanbul. The main pilgrimage routes to Mecca that developed over time were:⁷

- 1. the Syrian pilgrimage route (*Rakb al-Hajj al-Shāmī*), which later included the Ottoman pilgrims;8
- 2. the Iraqi route (Rakb al-Ḥajj al-'Irāqī), including Persians and other Asian pilgrims;
- 3. the Egyptian route (Rakb al-Hajj al-Maṣrī), including African, Maghrebi, and Andalusian pilgrims;
- 4. the Yemenite pilgrims (*Rakb al-Ḥajj al-Yamanī*).

The Tabūk route (to the north of Arabia) is known as the oldest road in the early Islamic period used by Muslim pilgrims. It connects Damascus to Medina and passes a number of camps and stations in Syria through Jordan via Tabūk to Hijaz. Caliphs and Muslim rulers in various Islamic periods were interested in conducting many construction projects along the routes, including the creation of pools, canals, forts, mosques, bridges, markets, and other rest stations. After Tabūk, a number of routes dispersed and headed to Medina, such as the Tayma' and Khaybar roads linking the Levant to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.9

Continuing to take care of pilgrims' affairs after the early Islamic period, caliphs and sultans later on adopted the duty to protect and preserve the Two Holy Mosques in the Hijaz, and were known by the title "The Protector of the Two Holy Mosques" (hāmī al-haramayn al-sharīfayn). These duties focused on several important aspects in order to ensure peace and security for the pilgrims to Mecca, back and forth all the way:

- 1. Road protection and construction of ponds and wells in the hajj routes
- 2. Organizing and securing the pilgrimage caravans and removing obstacles and risks by all means needed

⁶ See the electronic dictionary: https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-en

⁷ On the main routes to Mecca, see AL-'UMARĪ 2010, 2: 338–48.

⁸ On the Syrian *Ḥajj*, see MILWRIGHT 2013, 28–35.

⁹ See in detail about the Syrian route to Mecca with its stations during the Mamluk era: AL-UMARĪ, 2010, 2: 343-5; Many inscriptions and memorial Islamic writings still describe the pilgrimage routes in Jordan to the Hijaz, see TUTUNCU - PETERSEN 2012, 155-63.

- Providing means of subsistence for pilgrimage as well as necessary services and food
- 4. Carrying out necessary repairs in the two Holy Mosques (al-Ḥaramayn)
- 5. Responsibility for the annual supplies sent with the convoy of *al-Ḥajj al-Shāmī* to the poor people in Mecca and needy pilgrims (*al-mujāwirūn*), who spent their time in the two Holy Mosques in Mecca and Medina
- 6. Sending the *maḥmal* annually with the *kiswa* (cloth covering of the Kaʿba) and *al-ṣurra* (a package of money)¹⁰
- 7. Appointing the mission leader of the pilgrimage (amīr al-ḥajj)

In the Late Middle Ages and the Ottoman era, the <code>hajj</code> caravan was accompanied by a large staff and guards, headed by <code>amīr al-ḥajj</code>, who represented the caliph or the sultan in implementing his duties. He was the foremost official and the commander-in-chief of the pilgrims' mission, with several tasks to fulfil regarding care for the mission:¹¹

- Administrative, security, scientific, medical, catering, and guidance duties
- Several assistants and deputies for managing the caravan's affairs, such as a
 judge, court witnesses, organizer of the camel loaders, preacher to the pilgrims, and others

The pilgrimage was a manifestation of the exercise of state authority, particularly with regard to the protection and security of the pilgrims in the face of thirst, hunger, and the dangers of Bedouin attacks throughout the journey. After the early Islamic expansion in Syria, the Bedouin followed, and they even preferred nomadic life on the borders of independent lands. They were not interested in living in cities or in villages or moving to a life of stability.

From the early Islamic era to the Umayyad period (660–750), and the early Abbasid period, ensuring security was a reason for the multiplication of paths to Mecca. As mentioned, the main route from Syria to Mecca was the Tabūk route, but there were other ways, including the coastal route from Gaza to Ayla ('Aqaba) and Taymā'. Travellers picked the route of their choice depending on the season and the arrival point. Pilgrimage routes had various days of glory depending on which state was dominant. From their centre in Damascus, the Umayyads' policy regarding the Bedouins was formed by the Caliph Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān (r. 660–80). In times of good relations with the central authorities in Damascus, the nomad tribes used to fight and act in the border areas, and their chiefs received the tax revenue in the areas for which they were responsible. Muʿāwiya cared for important as-

¹⁰ The *maḥmal* is the camel that was sent during the *ḥajj* season by the sultan carrying the *kiswa* (covering) for the Kaʿba and other gifts. On the *maḥmal*, see PORTER 2013, 195–205; VROJLIK 2013, 206–13; and regarding the *kiswa*, see NASSAR 2013, 175–83.

¹¹ On the role of amīr al-ḥajj and his accompanying staff, see ʿANKAWI 1974, 151–66.

pects of the pilgrimage including the *kiswa*, with which the caliph was concerned in order to personalize a political act.¹²

In contrast, during the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad (750–1258), payments of taxes stopped, and the Bedouin gradually increased their attacks on the adjacent areas (cities and agricultural areas), especially in Syria due to its peripheral location. The Iraqi pilgrimage, then, was the site where the pilgrims of the East (Iraq, Persia, and Central Asia) and the Levant met, due to its safety and the availability of services such as wells (ponds) and rest houses, at least until the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad. During the Fatimid period in Cairo (969–1171), followed by the Seljuk control over Syria, and then the effect of the Crusades in the area (1099–1291), the Syrian hajj routes were interrupted, allowing the Bedouin to invade the adjacent areas, exploiting the political conflicts in Syria. As a result of those conflicts, the holy Black Stone (al-ḥajar al-aswad) in the Kaʿba was moved to the Persian Gulf by the Qarāmiṭa (a Shiʿi sect) for 20 years after they raided Mecca in 929 CE, looting and killing many pilgrims.

From the time of the Fatimid rule in Cairo, and later under the Ayyubids (1171–1250) and the Mamluks (until 1517), the Egyptian pilgrimage was the most important one, and it included the Maghrebi pilgrims, the Africans (*Takrūr*), and the Andalusians. ¹⁵ During the 10th to 12th centuries, the endless wars severely damaged the economic situation in Syria. Trade relations with the outside world were cut off, roads were unsafe for pilgrims, the livelihoods of farmers, artisans, and traders were disrupted, even peasants abandoned their land. Therefore, as a result of the weakness of political authorities in Syria, the Bedouin tribes of Banū Hilāl and Banū Salīm entered Palestine from Arabia and moved towards Sinai, Egypt, and North Africa (Tunisia). In the other direction, the Yemeni pilgrimage had the strength and importance under the Banū Rasūl dynasty to provide the *kiswa* and other supplies to the people of Mecca in the 12th century.

After the Ayyubids expelled the Crusaders from Jerusalem and the area, the future Ayyubid sultan al-MuʻazzamʻĪsā (r. 1218-27) renewed the Tabūk route again for the pilgrimage of Damascus in 1214, and it reached its golden age in the Mamluk period. Following the conquest of Syria, Egypt, and the Hijaz by the Ottoman Empire (1517), glory returned to the Syrian pilgrimage route because it was fol-

¹³ As a result of the Crusader conquest of the region and the building of their castles in Palestine and Jordan, the Syrian route to Mecca was interrupted and the Muslim pilgrims were forced to change their *ḥajj* routes. See: Petersen 2013, 21-27. On Muslim-Crusader conflicts, see: Amitai 2016, 324-45; Holt 2005, 170-9. See also Al-Kasasba 2018, 2.

¹² See AL-AZRAQĪ 1983, 1: 254.

¹⁴ On this attack of the Qarāmiṭa and its outcome, see IBN KATHĪR 1991, 11: 160-2.

¹⁵ See 'ANKAWI 1974, 146-8.

¹⁶ On the favourable conditions for pilgrim caravans to Mecca from Cairo and Damascus under the Mamluks, see 'ANKAWI 1974, 146–51.

lowed by Ottoman pilgrims. Thus, the Egyptian and *al-Shāmī* pilgrimage caravans seemed like "small towns on the move". ¹⁷

Motives of nomads' raids on pilgrimage routes

A question should be asked about the Bedouins' motives for attacking pilgrim caravans along the roads to Mecca despite the religious goals of this travel. It is known that the harsh living conditions of the nomads living in the deserts and their severe need for money and food led them to attack pilgrim caravans and traders passing by, but sometimes these raids occurred for no reason. A review of relevant sources of the period leads to the conclusion that there were various causes of these Bedouin attacks. Ignorance and tribal fanaticism ('aṣabiyya) among the Bedouins motivated them to loot the pilgrims for food and clothing without any religious motives for their deeds. Money, goods, and property held by pilgrims and merchants passing through Bedouin areas back and forth to Hijaz stimulated the Bedouins' ambitions to attack their caravans as part of their custom of raiding (ghazw). The major causes of such raiding can be summarized as follows:

- 1. Provocation or conflicts between the princes of Mecca, or between them and the pilgrims, led some tribesmen to seize the opportunity to raid the pilgrims' armed guards and loot them. In cases of lack of wisdom by the pilgrimage commander (amīr al-ḥajj) in dealing with the Bedouins, this led to conflicts with them—for instance, when he failed to perform his job properly by being negligent or unjust toward the Bedouins.¹⁸
- 2. Failure to deliver the funds agreed upon between the central authority and the Bedouins in exchange for guarding and protection of roads and maintaining water sources on the pilgrimage routes.
- 3. Conflicts and instability in the central authority and internal disagreements between the central authority or state governors led to a loss of security, i.e. to attacks on pilgrimage routes. For example, the nomads in Egypt and Syria began rebellions and attacked their surrounding areas, exploiting the political vacuum during the transition from Ayyubid to Mamluk rule (1250–60).
- 4. Severe cruelty used by the authorities to punish the Bedouins who sometimes attacked pilgrims, as well as military campaigns against them that led to capturing of women and children, seizing livestock, looting homes, and destroying properties also deepened the Bedouins' eagerness for revenge, as happened in the Damascus region in 1501.¹⁹

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¹⁷ See Dauphin - Ben Jeddou - Castex 2015.

 $^{^{18}}$ On the effect of conflicts among the emirs of Mecca and Medina, see Al-Maqrīzī 1997, 1: 481, 486, 487, 491, 2: 44, 59–60; Ibn 'Abd Al-Zāhir 1976, 359–60.

¹⁹ See IBN TŪLŪN 1998, 198.

Mamluk policy towards Bedouins

As already mentioned, in 1250–60 the Bedouins exploited the political vacuum and began rebelling and attacking surrounding areas in Egypt and Syria, claiming Mamluk authority to be illegal, and that they (the Bedouin) have the right to rule, considering themselves the "owners of the country" (aṣḥāb al-bilād).²⁰ Sultan Baybars acted severely against them, taking special care to secure the pilgrimage routes to the holy places in Mecca and Medina. The main aims of Baybars's acts against Bedouins were:

- to restore security along the roads;
- to ensure the nomads' loyalty and their obedience;
- to preserve the borders in Egypt, Syria, and the Hijaz areas by committing the Bedouins to keeping and controlling their territories;
- to obligate the Bedouins to pay duties and taxes (*zakāt* and *'ushūr*) like his other subjects.

