

Far from the Black: Investigations into the Armeno-Kipchaks and Black Sea Connectivity

By Scorpio
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Introduction

The theme of the research paper sounds: *Far from the Black: Investigations into the Armeno-Kipchaks and Black Sea Connectivity*. First, the Ottomans invented metaphorical names for geographical directions – black as north and white as south. So that, for example, the Mediterranean, means the sea between lands, was known as White Sea (Ak Deniz) and the Black sea (Kara Deniz).¹ This work aims to present the history of Armeno-Kipchak language owners in the Black Sea region. The goal of the paper is to portray the way of emergence of Armenians and Turks in Black Sea region, how the cultural and national annexation has happened, and how formed the Armeno-Kipchak language. Beginning in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Kipchak or Cumans began using the Armenian letters for their written texts, and so created a hybridized written register of Armeno-Kipchak.

The research paper relies on the historical sources that span the Byzantine and Ottoman period two contexts which engage with the Kipchaks in their Black Sea context. Through the Byzantine imperial lense, the work of the Constantine Porphyrogenitus' *De Administrando Imperio* and the work of the Gyula Moravcsik offer key interventions.

The research paper examines and compares the existing linguistic phenomena of Armeno-Kipchak language, drawing some comparisons between Armeno-Turkish language as well.

The research paper will make obvious why Armenians migrated to near Black Sea borderland, what were the key causes of assimilation there and what was the key ultimate result. All of this led to the conclusion that the internal factors handled the language system change, which is the major subject of the paper discourse.

The *first chapter* will introduce the origins of the central Asian steppe nations, the Kipchaks, and their language as a Turkic language from the Kipchak branch of the family, which was spoken in Crimea. The Kipchak populations resettled in northern central Europe in the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth realized in the sixteenth century, which stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea so intersected with Ottoman Imperial space, which laid claim to the Black Sea. The Black Sea, as a so-called "Ottoman lake", resonates with an Ottoman Black Sea unity reminiscent of Braudel and his own vision of the Mediterranean. Indeed, Armeno Kipchak literary works dispersed throughout the broader Black Sea sphere of influence and of themselves offer a lens into understanding the Armeno-Kipchak communities as a type of Black Sea continuity. The work highlights two aspects of my project: The historical sources and the

¹ S. Tezcan (from her essay in *Acta Orientalia Hungaricae* 1962), *Türkoloji Dergisi* III-1 (1968), 107–113.

history of the Kipchaks themselves from Byzantium through the Ottoman Period and the emerging historiography and its national stakes holds who have taken part in its study as critical textual medium for understanding Black Sea connectivity, and Armenian transnational identity.

The *second chapter* will introduce the language and diplomacy of the Crimean Armenians and the relevance of the Turkic texts in Armenian scripts, which will answer to the question: who are the Armeno-Kipchaks? How was written the Armeno-Kipchak texts under Mongol and Tatar control? Due to their location, the shape of their territory, the skill of its courageous Khans, and their influence over the major powers of Eastern Europe, they demand more than a passing mention in chronicles. Since the documents about them are written in many languages and have so many gaps, studying them takes enormous understanding of the history of several centuries. But the major details of Cuman history are undeniably true and very clear.

The introduction first analyzes the strengths and limitations of the Armeno-Kipchak language in Ottoman and Armenian context. They are also utilized the Mediterranean documents in this study which examines the scope and bases of the relevant secondary literature and also examines the flaws in our historiography, and the assumptions embedded in our views of modernity and the rise of Europe, and a summary of each chapter is given.

Chapter 1. Political Landscapes and Administrative Structures of Kipchaks in the Black Sea Region.

1.1. The Central Asian Steppe

The early Turkic invaders of the Black Sea steppe paved the way for the Mongols, just as the Seljuk Turks² were the precursors of the Ottoman conquerors. The expansion of the Turks south of the Caspian Sea occurred at the same time as the invasion of the European grassland by the Ghuzz and the Cumans. The two invasions must be regarded as part of the same upheaval in Asia, which drove forth Bonyak to cross the Carpathians, to gaze on the magnificence of Constantinople and to strike the golden gates of Kiev, and at the same time sent Mahmud to great adventure in India and the Seljuk Khans to the conquest of Persia, the Caliphate, and the Asiatic provinces of the Byzantine Empire.

The growing weakness of China after the extinction of the Tang dynasty opened up two vast fields for the enterprise of Asiatic nomads. But the extraordinary growth and expansion of the Tunguz tribes (and later of the Mongols) resulted in a steady movement of the Turks westwards. The Keraites and other Eastern Turks were expelled from their old pastures near the Chinese frontier, the Uighurs appeared in Western Turkestan, so that both the Turkish centres on the Jaxartes, the Chu and the Ili, and the Kipchak or Northern steppe must have been packed with Turkish tribes seeking an outlet. That these crowded hordes did not break out sooner was due to the strength of the two great kingdoms which separated Asiatic barbarism from Western civilisation: the Samanid Emirate on the Oxus, and the ancient Khazar empire on the Volga. About the end of the tenth century, however, both these states collapsed, partly through internal weakness, but mainly through the attacks of their more virile neighbours.³

The new pasture lands of the Kipchaks were in the great steppe between the Volga and the Don, where they conquered the survivors of the Khazar Empire and drove the Alans-the "Yas " of the Russian chronicles-further south, though for some time we find Khazar towns still existing on the Don, and the Alans continued their wanderings far north of their own kingdom in the Caucasus. In search of wider pastures, the Kipchaks rapidly overran the lands of the Torks and Pechenegs west of the Don, both of these hordes having recently suffered disastrous defeats at the hands of the Russians. In 1054 the Kipchaks appeared on the borders of Rus. In 1070 they crossed the Carpathians, and in 1090 they were already on the Danube.⁴

² Peter B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, (Wiesbaden, 1992), 19.

³ A. Bruce Boswell, *The Kipchak Turks, the Modern Humanities Research Association and University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, The Slavonic Review* , Jun., 1927, Vol. 6, No. 16 (Jun., 1927), 68-69.

⁴ A. Bruce Boswell, 71.

When the Mongols suddenly emerged above the horizon of Western Christendom in the thirteenth century, the Western Christians called them Tatars. In the correct form "Tatar", this *ethnikon* came to supersede the *ethnikon* "Mongol" in Muslim as well as in Christian records as the name for the nomads who were incorporated in the western appanages of the Mongol Empire. However, the Tatars were not identical to the Mongols. The Tatars were neighbouring but separate Mongol-speaking nomad people who had been subjugated by Chingis Khan at an early stage in his empire-building career. Chingis had incorporated the Tatars in his association of nomad peoples, as he had incorporated many other of these peoples besides, but the Mongols, not the Tatars, were the ruling people in the Mongol Empire so long as this empire lasted.⁵

In the thirteenth century, the Mongols took possession of the middle and the western section of Eurasian steppe,⁶ they found there a nomad people whose proper name was Qipchaq. The Russians called the Qipchaq "Polovtsi",⁷ which means *Steppe-people*. The Western Christians called the Qipchaq "Cumans" when the section of them, fleeing from the Mongols, sought, and found asylum in Hungary. Presumably this name "Cuman" is derived from the river Kuma, which traverses the Steppe to the north of the Caucasus and discharges into the Caspian Sea.

Combinations and splits of Eurasian nomad peoples have, indeed, been frequent.⁸ Both the Magyars and the Danubian Bulgars may have been splinters of the Onogur association of tribes, and the Volga Bulgars⁹ may have been a third splinter of the same association. One

⁵ Arnold Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World*, (London; New York; Toronto Oxford University Press, 1973), 425.

⁶ David Orrin Morgan, *The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy*, (1999), 319, 320.

⁷ The trade system that had developed by the first quarter of the thirteenth century and continued into the early years of Mongol rule consisted of Seljuk Turks from Asia Minor crossing the Black Sea to sell clothing and, after the Mongols' east-west trade began operating, silks and spices at Sudak to the Polovtsy or Kipchak of the steppe in exchange for fur and slaves. But the range of the fur traded in the system was narrow. Neither Ibn-el-Asir nor Rubruck mentioned distant markets or distant fur sources. The Polovtsy obtained their fur either from Bulgar, which received it from its own hinterland and its neighbors the Burtas, or directly from the Burtas. The furs were local squirrel and beaver, which were relatively inexpensive, ermine and Burtas fur, identified by Masudi in the 10th century as very expensive black fox and cheaper red fox. See El-Masudi's historical Encyclopedia entitled "*Meadows of gold and mines of gems*", transi. into English by A. Sprenger, I (London, 1841), 412; a translation into Russian has been published in *Istoriia Tatarii v materialakh i dokumentakh* (Moscow, 1937), 19.

