The Romanians and the Turkic Nomads North of the Danube Delta from the Tenth to the Mid-Thirteenth Century

Victor Spinei
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North of the Danube Delta
from the Tenth to the Mid-Thirteenth Century
East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450

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Florin Curta

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The Romanians and the Turkic Nomads North of the Danube Delta from the Tenth to the Mid-Thirteenth Century

By
Victor Spinei


Translation: Florin Curta, Maria Mihailescu-Bîrliba and Adrian Poruciuc.

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PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Illustrations ..........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.  The Environment and its Relation to the Anthropic Element</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. The Political History of the Carpathian-Dniester Region and of the Neighbouring Territories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth Century ...........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh Century ..................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelfth Century ...............................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Half of the Thirteenth Century ................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Contrasting Ways of Life: Romanian Agriculturists and Turkic Pastoralists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic and Ethnic Aspects ..............................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Aspects ........................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlements and Life Style ..................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwellings and their Annexes .............................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture .........................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Husbandry ..................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafts .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade .................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and Political Life ......................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Life ......................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burial Assemblages .............................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art ........................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Contacts and Interactions between Romanians and Turkic Nomads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected Bibliography .............................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Sources .......................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Written Sources ...............................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Archaeological Sources ......................................</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Secondary Literature ..................................................... 392

Sources of Illustrations ............................................................... 435
Illustrations .................................................................................. 439

Indices (by Cătălin Hriban)
   General Index ........................................................................... 499
   Author Index ............................................................................... 521
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. A. Map of forest spreading in Europe in 1910, drawn up by I. Riedel

Fig. 2. Map of discoveries of local population settlements in the central and southern Moldavia of the ninth–eleventh centuries (Dridu culture)

Fig. 3. Map of discoveries of local population settlements in the central and southern Moldavia of the eleventh–twelfth centuries (Răducăneni culture)

Fig. 4. Map of Turkic nomad-grave discoveries of the tenth–thirteenth centuries in the outer-Carpathian Romanian regions

Fig. 5. Map of the main types of rural settlements of Romania

Fig. 6. Iron axes and arrowheads of the tenth–eleventh centuries discovered at Fedesti, Jariştea, Câmpineanca, Hlincea-Iaşi, Siliştea Nouă and Bârlăleşti

Fig. 7. Iron and horn objects from the settlements of the tenth–eleventh centuries discovered at Simila, Murgeni, Hlincea-Iaşi, Gârbovăţ and Bârlăleşti

Fig. 8. Bronze, iron and horn objects of the ninth–twelfth centuries discovered at Ciorteşti, Dâneşti, Băiceni, Umbrăreşti, Câmpineanca, Crucioara, Roşcani and Grumazoaia

Fig. 9. Silver and bronze brackets, bronze reliquary cross, stone spindle-whorl, iron arrowheads, knife, snaffle-bit and sword of the ninth–eleventh centuries discovered at Hansca, Bogatoe and Paşcani

Fig. 10. Adornment objects and other metal pieces discovered in the tenth–twelfth centuries necropoleis at Arsura and Hansca-“Căprăria”

Fig. 11. Potsherds discovered in the ninth–tenth centuries settlement of Bârlad-“Prodana”

Fig. 12. Pottery of the tenth–eleventh centuries discovered in the settlements of Calfa and Orhei-“Petruha”

Fig. 13. Pottery of the tenth–eleventh centuries discovered in the settlement of Hansca

Fig. 14. Stamps on the bottom of the tenth–eleventh centuries pots discovered in the settlement of Hansca
Fig. 15. Potsherds of the tenth–eleventh centuries discovered in the settlement of Bârlăleşti
Fig. 16. Pottery of the tenth–eleventh centuries and eleventh–twelfth centuries discovered in the settlements of Bârlăleşti and Răducăneni
Fig. 17. Potsherds of the eleventh–twelfth centuries discovered in the settlements of Dâneşti and Răducăneni
Fig. 18. Potsherds of the eleventh–twelfth centuries discovered in the settlements of Pâhnești and Răducăneni
Fig. 19. Potsherds of the twelfth–thirteenth centuries discovered in the settlement of Iaşi-“Nicolina”
Fig. 20. Iron arrowhead, glass bracelet and potsherds from the twelfth–thirteenth centuries settlement of Iaşi-“Nicolina”
Fig. 21. Byzantine and Russian bronze double reliquary crosses of the tenth–eleventh and twelfth–thirteenth centuries from Şuletea and from an unidentified place in the Suceava area
Fig. 22. Ceramic decorated with zoomorphic motifs and human figures beings carved in gritstone of the ninth–tenth centuries discovered at Gara Banca and Deleşti
Fig. 23. Plan of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Proboța, Trapovca, Seliște and Zârnești
Fig. 24. Iron objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Balabanu
Fig. 25. Objects of horn, silver, gold, bronze, gilded and silvered iron and iron from the inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Balabanu
Fig. 26. Plan of a destroyed grave and the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Banca
Fig. 27. Plan of a Turkic nomads’ grave at Bădărașii Vechi and silver, gold, bone and iron objects from its funerary inventory
Fig. 28. Metal objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Bârlad-“Parc”, Pogonești, Berești and Todireni
Fig. 29. Metal and horn objects and pieces of gold thread tissue from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomad’s grave at Fridensfeld (= Mirnopole)
Fig. 30. Iron objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomad’s grave of Grozești
Fig. 31. Metal, horn and bone objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves of Holboca and Pogonești
Fig. 32. Iron objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Mândrești, Proboța, Grivița-Vaslui, Pogonești and Bărlad—“Moara lui Chicoș”

Fig. 33. Objects of metal, horn and glass paste from the funerary inventory of a Turkic nomad’s grave at Pavlovca

Fig. 34. Metal objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Pavlovca, Șabalat (= Sadovoe) and Gura Bâcului

Fig. 35. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves and their funerary inventory at Petrești and Bădragii Vechi

Fig. 36. Metal objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Proboța, Bărlad—“Moara lui Chicoș”, Umbrărești and Moscu

Fig. 37. Objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Seliște

Fig. 38. Byzantine coins, adornement objects and clay pot from the funerary inventory of Turkic nomads’ graves at Suvorovo and Tuzla

Fig. 39. Plan of a Turkic nomads’ grave at Chirileni, iron and bone objects and clay pots from its funerary inventory

Fig. 40. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves and their funerary inventory at Ursoaia

Fig. 41. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves and their funerary inventory at Balabănul and Chircăiești

Fig. 42. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves and their funerary inventory at Chircăiești and Cârnățeni

Fig. 43. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves at Taraclia

Fig. 44. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves and their funerary inventory at Taraclia

Fig. 45. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves and their funerary inventory from Taraclia

Fig. 46. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves and their funerary inventory at Olănești, Chirileni, Divizia, Opaci, Ursoaia, Cazaclia

Fig. 47. Iron and bone objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Ivanovca

Fig. 48. Iron and horn objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Sevirova, Alexandrovca and Ivanovca

Fig. 49. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves and their funerary inventory at Iablona, Plavni, Calanciac and Limanskoe—“Fricăței”
Fig. 50. Clay pot, horn and metal objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Belolesie, Limanskoe-“Fricăței”, Jeltâi Iar, Plavni, Ciauş and Ogorodnoe

Fig. 51. Metal, glass and horn objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Bolgrad, Palanca and Balabanu

Fig. 52. Iron and bone objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Balabanu

Fig. 53. Iron and copper objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Roma

Fig. 54. Iron, iron and wood objects and a saddle reconstruction from the funerary inventory of a Turkic nomads’ grave at Matca

Fig. 55. Gold, silvered iron, iron and copper objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Pogonești, Moscu and Grivița-Vaslui