From the data in the tables 1 and 2, it can be concluded that most of the Bedouin raids occurred in times of interruptions and conflicts among the political rulers or weakness of authority. That can be understood from al-Maqrīzī's description of the Bedouins' situation after Sultan Baybars had subdued them during his reign (1260–77) by saying that the Bedouins had been dispersed and their revolt was suppressed, and they were treated with violence and oppression until they were reduced and humiliated.²¹

As a result of the revival of the Abbasid Caliphate in Cairo in 1261 by Sultan Baybars, the Mamluk sultans assumed a special status of "the Servitor of the Two Holy Sanctuaries" (khādim al-ḥaramayn al-ṣharīfayn). So, the Mamluk duty of maintaining the pilgrimage became a political as well as a religious obligation. The rulers became responsible for all matters related to the safety of the pilgrimage along the roads and in the holy places, including sending the annual kiswa of the Ka ba and the departure of the richly decorated maḥmal that led the annual pilgrimage caravan from Cairo. The emir of the ḥajj was appointed by the Mamluk sultan to manage pilgrimage matters until returning back home. He was to be a man of competence, strength, courage, and diplomacy in order to protect the pilgrims, which made him frighten the nomads on the way. This responsibility of the Mamluk sultans imposed upon them the duty of maintaining the pilgrimage in a proper and safe manner. To this end, the sultans took various measures against violators

²⁰ On these events, see IBN 'ABD AL-ZāHIR 1976, 51, 120; AL-MAQRĪZĪ 1997, 1: 479-81; AL-Nuwayrī 2004, 30: 33-4, 68-9; AL-Dhahabī 1999, 49: 23.

²¹ See Al-Maqrīzī 1997, 1: 479–81: ...ḥattā tamma tabdīd shaml al-badw wa-ikhmād thawratihim, wa-mu ʿāmalatahum bi-l- ʿunf wa-l-qahr ḥattā qallū wa-dhallū.

of the order of the holy places in Mecca and Medina, and against the Bedouins along the <code>hajj</code> routes.²²

Table 1: Baybars's acts against Bedouins during his reign

Year	Events and results of Baybars's acts			
	Sultan Baybars provided the Bedouins with their livelihood.			
	He handed over to them the guarding of the country.			
1261	He obligated them to secure the borders with Iraq.			
	A proclamation to Sharaf al-Dīn 'Īsā ibn Muhannā as emir of all Bedouins in			
	Syrian areas (<i>mashyakha</i>). ²³			
1263	Sultan Baybars obligated the Bedouins to secure the country and safeguard it			
1203	until the Hijaz.			
1264	Baybars sent troops (khafar) to Khaybar to occupy it to guard the area and the			
1204	ways to Hijaz. ²⁴			
1265	Twenty-one Bedouin leaders (sheikhs) were executed.			
1268	Baybars succeeded in collecting both the zakāt and 'ushūr taxes. As a result,			
	many of the Bedouins, such as Banū Ṣakhr, Banū Lām, Banū ʿAnza, and other			
	tribes of the Hijaz submitted to him and committed to pay their zakāt dues of			
	sheep and camels.			
	Baybars had previously punished the Bedouins by taking their children			
1272	hostage. When the Bedouin leaders apologized to him, he freed their chil-			
	dren and reintroduced the previously decided-upon aid in money and live-			
	stock from neighbouring villages and cities. ²⁵			
1276	The Bedouins of Banū Uqba were obliged to provide horses and camels to			
	Sultan Baybars. ²⁶ This apparently became the usual relationship between the			
	Mamluk state and the nomads ('urbān).			
D d	Sultan Baybars succeeded in subduing the nomad tribes after implementing			
By the end	strict policies against their actions. The nomads were obliged to pay their			
of Baybars'	duties of <i>zakāt</i> from all regions under his influence, even from the Maghreb			
reign – 1277	and the Hijaz. Then, the Sultan used to send a special mamluk to the Hijaz			
	area to collect the <i>zakāt</i> . ²⁷			

 $^{^{22}}$ B. Walker, for example, discussed the changing relations between Mamluk authorities and the Bedouin tribes in Transjordan and its importance for several tasks, including defence against foreign invasion and preserving security on the main hajj route from Damascus to Mecca. See WALKER 2009, 83–105.

²³ AL-Nuwayrī 2004, 30: 26; Al-Maqrīzī 1997, 1, 538.

²⁴ See on this policy of Baybars: IBN 'ABD AL-ZĀHIR 1976, 165, 220; AL-MAQRĪZĪ 1997, 1, 557; AL-NUWAYRĪ 2004, 30: 152.

²⁵ On this event see: AL-NUWAYRĪ 2004, 30, 119-20.

²⁶ Al-Nuwayrī 2004, 147.

²⁷ See AL-NUWAYRĪ 2004, 96.

	1 7 7		
Bedouin raids	Bedouin raids		
1st Mamluk Era (Turk)	2 nd Mamluk Era (Circassian)		
659-76 AH (1260-77 CE) (Sultan	804-10 AH (1401-6 CE)	899-900 AH (1493-4	
Baybars' fighting against Bedouins.)	814-29 AH (1411-26 CE)	CE)	
683-7 AH (1284-8 CE)	841-2 AH (1437-8 CE)	903-4 AH (1497-8 CE)	
698-705 AH (1299-1305 CE)	843-66 AH (1439-61 CE)	906-7 AH (1500-1 CE)	
714-51 AH (1315-51 CE)	872-98 AH (1468-92 CE)	921 AH (1515 CE)	

Table 2: Main Bedouin raids in the Mamluk period by years:28

Sending money (*al-ṣurra*) to the Bedouins living near the pilgrim routes in exchange for securing the area, in addition to arranging money, clothes, and means of dressing for the Bedouin leaders, was a practice that continued uninterrupted every year. Occasionally, the authorities seized known violators of the order among the Bedouins and held them as a precaution until the *ḥajj* convoys moved away from their areas and then released them. Sultan Baybars dealt with the Bedouins in different ways, ranging from tolerance to harsh punishments. He was wary of the treachery of the Bedouins and punished them when needed by taking their children as hostages.²⁹

Many times, Mamluk sultans or their regional governors arranged for armed escorts guarding the pilgrim and trade caravans to repel attacks against them. They used to send military aid to the pilgrims if they were attacked for two purposes: to help the pilgrims or to punish the Bedouins. In 1304, during the reign of Sultan Qalāwūn (r. 1293–4, 1299–1309, 1310–41), Emir Sallār, for example, punished some of the aggressors against the pilgrims by cutting off their hands and feet, in addition to providing charitable aid, money, and assistance to pilgrims and other people in Mecca and Medina.³⁰ Another example is Sultan Khushqadam (r. 1461–7): in 1467, he acted to punish the attacking tribe of Banū 'Uqba in the 'Aqaba area by a military campaign in which their leader Shaykh Mubārak and sixty other men from his tribe were arrested and executed in Cairo.³¹

In the second Mamluk (Circassian) era, which was characterized by relative weakness, the Bedouin raids on pilgrimage routes and their surrounding areas increased.³² That is why the Mamluks worked to build rest stations and guard

²⁸ For examples of those raids in the late Mamluk period, see IBN ṬŪLŪN 1998, 32, 69, 132, 267, 276; IBN ḤIJJĪ 2003, 777.

²⁹ Al-'Umarī reports peaceful conditions on the way to Mecca, and good relations between pilgrim missions and the Bedouins in the first Mamluk period. See AL-'UMARĪ 2010, 338–9. ³⁰ See AL-MAQRĪZĪ 1997, 2, 378.

³¹ AL-MAQRĪZĪ gives many examples of such conflicts with the Bedouin in 1437–8, see, for example AL-MAQRĪZĪ 1997, 7, 372–3.

³² See Table 2 above to compare the number of conflicts between the two Mamluk eras. In his essay, Ibn Ṭulūn mentions how corruption spread in Damascus among the sultans and local rulers in the late Mamluk era and how it affected the maintenance of *al-Ḥajj al-Shāmī* and resulted in its neglect, see IBN ṬŪLŪN 2009. On the events in 900 AH/1494 CE, see IBN

posts between Damascus and the Hijaz, including forts and inns (*khans*), to provide comfort and safety for pilgrims.³³ The function of these stations was very important for safety and security as they provided shelter and nourishment to the poor and needy. Sometimes, pilgrims deposited and stored their goods in the forts, including some food for their return trip, or they provided dwelling for those forced to leave the caravan due to illness or injury.

Forts or *khans* on pilgrimage routes served as housing for guards controlling wells, pools, and other properties. They were also important because of the markets organized there between local people, pilgrims, and traders in general that Bedouins took advantage of. A good example of such a market is the one that the historian of the Mamluk era, Ibn Faḍl Allah al-ʿUmarī, described in Ayla (ʿAqaba) on the royal road, at the meeting of the pilgrimage routes from Gaza and Egypt. He says: "It is a destination intended for the traders of the Levant to come to, and great, extended and branched markets are established, that are not found in the main provinces and the big cities. Perhaps it does not lack anything in it: horses, camels, sheep, flour, barley, fodder and types of food, stripes, bearings... weapon, cloth, bedding, luggage, etc."³⁴

Relations between nomads and pilgrims under the Ottomans

After the Mamluks, the Ottoman sultans took upon themselves the special care for the holy sites and the safety of the *ḥajj* in order to preserve their religious status in the Islamic world. This duty was the principal reason for the successful protection of the Hijaz from Damascus, which was maintained by effective road security.³⁵ The pilgrimage caravan known as the Syrian Caravan included pilgrims from the Levant and Anatolia and was usually accompanied by the emir of the *ḥajj*, the *maḥmal*, and the Kaʿba cloth. Often, the *ḥajj* caravans would be combined with a military expedition to enable the Ottomans to maintain an active presence in the Holy Places.³⁶

ŢULŪN 1998, 132. In the year 916 AH/1510 CE, the pilgrimage from Syria via Tabūk was renewed after four years of interruption because of Bedouin raids and insecurity, see IBN ŢULŪN 1998, 267, 276.

³³ On early 16th-century forts on the Syrian *hajj* route, see PETERSEN 2013, 24–7. On establishing *khans* in Egypt, see also 'ABD AL-MALIK 2013, 42–54.

³⁴ See AL-'UMARĪ 2010, 341. On the role of the 'Aqaba *khan* (Ayala) as the meeting place between the Egyptian and the Syrian *Ḥajj* from Gaza, see 'ABD AL-MALIK 2013, 56–8.

³⁵ On the early Ottoman forts on the *ḥajj* routes, see Petersen 1989, 97-118. Sultan Selīm I ordered the construction of fortresses, and then other Ottoman sultans followed his policy as much as they could, see Petersen 2008, 31-46.

³⁶ In her study, S. Faroqhi focusses on the pilgrimage routes and securing the *ḥajj* missions by the Ottomans, see Faroqhi 1994, especially chapters 2 and 3. On early Ottoman Arabia and the *ḥajj* routes, see Petersen 2012, 9–19; on the Syrian *Ḥajj* see also Peters 1994, 144–61.