Even if the fur sold by the Polovtsy at Sudak included some valuable Burtas black fox, no fur from the Far North was in the stock of exports at this time. Thus, when the Mongols arrived, the fur trade they found had a range from source to market of the mid-Volga to Asia Minor and involved mainly local and relatively cheap types of fur. In the course of the following century, the Golden Horde's influence was felt on several aspects of the fur trade. See Janet Martin, *The Land of Darkness, and the Golden Horde. The Fur Trade under the Mongols XIII-XIVth Centuries*, EHESS, Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique, Oct. - Dec., 1978, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Oct. -Dec. 1978), 401-421.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20169830>

⁸ Moravcsik in Ioc. cit., 53.

⁹ I Zimony, *The origins of the Volga Bulgars*, (1990), 9.

splinter of the same Kontrigurs became one of the eight Magyar tribes;¹⁰ another became one of the eight Pecheneg tribes.¹¹ The Magyars may or may not have been split into two splinters when, in 889, the Pechenegs hit them. It has been noted that Constantine Porphyrogenitus' statements to this effect are questionable. On the other hand, there at some date which he does not record, the Magyars adopted into their confederacy three tribes of dissident Khazars whose ethnîe was "Kavar".¹² Moreover, it is certain that, in the thirteenth century, the Magyars adopted a section of the Cumans (Qypchaq) who were fleeing from the Mongols. When, in 889, the Pechenegs were hit by the Ghuzz, not all the Pechenegs preserved their identity by hitting and dislodging the Magyars. Some of them submitted to the Ghuzz and were absorbed by them.¹³ In truth, absorption may have been a more usual fate than eviction for defeated nomad peoples. For instance, there seems to have been only a minimum of displacement when the Mongols subjugated all their fellow tenants of the Eurasian Steppe.

Later in thirteenth century when the Golden Horde¹⁴ was established as the most powerful state in the middle ages, covering the larger number of territories, was the appanage of the House of Jöchi (Tuchi), Chingis Khan's eldest son, the Mongol element was no more than a veneer on the surface. The rank and file of the Golden Horde consisted of the Turkish-speaking nomad peoples—Qangli, Qaraluq, Qipchaq—who had been in occupation of the middle and western sections of the Steppe before the Mongols overran them. The disturbances on the Steppe have been wavelike, and waves are not displacements; they are upheavals that are transmitted from one stationary piece of water to another.¹⁵

Some of the creators of new combinations of nomad peoples have left a record of their political achievement by bequeathing their own names to serve as ethnîe for the combine that they have welded together. Saljūq, Chaghatay, 'Osman, Uzbek, and Nogay were the personal names of confederation-builders before they provided names for the confederations that these nomad statesmen had established.

The latest tenants of the middle section of the Eurasian Steppe have been the Kazaks, and their name indicates that originally, they were the outsiders beyond the pale of the Golden Horde.¹⁶ They did not occupy the heart of the Steppe till the Uzbeks had moved off into

¹⁰ DAI., 40, 172.

¹¹ DAI., 37, 66.

¹² DAI., 39-40, 171-2.

¹³ DAI., 37, 166-7.

¹⁴ Onerbek Khuangan, *The State of the Golden Horde - 750 years* (Scientific Collection "Interconf"), (Washington, 2020), 925.

¹⁵ Hugo Freiherr von Kutschera, *Die Chasaren*, (Vienna, 1910, Holzhausen), 28-9.

¹⁶ Arnold Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World*, (London; New York; Toronto Oxford University Press, 1973); See also FN 1, 427. If the term 'kazak' (Cossack, Casogian) is derived from the Turkish verb

Transoxania. It might have been expected that these outsiders would turn out to be composed of tribes that had not been on the heart of the Steppe before, but a survey of the Kazak hordes reveals that these hordes were amalgams of splinters of peoples—e.g., Qypchaq, Naiman, Qongurat (Qonqīrat) Jalair, Qangli—which had been tenants of the Steppe in earlier chapters of this history.¹⁷

1.2. The Languages of the Black Sea Borderland

The languages spoken by the Eurasian nomad peoples are as elusive as the names that these people bear. The Magyars speak an eastern Finnish language today, but in the tenth century they were bilingual. Constantine Porphyrogenitus in his book *DAI* informs us¹⁸ that they had become bilingual after they had absorbed the Kavars. He also continues, in the same context, that the Kavars were Khazars, and we know the Khazars were a Turkish-speaking people. In the thirteenth century the Magyars also absorbed some of the Cumans, who were Turkish-speaking too.¹⁹ These accessions of Turkish-speakers have left some traces in the vocabulary of the Magyar language. There are also more 200 loan words in Magyar from Old Chuvash,²⁰ the Turkish language, which was spoken by the Volga Bulgars, who were the Magyars' neighbours when these were living to the west of the River Don as allies of the Khazars. However, the Magyars ceased to be bilingual long ago. Their Finnish language has been their exclusive national language since the earliest date at which their Western neighbours became cognizant of it.

The Magyars have preserved their original Finnish language in spite of their having planted themselves in the midst of Slavonic-speaking and Roumanian-speaking and German-speaking populations. On the other hand, the Bulgars have lost original Turkish language; they now speak the language of the Slav peoples, to the south of the lower Danube, on whom the Bulgars imposed their rule in and after the year 680. The linguistic history of the Saveíroi-Saverians has been the same. At the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries, they were Huns,

'qazmaq' meaning 'to dig', these 'diggers' were originally the agricultural neighbours of the nomads. These were sometimes subject to the nomads (as, for instance, were Herodotus's Skythai arotères and Skythai georgoi) and were sometimes independent. The Turkish term came to be used to describe peoples who were independent of the dominant nomad horde, rather than peoples whose way of life was sedentary agricultural, not nomadic pastoral. r

¹⁷ A. E. Hudson, *Kazak Social Structure* (New Heaven, 1938, Yale University Press), 14.

¹⁸ In *De Adm. Imp.*, chap.37, 166-7.

¹⁹ Arnold Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World*, (London; New York; Toronto Oxford University Press, 1973); See also FN 1, 427. Kutschera, op. cit., p196, notes that the last speaker of the Cuman Turkish language in Hungary died in 1770.

²⁰ Arnold Toynbee; See also FN 5, 427.

presumably Turkish-speaking, on the Steppe to the north of the Caucasus.²¹ After they can be found transformed into a Slavonic-speaking people—by 680 to the south of the Lower Danube,²² and by 884 in the Dnieper basin.²³ The Serbs and Croats, too, have lost their original Iranian language, if it is true that they, like the Bulgars and the *Saveíroi*, were nomad conquerors of sedentary Slavs.

When in 860, A Dnieper-Scandinavian flotilla sailed from Kiev down the Dnieper, bypassed the Dnieper cataracts, coasted along the western shore of the Black Sea, threatened its way through the Bosphorus, and suddenly assaulted Constantinople from the seaward side, it took the East Romans by surprise. However, in this first encounter, as well as on all later occasions, the Rhos vessels proved not to be a match for East Roman warships armed with siphons squirting napalm.

Via the Black Sea and the rivers that discharge into it from the north, East roman shipping and Rhos shipping met, not only to fight but also to trade with each other, and this intercourse led to the conversion of Russia to Christianity in Eastern orthodox form. The western section of the Steppe, which intervened between the East Roman Empire and Russia, was never an impassable barrier. The successive nomad occupants of this end of the Steppe—Magyars, Pechenegs, Ghuzz, and Qypchags could harass the Russians *en voyage*, especially at the portage around the Dniepr cataracts, which was the point on the water-route between Kiev and Constantinople at which the watermen were most dangerously exposed to nomad assaults.

Next to the north lies a debatable zone that can make either good pastureland or poor arable. To the north of this lies the Black Earth zone, which is first rate soil for the raising of cereal crops. This belt of Black Earth runs north-eastward from the Carpathians to the Altai, but not beyond. To the north of the Black Earth and of the debatable zone, a belt of forest extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Between the northern fringe of the forest and the southern shore of the Arctic Ocean, there is a strip of tundra.