Fig. 56. Metal objects and fragment of a clay pot from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Tudora and Grădiștea and a stone statue at Nădușita

Fig. 57. Stone statue (kamennaia baba), attributed to the Cumans, from an unidentified place in the north-Pontic steppes, preserved in the Moldavian Historical Museum of Iași

Fig. 58. Stone statues (kamennye baby), representing Cuman men, from the north-Pontic steppes

Fig. 59. Stone statues (kamennye baby), representing Cuman women, from the north-Pontic steppes

Fig. 60. Types of trellis tent of nomads from the steppe zone of Eurasia: southern Qırqız, Qunrad Özbek, Laqay Özbek and northern Qırqız
ABBREVIATIONS

AA Archives de l’Athos (Paris).
AARMSI Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secțiunii Istorice (Bucharest).
ActaArchHung Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapest).
AD Analele Dobrogei (Cernăuți–Constanța).
AECO Archivum Europae Centro-Orientalis (Budapest).
AEMA Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi (Wiesbaden).
a.H. anno Hegirae.
AII(A) Anuarul Institutului de Istorie (și Arheologie) (“A. D. Xenopol”) (Iași).
AIM Археологические исследования в Молдавии (Kishinev).
AKM Археологическая карта Молдавской ССР (Kishinev).
AM Arheologia Moldovei (Iași–Bucharest).
Anonymus P. Magistri qui Anonymus dicitur, Gesta Hungarorum, eds. A. Jakubovich—D. Pais, in SRH, I.
AO...G Археологическая открытия… года (Moscow).
AOH Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae (Budapest).
ASAI Археология СССР. Свод археологических источников (Moscow–Leningrad).
ASUI Analele Științifice ale Universității “Al.I.Cuza” din Iași (Iași).
BBR Buletinul Bibliotecii Române. Studii și documente românești (Freiburg i. Br.).
BMNIN Buletinul Muzeului Național de Istorie Naturală din Chișinău (Chișinău).
BSGR Buletinul Societății Geografice Române (Bucharest).
BSRRG Buletinul Societății Regale Române de Geografie (Bucharest).
BZ Byzantinische Zeitschrift (Munich).
Călători, I–X  Călători străini despre Țările Române (Bucharest),
I (1968)—ed. M. Holban; II (1970); III (1971); IV (1972); V (1973); VII (1980);
VI (1976)—eds. M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, M. A. Mehmet.

Cl  Cercetări istorice (Iași).

Coman, Statornicie  G. Coman, Statornicie, continuitate. Repertoriul arheologic al județului Vaslui (Bucharest, 1980).

CPict  Chronicon pictum Vindobonense (IIR, XI) (1937).

Curta, Southeastern Europe  F. Curta, Southeastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 500–1250 (Cambridge, 2006).

DAI, I, II  Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, De adminis-

Diaconu, Coumans  P. Diaconu, Les Coumans au Bas-Danube aux XIe et XIIe siècles (Bucharest, 1978).

Diaconu, Petchénègues  P. Diaconu, Les Petchénègues au Bas-Danube (Bucharest, 1970).

DID, II, III  R. Vulpe, I. Barnea, Românii la Dunărea de jos (Din istoria Dobrogei, II) (Bucharest, 1968);
I. Barnea, Șt. Ștefănescu, Bizantini, români și bulgari la Dunărea de jos (Din istoria Dobrogei, III) (Bucharest, 1971).

DIR,A; C, v…  Documente privind istoria României (Bucharest),
A. Moldova, veacul XVI, I (1953); II (1951); III (1951); IV (1952); veacul XVII, I (1952); II (1953); III (1954); IV (1956); V (1957);


**FHB** Извори за българската история / *Fontes historiae Bulgaricae* (Sofia).


Gombos, I–III A. F. Gombos, *Catalogus fontium historiae Hungaricae aevo ducum et regum ex stripe Arpad descendentium ab anno Christi DCCC usque ad annum MCCCI* (Budapest), I, II (1937); III (1938).


Hurmuzaki E. Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* (Bucharest), I (1887); II, 4 (1894)—ed. N. Densusianu; I, 2 (1890); II, 2 (1891); II, 3 (1892)—eds. N. Densusianu, E. Kalužnica; I, suppl. 1 (1886)—eds. Gr. G. Tocilescu, A. I. Odobescu; II, 1 (1891)—ed. I. Slavici.

**Hust.let.** Густинская летопись, in PSRL, II (St. Petersburg, 1843).

**IIR** Izvoarele istoriei românilor, ed. G. Popa-Lisseanu (Bucharest).
Iorga, *Histoire*, II, III


*Ip.let.*

Ипатьевская летопись, in *PSRL*, II (St. Petersburg, 1843).


*Ist.Rom., I, II*


*IVESV*


*Izu.-Kishinev*

Известия Молдавского филиала Академии Наук СССР (= Известия Академии Наук Молдавской СССР, Серия общественных наук) (Kishinev/Chișinău).

*Kedrenos, I, II*

Georgii Cedreni *Compendium historiarum*, ed. Im. Bekker (Bonn), I (1838); II (1839).

*KS*

Краткие сообщения (Института Истории материальной культуры) (= Института Археологии AH СССР) (Moscow).


*MA*

*Memoria Antiquitatis* (Piatra Neamț).

*MASP*

Материалы по археологии Северного Причерноморья (Odessa–Kiev).

*MCA*

*Materiale și cercetări arheologice* (Bucharest).

*MGH*

*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.

*MGH,SS *

*MGH, Scriptores* (Hannover).

*MIA*

Материалы и исследования по археологии СССР (Moscow–Leningrad).

*Nik.let., I, II*

Летописный сборник, именуемый Патриаршеею или Никоновскою летописью [I,] in *PSRL*, IX (St. Petersburg, 1862); [II,] in *PSRL*, X (St. Petersburg, 1885).

*NPL*

Новгородская первая летопись старшего и младшего изводов, ed. A. A. Nasonov (Moscow–Leningrad, 1950).


**PGM** Проблемы географии Молдавии (Kishinev).

**Plano Carpini** Johannes de Plano Carpini, *Ystoría Mongalorum*, in *SF*.


**Psellos, I, II** Michel Psellos, *Chronographie ou Histoire d’un siècle de Byzance* (976–1077), ed. É. Renauld (Paris), I (1926); II (1928).

**PSRL** Полное собрание русских летописей (St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad–Moscow).

**PVL, I, II** Повесть временных лет, I, ed. D. S. Likhachev; red. V. P. Adrianova-Peretts; II, Приложение, ed. D. S. Likhachev (Moscow–Leningrad, 1950).


**RESEE** *Revue des études sud-est européennes* (Bucharest).

**RIR** Revista istorică română (Bucharest).

**RIs** (Studii.) *Revista de istorie* (Bucharest).

**RRH** Revue Roumaine d’Histoire (Bucharest).

**Rubruck** Guillelmus de Rubruc, *Itinerarium*, in *SF*.

**SAI** Советская археология (Moscow).

**SAI** Studii și articole de istorie (Bucharest).

**SCIV(A)** Studii și cercetări de istorie veche (și arheologie) (Bucharest).

**SCN** Studii și cercetări de numismatică (Bucharest).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simon de Keza</td>
<td>Simonis de Keza <em>Gesta Hungarorum</em>, ed. A. Domanovszky, in <em>SRH</em>, I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sk</td>
<td><em>Seminarium Kondakovianum</em>, 1–10 (Prague); 11 (Belgrade).</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMIM</td>
<td><em>Studii și materiale de istorie medie</em>, 1–16 (Bucharest); 17–25 (Brăila).</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRH, I, II</td>
<td><em>Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum</em>, ed. E. Szentpétery (Budapest), I (1937); II (1938).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiesenhausen, I, II</td>
<td>Сборник материалов относящихся к истории Золотой Орды, I, ed. V. Tiesenhausen (St. Petersburg, 1884); II, ed. V. G. Tiesenhausen, red. A. A. Romaskevich and S. L. Volin (Moscow–Leningrad, 1941).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VEDS</td>
<td>Восточная Европа в древности и средневековье, ed. L. V. Cherepnin (Moscow, 1978).</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZOO</td>
<td>Записки Одесского общества истории и древностей (Odessa).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The hardly reconcilable confrontation between sedentary agricultural communities and nomadic pastoralists is a quite well known aspect in the history of mankind. The antagonism between the two types of societies has been caused by the incompatibility between two systems of subsistence, and that antagonism manifested itself in many ways, in various parts of the world. The Carpathian-Danubian area particularly favoured the development of sedentary life, throughout the millennia, but, at various times, nomadic pastoralists of the steppes also found this area favourable to their own way of life.