During the golden age of the Ottoman Empire two major pilgrim caravans were organized regularly: the Syrian (al-Shāmī), joined by the pilgrims from Istanbul and Anatolia, and the Egyptian hajj caravan, joined by pilgrims from North Africa (the Maghreb). The Ottoman sultan himself oversaw the exit of the pilgrims of Istanbul and accompanied them from the Haram area in Üsküdar. The convoy was loaded with gifts of gold, antiques, and camels. He also sent with them money from endowment funds and gifts to the Two Holy Mosques (al-ḥaramayn al-sharīfayn), while for the people of Mecca and Medina he sent food, lamps, and carpets. Sultan Selīm I (r. 1512–20) was the first Ottoman Sultan to obtain the submission of the emirs (sharīfs) of Mecca and Medina to Ottoman power in 1517. He appointed as amīr al-ḥajj from Egypt Muṣliḥ al-Dīn who was the first Ottoman official to carry the kiswa for the Kaʿba. On January 22, 1518, the four judges and several Sufis participated with the Emir Muṣliḥ al-Dīn to bid farewell to the ḥajj caravan in Damascus (Maʿlā).³⁷

Sultan Süleymān (r. 1520–66) was the first sultan to pay attention to the safety of the <code>hajj</code> and took several steps, including building forts and sending garrisons to guard the pilgrimage, that the Ottomans continued to implement in order to facilitate the pilgrimage routes. In 1520–1, Sultan Süleymān completed the renovation of Mecca's water supply system. In general, the Ottomans made efforts to minimize risks to trade and pilgrimage by repairing and building <code>khans</code>, caravan stations, and forts, in addition to the mobilization of many of their soldiers as guards, and by making agreements with the Bedouin, which contributed further protection. In his study, Andrew Petersen states that the <code>hajj</code> forts had a variety of functions that served to increase Ottoman power in the region, in addition to their ideological services in guarding the <code>hajj</code> routes.³⁸

In times of security, good relations spread between Bedouins and the others on the routes, such as pilgrims, traders, authorities, inhabitants of villages and neighbouring cities. The Bedouin benefited from this calm atmosphere in several fields, improving their living conditions and economic and commercial perspectives at the same time. They performed "guide" and "service" functions for the pilgrims' caravans, so they earned from services like renting camels and carrying pilgrims, providing them with food and drinks. As mentioned above, pilgrimage camps and stations turned into mobile markets with items for sale to Bedouins, locals, and pilgrims. Meanwhile, European merchants also benefitted from the hospitality and good treatment by the Mamluks and then the Ottomans that encouraged them to trade in the area, and they established their ports and commercial centres wherever

³⁷ AL-JAZĪRĪ 2002, 496-7.

³⁸ See Petersen 2008, 31–50. On the special care and provision of protection for the pilgrims between Damascus and the Hijaz in the early Ottoman period, see AL-KASASBA 2018, 5–7, 11-13; BAKHIT 1982, 223; AL-GHAZZĪ 1979, 3, 157.

Mamluks and Ottomans had erected *khans* on the roads and spread safety and protection along the pilgrimage routes.

Under weaker Ottoman governments, after Sultan Süleymān, governors increasingly neglected their duties so that many of these achievements were corrupted. Forts were ruined and the soldiers lacked commanders. As a result, the governors took advantage of the weakness of the central authority and began to seize the funds (al-surra) allocated to the Bedouins, which led the latter to react by attacking the pilgrim caravans and looting them. Since the early 18^{th} century, it became a practice for the governor ($n\bar{a}'ib$) of al- $Sh\bar{a}m$ to assume the position of $am\bar{i}r$ al-hajj as well. Thus, Damascus became the important centre for the hajj in the Ottoman Empire, gathering pilgrims from the neighbouring regions and even from Iraq and Anatolia.

The influence of Ottoman janissaries on the post of amīr al-ḥajj made matters worse. When the hajj leadership was taken over by one of those janissaries, the emir of the hajj started to manipulate the money of al-surra and to prevent it from being spent for the benefit and appearement of the Bedouins. Those changes led to instability among the Bedouins, and then pushed them to attack pilgrim caravans. In the late Ottoman period, governors were unable to prevent Bedouin attacks on populated areas adjacent to the desert in the Levant in general. The Bedouin looting of pilgrimage routes spread, and adversely affected the surrounding population, causing sometimes disruption of trade and impediment for pilgrim caravans.⁴⁰ Most Bedouin attacks on the al-Hajj al-Shāmī in the Ottoman period were carried out in the 18th century, while the 16th and 17th centuries witnessed only a few raids, which indicates the strength and prestige the state had enjoyed in the first two centuries after the Ottoman conquest of Syria and Egypt in 1516-7.41 The worst and most miserable conditions of pilgrims and their guards are described by al-Bidīrī during their return to Damascus in 1757. He mentions that "al-Ḥajj al-Shāmī had been stolen by 'Arabs (Bedouins) and looted, and the Bedouins had taken away women and men with their money and their belongings". Al-Bidīrī added that "women and girls were barefoot and without clothing and horrors that happened to the pilgrims caused by the evil of the Bedouin unbelievers were acts that even fire worshipers do not do, things that were never heard of from ancient times, and not even from idolaters".42

As a result, the next year (1758), the leader of the *ḥajj* mission, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Pasha, the governor of Tripoli, and his janissary troops acted with cruelty by killing many Bedouins in the Hijaz together with their leader (sheikh).⁴³ During the

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³⁹ AL-KASASBA 2018, 10-11.

⁴⁰ Petersen 2008, 41-4; Faroqhi 1994, chapter 3.

⁴¹ See FAROQHI 1994, chapter 3.

⁴² See AL-BIDĪRĪ 1959, 206-8.

⁴³ AL-BIDĪRĪ, 221.

rule of the Ottoman governor and de facto ruler of Egypt Muḥammad ʿAlī Pasha (r. 1805–48), he dealt cruelly with the Bedouins in Egypt, Hijaz, and Syria: He tried to restrain them and change the course of their nomadic lives, their aggressive habits, and their traditions.⁴⁴

Conclusion

The nomads' (Bedouin) relationship with others, especially with the pilgrim caravans, was characterized by changeable situations according to the status of the central authority. Sometimes it was distinguished by maintaining peace and security, while on other occasions it involved violent attacks and looting. Dealings with the Bedouins were related to maintaining the security and safety of the pilgrims and their caravans. The changes in relationship with the Bedouins were an important aspect of the reality on the pilgrimage and trade routes, especially between the Levant and the Hijaz. In times of strict rulers who implemented organized administrative systems, safety and security spread on pilgrim routes. As a result, caravans flourished in the path of pilgrimage, for the benefit of both pilgrims and traders. So, the authorities established *khans*, forts, and rest stations for them. This situation supported the development of seasonal markets on pilgrimage routes, and busy permanent markets and *khans* in major cities, which benefitted the local people in towns and villages as well as the Bedouins, merchants, and pilgrims.

But in times of weakness of the central authority or in states of confusion, the *al-Shāmī* pilgrimage was interrupted and joined the Egyptian pilgrimage through the Gaza route to 'Aqaba, because insecurity, wars or attacks on pilgrims, strife or disasters prevented them from travelling directly from Damascus to Mecca. Power struggles between princes of Mecca and Medina were usually accompanied by inter-tribal conflicts over areas of influence. These events affected pilgrims' travels, causing the looting of funds and then commercial stagnation. The Bedouins reacted with attacks, taking captives and killing travellers in order to obtain financial and material resources. On the other hand, the authorities acted to punish the attacking Bedouins by taking their children and leaders hostage as a means of subduing them and recovering stolen money and goods. As a compromise, signing agreements between Bedouins and the authorities led to the appointment of sheikhs, obedience, and the protection of roads in return for money.

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⁴⁴ On Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha's treatment of the Bedouins in Syria, see SALIM 1990, 216–23.

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Vlachs and Yörüks as Military Groups under Ottoman Rule and the Evolution of Their Roles

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Abstract

This paper discusses the changing role of the semi-nomadic groups within the Ottoman military structure. First, the position of the *yörüks*—the Turkish semi-nomadic group—will be underlined during the foundation of the Ottoman State. It is argued that they were a significant source for the Ottoman army both as infantry and cavalry. Then, through the imperial building process which peaked during the reign of Mehmed II, they were less needed and turned into auxiliary forces. Similarly, the Vlachs were another group of semi-nomadic nature that was utilized by the Ottomans from their first encounter onwards. Being a demographic pool for the military class of the Balkans before the Ottoman arrival, they were granted their previous status by the Ottomans as well. Yet, in time, in accordance with their needs, the Ottomans turned them into auxiliary forces, too.

Keywords: Yörüks, Vlachs, nomads, Ottomans

Even though the foundation and expansion of the Ottoman state in its early years have attracted historians for many years, some of its structural components such as the semi-nomadic groups have been neglected as separate areas of research.¹ Despite the remarkable existing efforts by some scholars devoted to the study of this subject,² the discussions on the foundation process evolve around similar points

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¹ R. P. Lindner's monograph is an exception, see LINDNER 1983.

² For a close study of the basic arguments on the question of the foundation of the Ottoman state, see KAFADAR 1995.

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and yet they seem to be far from opening new avenues for research.³ Within this context, this paper analyses the roles of the semi-nomadic groups in the early Ottoman period. It first argues that the *yörük*s played a significant part in the early phases of the Ottoman expansion both demographically and militarily. In time, with the transformation of the Ottoman state, the importance of the *yörük*s diminished. Another group of semi-nomads, the Vlachs, with whom the Ottomans met during their advance in the Balkans, was employed for the imperial expansion as well. Their connection with other already existing military groups such as *voynuk*s and *martolos*es increased their value. The changes in the Ottoman state structure resulted initially in them becoming auxiliary forces, and later in the abolishment of their organization.

We know almost for certain that the early Ottoman society was predominantly of semi-nomadic and pastoralist nature.4 Therefore, the constructive sections of the state apparatus, i.e. the military, would inevitably reflect such a picture as well. The changes in the state structure and the expansion in the Balkans resulted in a departure from the dominance of its semi-nomadic culture. On the other hand, the pragmatism of a state on the verge of evolving into an empire made it possible to make use of the semi-nomads who recently came under Ottoman rule. Employing already existing institutions was an established practice for the Ottomans during the expansion period. The evolution from a frontier beylik to an imperial state was mainly realized through the institutional changes, especially in the military, introduced between the reigns of Orhan (r. 1324-62) and Mehmed II (r. 1444-46, 1451-81). Thus, the role of the semi-nomadic groups in the Ottoman army should be traced accordingly. As Irène Mélikoff states, "the early Ottomans were apparently closer to the nomadic Turcomans both in terms of their lifestyle and religious practices, at first Osman and Orhan being simple chiefs of such a tribe."5 Within the same scope, the fact that the first ruler of the Ottomans, Osman Gazi (d. 1324), was a son-in-law of a follower of Baba İlyas, a religious leader of the Turcomans with a heterodox Islamic belief, strengthens such a picture. According to a 15th-century chronicle, Orhan, when contemplating the establishment of a military detachment, consults his brother Ali, who plans to retire by becoming a dervish. Ali suggests to him that Orhan and his new soldiers wear white headgears, unlike the soldiers of other beys wearing red headgears, which itself is another indication of the dominant Turcoman presence.6

 $^{^3}$ For a recent criticism of the literature on the process of imperial foundation, see DEMIRHAN 2019

⁴ İnalcık 1993, 25-6; İnalcık 1980, 74-5, İnalcık 1986, 41-2.

⁵ Melikoff 1993, 154.

⁶ ORUÇ 2014, 18-19; ANONIM TEVÂRIH-I ÂL-I OSMAN 1992, 16; AŞIKPAŞAZADE 2013, 55. AŞIK-paşazade does not mention a permission from Hacı Bektaş.