However, the western section of the Steppe differs from the other two sections in being accessible from the relatively close and clement Baltic Sea, and not from the more distant and less hospitable Arctic Ocean. The northern hinterland of the western section of the Steppe is exposed to the radiation of civilization via both the Baltic and the Black Sea, and this superior accessibility has made it possible for civilized societies to establish themselves to the north of the western section of the Steppe as well as to the south of it.

²¹ Steven Runciman, *A History of the First Bulgarian empire*, (1930), 7, 10.

²² Theophanes, 359.

²³ The Russian Primary Chronicle, Cross's and Sherbowitz-Wetor's translation, 61.

A ceiling is set on nomad people's capacity for civilization by the rigidity of the requirements of the pastoral nomadic way of life, any corresponding restriction does not hamper whereas the cultural development of a sedentary society. A few Eurasian nomad peoples—for instance, the Skyths the Khazars, and the Uigurs—have attained a level of civilization that, for nomads, is high, but they have purchased this cultural achievement at the price of losing the command of their native element, the Steppe, to rival nomad peoples or to intrusive sedentary neighbours.

This episode was not the end of the story. The Russians' first occupation of the western section of the Steppe was brief. In destroying the remnant of the Khazar Empire the Russians opened the way for the Ghuzz and the Qipchaq, and, after they had been pushed off the Steppe by these next westward-moving waves of nomads, they were subjugated in their own country by the western section of the Steppe and its northern hinterland in the ninth and tenth centuries foreshadowed the extinction of the pastoral nomadic way of life on the Eurasian Steppe.

The Huns

The Huns²⁴, for instance, had been Turkish-speakers, and so were the Huns' descendants of the Bulgars. The Volga Bulgars (Qazan Tatars) speak Turkish still today, and the Danubian Bulgars spoke it till they took to speaking the language of their Slav subjects. The Pechenegs, Ghuzz, and Qipchaq, who followed on the Khazars' heels out of the heart of the Steppe, were Turkish speaking too. The contenders for the Khazars' heritage were the Pechenegs, followed by the Ghuzz and the Qipchaq, from the east and the Rhos from the north.²⁵

The Pechenegs

The geography of monuments of the Oguz, Pecheneg, Polovets-Kypchak and the Golden Horde nomads identified in the steppes of Eastern Europe shows that the ranges of these tribal nomads were formed in close connection with the natural and climatic conditions of the landscape zone of their habitat - the steppes (or under their influence). At present in the steppes of Eastern Europe, from the South Urals (Mugodzhara mountain) to the Dniester river and the Lower Danube, we have accounted for 514 burials of the Oguz-Pecheneg era (tenth-eleventh centuries).²⁶

²⁴ Hyun Jin Kim, *'Herodotean' Allusions in Late Antiquity: Priscus, Jordanes, and the Huns*, (2015), 127-142.

²⁵ Arnold Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and his World*, (London; New York; Toronto Oxford University Press, 1973), 444.

²⁶ V. A. Ivanov and M. I. Ivanova, *Geographical and Political Background of Medieval Nomads Settling in the Steppes of Eastern Europe*, (2011), 20.

The first recorded Pecheneg raid on Kievan territory was in 915.²⁷ In 968, Svyátoslav had to break off his operations in the Balkan Peninsula and to hurry back from Pereyeslavetz to Kiev in order to save Kiev from falling into the Pechenegs' hands. Ukraine suffered more severely from the Pechenegs' eleventh-century successors, the Ghuzz and the Qipchaq, and worse still from the Qipchaq's thirteenth-century successors, the Tatars of the Golden Horde. Even after Russia had been united, more effectively than ever before, by the Muscovites and had been united, more effectively than Tatar suzerainty, the Ukraine did not become fully secure against raids from the Golden Horde's long lived successor-state the Tatar Khanate of Krim until 1774, when Russia compelled the Ottoman Empire to renounce its protectorate over the Crimean Tatars and to leave Russia a free hand for dealing with them.

Roaming the steppes of the Lower Don Basin and the Dnieper, the Kypchaks/Polovtsy drop out of sight of oriental authors, and therefore the main source of information about them until the middle of the thirteenth century comes from Russian chronicles. It is likely that the reason for the Sary Kypchaks/Polovtsy choosing the mentioned areas as the main territory of their settlement in Eastern Europe is not only the low ecological potential of the steppes of the Ural-Volga region, but also the extreme ethno-political situation in the east of the Great Belt of the Eurasian steppes in the first half of the eleventh century, as was mentioned above.

Moving to the west, the grouping of the Cumans-Sary-Kypchaks attacked the Oguz, who as we have seen were nomads in the Aral Sea and the Volga River region and forced them to go beyond the Volga. However, as noted above, the steppes of the Ural-Volga region were not attractive to the Sary-Kypchak tribes, and they continued to harass the Oguz until they and the Pechenegs were expelled from the steppes of the northern Black Sea and the Azov Sea.

Thus, the steppes of the Volga and the Ural regions became the eastern and little-populated periphery of the Dasht-i-Kypchak, or "Polovtsian field". This, besides the geography of the Kypchak/Polovtsian burials in Eastern Europe, is proved by the geography of the Polovtsian stone statues that were a characteristic feature of the Kypchak-Polovtsian culture of the twelfth-early thirteenth centuries: the great majority are between the rivers Don, Seversky Donetsk and Dnieper.²⁸

The emergence of the Pechenegs in the steppes of Eastern Europe because of their defeat in wars with the Oguz ultimately might not contradict the policy goals of either the Khazar or Byzantine rulers. The Khazars, evidently, had not created (or had failed to create) an

²⁷ Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *The Russian primary Chronicle*, 71.

²⁸ S. A. Pletneva, *Donskie polovtcy. Slovo o polku Igoreve i ego vremja*. Moscow 1985, 252.

insurmountable obstacle in the way of the Pechenegs' movement to the west, so the Pechenegs, displacing the Magyars from Levedia (between the rivers Seversky Donets and Dnieper) found a more favourable ecological niche than their victors-the Oguz. This allowed them quickly to become a powerful political and military force which actively influenced the course of the Balkan-Mediterranean policy of Byzantium and the Kiev and Rus.

The Oguz staying in the Trans-Volga region could not become a real force in the steppes of Eastern Europe (although they contributed to the defeat of the Khazars by the Kievan Prince Svyatoslav in 965), and therefore their subsequent history developed in West Asia, where they retreated under the onslaught of the Kypchaks/Polovtsy.

The Kypchaks/Polovtsy themselves in their expansion to the west had no serious hindrance from the Khazar Khanate, so they passed quickly across the Trans-Volga steppes, chasing the Oguz, who, for whatever reasons, had not gone to the south with the Sultan Seljuks. More favourable for an environmental viewpoint, the steppe between the Kuban and the mouth of the Danube soon became the Kypchak-Polovtsian domain, known to oriental authors as Dasht-i-Kypchak, to Russian authors as Polovetskoye Polye, and to European and Byzantine authors as Kumania.

A reverse migration of the Kypchaks/Polovtsy into the steppes of the east of the Volga and the southern Urals in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries was determined by the administrative policy of the Golden Horde khans (Ulus Djuchi), who resettled the Kypchaks/Polovtsy dependent on them to less comfortable margins of the steppes of Eastern Europe.

Thus, the contours of the map of the medieval settlement of nomads in the steppes of Eastern Europe were formed not spontaneously, but under the influence of the political situation of that time.²⁹

1.3. Ethnos and Ethnie

The racial origin and early history of the great Asiatic hordes which invaded Europe through the "Caspian Gates" is still a matter of speculation. Learned theorists have differed, and scholars have found the material too scanty to disclose the identity of these nomad peoples. Whether Tunguz, Mongol, Turkish, or Finno-Ugrian blood predominated among the armies of the Huns, Avars, Bulgars, and Khazars will probably never be known.

²⁹ V. A. Ivanov and M. I. Ivanova, 28.