The author of the present volume aims to investigate the relationships between Romanians and nomadic Turkic groups in the southern half of Moldavia, north of the Danube Delta, between the tenth century and the great Mongol invasion of 1241–1242. Due to the basic features of its landscape, the above-mentioned area, which includes a vast plain, became the main political stage of the Romanian ethnic space, a stage on which local communities had to cope with the pressures of successive intrusions of nomadic Turks, attracted by the rich pastures north of the Lower Danube. Other areas inhabited by Romanians (with the exception of the Bărăgan plain and Dobrudja) were significantly less affected by Turkic invasions and occupations than southern Moldavia.

The geographic area at issue includes the southern half of Moldavia, within its medieval boundaries: the Carpathians in the west, the Milcov, the Putna, the Siret, the Danube and the Black Sea in the south, and the Dniester in the east.

My approach does not follow the beaten tracks, nor does it represent a total breakthrough. The chosen topic has not been neglected by historiographers; on the contrary, it has been dealt with in outstanding works, and it has enjoyed scientific attention. With no intention of enumerating all the significant contributions in the field, or of assessing them, mention must be made of the works of Ilie Gherghel,1 Ioan Ferent,2 Nicolae

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2 I. Ferent, Cumanii și episcopiile lor (Blaj, [1931]).
Iorga, Petre Diaconu and Ion Chirtoagă. Those works highlighted the various levels of knowledge specific to the periods in which they were written. The problem of the Romanian-Turkic relations is also reflected in synthetic works on Romanian medieval history, as well as in other studies that will be mentioned below. In trying to define the place of Turkic nomads in the complicated context of medieval events, and, implicitly, in trying to achieve a clearer vision of the specific character of the relations between those nomads and the Romanians, the works on Turkic history published by the following authors can prove to be of much help: Vasiliy Grigorovich Vasilievskii, Piotr V. Golubovskii, Joseph Marquart, D. Rassovsky (D. A. Rasovskii), Svetlana Aleksandrovna Pletneva, German Alekseevich Fedorov-Davydov, Omeljan


4 Diaconu, *Petchénègues*; idem, *Coumans*.

5 I. Chirtoagă, *Din istoria Moldovei de Sud-Est până în anii ’30 ai secolului al XIX-lea* (Chișinău, 1999), pp. 26–70.


7 P. Golubovskii, *Печенеги, тюрки и половцы до нашествия татаръ* (Kiev, 1884); idem, *Половцы в Венгрии* (Kiev, 1889).


11 Fedorov-Davydov, *Kochevniki*; idem, *Искусство кочевников и Золотой Орды* (Moscow, 1976).
Pritsak, Peter G. Golden, Andrei Olegovich Dobroliubskii, Jean-Paul Roux, András Pálóczi Horváth, Igor O. Kniaz’kii, Petro Petrovich Tolochko, István Vásáry, etc. Besides appearing in individual volumes, the issues of the evolution of later nomad Turkic tribes in eastern and south-eastern Europe have been approached in numerous collected volumes on various topics. Outstanding among those are, by their amplitude and diversity of subjects, the first two volumes of an extensive work devoted to the history and civilization of Turkic peoples,


14 A. O. Dobroliubskii, Кочевники Северо-Западного Причерноморья в эпоху средневековья (Kiev, 1986).


16 A. Pálóczi Horváth, Besenyők, kunok, jászok (Budapest, 1989); idem, Pechenegs, Cumans, Iasians. Steppe Peoples in Mediaeval Hungary (Budapest, 1989); idem, Petschenegen, Kumanen, Jassen. Steppenvölker im mittelalterlichen Ungarn (Budapest, 1989); idem, Hagyományok, kapcsolatok és hatásek a kunok régészeti kultúrájában (Karcag, 1994).

17 I. O. Kniaz’kii, Русь и степь (Moscow, 1996); idem, Славяне, волохи и кочевники Днестровско-Карпатских земель (кнечн IX–сер. XIII вв.) (Kolomna, 1997).

18 P. P. Tolochko, Кочевые народы степей и Киевская Русь (Kiev, 1999).


20 For the Russian and Soviet historiography concerning the late nomad Turks tribes and their relations with the Kievan Rus’, see R. M. Mavrodina, Киевская Русь и кочевники (печенеги, морки, половцы) (Leningrad, 1983).
a work that is co-ordinated by Turkish historians and benefits from the collaboration of renowned specialists from all over the world.\textsuperscript{21}

The investigation of the many-sided contacts between the sedentary inhabitants and the nomads in southern Moldavia during the tenth–thirteenth centuries may encounter serious difficulties, due to the vague and fragmentary way in which those contacts were recorded in documents of those times. The scarcity and ambiguity of those sources made it necessary to resort to collateral historical information and to interdisciplinary data. Much emphasis has been placed upon the insertion of relevant documents, especially those which were unpublished or rarely discussed in connection with the history of the eastern Carpathian space. In that respect, the territory under consideration has many essential aspects that have not been adequately explored and clarified. The access to the past and to credible reconstructions is unconceivable without a clarification of specific aspects, certainly not of all, but at least of those that had substantial consequences.

No claims are made here for an exhaustive research on the chosen topic. In some directions the knowledge is limited; also, the space allotted here would not be enough even for a presentation of what is known. To imagine that one could give credible answers to all the controversial problems implied here and that nothing has escaped attention would merely be sinking into an abyss of vanities. The level of research is still underdeveloped in some fields; therefore my conclusions are just working assumptions, which are liable to suffer further modifications. The goal is to open discussions even on problems that have not yet been elucidated, and which, consequently, may lead to quite different interpretations. I take such diversity of opinions as granted, and try to stimulate a further development of ideas. In general, I will avoid ostentatious polemic gestures, but will uphold my own opinion, in opposition to theories I suspect of having wrongly interpreted the idea of \textit{bona fide}, or of having tendentiously presented historical realities.

Along general lines, this volume follows the structure of a book published in Iaşi in 1985. There are, however, several important differences. I have left out lengthy passages on the specific features of the geographical background, as well as the descriptions of Turkic funerary complexes. Many new paragraphs have been added, in order to enrich the text published more than two decades ago.