In this respect, it would be useful to give an outline of the Ottoman military structure and its evolution until the end of the 15th century. As stated above, the social structure of the early Ottomans was dominantly of semi-nomadic nature beside the fact that the Seljukid state tradition had a formative impact in the administrative background of the Ottoman principality. The military nature of the Ottomans, therefore, was shaped in parallel with their social structure. The seminomadic groups were both subjects and soldiers of this body, which was dominantly of tribal nature. It was "very difficult to distinguish between society and military among the Turkomans living in the Bithynian marches."⁷ The Bithynian frontier principality thus became a centre attracting wandering groups in Anatolia with the prospects it promised. It should be added that the combatant seminomads were led by a bey and his retinue, consisting of alps-or alp erens-and their comrades (yoldas, nöker), who were bound by a sort of chivalric codes, and these warriors were rooted in the Eurasian steppes.8 Aşık Paşa described the alp of his time in his Garibnāme (1330) as "a soldier having a good horse, carrying a keen edged sword (kılıç), bow (yay), arrows (ok) and lance (süngü), and bearing an impenetrable and awe-inspiring coat of mail (ton)."9 Thus, it can be said that during the period of frontier march while the beylik was a part of the Seljukid Empire under the Ilkhanid rule, the Ottoman forces mainly consisted of mounted archers, who were dominantly of semi-nomadic background and were under the command of alps.

During the process of becoming an independent principality, the Ottomans' popularity gained momentum among the Turcoman warriors, and in the same period Osman Beg became a more dominant figure among his fellow *alps*. ¹⁰ Then, in the period of expansion into Rumelia, these fellow *alps* turned into leading frontier lords of the Ottoman principality. The mounted Turcoman warriors were setting raids against the land of the so-called infidels, thus paving the way for conquests. These groups later constituted the *akıncı* (raider) forces that seem to have gained an organized structure in the 15th century. ¹¹ The reign of Orhan was the period of institutionalization of the military in parallel with the new territorial gains and these gains increased the need for a regular army. *Yaya müsellem* (infantry and cavalry) corps were recruited from the peasantry and semi-nomadic groups in return for a farm to cultivate and/or for some tax exemptions. The income from a certain amount of land was granted to the *timarlı sipahis*, who were professional mounted warriors, whose background varied from previous lords of the newly acquired lands to Turcomans. Land tenure in return for military service

⁷ FODOR 2009, 192.

⁸ See Pritsak 2012 and Günal 2007.

⁹ FODOR 2009, 194.

¹⁰ For a recent and comprehensive account of his career, see ALTUĞ 2020.

¹¹ KIPROVSKA 2004, 11–28.

was not a novelty in the medieval Mediterranean, and the Ottomans utilized it from the early years onwards. Azeb soldiers were another part of the infantry, and they were in time replaced by the janissary corps, which were first introduced during the time of Orhan. Yaya-müsellem corps together with azebs would be turned into auxiliary forces later. Until the time of Mehmed II, there was no structural change. The reigns of Murad I (r. 1362-89) and Bayezid I (r. 1389-1402) are known for the Ottomans' efforts to consolidate their power over their tributary states in the Balkans and in Anatolia. Bayezid I's aggressive attempt to dominate the periphery of the Ottoman state resulted in a period of interregnum as a result of the heavy defeat at the hands of Timur in the Battle of Ankara in 1402. After Mehmed I (r. 1413-21) rebuilt the Ottoman state, the reign of Murad II (r. 1421-44, 1446-51) paved the way for the military and organizational accomplishments of Mehmed II. It is a well-known phenomenon that Mehmed II, referred to as the Conqueror, developed the Ottoman state from a beylik into an empire. Apart from his reputation for putting an end to the Eastern Roman Empire by taking Constantinople into Ottoman possession, he is also credited for the codification which enabled him to transform the Ottoman state structure into an empire. He regulated some laws including the exaltation of the sultan by his officers, increased the number of janissaries to a great extent, and began choosing his viziers from the kuls, i.e. slaves. All these reforms are seen as signs of "the imperial turn" of the Ottoman state. 12 Besides, the integration of the already existing military class in the Balkans gained momentum through the annexation of the Bosnian lands. Some military remnants of the formative period were turned into auxiliary forces within the same context of imperial transformation, which will be discussed below and is important within the scope of this paper.¹³

The nature of the bulk of the units within the Ottoman army was thus shaped between the early years of the *beylik* and the reign of Mehmed II. In this context, it could be argued that the evolution of the Ottoman army over a period of around one hundred and fifty years was thus realized in accordance with two basic principles. First, the early Ottoman military was dominantly of semi-nomadic nature in terms of manpower, which was also a result of the demographic flow accompanying the military movements in the Balkans. Second, the Ottomans, as a late medieval/early modern formation, did not hesitate to adopt the pre-existing military institutions and their human resources. The Turkish semi-nomadic groups, the *yörüks*, and the Vlachs, as already existing semi-nomadic groups in the Balkan lands that came under the Ottoman rule, were both effectively utilized within the Ottoman military machine. Their roles within the military changed in time in accordance with the evolution of the Ottoman state and its needs. Both groups will

¹² Here, I use the term to define the evolution of the Ottoman state into an empire.

 $^{^{13}}$ For a brief survey of the early Ottoman military organization and its evolution in time, see KALDY-NAGY 1977.

be analysed in terms of their roles within the Ottoman military structure and the changes in time.

As one of the demographic elements of the Ottoman movement, the seminomadic *yörük*s groups were moved into the Balkans both voluntarily and by force in an intensive wave during the 14th and 15th centuries. These *yörük*s formed the man force of the frontier leaders, *akıncı beyleri*, in the very early stages of the Ottoman state, as touched upon by Maria Kiprovska:

... keeping in mind that those deportees came to Rumeli along with the hereditary *akıncı* leaders of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, it would not be mistake if we supposed that exactly these companions of the frontier *beys* performed the service of *akıncı*s on the Balkans, for which service, on the one hand, they were granted lands and certain privileges on the *beys'* part, and, on the other hand, they themselves were loyal to their commanders in chief – the *akıncı* leaders.¹⁴

In other words, the semi-nomadic groups shaped the nature of the Ottoman military during the early years of the Ottoman state. It is estimated that the human source of these raiders (akıncıs) were yörüks. In the earliest known fiscal and military register from the 1430s, the cavalry with fiefs (timarlı sipahi) under the command of Ali Bey, who was the son of the famous frontier lord Evrenos Bey, are mentioned as people with Anatolian and semi-nomadic origin: around 30 sipahis are recorded to be "Saruhanlu" or "Saruhanludan sürülüb gelmiş", or "Saruhan'dan sürülüb gelmişin oğlı". These expressions can be translated as "from [the Principality of Saruhan", "deported from Saruhan", "son of a deportee from Saruhan". The deportation from Saruhan is a famous one recorded in the early chronicles. In the late 1300s and the early 1400s, the yörüks of Saruhan did not obey the prohibition on retail of salt (for the benefit of the state monopoly on salt trade), and they were deported to Rumelia, predominantly to Plovdiv (Filibe) and Serres (Siroz). It is clearly stated that in 1385 "there were nomads in the land of Saruhan, [Kara Temürtaş] deported them to the province of Serres."15 Another record pertaining to the reign of Bayezid I also clearly refers to the deportation of Saruhanlı yörüks: "The province of Saruhan had nomadic people, they were spending winter in the Menemen plain. And there was prohibition on the trade of salt. They were unwilling to consent. Bayezid Khan was informed about it, and he let his son Ertuğrul know about the case and ordered him to deal with these people accordingly by assigning his trustworthy men and to deport them to Filibe. Ertuğrul received his father's order and sent these nomads to Filibe."16 When these lines from the chronicles are evaluated together with the records from the early 15th century tapu

¹⁴ Kiprovska 2004, 58.

¹⁵ AŞIKPAŞAZADE 2013, 84.

¹⁶ AŞIKPAŞAZADE 2013, 100.

tahrir defters, one may see that not only the raiders but also the cavalry with fiefs included a good number of warriors with semi-nomadic origins.

In this way, one may notice that in the very early stages of the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans, the frontier marches attracted many people for booty and gaza, and the yörüks were dominant among them. Yet, in time – probably in the early 15th century – the military organization of the Ottoman state began to change and the forces under the command of the frontier leaders were reorganized. The number of the cavalry with fiefs increased in this period. From what is implied in the sources, we know that the raider groups did not consist only of yörüks, yet they were dominantly of this origin. According to the 15th-century chronicles, the deportees from the Saruhan region were led by Paşa Yigit Bey. 17 As a frontier leader he led this group of nomads to Filibe, which is a strong sign of the military nature of the yörüks in the Balkans. 18 Besides, once these groups were in the Balkans, they began to live along the frontier of the Ottoman marches, thus forming a pool for the military forces of the frontier leaders. It is instructive to follow the direction of the early Ottoman conquests in the late 14th and early 15th centuries and compare it to the yörük auxiliary organization centres from the 16th century. 19 The settlements conquered by the Ottoman forces in the early phases of the Ottoman movement in the region, a significant number of whom were of semi-nomadic origin, were the places where one can notice the density of the *yörük ocaks* in the 16th century.

How can we trace the military legacy of the *yörük*s in the Ottoman Balkans? In the second half of the 15th century, the central and provincial armies became more professional through the increase of fief holding *sipahis* and the janissaries. This period coincides with the infantry *yaya*, *azeb* soldiers, and cavalry *müsellems* becoming auxiliary forces due to the centralization and imperial policies of Mehmed II and being replaced by *timarli sipahis* and janissaries. Curiously, this is also the period when we have first records of the *yörüks* as auxiliary forces. The law codes from the reign of Mehmed II outline the structure and duties of *yörük* auxiliaries. In accordance with them, they were organized in units called *ocaks* (literally meaning "hearth"), and each *ocak* had 24 people. Four of them were assigned as the serving ones, one of whom would participate in a campaign or will conduct state service each year. The remaining three would serve alternately. Twenty of the hearth's members were named *yamak*, and they were to pay for the expenses of the incumbent. The incumbent was "to be equipped with his own corselet, and with no lack in his pole, iron, arrow, bow and shield." There were some minor changes in the

¹⁷ AŞIKPAŞAZADE 2013, 100.

¹⁸ AŞIKPAŞAZADE 2013, 100: "Paşa Yiğit Bey ol kavmin ulusuydı".

¹⁹ For a detailed discussion of the origins of the *yörük* organization, see YENI 2013, 152–212. Also, see a very recent study on the issue, KALIONSKI 2020. Unfortunately, I did not have the chance to see this study before the submission of my manuscript.

²⁰ AKGÜNDÜZ 1990, 354-5; cf. YENI 2013, 168.

organization in the 16th century, yet their role as auxiliary forces was defined in the law codes more clearly.²¹ In the records of the Grand Council (mühimme defterleri of the divan-1 hümayun), there are various entries where yörüks, yaya-müsellems, and voynuks were all summoned to act as auxiliary forces doing such jobs as constructing bridges over rivers or preparing roads when needed. When they were not attending campaigns, they worked in mines, repaired fortifications, and performed other works of that kind. As for the transformation of the semi-nomadic groups that were within the state mechanism from the foundation process onwards both demographically and militarily, it can be deduced that the early Ottoman society and military – their polity being still a kind of frontier principality – were hugely dominated by these semi-nomadic groups. Yet, from the second half of the 15th century onwards, a centralist and imperial policy began to hold sway. Thus, the frontier lords in the Balkans turned into ordinary provincial governors, and the position of the yörüks in the military diminished accordingly.

There was also another semi-nomadic group with whom the Ottomans met during their military movements in the Balkans. It was the Vlachs. As it was proven to be valid for some other groups, they were employed by the Ottomans within their military structure as they had some previously established military organization. ²² It is well known that the Ottomans were ready to adopt pre-existing institutions and regulations, at least in the early years of their control of a region.²³ On the basis of the early Ottoman laws concerning the Vlachs, it is assumed that "Ottoman legislation concerning the Vlachs was adopted and revised legislation of previous periods."24 The adoption of the established administrative applications opened the way for a smooth transition, thus in some cases, facilitating the integration of a region. In this way, a good number of the existing Balkan aristocratic elite and military officers were utilized in accordance with their status and ranks. Studies on the 15th-century tax registers reveal many examples of it.25

While a part of the Balkan aristocracy became a part of the Ottoman army with fiefs as income in return for their services, there were members of the lesser nobility who were also integrated. Among them, there were voynuks, martoloses, and the Vlachs. The Vlachs were also in a way related to the other military groups, in terms of supplying manpower for voynuks and martoloses. Roughly speaking, the Vlachs had a military organization by themselves besides being a human source for the

²¹ YENI 2013, 168-70.