More information exists about the later invaders - the Pechenegs, the Ghuzz and the Cumans and it is quite certain that they were Turks. We have more description about Pechenegs by Greek writer Constantine Porphyrogenitus. The history of Ghuzz is short and unimportant. About Cumans, little has been written.³⁰

Cumans were the people that inhabited the steppe zone in the medieval period, formed a tribal federation with the Kipchaks and actively shaped the fate of the region from the Black Sea to the Carpathian Basin, have been primarily known to history as nomadic, mounted warriors.³¹

Much scholarly debate has been focused on the early history of the Cumans. People with names like Cuman, Qún, Kipchak, Polovtsi, Walben etc. appear in historical sources.³²

The other main theory locates the Cumans' homeland in the Altay region and southern Siberia. The name Kipchak,³³ by which the Muslim and Mongol sources probably meant Cumans (or at least the ancestors of those who later were known as the Cumans),³⁴ appears on an eighth century inscription suggesting that they belonged to the leading élite of the Turkic Khaganate that previously ruled over the steppe zone.³⁵

The Cumans, who formed the western branch of the Kipchaks, were invaded by the Mongols in the Dasht-i Kipchak region, and some of the Kipchak tribes began to migrate to Europe. These Kipchak tribes who migrated to Europe are defined as Cumans, and the city of Kumanova is their city. It was established in the middle of a long valley. Kumanova is an

³⁰ A. Bruce Boswell, The Kipchak Turks, *the Modern Humanities Research Association and University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, The Slavonic Review*, Jun., 1927, Vol. 6, No. 16 (Jun., 1927), 68.

³¹ Kyra Lyublyanovics, *The Socio-Economic Integration of Cumans in Medieval Hungary. An Archaeozoological Approach*, Budapest, (2015), 5.

³² András Pálóczi Horváth, *A kipcsak pusztaságtól Cumaniaig; [From the Kipchak Desert to Cumania]*, Peoples of Eastern Origin in Medieval Hungary. The Cultural Heritage of Pechenegs, Uzes, Cumans and the Jász. *Studia ad Archaeologiam Pazmaniensiae – Archaeological Studies of the Péter Pázmány Catholic University, Department of Archaeology* 2. (Budapest: Archaeolingua, 2014), 71-86: 71-73.

³³ The Kipchaks mentioned in *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms* by Ibn Khordadbeh (ninth c.) were still living in the southern part of Siberia, in the northeastern zone of the vast area inhabited by Turkic peoples.

³⁴ The thirteenth-century traveler William of Rubruk, who made a journey to the court of the Great Khan Möngke and reported on the Eurasian steppes, identifies the two peoples. Peter Jackson and David Morgan eds, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*. Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, Second Series no. 173 (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1990), 105.

³⁵ Horváth, A csengelei kunok, 254; Golden, Peter. *Cumanica IV: The Tribes of the Cuman-Qipcaqs*. *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 9 (1995-97), 99-122: 102, footnote 10 (henceforth: Golden, Cumanica IV); Toru Senga, "Megjegyzések a kimekek törzsszövetségének kialakulásához" [Notes on the Development of the Tribal Alliance of the Kimeks] *Antik Tanulmányok / Studia Antiqua* 41 (1997) /1-2, 175-193: 187, see also footnote 53.

important city where the Turkish traces of Rumelia can be found even before the Ottoman Empire.³⁶

Before the expansion into the Balkans, twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. The outstanding historical role of Cumans in the region during the centuries has not been emphasized enough. In particular, the Cumans (Kipchak) who settled in the steppe region from Dobruca to Akkerman and converted to Christianity, established various dynasties. A group of them established a principality in the Dobruca-Varna region in the second half of the 14th century. The capital of the principality is Kalliakra.³⁷

Although the common Western term "Cumans" is equally correct, it is Kipchaks. "Polovtsy" is a local name which is used by Russian writers. The name "Pecheneg" seems to be closer to the original than Pat-zinak in Greek. The Ghuzz are commonly referred to as "Torks" in this context, since the Russians who lived on their borders gave them that name. However, this usage should not be confused with the general usage of the term "Turk", which includes these peoples.

³⁶ Plamen Milchev Chernopolski, Nelya Lukpanovna Shapekova and Bilal Ak, *Academic Researches in Health Sciences*, St. Kliment Ohridski University Press, Sofia (2021), 425.

³⁷ Chernopolski, 464.

Chapter 2. The Language and Diplomacy of the Crimean Armenians

2.1. Who are the Armeno-Kipchaks?

The first accounts concerning the Armenian presence in the peninsula are from the period of the Byzantine rule over Crimea. These accounts mainly concern Armenian military commanders in the service of the Byzantine army, who were excellent warriors and faithful servants of the emperor. Armenian military commanders were very often sent into exile to the peripheries of the empire after unsuccessful uprisings against Byzantine emperors or, on the contrary, were entrusted with defending the Byzantine borders against invasive attacks.³⁸

In the course of seven centuries, the growing number of the Armenians and their social integration into the public life of the Crimea was palpable. Migration patterns of Armenians were driven by the political-economic situation in the Armenian kingdom, such as invasions and the concomitant destruction from the seventh to the eleventh centuries, as well as the frequently exercised massive deportation of the Armenian population by the Byzantine Empire. The first inflow of immigrants came to Crimea in the seventh century because of the Arab invasion, when persecution and high taxes forced many Armenians to leave the Armenian kingdom.³⁹ The route of migration for this group of Armenians was through the Balkans.

Another inflow of Armenians occurred in the eleventh century, caused by the incursion of the Seljuks and the collapse of Bagratid Kingdom of Armenia in 1045. At the same, the majority of Armenians moved to Cilicia, to the northwestern regions of historical Armenia, and to the Crimea as well. Several groups of Armenian people came to the Crimea through Trebizond and Sinope.⁴⁰

However, the biggest influx of Armenians to Crimea came from the city of Ani, which was exposed to the Mongol invasions in 1330, so that many inhabitants of Ani found shelter in areas near the Volga River and then moved to the southern part of the Crimea in the Black Sea region. After the fall of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia in 1375, many Armenians migrated to the Crimea in the fourteenth century.⁴¹

³⁸ Gayane Babayan, *Gospel Books as a Means to Reconstruct the Armenian Artistic and Cultural Milieu in Fourteenth-Century Crimea*, Central European University, Budapest, (December, 2016), 56.

³⁹ The Armenian kingdom is referred as the Bagratid Kingdom of Armenia (880-1045) which was an independent state and was founded by Ashot I in 884. For a general overview on the medieval Armenian kingdoms; See Nina Garsoïan, "The History of Armenia", in *Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts* ed. Thomas Mathews and Roger Wieck (New York: Princeton University Press, 1994), 9-15.

⁴⁰ [Vardges Mikaelyan] Vardges Mik'ayelyan, *Łrimahayoc' patmowt' yown* [The history of Crimean Armenians] (Yerevan: Hayastan hratarakč' owt' yown, 1989), 5-46.

⁴¹ Gayane Babayan, *Gospel Books as a Means to Reconstruct the Armenian Artistic and Cultural Milieu in Fourteenth-Century Crimea*, Central European University, Budapest, December 2016, 57.

Southeastern Crimea in the fourteenth century can be characterized as a developed and prosperous region — being a part of the trading system of the Black Sea as an important transit area for the commercial affairs between the Mediterranean and Asian markets.

The role of Genoese and Venetian trading colonies⁴² — which were established in the Southeastern Crimea in the middle of the thirteenth century — was central to the economic advancement of the region and was marked by the political and economic changes which took place along with the recapture of Constantinople in 1261 and the ascent of the Palaiologos⁴³ dynasty to the Byzantine throne. In the second half of the thirteenth century and up to fifteenth century — the Ottoman conquest of the peninsula in 1475 — Kaffa (Theodosia), Sudak⁴⁴ (Soldaya), Surxat (Solgat, Solghat) and Tana were the most important centers among the trading colonies (factoria, comptoirs, emporia) established by Italians in the Northern shore of the Black Sea.⁴⁵

The Armenian Communities in the Crimean Peninsula were established long before those in Poland, Ukraine, Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia and Bukovina. In fact, most of the immigrants in these countries came from the Crimea. Armenian contacts with the Crimea dates back to the eighth century. From the sixth to the twelfth century, the southern coastline of the Crimea was under Byzantine control. Armenian contingents fighting in the Byzantine armies were stationed there frequently. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries large numbers

⁴² When the first Genoese merchants established their settlement on the seashore of the Crimea, around 1275, there was no more evidence of the rich history of Theodosia, a Greek colony in antiquity, for which a little hamlet, Caffa, had substituted. From the third century the Greek colony had disappeared, if we accept Constantine Porphyrogenitus' statement: in his *De administrando imperio*, the learned basileus, dealing with and obscure conflict between tribes in Diocletian's reign, refers to a locality called Caffa and no longer to Theodosia. It means that Byzantium had lost any interest in the domination of the eastern part of the Crimean peninsula, while the western part, with Soldaia and Chersonesos, until the middle of the eleventh century, was the Byzantine "eyes" toward the moving world of the steppe. The Crimean seashore passed under Cuman control after 1050 and, two centuries later, under the domination of the Tatars, who gave to the Genoese free license for their settlement. See M. Balard, *The Greeks of Crimea under Genoese Rule in the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 49, Symposium on Byzantium and the Italians, 13th-15th Centuries (1995), 23. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1291706>

⁴³ J. W. Barker, Constance Head, Imperial twilight. The Palaiologos Dynasty and the Decline of Byzantium, (2015), 92.