The additions were possible due to my research in several national libraries, or in some belonging to reputed institutes and universities such as those in Berlin (Eurasien-Abteilung des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Institut für Prähistorische Archäologie/Freie Universität), Frankfurt am Main (Römisch-Germanische Kommission des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität), Konstanz (Universität), London (School of Oriental and African Studies, School of Slavonic and East European Studies/University College London), Mainz (Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum), Munich (Bayrische Staatsbibliothek, Historicum/Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Monumenta Germaniae Historica), Stockholm (Kungliga Biblioteket, Vitterhetsakademiens Bibliotek), Vienna (Institut für Mittelalterforschung, Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek), Washington, D.C. (Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, Library of Congress), etc. The books and copies I have received from foreign colleagues, such as Uwe Fiedler (Berlin), Irina G. Konovalova (Moscow), Anton Cuşa (Evry) and others, felicitously filled up bibliographic gaps. I have also been able to use a rich archaeological material discovered and published lately in Romania, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

The illustrative part of the volume consists of representations of archaeological items that are significant both for the Romanian medieval society and for the Turkic nomads. Many of the vessels and objects have not been published until now; they come from archaeological diggings led by the present author (Băiceni, Bârlad, Bârlăleşti, Dăneşti, Griviţa-Vaslui, Iaşi, Pâneşti, etc.), or from the collections of some museums and archaeological institutes in Romania (Bârlad, Botoşani, Focşani, Iaşi, Tecuci, Vaslui, etc.), the Republic of Moldova (Kishinev/Chişinău), Ukraine (Kiev, Odessa), and Russia (Moscow, Leningrad/Sankt Petersburg). The drawings were done by Waltraud Delibaş, Emilia Drumea and Romeo Ionescu of the Institute of Archaeology in Iaşi, and by Aneta Corciova of the Department of Archaeology of the “Alexandru

22 V. Spinei, Realităţi etnice şi poliţice în Moldova Meridională în secolele X–XIII. Români şi turanici (Iaşi, 1985).
Ioan Cuza” University of Iași. I owe the computer typeset to Carmen Hrișcu and Mariana Petcu and the illustration scanning to Diana-Măriuca Vornicu of the Department of Archaeology of the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University and Cătălin Hriban of the Moldavian Historical Museum of Iași.

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Iași, April 2008
CHAPTER ONE

THE ENVIRONMENT AND ITS RELATION TO THE ANTHROPIC ELEMENT

The reconstruction of the landscape of the southern half of Moldavia at the beginning of the second millennium is of great importance, and should demonstrate the character and extent of the influence of the geographic background on the evolution of human communities. Landscape is a complex body of elements with different structures that have not remained the same through the ages. Of particular interest are the constituent parts of the lithosphere, the hydrosphere, and the biosphere, with which man remains in continuous connection. My view is essentially anthropocentric, and my investigation is particularly focused on the use of the landscape.

At least until the eighteenth century, in the panorama of the eastern Carpathian territories, no structural modifications had appeared in regard to its physical conformation since the dawn of the medieval period. Therefore we consider that in order to shape a comprehensive image of the territory after the beginning of second millennium, one can also resort to the written and the cartographical sources that appeared in subsequent periods, without surpassing, as a rule, the above-mentioned century.

During the last decades, the problems implied by the investigation of the connection between the geographic background and the development of Romanian society have been neglected, to a certain extent. Some historians have gone so far as to completely refuse that a connection exists. Perhaps this nihilism is a reaction to earlier exaggerations by the supporters of vulgar determinism and some excessive trends in geopolitics. Many contemporary scholars consider geopolitics to be discredited as a structural aggregate of epistemological cognition, as a result of Nazi abuse. It would be out of place to analyse here the harmfulness of such irrevocably discredited practices, but we can afford the observation that the repudiation of the pseudo-scientific principles of geopolitics, as well as of their supporters, neither imposes, nor justifies a total rejection of it. Its valid constituent parts cannot be denied just because they were also embraced by the promoters of
fascism (just as nobody would think of excluding Dürer’s, Goethe’s or Wagner’s works from the world’s artistic heritage solely due to their names having once been invoked in the service of for exacerbated nationalist propaganda).

The influence of the geographic factor must not be reduced only to biologic, demographic and economic aspects that are reflected (more or less clearly) in social life, and in administrative, military and political organization. A focus on the role of the geographic background in the general evolution of society does not presume joining the geodeterminist theories, but it is justified since, during the last decades, approaches to this problem in the specialized Romanian and east-European literature have not always proven adequate, partially due to their adoption of dogmatic positions that limited the contribution of the geographic background only to the economic sphere.

Generally, there is an idea that the further we move back in time, the greater the dependence of humans upon nature appears to be, and that, through the general evolution of humankind, this dependence gradually decreases. But in fact, what we owe to nature never dwindles. On the contrary, the ever increasing necessities of society, both material and spiritual, make it look for new resources in the environment, its relations with which grow more and more diverse. What can usually be dissociated from the dependence on nature means, in fact, an increase in the possibilities of humankind of using the resources of a certain area, of adapting distinct components of the environment to its own necessities, and of facing natural calamities and cataclysms, due to technical progress and to accumulations of ever deeper knowledge about nature’s intimate mechanisms.

In the evaluation of the natural environment in connection with the evolution of society, a range of specific aspects and nuances must be

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taken into consideration. With good reason, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) said “Nature must be neither overestimated, nor underestimated” (Die Natur darf nicht zu hoch und nicht zu niedrig angeschlagen werden), an idea that should be unanimously accepted nowadays. Undoubtedly, human activity is the main factor in the progress of civilization, but, as long as the life of human communities develops within a certain geographic area, it is not inconsequent at all whether or not it disposes of resources, fertility, proper climate, natural protection, or whether it is large enough and has free access to land or waterways. Its evolution can be hastened when there are elements present capable of stimulating the achievements of society. That is why I fully subscribe to the idea that the geographic area is not only a condition for social activities, but also one of their stimuli.

At the same time, I believe it necessary to underline that the profoundly complex relation between humans and nature implies neither temporal nor spatial immovability. The generosity of the environment that appears to be vital at a certain time may become an obstacle for the productive system in the long run. In the same way, the impoverishment of some territories, by determining tenacity and rigidity of occupations of the human communities, proves to be capable of leading them to important progress. In the mid-eighteenth century, Montesquieu, by simplifying and by upholding realities as absolute, concluded that whereas sterility of the soil stimulates diligence and resilience, fertility produces a decrease in vigor. It has also been observed that, as compared to the temperate zones that provide proper conditions for development, the excesses of the warm climate produce a certain inertia and lack of motion; and a too cold climate concentrates, by insidious means, the

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vital energy in the efforts for ensuring subsistence. The climate influences some somatic features of the people, including their anatomical structure, but that requires a very long time. There is no direct action of the environment upon the moral nature of the people. If in the past the most elevated achievements of mankind were specific to warm zones of the Orient and the Mediterranean, at the beginning of the modern period the centre of gravity of the civilized world moved to the temperate zones less favoured by nature, but with a population in which hardships had stimulated its inventiveness and diligence. The progress of science and technology partially diminish the importance of primary conditions of the environment, since it opens possibilities of adaptation.

Prosperous territories, rich in all kinds of resources, have always had a high demographic rate. The ill luck of the gifted regions was that, like magnets, they attracted plundering neighbours, who wished to enlarge their own wealth by stealing from others. In exchange, the arid and hardly explored territories were less coveted and enjoyed more peace.

The relation between humans and nature has never had a unique direction, but rather an ambivalent one, in the way that man, in his turn, has acted as a moulding agent upon the lithosphere, the hydrosphere, and especially on the biosphere. In that respect, it has been noted that "by giving life to history on the earth, people also give life to geography." As a constituent of the biosphere—by representing what is named anthroposphere—humans separate themselves from the other living beings due to their intellect and usage of complex scientific-technical means, so that they master the main modifying potentialities of the planetary cover.