²² N. Isailović provides a picture of the Vlachs before the arrival of the Ottomans with details on the taxation of their pastoral production, ISAILOVIĆ 2017, 30.

²³ Kiprovska discusses the integration of the already existing groups of population with military functions into the Ottoman system and its reflection on the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans throughout her article, KIPROVSKA 2016. For the earliest study on the issue, see İnalcık 1953.

²⁴ Isailović 2017, 39.

²⁵ The earliest Ottoman tax register has many examples of it, see İNALCIK 1987.

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other local groups.²⁶ In this aspect, they were similarly employed as the yörüks. As noted above, in the medieval Balkans the Vlachs were already a group performing military services, thus enjoying a specific legal status differentiating them from the rest of the population. They were also used for the inhabitation of depopulated regions. In time, the impact of the feudal structure within the Vlachs began to loosen their position in favor of sedentary life, and thus some of them were no longer part of the military structure. Yet, their leaders continued to be associated with the military.²⁷ When the Ottomans came to the Balkans in the 14th century and moved towards the Bosnian territories in the early 15th century, they encountered the militarily-associated Vlachs, and agreed to include them into the Ottoman military and administrative structure. As already mentioned, the way of their registration into the Ottoman fiscal and military registers reveals the fact that they had already been associated with the military even before the arrival of the Ottomans. The chiefs of the Vlachs were recorded as "kadîmî sipâhî oğlı" or "sipâhî neslinden" (trans. sons of old cavalry, descendants of cavalry).²⁸ We know that the Vlachs were present in the conquest of the towns of Maglaj, Tešne, Doboj, Zvornik, Teočak, and Tuzla in northeastern Bosnia.²⁹ It can thus be asserted that the Ottomans made use of these nomadic groups as active combatant forces. In this sense, they can be seen as non-Muslim akıncıs, raiders.

How were the Vlachs organized according to the early Ottoman registers? According to the first kanuns for the Vlachs of Braničevo and Vidin in the 1460s and Smederevo in the 1470s, the basic military obligation of the Vlachs was to provide one voynuk from five households. The kanuns for Hersek from 1477 and for the Maglaj and Kral districts of the 1480s mention their obligations to provide one incumbent (eşkünci) for every ten or fifteen households to participate in campaigns. In the early 16th century, they were required to provide one voynuk or gönder for guarding unsafe regions, and they were to join the campaigns as cavalrymen. The Vlachs were organized into knezliks in parallel with their settlement. The term katun was also used to refer to a fiscal unit consisting of 20 households in the beginning, but then this term disappeared together with the decreasing importance of the Vlachs for the Ottoman military. A knez was the chief of the Vlachs in his knezlik/nahiye, while a premikür was the leader in his village and the unit was called premikürlük.³⁰ The voynuks and martoloses were related to the Vlachs because they were mostly of Vlach origin. Then in time they began to be distinguished from them through the sedentarisation of the Vlachs.³¹

²⁶ Antov 2013, 227; Kursar 2013, 137.

²⁷ Kursar 2013, 118.

²⁸ Kiprovska 2013, 88-9; cf. Kursar 2013, 143.

²⁹ Kursar 2013, 130.

³⁰ Kursar 2013, 139.

³¹ Kursar 2013, 138.

In the 1530s, the Vlachs lost their importance for the Ottoman army. This was because the Ottoman borders were changed, and thus the Vlachs were not as useful as they used to be as active military groups. But the Vlachs living along the Danubian route were an exception. Thus, most Vlachs lost their military status due to the changes in the borders, except for the ones along the Danubian route after the Battle of Mohacs. Their communal leaders such as *knezes*, *premikürs*, *voyvodas*, and *katunars* continued to serve, albeit in the auxiliary forces in return for some tax exemptions.

They are mentioned in a 16th-century provincial law of Pojega in the following way:

Vlachs are settling in desolated arable fields in the border-province, making them inhabited and prosperous. Some Vlachs are cultivating fields, while others are pasturing goats and sheep. In other provinces, they pay 83 *akçes* per household in return for cultivation of fields, and cattle tax according to the Vlach custom. If this records in the register, these hearths (*ocaklar*) will become contractors for the performance of the imperial services, defense and security.³²

This quote reveals the fact that the Vlachs had also been turned into auxiliary forces and they were mainly serving in mines, mountain passages, clearing the roads for the army, repairing the fortresses, etc., just like the semi-nomads who came with the Ottomans, the *yörüks*. The Vlachs were summoned for the imperial services either during the campaigns to assist the army or for other services in return for their tax exemptions. There are many examples of such calls for service in the imperial registers of the Imperial Council.

The conservative nature of the early modern Ottoman state can be seen in this evolution. Since some of the Vlachs were of semi-military character, the Ottomans continued to employ them as auxiliary forces and work forces. Around the 1620s, the Vlachs along the borders also lost their privileges and became ordinary subjects because the fortress system was introduced for the defence of the borders,³³ while the *yörük* continued to be used as auxiliaries until the end of the 17th century under the *yörük* organization. In 1691, they were reorganized under the name of *evlâd-1 fâtihân* yet with similar obligations.³⁴ In short, the early Ottoman society and military, whose political entity was still a kind of frontier principality, were hugely dominated by the semi-nomadic groups, and the structure of the military organization reflected this through the domination of these groups in the army. Yet, from the 15th century onwards, and especially during the reign of Mehmed II, the Ottomans followed a centralist and imperial policy. Thus, the frontier lords in the Bal-

³² Kursar 2013, 132.

³³ Kursar 2013, 136.

³⁴ GÖKBILGIN 1957, 255.

kans evolved into ordinary provincial governors, and the position of the seminomadic groups in the military diminished. However, the pragmatism of an early modern state continued to make use of these groups by transforming them into auxiliary forces and using them according to the needs of the state.

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The Battle of the Epic Hero with Death: The Problem of the Relationship between Medieval Turkic and Byzantine Folklore

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Abstract

The fifth tale of the Turkic *Book of Dede Korkut* about Deli Domrul has a strong connection with the Greek legends and Byzantine songs about Digenis Akritis. In terms of its plot, this story stands apart from the rest of the tales of the *Book of Dede Korkut* and, at first glance, from the tradition of the Turkic epic in general. It combines two motifs that were distributed primarily in ancient and modern Greek folklore: the struggle of the hero with death and the wife who gives her life as a ransom for her husband's death. But at the same time, there is a similar motif in the Bashkir folklore in the oral epic *Ural-Batyr* as well as in a legend (known to us from a later literary study from the 19th century) about the hero, who, boasting to his friends, tries to deceive and kill Death, but God punishes him for that.

Keywords: Oghuz Turks, epic, Byzantine folklore, Turkic folklore

The Turkic medieval written epic *The Book of Dede Korkut (Kitāb-i dedem Ķorķud,* BDK further in the text) is undoubtedly the most important source on the social and cultural life of the early Oghuz Turks. Customarily, the composing of the twelve stories of which the BDK consists is said to have taken place in the 11th century, but the stories were fixed in writing only later, approximately in the 15th century.

The BDK (according to the Dresden manuscript¹) consists of twelve songs/legends, which tell of the exploits of the Oghuz heroes. At the core of the

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¹ In 2018, a new manuscript containing the BDK epic cycle was found in Iran (the so-called "Gonbad manuscript"); a brief research on it as well as the manuscript itself was published in June 2019, shortly before completion of the original version of this paper (see: Shangoli et al. 2019).

epic, which is constructed by these stories, lies the struggle of the Oghuz tribes against the infidels, non-Muslims ($k\bar{a}fir$), in the lands of Asia Minor, as well as the constant internecine strife among the Oghuz themselves. This text reflects both the events of early Turkic semi-legendary history (not only historical facts, but also a set of mythological beliefs) and later events related to the spread of their power in Asia Minor and their contacts with Byzantium. The stories that comprise the BDK display a clear connection with both common Turkic literary and folk traditions and more recent strata. A monument of a written epos, the book lies on the border between oral and literary tradition as well as between folk narrative and historical chronicle.

There are several tales in this epos which are closely connected with Byzantium and the Empire of Trebizond: "Deli Domrul, Son of Dukha Koja", "How Bisat killed Depegöz" and "Kan Turali, Son of Kanlı Koja". Those tales are chronologically the latest in the BDK, they had been formed already on the territory of Asia Minor after the migration of the Oghuz tribes to the South Caucasus. The fifth tale of the Turkish BDK about Deli Domrul probably dates back to the Greek legends and Byzantine songs about Digenis Akritis: the main hero named Deli Domrul ("Wild Domrul") challenges the angel of death Azrail. Allah sends Azrail to take the soul of Domrul. Domrul engages him in battle, then begs for his life, and then asks his father and mother to give their souls in his place—but they don't agree. After that, Domrul asks his wife and she is ready to make this sacrifice. God gives life to Domrul and his wife and takes the lives of his old parents.

In terms of its plot, this story stands apart from the rest of the tales of the BDK and, at first glance, from the tradition of the Turkic epic in general.² It combines two motifs that were distributed primarily in Greek folklore: the struggle of the hero with death, and the wife who gives her life as a ransom for her husband's death—after the mother and the father of the hero refuse to do that.³

² Later, the story of Deli Domrul in the Turkish literary tradition was closely connected with the image and legends of Haji Bektash Veli (see GÖKYAY 2000, LXXIII). O. Ş. Gökyay, with reference to P. N. Boratav, reports, in particular, about the legends about the Holy Tuğrul (Doğrul/Domrul) that existed among the Bektashis. It is known that the tales related to the cycle of the BDK for a long time – up to the first half of the 20th century – existed in oral form in Turkey and Transcaucasia, often within a different, later genre of Turkish traditional literature: the genre of the folk story (Tur. *halk hikayesi*).

³ A fairly detailed analysis of the second motif with quite extensive comparisons with monuments of world folklore is contained in the unpublished article of Wolfram Eberhard "Über die Erzählungen des Dede Korkut" (it is stored in the archive of the Folklore Society of the Finnish Academy of Sciences) (see EBERHARD, n.d.). In his research, W. Eberhard, who is primarily interested in the origin of the plot of each of the stories of the BDK, derives the image of Domrul and the tale about him from Admetos and Alkestis of the ancient Greek mythology.

The epic poem "Digenis Akritis" is a monument of the Byzantine heroic epic and has come down to us in several versions (six are known) and is referred to as "the only epic monument of its kind created in Greek after Homer";⁴ most likely, it is founded on the basis of folklore material. The so-called "Acritic songs" belong to medieval and modern Greek folklore and praise the military exploits of the *akritai*—a special class of warriors, which emerged in Byzantium roughly in the 9th—10th centuries for the defense of the eastern frontiers of the Empire.

Tales about Digenis Akritis and his exploits were extremely widespread in the territory of Asia Minor and the South Caucasus.⁵ The original version apparently went back to the end of 10th and the beginning of 11th century; the number of layers in the surviving versions indicates different periods of their emergence from the second half of the 11th to the 14th century.