⁴⁴ This [Sudak] is a city of Kipchaks, from which they receive their goods because it lies on the shore of the Khazar sea and ships with clothing come to it; the clothing is sold for girls, slaves, and Burtas furs, beaver, squirrel, and other items that are found in their land." See V. Tisenhausen, op. cit.: 26; also quoted in V. E. Syroechkovskii, "Gosti Surozhane", *Izvestiia go sudar stvennoi akademii istorii material'noi kul'tury imeni N. Ia. Marra*, 127 (Moscow-Leningrad, 1935): 12; 2; and in B. D. Grekov, A. Lakoubovski, *La Horde d'Or et la Russie* (Paris, 1961), 34.

In his accounts Ibn el-Asir explains, that *the route to it* [i.e., the Kipchak land] was cut from the time the Tatars invaded it and nothing was received from them [the Kipchaks] in the area of Burtas fur, squirrel, beaver and other items that were imported from this country. When they [the Tatars] left it and returned to their own land, then the route was restored and goods were again imported as before. See V. Tisenhausen, op. cit.: 28. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20169830>

⁴⁵ Gayane Babayan, 50.

of Armenian immigrants arrived from Constantinople, Armenia Minor, and Greater Armenia. Those from Constantinople and Armenia Minor came via the Balkans or The Black Sea, whereas those from Greater Armenia crossed the Caucasus.

In the eleventh century, immigrants from Armenia Minor and Greater Armenia fled their ancestral homeland because of the Seljuk expansions. The penetration of nomadic elements into Armenia and eastern Anatolia disrupted the way of life of the local sedentary population and forced them to migrate elsewhere. Armenian immigrants from Constantinople and its environs probably migrated because of the religious intolerance of the Byzantine authorities toward the Monophysites. This element probably reached Crimea several decades earlier than that of fleeing the Seljuks. Though it is not clear why the early Armenian immigrants chose Crimea as their destination, the mild climate of the southern part of the peninsula, the fertility of its soil, and the commercial opportunities were probably major attractions. One of the earliest vestiges of Armenian presence in Kaffa (the modern town of Feodosia) is an inscription in Armenian bearing the date 1027.

The Armenians living in Crimea started to create their own forms of national entity, their own developed culture. They played a significant role in the economic life in the country, promoting various contact between the East and the West. During the years of the decline of the Transcaucasian homeland, the Armenians of the Ukraine preserved the cultural traditions of their country that has sheltered them.

The preservation of Armenian identity was difficult because the region was inhabited with Tatars who were Muslims. There also was a small concentration of Greek and a very small number of Italians. The Armenians were forming the "largest" minority group of Crimea.⁴⁶

The political situation of Eastern Europe in the thirteenth century and new conditions favourable for commercial enterprises made Crimea even more appealing to Armenian settlers. In 1239, the Mongols under Bathu Khan invaded Crimea, which became a part of the Golden Horde. Under Mongol domination, the Armenians fared relatively well, as long as they paid their tributes. Toward the end of thirteenth century, Armenian communities in Crimean Peninsula

⁴⁶ Maksoudian, 55.



Figure 1 The Crimean peninsula in the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries.⁴⁷

gained a great interest among locals, as they had already established Churches and religious institutions in their new land.

In 1267, the Genoese came to terms with the Mongols of the Golden Horde and monopolized the trading privileges in the southern and eastern regions of the Crimea. The Genoese consulate, which was in the city of Kaffa, extended its jurisdiction over all the Genoese colonies in the peninsula.⁴⁸ Thus, the Genoese controlled the entire region, despite Mongol authorities and officials. The Armenians, with their extensive commercial ties, were useful to the Genoese. Favourable conditions created by the Genoese attracted more Armenians. Genoese sources report that in 1316 there were three Armenian Katholikos and one was subject to Rome.

⁴⁷ <https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/ruwiki/51600>

⁴⁸ The Genoese republic in the 13th - 15th centuries in the Northern Black Sea region created an integral system of cities and trade settlements. Politically, it has become a special state entity on the edge of Europe, subordinated to Genoa and based on the lands of the Golden Horde. This system did not arise immediately and developed in several stages. In its completed form, by the end of the 14th century, it consisted of cities and settlements in the Danube delta (Kilia and Likostomo), the northern shore of the Black Sea (Mavrokastro, Zinestra, Iliche), the Azov coast and the Don delta (Porteti, Palastra, Kabardi, Tana, Pekso), The Taman Peninsula (Kopa, Matrega), the coast of the North Caucasus (Mapa, Mauro Lacho). The main place in this system was occupied by four cities of the Crimean Peninsula (Kaffa, Soldaia, Chembalo, Vosporo), their rural districts, villages and castles of the Southern coast of Crimea. The capital of these possessions was the Crimean city of Kaffa, whose head, the consul, was the supreme ruler for the entire territory. See, Sergey G. Bocharov, *Ancient Economic and Social Concepts in the Genoese Gasaria Region*, European Research Studies Journal Volume XX, Special Issue, 2017, 199-207.

2.2. Armenian Trade Activity in Crimea

The Armenian merchants of the Crimea were in close contact with the Armenian communities in the lower course of the Volga River. The Mongols, who had transported large numbers of Armenians there from Ani in 1235 and 1262 had established these communities. Well aware of the commercial possibilities and the better way of life in Crimea, the leaders of these communities negotiated with the Genoese and made a treaty with their consul to migrate. The Genoese were as anxious as the Armenians to populate the Crimean Peninsula with Armenians. Not were the Armenians commercially useful, they also could provide warriors to secure the protection of Genoese interests. According to the information in the colophon of an Armenian manuscript, in 1330 "the princes, nobility, and the common people left Akhsarai and, taking up arms, fought against the Tatars to break through their lines. They came to Crimea where they settled in Feodosiia, Kazarat, Surkhat, and the environs of these towns".⁴⁹

In Armenian texts written in the Crimea, scholars have noticed words that are characteristic of the dialect of the Shirak district, where the city of Ani is located. This substantiates the claim of the Crimean Armenians that they are progeny of immigrants from Russia who were themselves descendants of the people of Ani.⁵⁰

The Armenian communities in the Crimea extended from Belogorsk to Feodosiia and to the foothills of the Crimean or Yalta Mountains in the north. Nineteenth-century Armenian travellers describe several Armenian monuments in this region, some of which were still extant. Despite the very heavy toll reaped by the Black Death in 1346 -1347, the Armenian communities survived and continued to flourish throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The author of a colophon gives us specific information about the numbers of Armenian who migrated to Crimea in 1330.

At that time, we became strong and increased in number, and built villages and districts. The princes and the nobility filled the mountains and plains from Gharapazar to Surkhat and Feodosiya with monasteries and churches... We built one hundred thousand houses and one thousand churches. Out of fear of the Huns fortifications were built around the city of Feodosiya.

⁴⁹ [Vardges Mikaelyan] Vardges Mik'ayelyan, *Ērimahayoc' patmowt' yown* [The History of Crimean Armenians] (Yerevan: Hayastan hratarakč'owt' yown, 1989), 5-46.

⁵⁰ [Karen Matevosyan] Karen Mat'ewosyan, *Ani-Širaki patmowt' yan êjer* [Historical Pages from the Ani Shirak] (Yerevan: Author's publication, 2010), 272-273.

Based on this colophon, scholars have suggested that at least half a million Armenians lived in the region during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁵¹ This is a very large number of the Middle Ages and may be somewhat inflated. Yet we know from Genoese sources that the Armenian population of Kaffa alone was 46.000.⁵²

The Armenians also lived in villages in the vicinities of these cities. The communities grew larger than more Armenians arrived from Cilicia after the fall of the Armenian kingdom in 1375. Life for the Armenians in Armenia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had become unbearable under nomadic Turkic dynasties. Continuous wars between the Ottomans and the Safavids throughout the sixteenth and the early decades of the seventeenth centuries laid waste on the country. The Armenian population of the cities and villages of Greater Armenia abandoned their homes and sought the safety of the Crimean Peninsula. Our sources refer particularly to immigrants from villages in the modern Nakhichevan and Baiburt regions who were engaged in commercial enterprises and cultural work in the Crimean towns.⁵³

In the early decades of the fifteenth century, the Armenian presence in the Crimea was very impressive. In his letter of 1432, Pope Eugenius IV refers to the city of Sudak as being *in partibus Armeniae maioris*. Western sources occasionally called the Crimean peninsula *Armenia maritima* and the Sea of Azov as *Lacus armeniacus*.