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8 J. Brunhes and C. Vallaux, La géographie de l’histoire (Paris, 1921), p. 3.
It is of utmost importance not to produce any disturbances in the natural equilibrium. Because of the interaction between the human communities and the natural-geographic space, the negative effects of any disturbances are to be felt sooner or later, with a reduced or amplified intensity, by the human society as well. As for the necessity of stability in the concord between human activity and nature, “in order that man should be at peace with himself—and with others—he must be first at peace with the Earth.”\textsuperscript{10} Along the same lines, but considering other domains, Francis Bacon (1561–1626) stated: “Nature is defeated by obeying it” (\textit{Natura enim non nisi parendo vincitur}).\textsuperscript{11} Among the structural elements of the environment a remarkable equilibrium has been established, so that any deterioration within a region or all over the world, suffered by any of the elements, lifeless or alive—because of the permanent interdependence between them—produces chain reactions.\textsuperscript{12}

An impact of the anthropic factor on the natural environment became obvious beginning with the first stages of civilization.

Before the Middle Ages, or even before the modern times, the relatively low density of the population in the Carpathian-Danubian regions (taking into account the same situation in other regions of the planet) and the limited technical possibilities could not generate widespread disturbance of the environment. This does not mean that the initial landscape did not suffer at all because of the concrete action of humans and of lifeless elements. For certain historical periods, archaeological investigations have revealed a higher rate of population density in the Carpathian-Dniesterian area. Among other things, we can refer to the situation of the second half of the third millennium B.C., in the Late Neolithic of the Cucuteni-Tripolie culture area, and to that of the

\begin{itemize}
  \item of the earth,” in \textit{Man’s Role in Changing the Face of the Earth}, ed. W. L. Thomas, Jr., with the collab. of C. O. Sauer, M. Bates, L. Mumford (Chicago–London, 1956), pp. 49–69;
  \item P. B. Sears, “The processes of environmental change by man,” in \textit{ibidem}, pp. 471–486;
\end{itemize}


\textsuperscript{11} Francisci Baconi de Verulamio \textit{Novum Organum. Pars Contemplativa} (Lipsiae, 1840), p. 43.

\textsuperscript{12} Al. Roşu, I. Ungureanu, \textit{Geografia mediului înconjurător} (Bucharest, 1977); V. Tufescu, M. Tufescu, \textit{Ecologia şi activitatea umană} (Bucharest, 1981); P. Stugren, \textit{Bazele ecologiei generale} (Bucharest, 1982).
third and fourth centuries corresponding to the evolution of Sântana de Mureș-Cherniakhov culture. The discoveries reveal a high rate of density at the end of the Bronze Age (the Noua culture) too, in the Late Hallstatt and in Latène III, with the Thraco-Dacian communities, as well as in the last quarter of the first millennium of the modern era. Human communities seem also to have grouped in the south-western part of Moldavia in the Middle Bronze Age (the Monteour culture) and in western Moldavia in the second and third centuries (the Carpo-Dacian culture). The ensuring of subsistence for a significant population with rudimentary technical means required extensive tilled land and pasture, damming up of the rivers to create fishing ponds, intense hunting of certain animals for meat and fur, etc. At times, the anthropic impact on the terrestrial environment suffered deteriorations of its constituents, which, without being always doubled by the regen-

erative processes, suffered changes that were harmful for the natural equilibrium, as recorded even in the early Middle Ages.

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The territory inhabited by Romanians has a well-marked individuality that, on the whole, and in spite of its large variety and complexity, has a remarkable homogeneity and symmetry. Indeed, one may confidently assert that the unity of the land has much to do with the unity of the Romanian people. The great scholar Simion Mehedinți (1869–1962) justly characterized the Romanian regions as “a classic example of unity in diversity”.

Romania’s diversity results from a combination of all the main forms of relief, whereas its unity is manifest in their proportional and harmonious ordering. The central part of the Romanian territory is a plateau surrounded by a majestic ring-shaped mountain chain—usually compared to a fortress—flanked by hills, which in turn border on a broad strip of plain. The order of the landscape formations creates the impression of concentric circles. From the climatic point of view, the Carpathian-Danubian area is under a triple influence, as manifest especially in the eastern regions of the continent, and less manifest, due to the distance and to the Carpathian chain and other mountains, in the direction of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. From the mountain belt there start, like a fan, countless rivers, which segment

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the relief forms, so that they facilitate transversal and longitudinal circulation. The harmony of the relief is completed by the symmetry of the distribution of vegetation in close connection with the types of soil. The variety of the cover is explained not only by the stratification of the relief, but also by a triple section of geo-botanical areas of the eastern, central and northern parts of the continent, each of them imposing its predomination at certain levels of vegetation. The disagreement in some parts of vegetal formations, forests included, reflects the flexibility of the phenomena that occur in the biosphere.17

So, there is conspicuous interaction among relief, climate, hydrologic network and the pedologic, vegetable and animal cover. All these elements of the geographic complex, in their turn, induce the spreading, density and mobility of the population, as well as the latter’s material and spiritual creations.

The individuality and the homogeneity of the Romanian geographic landscape do not presume a separation of its components from the rest of the European territory. On the contrary, all these constituents systematically gather in more extensive units of the continental landscape, without reproducing, as a whole, the environment composed of relief, climate structure, pedologic and hydrologic ones, etc. of other parts of Europe, but only fragments of them. In this way, the south-eastern Carpathians form only a part of the Alpine-Carpathian-Balkan chain that branches out over a large area of the central and south-eastern Europe. The Moldavian Plateau is continued towards the north east by the Volhyno-Podolian Plateau and the Dnieper Plateau, and the Bugeac and the Romanian Plain represent the western end of the Eurasian steppes. The interference of environmental entities—both inanimate and living—from other parts of the Earth, has left conspicuous marks in the Carpathian-Danubian area.

As part of the Carpathian-Danubian area, Moldavia shares the main characteristics of the whole to which it belongs organically. Moldavia, the region of our focus, has the same complexity, unity and variety shown by the relief configuration itself, ordered in levels that descend, without discordant deviations, from west to east, from the Carpathian summits to the vast Lower Danubian plains and the Pontic shores. The altitude range of the vegetation, the structure of the soils and the atmospheric phenomena—primarily the climate differentiations—closely

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17 See footnote 14.
follow the outline of the relief. The main co-ordinates of the geographic medium are, to the largest extent, similar to those of the north-Danubian regions in the neighbourhood.

At the beginning of the climatic subsystem in the southern part of the east-Carpathian area there has been conjugated action of the same factors that shaped the characteristic features of the Romanian climate too: cosmic factors (solar radiation), dynamic factors (atmospheric circulation) and the geographic ones (environment). The general atmospheric evolution in the Carpathian-Danubian regions gave rise to some important differentiations in temperature between the seasons, and to non-periodical variations too, mainly mediated by the Azores and Siberian anticyclones, as well as by the Iceland and Mediterranean Cyclones. By lying in a fully temperate zone, at the junction of some contrastive influences, Moldavia must be included in the category of territories with moderate continental climate, having, at the same time, transitory forms towards an extreme continental climate. Unlike other Romanian regions, Moldavia is not protected by the Carpathians against harsher weather coming from polar regions, or against an excessive continental climate characterized by hot and arid winds in summer, and cold and dry ones in winter. At the same time, the summits of the Carpathians often act as a filter in front of the warm Mediterranean masses of air, or those of the western Atlantic. Without having an important impact upon the climate, the Black Sea acts as a thermal reducer along the strip of the seaside. On its whole, the territory of Moldavia lies within an area with relatively low precipitations, 69 percent of the years being droughty between 1881 and 1961. Nor is the pluviometric compensation regular and immediate.