The image of Charon ($X\dot{\alpha}\rho\omega\nu$)—the demon of death on a black horse—passed into Byzantine folklore from ancient Greek mythology and for a long time remained in Greek folklore and the beliefs of the Middle Ages, and even modern times. In ancient Greek mythology, Charon was a boatman who ferried the shadows of the dead across the underground river Acheron to the underworld. In many modern Greek folk songs, Charon appears as a demon of death riding a black horse.

The motif of the struggle of the epic hero with Charon is presented in the 8th book of the poem "Digenis Akritis", as well as in a number of the Acritic songs:

And many other things too, for your love, My soul, I did, to win you utterly; And yet I missed my aim, I lost my hope. For be assured certainly I am dying. Me, the invincible, Charon quite routs, Hades parts, dear, from my much love of you, And the tomb covers me with all my pain And grief unbearable for your widowing. (Digenis Akritis, 8, 124-5)⁶

See also:

If Digenes the Borderer's name was heard Horror seized all and greatest cowardice; Such favour had the youth received from God His name alone would rout his adversaries. For if the hero ever went out hunting All beasts would run to cover in the swamp.

⁴ SYRKIN 1960, 131.

⁵ The Armenian legend of Kaguan Arslan and his bride Margrit is also known as a version of the Greek song about Digenis and his struggle with Charon (ZHIRMUNSKII 1962, 199).

⁶ Mavrogordato 1970, 239.

Now he is held down by a little tomb, Vain, ineffectual for all to see. Who is it greatly dared to bind the strong? Who had strength to subdue the undefeated? Bitterest Death, accessory of all, Charon, thrice-cursed and common taker-off, Hades insatiate, these three man-killers, The three unpitying, and every age, All beauty withering, wasting all glory. (Digenis Akritis, 8, 260-70)?

Here, in the poem of Digenis Akritis, the "battle" of the main epic hero Digenis with Charon ending with the hero's death is referred to metaphorically, whereas in the Acritic songs this motif is much more developed: Digenis fights with Charon more than once.⁸

The question of the relationship between Byzantine folklore and the Turkic epos remains unexplored to a significant extent, but it is obvious that the formation of the BDK was strongly influenced by both Byzantine Greek folklore and some archaic epic themes and motifs.

The motif of the fight or outwitting between a man and Death/Azrail from the Turkic epics can also be found in Crimean Tatar folklore and —quite unexpectedly—in the Bashkir epics.

At the end of 19th century, Wilhelm Radloff collected some works of the oral epic folklore (epic *destans*, songs, short stories) of different dialects of the Turkic peoples of Crimea (Crimean Tatars of the southern coast of Crimea, Tatars of the north and steppe parts of Crimea, and the Karaite Turks); the materials were published in the 7th volume of his *Proben der Volkslitteratur der nördlichen türkischen Stämme* (1888, VII. Theil "Die Mundarten der Krym"9). Among them, there was the short story "Azraiilnın dostu" ("The Friend of Azrail") from Miskhor: 10 a man who once became a friend of Azrail cheats him when the latter comes for his soul. 11 As a result of a trick, the man succeeds in cheating the angel of death and almost defeats him: when Azrail comes after the man's soul, the man starts reading a book and asks Azrail to wait for a while (until he finishes the book) and Azrail agrees with him; when the angel of death comes for a second time the man says that he would finish reading the book in seventy years—thus, the man manages to deceive Azrail and get another seventy years of life. This legend, of course, is not directly related

⁷ MAVROGORDATO 1970, 249.

⁸ Popova 1974, 90.

⁹ See: RADLOFF 2010.

 $^{^{10}}$ Miskhor (Tur. *Mishor*) is a village (and now a locality) on the southern coast of Crimea, 10 km southwest of Yalta.

¹¹ Radloff 2010, 88.

to the Turkic motif of the hero's struggle with death, which was discussed above, but probably represents one of its very late interpretations.

However, at the same time, there is a similar motif in Bashkir folklore in the oral epic "Ural-Batyr" and in a late legend about the hero who, boasting to his friends, tries to deceive and kill Death, but God punishes him for this.¹²

In the Bashkir "Ural-Batyr" epic the hero is also looking for a struggle with Death in order to kill it.¹³ But according to some researchers, the status of this epic itself is still subject to discussion¹⁴—it is known that the epos exists in a single edition from 1910, which was compiled by the collector of the epos. The other mentioned Bashkir legend is known to us only from a late literary and dramatic narrative of the 19th century (though its folklore basis is indisputable), which was published by I. I. Zheleznov¹⁵—this is probably the latest development of the theme of Ural-Batyr.

Ioasaf Ignatievich Zheleznov (November 12, 1824 – June 10, 1863) was a Russian writer, researcher of the Ural (Yaitsky) Cossacks, collector of folklore, historian, and ethnographer. Being himself from a family of Ural Cossacks, in 1862 he was elected as a member of the military office, which was responsible for the affairs of the Ural Cossack community. Zheleznov was famous as a defender of the rights and interests of the community. In 1858, he published his ethnographical work Uraltsy — Essays on the Life of the Ural Cossacks («Уральцы — очерки быта уральских казаков»), which immediately drew attention to the author and revealed his remarkable literary talent. After that, he started to collect material on the ethnography and history of the Ural Cossacks. A significant part of these materials has not been treated and edited by I. I. Zheleznov and was published only after his death; some part was issued by him in Legends and songs of the Ural Cossacks («Предания и песни уральских казаков») that was reprinted with some additions in 1888 and then in 1910 (both after the death of I. I. Zheleznov). 16

In *Uraltsy*, there is a legend represented as a story told in Russian to Zheleznov by an old man somewhere in the steppes. The man tells of "the holy hero" (without name) that lived in Bashkiria about 200 years ago and was famous as a brave defender of all poor and underprivileged people. The hero was also well known for his exploits as a successful and skilled hunter. Once, at a feast, he decides to pretend to be dead in order to experience what death is and tell all the living people

¹² I am very grateful to professor Sergey Yu. Neklyudov who drew my attention to this publication.

¹³ See: Zaripov 1987, Mirbadaleva et al. 1977.

¹⁴ Neklyudov 2019, 91.

¹⁵ See: Zheleznov 1910, 220-6.

¹⁶ In 1888, his three-volume collected works with the first biographical essay about him were published in Saint Petersburg. The author of the essay was N. A. Borodin, a well-known Ural scholar who was acquainted with the local tradition. In 1910, this three-volume edition was reissued under the general title *The People of Ural (Uraltsy)* (see: ZHELEZNOV 1910).

about it, and at the same time "to punish Death properly". However, he does not succeed in deceiving Death, and his fellows, *the djigits*, shortly find the hero actually dead in his fake grave, with the handle of his axe on his feet and a look of horror on his dead face. The legend finishes with a moralizing maxim by the old man about the punishment of Allah for mocking death. The man also claims the happiness of the Bashkir people was buried in the grave of the hero:

Struck with fear and barely alive, the friends of the hero, having filled up his grave tightly, return to the nomad camp and tell about his death to the people, and the people, seeing in this event the punishment of the Almighty God for the daring desire of a mortal to learn the secret of fate, give themselves up to grief and pray for the soul of the hero. The grave of the hero, concludes the legend, buried in itself, together with him, also the happiness of the entire Bashkir people.¹⁷

Thus, the motif of the hero's struggle with Death/the Angel of Death/Azrail is represented in a few different Turkic epic traditions sometimes with a strong literary influence or editing. If we talk about the plot of the Turkic epic (the tale of Deli Dumrul from the *Book of Dede Korkut*), then the influence and the relationship with medieval Greek folklore can undoubtedly be seen, but at the same time it is possible that such a motif of confrontation, dispute, and cheating of Death by the main epic hero may also have a Turkic origin.

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¹⁷ Zheleznov 1910, 226.

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Early Mediaeval Nomads between Iran, Central Asia and Europe: The Issues of the Archaeological Evidence

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Abstract

In this article, the author deals with the themes of the centrality of the Iranian plateau and the archaeological cultures that have succeeded therein in relation to the issues of the ancient and mediaeval Eurasian nomadism. Spanning briefly from the Iron Age to the late Middle Ages, the author identifies and analyses the main aspects of this centrality crossing also the intricate question of the ethnical and cultural affiliation. The whole phenomenon of ancient Eurasian nomadism was active and operational thanks to numerous ethnically Iranian population groups. And even in the Middle Ages there was a conspicuous number of Iranian populations, although for the most part they were replaced by those of Paleo-Turkic stock.

Keywords: Archaeology, Nomads, Iran

Introduction

Among the methodological approaches used by most of the archaeologists dealing with the Eurasian nomadic groups, the most popular one is the attempt at singling out their identity on the basis of material evidence. While ethnocultural identities are usually well documented in historiographical evidence, they always appear difficult to recognize from the point of view of the archaeological documentation.

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Moreover, the complex relationship between the concepts of ethnos and culture further complicates the issue, especially with regard to the medieval period, both in Europe and Asia.¹ Without delving into an analysis of the theories proposed during the last two centuries in the archaeological scientific debate, we will just mention some of the most important and recent contributions to this issue.² All cited authors have examined the differences and the overlaps of those terms according to their ideological and political perspectives, and the different sociopolitical and cultural environment where they lived.

Generally speaking, the cultural-historical approach is certainly predominant in the field of archaeological studies, and the identification and the reconstruction of ethnicities is thus one of the main aims of the related research activities. The original significance and functions of items and objects, even when they remained substantially unknown, have often been used in order to construct a possible ethnic background.3 Step by step, ethnicity has been conceptually transformed into a real culture, moving from an abstract indeterminacy to a real identity. Many archaeological interpretations have, thus, been oriented to consider every culture, i.e., the set of traits widespread over a given territory within a definite time span, as the bearer of a certain identity. Thus, the scientific debate in the archaeological field has determined a sort of distinction between those who consider ethnicity as the original character of a people and those who regard it simply as the marker of cultural changes. Today, most of the scholars refer to ethnos as a human group defined by physical type, customs and cultural traits, without considering whether an actual blood relationship existed among its members. Much more problematic, from a properly archaeological point of view, is to understand the value and the function of a single item of material culture, and associate it with a sufficient degree of approximation to an ethnos or population.

As a matter of fact, attempts to identify through their material culture the typological and chronological elements pertaining to ethnic groups have been developed together with those used in other fields of research in order to identify languages and homelands. Therefore, the concept of culture has been generally considered in each of its elements a reflection of sorts of a "national" spirit. This in turn led scholars to consider material culture as bearing the "footprint" of the ethnic group responsible for its production. The detailed topographic maps increasingly widespread in archaeological research are generally used to identify the distribution of the patterns of object types, viewed as localised in highly homogeneous and well-defined macro cultural areas. Such areas are then tentatively combined with the mosaic of the ethno-historical sources. This approach has occurred in particular within the field of studies and analyses of the nomadic peoples, con-

¹ GEARY 1983.

² Lucy 2005; Bierbrauer 2009; Curta 2002; Pohl - Mehhofer 2009; Bálint 2009.

³ Brather 2004.

sidered bearers of a set of cultural traits that could be also somewhat recognized in their historical background. Archaeological cultures were thus equated, in particular political contexts, to ethnic groups, and this was also seen as a legitimisation of modern claims over a given territory. Since cultures were regarded as a homogeneous compact unity, the direct consequence of this cultural-historical approach to single out ethnic identities was the idea that distinct types of objects were actually ethnic indicators. Ethnic groups could be recognized, then, from archaeological records based on their specific aspects, parts of which had been turned into particular types of pottery, tools, brooches, swords, arrow heads, belts, belt fittings or architectural remains. Searching for ethnic groups was thus reduced to the identification of typologies, with the assumption that archaeological classifications could reproduce the categories that ancient producers and consumers had originally elaborated.