In southern Crimea, the Armenians lived in their communities whose ethnic integrity was both politically and economically expedient for the Genoese. Armenian contingents under the command of Armenian commanders protected the Genoese colonies of Surkhat, Kaffa, and others. The seaport city of Kazarat was the seat of an Armenian official who had, under his command, an Armenian detachment and kept a close eye on the activities of the local Tatars. The Armenians built the fortifications of the city of Kaffa and oversaw its safety. In 1475 they defended the city against the onslaught of the Ottoman navy, yielding to the superior Ottoman forces only after the escape of the Genoese consul. Acknowledging the fact that the Crimea was for the most part inhabited by Armenians—population *esse in maiori parte Armeniis*—one of the Genoese consuls describes them as *boni mercatores, nobis fidelissimi* who are of great service to the state—*civitati magnum beneficium*.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Patrick Donabedian, *Small Mural Khachkars in Medieval Armenian Communities of Crimea, Galicia, Podolia, and Bessarabia*, (2016), 189.

⁵² Furthermore, there were very large communities in Sudak, Surkhat, Eupateria, Kazarat, Belogorsk (Karasubazar), Simferopol (Akmechit), Bakhchisarai, Balaklava (Chembale), Armiansk (Orabazar), Inkerman, and elsewhere.

⁵³ Krikor Maksoudian, *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*. Edited by Richard G. Hovhannisyan, (1939), 55-59.

⁵⁴ Maksoudian, 55.

Information on the early history of the Armenian communities of the Crimea reveals that the Armenian immigrants represented a segment of thirteenth century Zakarid Armenian society. Under Genoese control, the communities maintained their internal autonomy. The sources distinguish three major classes among the immigrants of 1330: princes (*ishkhanank*), nobility (*aznvakank*), and common people (*zhoghovurd*). The feudal order was ultimately replaced by the merchant class, which continued to play an active role in the life of the communities until the eighteenth century.⁵⁵

In the middle of the fourteenth century, the Armenian Church was organised as a prelacy in the region of Crimea. The new episcopal jurisdiction was known as *Hayots hiusisayin koghmark* (The Northern Regions of the Armenians [or Armenia]). The town of Surkhat, where the seat of the bishop was located, was the ecclesiastical metropolis of the Armenians. The church occupied a central place in the life of the community. In Kaffa alone, the number of churches rose to forty-four after the great migration of 1330, and many were built in the traditional Armenian architectural style.⁵⁶ The common people had a voice in the election of their prelates. In 1474, they refused to accept the candidate of the merchant class and proposed the name of another bishop acceptable to them. This tradition, which seems to have its antecedents in Ani, was later transferred to Constantinople by thousands of Crimean Armenians who flocked there at the end of the fifteenth and throughout the sixteenth centuries. The practice of expressing popular dissent ultimately led to the secularization and modernization of the Armenian society of the Ottoman Empire.

Already in fourteenth century the Armenians of Crimea specialized in agriculture and the crafts. In cities they lived in their own quarters and spoke their native tongue but conducted business transactions with non-Armenians in local languages such as Italian, Greek, and particularly Kipchak Turkish.⁵⁷

Armenians had lived on the Crimean peninsula for over six hundred years by the time they left in 1778. Since the great migration of 1330, eighteen generations maintained the Armenian identity on Crimean soil. The communities of the Crimea were tightly knit around traditional Armenian institutions such as the family and the church. New waves of immigrants from Armenia Minor and Greater Armenia occasionally replenished the Armenian population of the communities, particularly after 1475. The constant inflow helped to preserve the Armenian language and traditions. We note that immigrant scribes, miniature artists, writers,

⁵⁵ Maksoudian, 55-6.

⁵⁶ Helen C. Evans, *Armenia: Art, Religion, and Trade in the Middle Ages*, (2018).

⁵⁷ Maksoudian, 57.

poets, and chroniclers handled for the revival of the arts and literature in the seventeenth-century Crimean communities.⁵⁸

When the Mongols conquered Europe in the thirteenth century, they helped to create the conditions that allowed the caravan trade to flourish, integrating Europe to Asia, Persia, China, and even India. Trade served as a major source of income for all the kings of the coastal regions around the Mediterranean and the Black Sea region.

The favourable conditions under which the Armenian communities flourished during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries came to an abrupt end in 1475, when the Ottoman navy attacked and laid siege to Kaffa. The city fell, and the rest of the Genoese colonies in the Crimean peninsula were seized and placed under the control of a Tatar khanate, which officially accepted the suzerainty of the Ottoman sultan in 1478. The Armenian communities survived under the Tatar khans but lost their former luster and importance.

It is appropriate to mention the involvement of the cities of Barjr Hayk' and the Cilician kingdom of Armenia in this trade network and the Armenian merchants' involvement in it as intermediaries and traders. This route embraced three major Armenian cities; Karin (Erzerum), Erzuka (Erzinjan) and Sebastia (Sivas), from where the trading route proceeded to the south; to the important outlet of Cilician kingdom, Ayas.⁵⁹ In Karin/Erzerum, the caravans which had a direction to Trebizond proceeded to the northwestern direction whereas, as it is attested to in Pegolotti's fourteenth-century manual, the *Practica della Mercatura*, trading route between Ayas and Tabriz went directly through Khoi to the westward direction.⁶⁰

The Genoese merchants, who initiated the long-distance trade, plausibly established partnerships with local Muslims from Persia and Central Asia who were familiar with routes and markets. The latter is attested to in the notary acts in which partnerships between Italians and Greeks, "Saracens" and others are recorded.⁶¹

In the second half of the thirteenth century and in the fourteenth century, even though Byzantium triumphantly took control over Constantinople and declared its ambitions for restoring the glory of the empire, the political realities of the time revealed its incapability to reunite the fragmented empire. The glimmer of hope arose when the Byzantines tried to set up an alliance with the Mongols, who became powerful players of political life and their sympathy to Christianity served as a prerequisite of success. The Byzantines were not the only ones who

⁵⁸ Maksoudian, 59.

⁵⁹ Thomas Sinclair, *Trade, Administration, and Cities on the Plateau of Kars and Ani, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Century*, in *Armenian Kars and Ani*, ed. Richard Hovahannisyan (Los Angeles: MAZDA Publishers. 2011), 174.

⁶⁰ Sinclair, 175.

⁶¹ Sinclair, 104-5.

sought an alliance with the Mongols against the rising danger of the Turks of the Asia Minor and Mamluks of Egypt. The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia, using the same strategies of intermarriages and military support, established liaisons with the Mongols from the thirteenth century onwards.⁶²

These political realities may seem like digressions from my direct research questions, yet these are factors which had a crucial impact on the neighbouring regions and shaped the political map of fourteenth-century Black and Mediterranean Seas. These developments generated a situation where the Italian states, whose main profit was gained by trade, had to seek alternative sources which would grant them economic security in case of the political turmoil. They experienced difficulties in their Eastern Mediterranean ports after the capture of Baghdad (1258), the sack of Aleppo (1260) by the Mongols, with the help of the Armenian and Frankish troops. This made them reroute their trade and gain open access to the Northern shore of the Black Sea.

In this context, they found allies with the Nicaean Empire and provided a military support to Michael VIII for recapturing Constantinople. As a precondition for such support, they signed a trade and defence pact with Byzantium, known as the Treaty of Nymphaion in 1261. This document granted the Republic of Genoa unlimited access to the Black Sea as well as various taxation and customs concessions. The most important condition of this treaty was the obligation of the emperor to forbid any Western traders to navigate through the Bosphorus, except for merchants from Genoa and Pisa. This act was primarily aimed to hindering the entry of the Venetian ships, the main rival of the Republic of Genoa, to the Black Sea.⁶³

The support of the Byzantine emperor was not sufficient for the establishment of Genoese colonies in the eastern part of Crimea,⁶⁴ so they started negotiating with the Mongols, who at the time primarily held the area. As part of the realization of Genghis Khan's world domination plan, the next Great Khan, Ögedei (1229-1241), initiated the broadening of the frontiers of the Mongol Empire and one of the main directions encompassed the western end of

⁶² Gayane Babayan, 52.