As the investigations of the last decades have proven, the climate of Europe witnessed certain fluctuations at the end of the first millennium and the beginning of the second one. In the steppes of the southern part

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of Eastern Europe, a long moist period was interrupted by dry climate in the ninth-tenth centuries. At the same time the level of the Caspian Sea and of some rivers and lakes of the Mediterranean basin rose considerably, bringing about flooding. Also, in the Europe north of the Alps there was a period of moderate winters between 1150 and 1330, interrupted by cold periods in the middle of the twelfth century and the beginning of the following two. From 1240 to 1400, winter precipitations increased in comparison with the previous period. In contrast, the west European summers between 1200 and 1300 were generally dry, unlike the previous and the following periods; they were preceded by warm springs until the fourteenth century, when an evident cooling took place. One can suppose that the evolution of the climate in Carpathian-Danubian space had, mainly, the same features, but there is no certainty in this respect, because of the lack of concrete data.

The entire hydrologic network of Moldavia belongs to the Black Sea basin. With the exception of some small rivers that are tributary to the maritime and Danubian lakes, most water courses run into three main rivers, the Siret, the Prut and the Dniester; the first two flow into the Danube, and the last one into the Black Sea.

The Moldavian flora and fauna structures—evidently influenced by the relief and by the pedologic-climatic conditions—are characterized by variety and regional differentiations. Among the planetary spheres, the one most obviously affected by anthropic modifications was the biosphere, which has undergone substantial changes since the Middle Ages. In the agricultural and animal-breeding activities that developed

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within the Carpathian-Dniester area, especially in the last two or three centuries, the initial flora and fauna have suffered great transformations. In the place of the cultivated and wild original fund, numerous cereals, technical and leguminous plants of American and Asian origins were introduced (maize, rice, sunflower, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplants, tobacco, etc), which now occupy vast areas.

Due to the special place of forests in the history of the Romanians, one must take a closer look at some aspects of this feature. In accordance with the specialists’ estimations, forests must have covered about 60 to 70 percent of the territory of ancient Dacia (Fig. 1B). There are many historical references from which the large surface area of forests in the whole of Moldavia can be deduced, up until close to the modern period, an exception being only its southern extremity. The map representations of Moldavia in the eighteenth century, including the ones published by Dimitrie Cantemir, Hora von Otzellowitz and Friedrich Wilhelm von Bawr, also indicate large forested areas, especially in the northern, western and central regions. The everglades of the main rivers were also dominated by the arborescent vegetation, which was meant to minimize the effects of high floods. The road along the Bârlad Valley, between the cities of Bârlad and Vaslui, crossed

23 M. David, Consideraţiuni geopolitice asupra statului român (offprint from Învăţătorul român contemporan şi destinul naşului nostru) (Iaşi, 1939), pp. 48–49 and fig. 2; E. Pop, Pădurile şi destulul nostru naţional (offprint from Buletinul Comisiunii Monumentelor Naturii 9 [1941], nos. 1–4) (Bucharest, 1942), pp. 18–20; Tufescu, România, p. 234; C. C. Giurescu, Istoria pădurii româneşti din cele mai vechi timpuri şi pâine astăzi, 2nd ed. (Bucharest, 1976), p. 11.


beech forests.\textsuperscript{28} North of Vaslui the road continued, crossing vast and thick forests, through the village of Scânteia towards the city of Iaşi.\textsuperscript{29} At the same time, there also are reports about forests along the Prut,\textsuperscript{30} as well as on those along the road between Roman and Focşani, along the Siret Valley.\textsuperscript{31}

Until the beginning of the modern period, deforestations were not extensive, although there were not restrictions in that respect. Forests represented communal ownership, but the members of rural communities could extend their farming land to the detriment of the forests, which was usually done by slash-and-burn. Beginning especially with the eighteenth century, Moldavia’s forested areas were subject to vast and irrational deforestation, both during the time of the Turkish trade monopoly imposed on the Romanian Principalities, and after its abolition in 1829, despite some restrictive laws regarding the revaluation of the forestry fund. Still more irresponsible were the actions of the Tsarist administration in the spoliation of the forests in the province of Bessarabia (Basarabia) between 1812 and 1917, when that territory was annexed to Russia.

Romania’s forestry fund in 1980 represented 26.6 percent of the total surface of the country (in comparison with the 41.4 percent farming land and 18.8 percent pastures and hayfields).\textsuperscript{32} The Romanian mountain ranges are lined by hills. Whereas the Moldavian counties with mountainous and subalpine regions have a high percentage of forests (Suceava—51.7 percent; Neamţ—44.3 percent; Bacău—40.1 percent; Vrancea—37.4 percent), in the hilly counties and plain areas, that percentage is much lower (Iaşi—16.2 percent; Vaslui—12.9 percent; Botoşani—11 percent; Galaţi—7.8 percent).\textsuperscript{33} The regions most affected

\textsuperscript{28} Călători, V, p. 487 (R. Bargrave); VII, p. 356 (Solia lui I. Gninski); R. G. Boscovich, Giornale di un viaggio da Constantinopoli in Polonia (Bassano, 1784), pp. 105–108.

\textsuperscript{29} Călători, V, pp. 117 (Solia lui Krasinski), 155 (Solia lui W. Miaskowski), 488 (R. Bargrave); VI, pp. 30 (Paul de Alep), 732 (Evlia Çelebi); VII, p. 356 (Solia lui I. Gninski); VIII, p. 189 (Leontie); Boscovich, Giornale, pp. 112, 114; Bezviconi, Călători ruşii, p. 139; D’Hauterive, Journal inédit d’un voyage de Constantinople à Jassi, capitale de la Moldavie dans l’hiver de 1785, ed. A. Ubicini, in idem, Memoriu asupra vechii și actualei stări a Moldovei prezentat lui Alexandru Vodă Ipsilante, domnul Moldovei, la 1787 (Bucharest, 1902), pp. 327–328; N. Iorga, Istoria românilor prin călătorii, ed. A. Angelescu (Bucharest, 1981), p. 360.

\textsuperscript{30} Călători, VII, pp. 288–289 (Ph. le Masson du Pont).

\textsuperscript{31} Călători, VI, pp. 156–157 (Paul de Alep). See also Cantemir, DM, pp. 64–65.

\textsuperscript{32} Enciclopedia geografică a României, ed. G. Posea (Bucharest, 1982), p. 146.

\textsuperscript{33} Pădurile României, ed. C. Chiriţă (Bucharest, 1981), pp. 228–230.
by irrational deforestation were the hilly ones, where forests were cleared to make room for farmland, pastures, orchards and vineyards. On the Tutova Hills, for example, the surface area covered by forests rapidly decreased from 47.37 percent in 1832 to 21.9 percent in 1893. After 1900, deforestation slowed down, so that the forested area still covered 18.8 percent of the region in 1970.34

In 1978, afforested areas covered only 278,400 ha of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (the present Republic of Moldova, partially corresponding with the old territory of Bessarabia). That surface represents only 8.2 percent of the republic’s territory,35 and it covers a strip of land on the left of the Dniester, without including the Bugeac (almost totally forestless), and the Hotin region. In 1896 Bessarabia had 276,581 ha of forest, which decreased to 249,356 ha in 1919, a surface of 92,258 ha being deforested between 1873 and 1919 alone. In the southern half of Bessarabia, corresponding to the former counties Chișinău, Tighina, Cetatea Albă, Ismail and Cahul, there was a surface of 108,124 ha in 1919, out of which more than a half was in the Chișinău (Lăpușna) county.36 From 1850 to 1901 the forested area was reduced by 59 percent, due to irrational deforestation ordered by Russian governors.37 After World War I, when Bessarabia was united with Romania, the regression of the forested area was much slower: in 1926 forests covered 235,200 ha, that is 5.4 percent of the whole province–44,422 km2–and in 1933 it amounted to 233,095 ha.38 Bessarabia’s southern steppe regions were almost totally devoid of forests; in 1927 they hardly occupied 1 percent of all the territory of the Cetatea Albă and Ismail counties, whereas in the Cahul and Tighina counties they were of about 2 percent and 3 percent, respectively.39

The above-mentioned data indicate that, in the past, the forested area was much larger and that the mentioned evaluations regarding its size are not exaggerated.