In this regard, there is no great difference between the approaches used to identify, especially in the mediaeval world, a population, be it nomadic or sedentary, or a political dynasty, and the context of the archaeological studies of Iran in the late Iron Age, without taking into consideration the details of the obvious distinction between different interpretative levels in the dynastic, ethnic, political and chronological horizons.4

The Iranian Plateau

Within the methodological framework of the study of mediaeval and earlier nomadic realities in Eurasia, the crucial role played by the Iranian plateau in regard to those people probably originates in the presumably mostly nomadic character of the original Iranian groups that moved to Iran from Central Asia, and that only in a later moment would be transformed, albeit gradually, into sedentary populations.

This long and perhaps complicated process is far from being fully understood, both due to the lack of direct sources, and a rather insufficient archaeological documentation. The interpretation of that process, furthermore, lends itself to the interpretative misunderstandings we have mentioned earlier. In any case, the Iranian centrality is evident in all the most important phases in which the history of Iran and that of the nomadic populations are analysed. This role has remained the same also in much later periods, including the late mediaeval, even if with very different and less fluid cultural and ethnic connotations. This is also due to the fact that the plateau was geographically located between the east and the west, i.e., the two poles of the nomadic movements from the late Bronze Age to the middle of the 1st Millennium AD.

Within the context of the early and late nomadism in the Eurasian Steppes, the centrality of the Iranian plateau and of the cultures that moved across it is quite

⁴ GENITO 1998.

well known in its general features. It will be enough to consider, for instance, most of the nomads of the Iron Age historically known as Cimmerians, Sauromatians, Sarmatians, Scythians, Saka, Massagetes, Arimaspes, Issedones, etc. They were thoroughly described by Herodotus and other important historians, but unfortunately, they are much less identifiable through archaeological evidence. Historians have always correlated those populations to an ethnic Iranian origin and to Iranian languages. The cultural relationship between the nomadic world and the Iranian plateau can also be clearly noticed at a later stage, by many features and elements chronologically related to the historical "state/imperial" Iranian dynasties. Such is the case, for example, of the nomadic social nature and origins of the first dynasty, the Achaemenids in the 6th-5th century BC. That character is at times evident within the epigraphic texts written in Old Persian, Accadian, and Elamite. The communication system of the dynasty reminds of its original nomadic social structure, especially in the form and titles, more than we may expect.⁵ The same may be observed in the later nomads, starting from the habit of the Byzantine sources to call all the nomads of their time Scythians. 6 The name of the Scythians, in fact, outlived their own historical period; some authors continued to use the term for many groups unrelated to the original Scythians, such as Huns, Goths, Türks, Avars, Khazars, and other unnamed nomads.7 Others frequently applied the name "Scythian" to nomadic groups in general who never had any ethnic relation to the earlier Iranian nomads bearing the same name.

During the Parthian period (2nd century BC – first half of the 2nd century AD), we can observe that the same Arsacid dynasty originally belonged to the nomadic tribe of the Dahae⁸ and that during the Sasanian period (mid-3rd and mid-6th century AD) a dynamic link continued to exist between the cultural realities already

⁵ Rossi 2003, 681–700.

⁶ Although the relations between the nomads and Byzantium have been the subject of many studies, there is to date no comprehensive treatment of the topic. Byzantine sources provide abundant information about how the imperial government in Constantinople dealt with the peoples inhabiting the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian Seas. Conclusions drawn from written sources, however, differ from those resulting from archaeological excavations (Curta 2001). New evidence from excavations has enriched our understanding of relations between nomadic and settled communities and has questioned the pigeonholing of diverse communities into preconceived ethnic categories such as "Pechenegs," "Oghuz," and "Cumans".

⁷ Harmatta 1996, 181–182; Nicholson 2018, 1346–1347.

⁸ The Dahae or Daha were a group of Scythian tribes of Iranian origin. Strabo places the Dahae nomads roughly in present-day Turkmenistan (DE BLOIS – VOGELSANG 1993). Together with other Scythian tribes they fought alongside Darius III in the final battle with Alexander at Gaugamela (331 BC) in Modern Iraq. They later joined Alexander the Great on his Indian expedition. A branch of the tribe, the Parni, migrated south into Parthia and joined the locals who were also Iranians. They founded the Arsacid dynasty which reunified Persia under Iranian hegemony.

sedentarized for centuries and the continuous nomadic movement from the North and North-East of the plateau. Over the course of a few centuries, at the turn of the 1st millennium BC and the 1st millennium AD, that movement will experience one of the most significant and great ethno-cultural and linguistic transformations. This step was, among other things, signalled by the use of the expression "Hun-Sarmatian period",9 emphasising the ethno-cultural Iranian/Turkic mixture - before the increasingly decisive advent of the Paleo-Turkc peoples in place of the Iranians in the Eurasian steppes.

It is not the case to analyse here in detail the numerous archaeological and historical proofs of the cultural relationship between the Parthian and Sasanian periods and Central Asian cultures, especially with nomadic peoples such as the Huns, the eastern Goths, the Avars, the Khazars, etc. There are many examples that could be given in this regard, from simple items of material culture (representations on coins, seals, etc.) to the macroscopic architectural and figural remains (rock-reliefs, architectural and painted decorations, etc.). I will refer here, for example, to the well-known remains of the painted walls of the Afrasiyab palace in Samarkand (Uzbekistan)¹⁰ where the iconographic details of the images are incredibly similar

⁹ BOTALOV - GUTSALOV 2000.

¹⁰ One of the pictorial decorations most useful for our discussion is that of Room 1 in the palace discovered at Afrasiyab: see Azarpay, Belenitsky, Marshak, Dresden 1981. It was, in all probability, the audience hall of the palace of Varkhuman (Vargoman), one of the sovereigns of Samarkand (REMPEL' 1984; PACHOS 1966; AFRASIAB 1969-75). From a purely iconographic point of view, the subjects depicted can be summarised as follows: 1. Southern wall: a long procession of richly dressed characters advances on foot or on horse and camelback, representing the procession accompanying the princess sent in marriage to the sovereign of Samarkand; 2. Northern wall: the pictorial remains are divided into two parts: eastwards, a group of horsemen is represented fighting with wild animals attacking them; westwards, a river with fishes, water birds, lotus flowers, fantastic animals, on which two boats advance, one of which is crowded with only female characters; 3. Eastern wall: southwards, a seascape featuring birds and fishes is depicted; three naked children shoot bows, a man is attached to the tail of a bovine; northwards, two very fragmentarily preserved figures, perhaps Indians; 4. Western wall: forty characters, in which it is possible to recognize different ethnic groups due to their various costumes and facial features, advance in procession from several points towards the central part of the composition, which was originally supposed to be occupied by an image unfortunately totally destroyed. On the garments of one of these characters (AL'BAUM 1975, pl. 15) appears a long inscription, consisting of two horizontal lines of Bactrian cursive writing and sixteen vertical lines of Sogdian cursive. The ambassador of the principality of Ciaghānyān (basin of Surkhān-dāryā) and that of Čač (the region of modern Tashkent) speak to the king of Samarkand, Varkhuman (Vargoman). The complex historical situation that arose in Sogdiana after his death does not allow to believe that the paintings were made to commemorate him, therefore they must have been painted in his reign, more precisely the third quarter of the 7th century. Shishkin (SHISHKIN 1966) believed that the paintings illustrated legendary stories, according to a Sogdian tradition attested, e.g., also in Pendžikent, 'building' VI, 41, where the literary cycle of Rustam is depicted.

to most of the documented Avar objects, like dresses, belts, belt-fittings, swords, etc., ¹¹ also similar to other representations that the Sasanian dynasty has carved on the rock reliefs in the gorges and mountain passes of Fars and other regions of the plateau. ¹²

Those iconographic peculiarities arose as a consequence of the increasingly growing role of the Sasanian dynasty in the geopolitical balance of the time, which somehow connected geographically the plateau and the world of the steppes. The Sasanian state political-formation was also in close contact with the Roman-Byzantine world in the West, and in the East with the new political realities that were beginning to appear on the international stage in the areas of the steppes. The horse was certainly one of the most important figures in this series of contacts: it seems to have played a particular and decisive role due to its technical and tactical military importance, the latest consequence of the primitive equestrian nomadism dating back to the Iron Age. The presence in the Roman imperial army of the *clibanarii* and *catafractarii* derived from the nomadic world¹³ reveals an unexpected

Al'baum (AL'BAUM 1975) concluded that the subject depicted on the western wall was the reception ceremony of the foreign ambassadors at the court of Varkhuman (Vargoman) and that the journey of the legations to Samarkand was illustrated on the other walls. Different interpretations have been advanced recently (CRISTOFORETTI – COMPARETI 2007, 33–71) in relation to two Chinese and Iranian festivities that in a certain chronological period occurred probably in the same time of the year.

¹¹ László 1955; Bóna 1979; 1980; 1988; Garam 1990; Garam 2000.

12 HERMANN 1980-81. The ancient Near Eastern tradition of carving rock sculptures became extremely widespread during the Sasanian period with a long series of reliefs, most of whom are in fact located in the mountain ranges of Fars. The commemorative and laudatory character of this type of sculpture (with scenes of royal investiture and victories) always found its main representation on the plateau. This particular form of figurative expression, conveying peculiarly distinctive meanings and values aimed at the memory of the observer, can be read at several levels. These rock-reliefs have often been observed and studied as isolated phenomena of great artistic importance and great commemorative and celebrative significance. On the other hand, their role as significant elements of a successful attempt to institutionalise or, if this term is to be preferred, sacralise a territory, has been much less emphasized. We are especially referring to their presence on mountain passes, river bends, etc., as a way of occupying a territory which may be dated back, as we know, to very ancient times. It is well known that the Zagros and the Elburz mountain chains have always been key physical features of a difficult, impervious landscape, sometimes characterised by forbidding heights as well, which could also be ideologically and religiously celebrated, making it co-essential to all the political events which occurred on the areas of the plateau. These remains are some of the most successful and scenically impressive examples of figurative artistic production; everything was designed to plan, and these works were cut into the most durable material support, rock, turning it into the most sensational instrument of political propaganda. The study of the territory certainly remains one of the most neglected aspects in the traditional approach to the archaeology of the Sasanian period.

¹³ Gamber 1968; Bivar 1972; Nikonorov 1988, 127-28; Eramo 2018.

predecessor of mediaeval tactics. The earlier Iranian peoples like the Sarmatians, and more recent dynasties like the Parthians and the Sasanians, continued to largely influence the western habit of warfare. Other findings supposedly originating from Iran and more recent discoveries give evidence of the mixed cultural context of its nomadic origins much larger than it was previously expected, 14 owing to the application of a new, up to date physical anthropological approach which seems to provide fresher perspectives to the matter.

Within this context the Parthians, and especially the Sasanians, make the horse the main iconographic instrument of their imperial propaganda; the first rock reliefs at Firuzabad realised by Ardashir I (224-41 AD), and those of Shapur in Bishapur, will always feature representations of the sovereign on horseback, in investiture scenes, military victories, or even in combat.