⁶³ Dionysios Stathakopoulos, *A Short History of the Byzantine Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 154-61.

⁶⁴ The Genoese Levantine colonies originated during the era of the Crusades (eleventh to fifteenth centuries) in a complex dynamic with the Byzantine Greeks, the Turkic dynasties, and various Latin warlords. In the eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean, and the Black Sea, a Genoese feudal aristocracy traded with the Byzantine and Turkic dynasties, and many Genoese families became extremely rich. But the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 signaled the beginning of the end of Genoese commercial dominance. Individual Genoese merchants continued to reside at Pera, just across the Golden Horn from Constantinople, and the Genoese colony of Caffa in Crimea held out until 1475. Chios continued under Genoese rule into the middle of the sixteenth century. See, Padraic Rohan, *The Genoese Levantine Colonies at the Birth of Ottoman Imperial Power: A Framework for Inquiry*, (May 2015), 1-2.

the Eurasian steppe in Russia through Poland and Hungary. Acting upon this military plan, in 1239 the Mongols, under the command of Batu Khan (1207-1255), grandson of Genghis Khan, conquered Crimea.⁶⁵

Later Crimea became the Ulus of Jochi or the Golden Horde with Surxat (Solgat, Solghat) as a center of the ulus and was named Eski-Qirim.⁶⁶ The Mongol name is a Turkic word, qirim (moat). As noted in the scholarship, the Mongols likened the moat to the Isthmus of Perekop.⁶⁷ In 1265 Berke Khan donated as an appanage "Solghat and Sudak" to Kai-Kawus II, a dethroned Sultan of Rum who was released by from the Byzantine captivity by the Mongols.⁶⁸ Besides Kai-Kawus II, other Seljuk emirs received estates in the southeastern part of Crimea. Until 1280s, the Seljuks ruled over Surxat and their presence is evident in the preserved monuments.⁶⁹

2.3. Turkic Texts in Armenian Scripts

The writing, which has already been given the name of Armeno-Kipchak, attracts attention from various points of view. After all, the written monuments created on it are not only important historical sources for studying the past of the Armenian colonies in the 16th-17th centuries, but also valuable linguistic sources. For the entire territory of Eastern Europe, few written monuments of the Turkic peoples-Kipchakophones⁷⁰ have been preserved. Written monuments of many peoples have either not been preserved or have been preserved in such a small amount that, taken together, they make up an insignificant fraction compared to the thousands of pages of Armeno-Kipchak texts that have come down to our time and are stored in many libraries and archives. The Armeno-Kipchak texts are written in Armenian script, which more accurately betrays the phonetics of Turkic speech than Arabic or Jewish.

⁶⁵ John Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 75.

⁶⁶ *Ulus* is a Mongol, Turkic social term which is used to indicate a particular populace or state. It can also have the meaning of horde, a military-administrative entity of Mongol and Turkic populace.

⁶⁷ The Isthmus of Perekop is a narrow strip of land which connects the Crimean peninsula to the mainland of Ukraine.

⁶⁸ J. Saunders, *The History of the Mongol Conquests*, 1972, 159.

⁶⁹ [Tatevik Sargsyan] Tat'ewik Sargsyan, *Mijnadaryan Sowrxat'i hayerə ew nranc' havatatelinərə* [*The Armenians of medieval Surxat and their churches*], *Patma-banasirakan handes*, 1 (2000), 108; See also [Osman Akchokrakly] Osman Akchokrakly, "Staro-Krymskie i Otuzskie nadpisi XIII-XV v.v." [The inscriptions from Starý Krim and Otuz], in *Izvestija Tavricheskogo obshhestva istorii, arheologii i jetnografii* 1, (1927): 5 – 17.

⁷⁰ In the case of the Turkophone Armenians of Ukraine (more precisely, the Kypchakophones from the name of the group of Kipchak languages, which include Tatar, Crimean Tatar, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Bashkir, Karakalpak, Kumyk, Karachay-Balkarian, Nogai, Karaite languages), a great written heritage is of particular interest. This "kipchakophonic" episode in the ethnic history of the Armenian people: archival documentation, original and translated writings, epigraphic monuments.

It should be noted that among the Armenian and Armenian Turkish literature, there were many Armenian literatures of Kipchak, Latin, Arabic, Hungarian, Kurdish and many others with Armenian letters.

From the second half of the eleventh century onward political events⁷¹ forced waves of Armenians to migrate from their old capital, Ani, to the Volga and the Crimea.⁷² As newcomers to the Cuman area⁷³ the Armenians entered into close relations with the Turkic population and, as middlemen in the Kipchak trade, they soon learned their language.⁷⁴

Between the end of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, assisted by privileges granted by the Polish king,⁷⁵ these Armeno Kipchak colonies established themselves in different towns among which were Lwów, Kamieniec Podolski, Łuck, Raszków, Zamość and Bar.

The Armenians' conversion to Catholicism facilitated their assimilation, and during the seventeenth century they began to use Polish instead of Tatar, spoken by them for centuries. The *Tartarorum lingua* in Armenian characters spoken by Armeno - Kipchaks survived in a few manuscripts. The Armeno - Kipchak copy of the *Statut*, the royal decree was probably written in Leopold in 1568. It includes the King of Poland, Sigismund I's confirmations of *Tora Bitiki/Ganunk*, the modified Tatar version of the *Datastanagirk*⁷⁶. This code of laws, edited in 1184 by Vartabed Mhitar Goš at the command of the Katholikos (Patriarch), was modified and translated into Latin, Polish, and then Tatar, for the Armenians of Léopol.⁷⁷

⁷¹ In 1064 the Seljukid Sultan Alp – Arslan occupied the Armenian capital, Ani (Brătianu, *Recherches sur le commerce génois dans la Mer Noire au XIII siècle* (Paris, 1929), 36-39. The Mongols took and destroyed Ani in 1239. The Ottoman conquest of Caffa caused the third wave of Armenian migrations from the Crimea to Podolia in 1475. (Lewicki and Kohnowa, "La version turque-kipchak du Code des lois des Arméniens polonais, d'après le Ms. No.1916 de la Bibliothèque Ossolineum," RO XXI (Warszawa, 1957), 157-58).

⁷² In the 13th- 14th centuries the Crimea, particularly the Sudak area was known as *Armenia maritima*. (Lewicki and Kohnowa 1957, 157); also, Pritsak mentions Sudak as a center for trade between Russia, Constantinople and the Mamluk State in Egypt.

⁷³ In 1154 El- Idrisi mentioned the town Djalita (today, Yalta) as part of "Qomāniyya." Jean, archbishop of Sultanieh in his *Libellus de notitia orbis* (1404) used the term *Comania* for the area of Southern Russia which is synonymous with the "Grande Tartarie," (deny, "L'arménocoman et les Ephémérides' de Kamienec." *Ural-Altaische Bibliothek* (Fortsetzung der 'Ungarischen Bibliothek'), IV (Wiesbaden, 1957), 8-9).

⁷⁴ For the hypothesis that the Armeno-Kipchak speakers are in fact Kipchaks converted to the Gregorian religion see Clauson ' *Armeno-Qipčaq* ' RO XXXIV (1971), 9.

⁷⁵ According to Pritsak, Leos I invited the Crimean Armenians to settle in the Galician and Lodomerian Kingdoms, the Western Ukraine in 1280. Lewicki and Kohnowa note: "Le roi polonaise Casimir le Grand accorde en 1356 aux Arméniens de Lwów le privilège en vigueur duquel ils peuvent garder leur propres lois et s'en servir simultanément avec le droit municipal allemand (de Magdebourg)... Il est fort probable qu'ils y soient venus à l'appel des ducs ruthènes et des rois polonaise qui venaient de coloniser le pays dépeuplé par les incursions des Tatars." (1957), 157-58.

⁷⁶ The book of tribunals.

⁷⁷ Schütz, The Code of Laws is presentation of the Kamieniec Chronicle; see Schütz, *An Armeno – Kipchak Chronicle on the Polish- Turkish Wars in 1620-21*, (Budapest, 1968).