36 C. Filipescu and E. N. Giurgea, Basarabia. Considerații generale agricole, economice și statistice (Chișinău, 1919), pp. 117–120.
37 N. K. Mogilianskii, Материалы для географии и статистики Бессарабии (Kishinev, 1913), p. 118.
38 Бессарабия. Военно-географический справочник (Moscow, 1940), p. 109.
39 D. A. Sburlan, I. C. Demetrescu, and At. Haralamb, Pădurea și omul (Bucharest, 1942), p. 87.
The forest, besides its economic significance (as a cardinal constituent of the ecosystem, and as a generator of the favourable facilities) meant an extremely efficient refuge in front of the numerous invasions of the peoples in the neighbourhood. Finding shelter in the forests became a frequent way of defence, beginning especially with the second half of the sixteenth century, at the time of the military weakening of the Moldavian Principality, marked by the Ottoman demand that the country’s fortresses be demolished.

In maintaining the continuity of the Romanised population in the Carpathian-Danubian area during the troubled period of the migrations, forests was also came to play an important role. It is significant that some generic terms in Romanian regarding the forest are of Thraco-Dacian origin and that many names of trees and of the constituent parts of a tree are inherited from the Latin. The earlier historiography had given credit to the idea of the inhabitants’ refuge in the higher Carpathian regions during the migrations, which seems to be less probable as long as the subsistence possibilities offered by mountains are relatively limited, and the practice of agriculture becomes,


partially, ineffective. In exchange, the capacity of the forests in the hill and plain regions to provide food sources, as well as protection, is much higher. The old concept of “refuge in the mountains” should be replaced by “refuge in the forest.”

Moldavia’s forests were also used in the Middle Ages as strategic positions to face enemies superior in number and endowment.

In Moldavia’s southern regions, the more clearly outlined geographic elements are placed at the extremities of these regions: the Carpathian arch in the west, and the Danube Delta and the Black Sea coast in the south and the south-east.

In Simion Mehedinți’s opinion, the destiny of the Romanians is as inseparable from the Carpathian citadel as that of the Egyptians from the Nile Valley, or that of the Italians from their Mediterranean Peninsula. The Carpathians—“the backbone” of the Romanian territory—represented in the great geographer’s conception “the most advanced citadel of Europe in front of the Ponto-Caspian steppe,” because, indeed, from the Urals towards the west, along 2,500 km, no more prominent form of relief is to be found.

The east-Carpathian branch consists of three parallel strips, oriented north-west—south-east. The central part is represented by a crystalline-Mesozoic strip, with the highest altitude in the eastern Carpathians,

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44 For details on the names, relief, climate, hydrographic system, flora and fauna of southern Moldavia, see V. Spinei, Realități etnice și politice în Moldova Meridională în secolele X–XIII. Români și turanci (Iași, 1985), pp. 20–42.

45 Mehedinți, Le pays (see above, n. 14), pp. 5–6.
which marks the borderline separating Moldavian territories from Transylvanian ones.

The depressions and the river valleys occupy considerable surfaces within the Carpathian landscape, and they count among its specific forms. Their importance lies in the fact that, due to more favourable conditions than those in the mountains, they provide facilities for human habitation, while being, at the same time, lines of communication. The depressions usually shelter the so-called *curături* (“clearings”), created by deforestations meant to create pasture or tilled land, especially when, because of the pressures of incoming migrants, the inhabitants were forced to retreat from the plain regions.46

In spite of the fact that the eastern Carpathians are of average height, to cross them means to face difficulties, because they do not have easily accessible passes; no rivers flow through them crosswise, the way the Olt crosses the southern Carpathians at Turnu Roșu, for example. The links between the slopes of the Carpathians are also difficult due to the fact that the mountains are ordered in parallel ranges and are covered to their summits with thick forests.47 Some roads that cross the eastern Carpathians now were but simple paths a few centuries ago. But the above-mentioned hardships were not an obstacle in establishing connections between Moldavia and Transylvania. On the contrary, such connections were uninterrupted through the ages. As early as the Neolithic Age, on both sides of the mountains, the same archaeological cultures developed for centuries, which is an indication of ethnic-cultural unity. In this way, the bearers of the Criș culture and of the Linear Pottery culture of the Early Neolithic, those of the Cucuteni-Tripolye culture of the Late Neolithic, and those of the Noua culture of the Late Bronze Age were spread both in Moldavia and in Transylvania. Between the Chalcolithic and the Hallstatt period, numerous kinds of tools, weapons and jewels of copper, bronze, gold and iron, made in intra-Carpathian centres of production, entered Moldavia by intertribal exchanges by way of mountain passes. A remarkable flourishing, as well as a unity, is manifest in the Daco-Getic civilization of the inner- and outer-Carpathian areas.48

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48 *Ist. Rom.*, I, passim; H. Daicoviciu, *Daci* (Bucharest, 1965); D. Berciu, *Zorile istoriei în Carpați și la Dunăre* (Bucharest, 1966); S. Morintz, *Contribuții arheologice la istoria tracilor*
After the Roman conquest, between the intra-mountainous territories of the province Dacia and the part of the province Moesia Inferior covering the south of Moldavia and the whole of Dobrudja, permanent links were established, especially through the Oituz Pass. The road starting from the Roman camp and the castellum of Galați-Barboși—extending eastward up to Tiras, and towards the south up to the west-Pontic fortresses—followed the Siret Valley up to present-day Poiana, then the Trotuș Valley and the Oituz Valley up to what is now Brețcu, the Transylvanian extremity of the Oituz Pass. Though there are signs of the use of that road before that—by the Dacians themselves, and by the Greek merchants—its military-strategic importance considerably increased during the time of the Roman rule. The relations between the two sides of the eastern Carpathians inhabited by Daco-Roman population were maintained throughout the period of the migrations until the formation of the Romanian people was complete. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, an Armenian scholar keenly pointed out the importance of the mountains and the paths for the Romanians: “For the inhabitants of Wallachia and Moldavia, the Carpathians were good refuge during the wars, because here and there, the mountains as a whole, are inaccessible, having passes in very few places, known only by those familiar with the area”.

Among the trans-Carpathian passes that link southern Moldavia and Transylvania, larger and more accessible was the one along the Oituz Valley, known in the Middle Ages under the name of “the lower road”—as opposed to “the upper road of Suceava”—or as “the Brașov

52 Cronica lui Macarie, in Cronicile slavo-române (see above, n. 43), pp. 82, 96.
The pass was an important trade road, as well as a strategic one; it was through it that armies such as those of Matthias I Corvinus, Petru Rareș, Mihai Viteazul (Michael the Brave) and of other voivodes and commanders passed. Generally, the travellers and the medieval chronicles qualify the Oituz Pass as difficult. Georg Reicherstorffer wrote, in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, that it is “a very difficult road, stony and so narrow that only one cart can hardly advance along it”, the information was confirmed by his contemporary, Anton Verancsics, who wrote that the pass was “full of dangers,” with “very steep slopes covered with very thick and large forests”. In the same way the difficulties of crossing the Oituz Pass are described in other accounts of the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries. The heavy use of the road necessitated maintenance, especially the removal of broken rocks and of fallen tree trunks.