These kinds of representations have been uncovered on graffiti, paintings, figurines, rock reliefs, and also on items like belts, belt fittings, cuirasses, weapons, arrowheads, etc., in a very wide spatio-temporal distribution in Eastern Europe and Hungary, Doura Europos, Palmyra (Syria), Iran, Central Asia, and China between the end of the 1st millennium BC and the middle of the 1st millennium AD. Their enormous geographical and cultural diffusion has also raised some perplexities about their origins and chronological location; nevertheless, they should not be interpreted as a consequence of the transmission of original Sasanian iconographic themes and motifs all around the Euro-Asiatic world, as proposed for a long time with many nuances by different schools of studies, particularly in Hungary, 15 China,16 and Central Asia.17 They may rather be interpreted as aspects of a more general and undifferentiated framework of cultural references in which the Iranian cultural centrality of the period continued to play a significant role. This centrality consists precisely of the extraordinary complex capacity of the Iranian culture to absorb, re-elaborate and transmit values, symbols, techniques, and habits of life and warfare from all around the world, including the nomadic cultures of the steppes, well beyond the territorial limits of their own sphere of political influence. In short, following a concept already stated some time ago, we can reasonably speak of the so-called "external" Iran. Furthermore, that centrality was favoured by the enormous physical diffusion of the Iranian populations (from China to Europe), and by the nomadic character of most of them.

The iconographic evidence found on the rock reliefs of the Sasanian period unequivocally clarifies the central role of the horse as well as representing objects and material evidence related to the use of this animal, such as harness, trousers, cloth-

¹⁴ BÁLINT 1978; GENITO 1993.

¹⁵ BÁLINT 1978.

¹⁶ Lerner 2005; 2011; QI Donfang 1999.

¹⁷ Marshak 2001.

ing, horse harness, bites, belts, belt fittings. 18 One important exception is represented by the lack of any iconographic and material reference to the use of stirrups, which is instead present in many of the contemporary pictorial and engraved representations of special armour and fittings in Central Asia. Contemporarily to the Sasanian period during the 420s and 430s, the Huns created an enormous imperial political formation, probably the largest nomadic political unit during this time.¹⁹ The socio-political evolution of the nomadic society which developed under such political unity created a contradictory phenomenon: an imperial political formation (which represented the super-state stage in the long lasting state evolution) composed of nomads (who traditionally represented a non-state community). Previously obscure peoples were thus able to constitute a social and political system based on a royal lineage and, at a lower level, on differing kinds of aristocracy. These political structures were strong enough to triumph at the moment, but so fragile as to collapse in a relatively short space of time. This was the case of the socalled "Empire" of Attila which disappeared almost immediately after reaching the pinnacle of its history in AD 454.20 From an archaeological point of view, a characterization of the material culture of this period based on ethnic origin is practically impossible.

There are also other archaeological finds, basically treasure troves with all their dubious related baggage of chronological uncertainties and ethno-cultural affiliations. For their typology and their technical, stylistic, and iconographic characteristics, their attribution remains uncertain, fluidly shifting between the Hun, Iranian-Sasanian, Avar, and Byzantine world, without neglecting the presence of other cultural contributions. We are referring to the cemetery of Nagyszéksós²¹ which has, in fact, revealed many golden objects for which Greek, Roman, Hun, and Byzantine craftsmanship has been variously claimed,²² or to the famous diadem of Csorna, with a symmetrical row of stones, reflecting different styles and techniques which can be connected to the so-called Sarmatian or Alan tradition.²³ The object has, furthermore, many close typological parallels with others found over the whole Hun political imperial-formation, such as the extremely significant ritual cauldrons,²⁴ of which those of Törtel²⁵ and Várpalota²⁶ are the best preserved in Hungary.

¹⁸ BÁLINT 1992; BÁLINT 1993.

¹⁹ Maenchen Helfen 1973; Maenchen Helfen 1978.

²⁰ Werner 1956.

²¹ Fettich 1953.

²² Kiss 1982.

²³ Kovrig 1985.

²⁴ ZASECKAJA - BOKOVENKO 1994; ÉRDY 1994.

²⁵ PÁRDUCZ 1963.

²⁶ Kovrig 1973.

In 567 AD, the Avars reached the Great Hungarian Plain, where they created a new state political-formation which was nomadic in character.²⁷ The Avar political system, organised in tribes, immediately had a strong political impact on the area. But its most significant cultural aspect was the creation of a new military tactic which represented the final stage of the warfare evolution among the nomadic peoples of the steppes. The military system was based on light cavalry employing saddles, stirrups, and leaf-shaped lance heads with an incredible penetrating force. The men fastened their dresses with belts from which weapons hung; the belts, decorated with characteristic embossed metal plaques constituted the sign of social rank, according to the techniques and the value of the material used.²⁸ Amongst the finds of this period, the hundreds of horsemen graves discovered by Hungarian scholars constitute one of the most characteristic elements. Also, these graves represent the final stage in the evolution of a burial rite which had started long before, but they also contain an innovation: the simultaneous deposition of the horseman with his animal.

The study of the archaeology of the nomadic people of the Eurasian steppes encompasses a wide range of research, both in geographical and chronological terms. Within this very extended perspective, the nomadism of the early Middle Ages presents some particular aspects, on account of which it is appropriate to approach the topic in a more nuanced manner, especially when considering the many recent and less recent discoveries that are not always adequately known, and which may open new research perspectives. Beyond the macroscopic cases of the treasures of Vrap in Albania, ²⁹ of Mala Pereshchepina in Ukraine, ³⁰ of Sânnicolau Mare/Nagy-

²⁷ POHL 1988.

²⁸ László 1955.

²⁹ The treasure was discovered in 1902; the objects were produced in approximately 700 AD and given to the Metropolitan Museum of Art by J. P. Morgan Jr. in 1917. The various vessels making up the ensemble have been attributed to the Avars, who subjugated much of the local populations and occasionally clashed with the Byzantine Empire. Through these conquests, the Avars were able to amass considerable amounts of wealth, some of which was buried in-mass near Avar settlements. The origin of the treasure troves is disputed; some maintain that the Avars were themselves skilled metalworkers, while others believe that the valuable objects (including gold jars, cups, and dishes) found in Avar hoards were produced in Byzantium and then either looted or given as tribute to the Avars. The ensemble consists of several gold cups, a silver bucket, several drinking dishes, and a jug.

³⁰ The treasure hoard of Mala Pereshchepina was found by accident by a cow herder in May 1912, in the Poltava Governorate of the Russian Empire. The villagers destroyed all the archaeological context, so the researchers who arrived two days later could only study the traces of its destruction. In total, the treasure consists of approximately 25 kg of gold and 50 kg of silverware, including pots (16 gold and 19 silver), weapons (straight swords, daggers), jewellery (belts, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, rings), coins (the so-called heavy solids of Mauricius (582-602) and Constant II (641-668)) and hand tool ornaments. Numbering more than 800 pieces, the trove was first studied by I. A. Zareckij and N. Makarenko (ZARECKIJ -

szentmiklós,³¹ variously traced back to the proto-Bulgarians, the Avars, the Khaganate of Khazaria and even to local artisans, we can also mention the belt fittings

MAKARENKO 1912) and by A. A. Bobrinsky (BOBRINSKY 1914): see FONJAKOVA *ET AL.* 1996; WERNER 1984. The origins of the objects may be traced back to the artistic production of Byzantines, Bulgarians, and Avars. The initials M. P. engraved on the bottom of one of the 5 kg, 4th-century bowls, and the signature on one of the rings, have been variously interpreted. The treasure was considered a Slavic spoil of war, or the tomb of the Bulgarian Khan Kuvrat. It is certain that some items, such as the solidi and a belt set, were made in the imperial workshops in Constantinople. The identification of the trove as a burial site received wide international resonance after the renowned German researcher Joachim Werner read, in 1984, the name *Seibt* as *Kuvrat*, the prominent leader of the early Bulgarian principality (in the form of ΠΟΒΡΑΤΟΥ or ΠΡΟΒΑΤΟΥ). Several experts had already disputed the identification of the find at the time of the reading, as the absence of bones or coffin remains suggests that the treasure should not be interpreted as a burial find.

31 BÁLINT 2010. A group of precious objects found in 1799 (Romanian Sânnicolau Mare), along the lower course of the Maros river, constitutes the most important treasure (9.9 kg) of the Carpathian basin for the early Middle Ages (ALFÖLDI 1951; 1952; 1954; LÁSZLÓ - RÁCZ 1977a; RUSU 1985-86). It is, unfortunately, now partially dismembered: twenty-three gold objects converged, in fact, in the Imperial Treasury in Vienna, while various other pieces ended up missing or were melted down. The original ensemble is preserved in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Mus., Schatzkammer. The ornamental repertoire adopted on these objects appears very diverse. Among all, the most critically debated are two containers (a jug and a bottle) both decorated with figurative scenes, however very different from each other in quality and execution. The most important artefact of the treasure, from an artistic and technical point of view, is a bottle, on which the depiction of the victorious sovereign is configured as an iconographic motif derived from the art of the steppes; the scene of the abduction to heaven and that of the hunting sovereign are instead Sassanid and proto-Islamic motifs, while that of the fight between animals is of ancient and Byzantine inspiration. The dating and place of production of the treasure, as well as the ethnic origin of the owner, are still the subject of discussion, both because it is difficult to establish precise parallels - if not to a limited extent - for the shapes and decorations of the various artefacts, and because the production of Byzantine metal vessels of the 8th-10th centuries is very little known, whereas it must have had an influence, directly or indirectly, on the objects in question (BENDA 1965; BÁLINT 2010). In the specialised literature the hypothesis (MAVRODINOV 1943) is that the treasure should be connected to late Sasanian and proto-Islamic production, although the formal affinities and chronological relationships are unsatisfactory. According to the currently most widespread hypotheses - but not demonstrated in a methodologically convincing way - the treasure should have been assembled in the Avar Khaganate, in the 7th-8th century, or in Bulgaria in the 9th; consequently, its burial could have occurred at the beginning of the 9th century – perhaps following the collapse of the Avar Khaganate (796–803) – or at the end of the same century, under the pressure of the Hungarian "conquest of the homeland" (896). The possibility of a Hungarian origin of the treasure, with a dating to the 10th century, has also been proposed (LÁSZLÓ - RÁCZ 1977b), yet based on arguments questionable on a methodological, typological, and chronological level. The thesis of a Bulgarian origin, on the other hand, does not seem to be supported by the scarce analogies found in from Uč Tepe in Azerbaijan³² or those from the Saltovo-Mayaki culture in Ukraine³³ and from the Martynovka treasure in Ukraine.³⁴ These less striking, but not less meaningful findings, are still waiting to be published in full, and will provide more exhaustive answers to the many still unsolved questions about the archaeology of the early mediaeval nomads, and also on the background of the Iranian culture.

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artefacts from the territory of Bulgaria; the comparisons proposed up to now suggest that the Proto-Bulgarian goldsmiths had relations not so much with the metalworkers of the steppes, but above all, to a substantial extent, with the Byzantine ones. Given its nature as a treasured complex, the set of artefacts is, on several levels, composite: in fact, concerning its dating it is possible to indicate, for many elements, similarities with works of the 7th century. Most of the decorative motifs, on the other hand, can be compared to the late Avar art of the 8th century. Conversely, from a typological point of view, it seems possible to establish some connections with other works from the treasure found in Vrap, near Durres, Albania. ³² BÁLINT 1992.

³³ Pekarskaja – Kidd, 1994; Kidd 1995; Kidd 1996; Bálint 1989, 88-92; Balogh 2004. Saltovo-Mayaki is the name given by archaeologists to the early mediaeval culture of the Pontic steppe region located approximately between the Don and the Dnieper rivers. This culture was a melting pot of Onogur, Khazar, Pecheneg, Magyar, Alan, and Slavic influences. Dur-

ing the 9th century, the Saltovo-Mayaki culture was closely associated with the Khazar Khaganate, and archaeological sites from this period are one of the possible ways in which historians can track the geographic extent of the Khazar influence.

34 The objects of this treasure are also very problematic, including the belt fittings that are usually used as a term of comparison in order to find stylistic and technical confirmations of the various proposed attributions.

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