The Kamieniec Chronicle was written by three generations of a family of Armenian priests from Kamieniec, probably between 1560-1652. In it, events from 1430 to 1610 and 1648-1652 are presented in Armenian, while the period between 1611-1624 is described in Armeno- Kipchak by Aksent.⁷⁸ The author brings into focus the Polish – Ottoman wars in Cecora (1620) and Hotin (1621) caused by the rivalry for Moldavia, a territory the Poles wanted as a corridor to the Black Sea, while it was regarded by the Ottomans as a strategic base and a link to the Crimea.⁷⁹ The description of the battle of Cecora gives the chronicle a special importance as this subject is scarcely discussed in Polish sources.

There are three bilingual dictionaries in a manuscript probably written in Poland in the early seventeenth century.⁸⁰ A note on one of the manuscripts informs the reader that the dictionary was bought in the Wallachia.⁸¹ It appears that the manuscript does not have Rumanian borrowings, the only probable exception being the word *Dikcionar* from *Dikcionar Armenorum Christophori Gluskovii*, which is written on the cover.⁸² This particular manuscript is almost a trilingual dictionary since it includes a considerable number of Latin words besides the 10.000 old Armenian entries explained in Kipchak.⁸³

Lewicki and Kohnowa, who mention a couple of other Armeno-Kipchak manuscripts from the seventeenth century,⁸⁴ point out that all these documents reflect two Armeno-Kipchak

⁷⁸ The grandson of the first author of the Chronicle, Der Hovhannes.

⁷⁹ For a detailed presentation of the Kamieniec Chronicle see Schütz, *An Armeno – Kipchak Chronicle on the Polish-Turkish Wars in 1620-21*, (Budapest, 1968).

⁸⁰ These dictionaries constitute the basic material for Tryjarski, *Dictionnaire arméno-kipchak*. (D'après trois manuscrits des collections viennoises.) (Warszawa 1968). Tryjarski assumes that the first manuscript was written in the Polish- Ukrainian area and then brought to Moldavia. As it appears from a note on the manuscript, an Armenian from Poland bought it back in 1638. As concerns the second manuscript, it is possible that it was written in Poland or in the Crimea. (Tryjarski, 1968), 14, 16-18.

⁸¹ Schütz, (1968), 154.

⁸² Tryjarski, (1968), 15. Rumanian dictionar (diktsionar).

⁸³ Lazarescu-Zobian, Maria Mina, *Kipchak Turkic Loanwords in Rumanian*, Columbia University, (1982), 65-71.

⁸⁴ Lewicki and Kohnowa (1957), 156. Other studies on the Armeno-Kipchak manuscripts: Schütz, '*Armeno-Kipchakische Ehekontrakte und Testamente*,' (Budapest, 1971), 265-300. The author refers to the collection of contracts of marriages, *Ehekontrakte*, and testaments written in Lemberg (Lwów) between 1572-1630. Kraelitz-Grieffenhof, "Sprachprobe eines armenisch-tatarischen Dialektes in Polen," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* XXVI (1912), 307. The study is based on the Psalm 50/51, *Miserere*, translated from Armenian to Kipchak by the Deacon Lussik of the city of Zamość in 1590. Deny and Tryjarski, "Histoire du sage Hikar' dans la version arméno-kipchak " *RO* XXVII, 2 (Warszawa, 1964), 7-45. The study is based on the manuscript entitled *Maxims and wisdoms of the wise Hikar*, a work of "belles lettres." Schütz, *Armeno- Kipchak texts from Lwów*, (1618), 291-309. Schütz makes a presentation of the prayer-book printed in Lwów which also includes *Fide Confiteor*, short prayers written by the Patriarch of the Armenians, Nerses Clajensis from Hromkla in the 12th century.

dialects: The first, very close to that of the Codex Cumanicus⁸⁵ and the Karaim texts, was named by Deny "l'armèno-comān" and by the abbot Martin "la langue des Tatars de l'Ukraine."⁸⁶

The substance of the language remains very distinctly Turkish and has the advantage of having entirely escaped Osmanli influence. The vocabulary is identified not only with that of the Codex Cumanicus, but with that of the Qumiq (west bank of the Caspian, north of the Caucasus) and shows an undeniable influence of the Uighur.⁸⁷

The second is a dialect influenced by the Ottoman. Schütz, for example, considers the Armeno- Kipchak palatal, labial *ü* in the language of the *Kamieniec Chronicle* due in part to the influence of Ottoman pronunciation.⁸⁸

The rich vocabulary of the bilingual dictionaries led Tryjarski to the conclusion that they reflect an elevated language able to express philosophical thoughts and moral religious precepts. The dictionaries also include archaic Armenian entries explained in Kipchak, as well as terms regarding customs, magic practices, and everyday life. Schütz describes the Kipchak spoken by Armenians "a uniform dialect without considerable variations (from one literary monument to another)."⁸⁹

Clauson, who made an analysis of the language of Tryjarski's dictionary, has brought to light several layers of words which, broadly speaking, also occur in the Codex. According to him, the earliest layer contains words from the Türküt language of the eighth and ninth centuries, as it is preserved in the Orkhon inscriptions, and from Uighur. The second layer consists of Oghuz and Kipchak words, which were in use 900 years ago. Some of them appear in Kāšarī's *Dīwān- Lughātī l-Turk*. The third layer contains words from the language used in the Golden Horde, as it is illustrated in Qutb's *Husrāv u Šīrīn*, probably written in 1341-42. Smaller, but equal in importance for the description of the Armeno-Kipchak and the language of the Codex, are the layers of Ongolian administrative terms and Persian words, among the "Arabic words (which) had become loanwords in Persian before they reached Qipčaq."⁹⁰

⁸⁵ The Codex Cumanicus is a medieval dictionary, a well-known written monument of the presumably Cuman language of the early 14th century, the only copy of which is kept in the library of St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice.

⁸⁶ Abbot Martin catalogued the Armenian documents for the National Library of Paris (Deny, 1957), 9.

⁸⁷ Journal Asiatique, ser. 11, XVII (Juillet- Septembre, 1921), 135.

⁸⁸ Schütz, (1968), 98.

⁸⁹ Schütz, "Remarks on initial *ḍ* in Kipchak languages" (1972), 371.

⁹⁰ Clauson, (1971), 11-12.

The advantage of the Armenian script (i.e., the accurate representation of the Kipchak sounds), enabled scholars to correctly transliterate this language, which according to Schütz is:

...a valuable link between the Codex Cumanicus and the modern Tatar languages of the Kipchak type and affords a rich source for the investigation of Cumanic dialectology.⁹¹

⁹¹ Schütz, (1968), 9. For a detailed presentation of the phonetic and morphological characteristic features of the Armeno-Kipchak as they appear from different studied manuscripts (1968, 98-113), Deny (1957, 18-22), Pritsak (PhTF I, 82-84). Schütz's remark is noteworthy: "The general grammatical aspect of the different Armeno-Kipchak texts is different because in consequence of the character of the text, certain grammatical forms are preponderance."

Conclusion

The paper emphasises that the Genoese republic developed a state formation by the last quarter of the fourteenth century along the Northern Black Sea Coast, with its centre on the Crimean Peninsula in the town of Kaffa. Along with the Golden Horde (later the Crimean Khanate) and the Byzantine Empire (becoming the Ottoman Empire), this state formation shaped all historical events and set the political situation in the region.

The research paper studies the Armeno-Kipchak language owners, going deeper to the historical context. The paper discusses more about who are the Kipchak Turks, and who are the Armeno-Kipchaks? The origins of the huge Asiatic hordes that invaded Europe over the "Caspian Sea" and their early history are still subject to debate.

The Kamenets Chronicle records take a big place in the work representing the local events in Kamenets Podolsk from the fifteenth till the middle of the seventeenth century; besides it also describes the life of the Polish – West-Ukrainian borderland, Poland's connections with the bordering Moldavia, Ukraine. Further the onslaughts of the Cossacks, the raids of Crimean Tatars, etc. In short, this Chronicle is an important historical source concerning the local Armenian settlement, and of the history of Poland and the adjacent countries in the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

The main body of the Armenian population of Podolian area speaking Armeno-Kipchak during the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries either adopted Polish or, in the consequence of commercial and political reasons, war events - continued wandering further. Though the Armenian language, still we are not entitled to speak of a direct continuity of language. If it had not been for the continuous influx of Armenians from the seventeenth century on, there could hardly have come about a "re-Armenisation" of the colony.

The Armeno-Kipchak language constitutes a valuable link between the "Codex Cumanicus" and the modern Tatar languages of Kipchak type and affords a rich source for the investigation of Cumanic dialectology.

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