Besides the road axis of the Oituz, there were numerous other roads that penetrated the eastern Carpathians, but they were much less favourable. In the first half of the second millennium, it is probable that those roads of southern Moldavia were but simple paths that could not be used by carts. One could go on foot or on horseback, and shepherds could also move their sheep to the alpine pastures. South of the Bistrița (a river which runs out of the mountains, and which, together with its tributaries, constituted an important means of communication with
northern Transylvania), there were more roads and lower mountainous regions covered with pastures. Along the Bicaz no one could cross because of the steep narrow pass, so roundabout paths were used instead. Of much more importance was the road through the Ghimeș Pass that connected the Trotuș Valley and the Olt Valley, between the depressions of Dârmașani and Ciuc. In the middle of the seventeenth century the Ghimeș Pass, also called “the pass of the Szeklers,” could be crossed on horseback, despite its narrowness. From the following century we have some map representations of that pass as well as of the Oituz one. The broad valley of the Trotuș favoured the trade between medieval Moldavia and the Szekler settlements, being also used as a point of entry into Transylvania for Tatar raiding parties from the Bugeac. In the Middle Ages, besides the main roads with Moldavian customs at Prisăcani, Bicaz, Comănești and Oituz, numerous paths and flat mountainous regions were also used, with no less than eight lateral paths being recorded in the Ghimeș region at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, in order to cross to Moldavia through Vrancea, the transhumant Transylvanian shepherds used three main roads. To those, a few minor ways of communication could be added. Undoubtedly, many of them had been used long before, for hundreds or even thousands of years. Some older roads and paths may have been given up as well, for various reasons, in favour of others that were subsequently opened.

Like other Carpathian regions, the eastern range has a large variety of terms (e.g., trecătoare [pass] or șea [saddle]) created by a population speaking Romanian. In the course of time, the importance of those passes rested not only in their role as a mediator of interethnic relations,

60 Călători, V, p. 602 (C. I. Hîlebrandt).
but also in the shelter they offered, as well as in facilitating the traffic of goods from one side of the Carpathian Mountains to the other. The data briefly presented above supports the assertion that the east-Carpathian branch has never separated the population on one side from that of the other side.

One level below the Carpathians towards the east is the subunit of relief known as sub-Carpathians. The term has been applied to a relatively compact area of higher, hilly country. Although its altitude is generally higher than that of common hills, the relief does not always mark it as distinct from lower hilly regions, the differences being visible mainly in the petrographic structure.

Neighbouring the sub-Carpathians to the east, the Moldavian Plateau is the largest relief unit of the entire Romanian Carpathian-Dniestrian territory. Despite that, its landscape is far from uniform, in regard to both the relief proper, and the bio-pedo-climatic register. In the Ukrainian territories, north-east of the Dniester, the Moldavian hilly forms come after the Volhyno-Podolian Plateau between the Dniester and the Bug, and after the Dnieper Plateau, between the Bug and the Dnieper.

The hydrographic systems of the Siret, the Prut and the Dniester drain almost the whole surface of the Moldavian Plateau. Their lengths are of 686 km, 967 km and 1,352 km, respectively, and the surface of the basins of 44,811 km², 28,396 km² and 72,100 km², respectively. As all the main tributaries of the Prut rise in the plateau and plain regions and are supplied by snow-thawing and incidental rains, the river’s average yearly discharge is of only 110 m³/s, being much more reduced than that of the Siret (230 m³/s), which is shorter but collects its main tributaries from the mountains. Their liquid flow values are big in spring and summer, and considerably diminishes in the other seasons. Although the solid flow recorded along the Prut in certain periods reaches high enough values, the drinkable qualities of that river’s water, often remarked upon in the past, seem not to be affected.

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65 V. Slastikhin, in Enciclopedia sovietică (see above, n. 35), pp. 30–32; Enciclopedia geografică (see above, n. 32), pp. 57 and 59; P. Găstescu, I. Zăvoianu, B. Driga, D. Ciupitu, I.-J. Drăgoi, “Waters,” in Romania. Space, Society (see above, n. 18), pp. 103–111.
The Dniester, which makes the border of Moldavia in the east, represents an outstanding, well individualized boundary. In ancient times its stream separated Dacia from Sarmatia, and in the Middle Ages and the modern period it separated the Romanians in Moldavia from the Golden Horde, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine and Russia, respectively. Its waters have cut its bed in the hard rock, and the steep rocky banks made the chronicler Miron Costin state that the Dniester “flows among naturally sculptured rocks, as if they were carved by man”. Upstream of Tighina (Bender) its medium width is about 200–300 m, varying in some portions between 100 m and 500 m, and its depth between 2 m and 20 m. Between Tighina and the sea the river bed narrows to 65–85 m, but the width grows along limited lengths up to almost 200 m. In several places there were more fords that would have been good for carts. Across one of those fords the famous surprise attack of the Huns against the positions of Athanaric’s Visigoths took place in 376.

The crossing of the Dniester becomes possible in winter when the river water freezes. The running of the Dniester’s water is not uniformly proportioned; in spring and in summer about 44.4 and 25.5 percent of the whole was recorded, and in autumn and in winter only 16.0 and 14.1 percent. The shallower parts of the course of the Dniester are obstacles for navigation, and the information before the eighteenth century is contradictory in regard to naval transport.
Some Greek authors, such as Pseudo-Scymnos\textsuperscript{73} and Strabo,\textsuperscript{74} as well as Georg Reicherstorff,\textsuperscript{75} Anton Verancsics (Antonio Verantio)\textsuperscript{76} and Dimitrie Cantemir,\textsuperscript{77} asserted that the Dniester—known as Tyras in antiquity—was a navigable river, which was contradicted by a French report in 1712\textsuperscript{78} and by other sources.\textsuperscript{79} In fact, the disagreement among these sources is due to the fact that in some cases the lower river that was navigable was taken into consideration, whereas the upper river was not navigable. The oldest known project of improving the Dniester navigation was ordered by the Polish crown; it dates from 1568, and was commissioned to a Florentine.\textsuperscript{80}

The river freeze, which usually lasts from December until February or March, affects the whole hydrologic network of Moldavia, the duration and the forms of manifestation alternating in accordance with the climate. In mild winters there may be no ice bridge or the ice is very thin for short periods of time, and only over limited surfaces. When there was an ice bridge, the rivers could be easily crossed on horseback or by sledge. Sometimes Moldavia’s enemies waited for the rivers to freeze in order to start their attacks.\textsuperscript{81} Besides rivers and underground waters, the plateau and hilly territories have numerous lakes and ponds. Their large number and the abundance of fish were seldom noticed in the documents of the Moldavian administration and in the notes of the foreign travellers of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries.\textsuperscript{82} The fate of


\textsuperscript{76} Cantemir, \textit{DM}, pp. 64–65.

\textsuperscript{77} Hurmuzaki, I, suppl. I, p. 424.

\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Călători}, VIII, p. 287 (M. Eneman).


\textsuperscript{80} Hurmuzaki, II, 3, pp. 1–2; \textit{Cronica Ghiculeților} (see above, n. 40), pp. 272–273.

\textsuperscript{81} Georgii a Reichersdorff, \textit{Transilvani, Chorographia Moldaviae} (see above, n. 55), p. 105.

\textsuperscript{82} Georgii a Reichersdorff, \textit{Transilvani, Chorographia Moldaviae}, p. 111; \textit{Călători}, I, pp. 192, 202 (G. Reicherstorffler); III, p. 181 (François de Pavie); V, p. 276 (P. Beke);
those water-bodies was also to correct, to a certain extent, the inconstant character of the liquid flow, by holding back the floodwater.

In the hilly areas there is alternation of forest and forest-steppe (Fig. 1B), within which central-European plants and trees intermix with east-European ones. The extension of tillage and deforestation substantially limited wild flora, a fact that partially accounts for the extension, during the last centuries, of steppe to the detriment of forest, against a background of slight aridity. Conversely, in some postglacial periods, forested areas tended to extend towards the steppe, whose area thus decreased.

On the lowest altimeter level of the Carpathian-Dniestrian relief there is a strip of plains, of variable width, north of the Danube and the Black Sea; this strip is bordered by the hills, the sub-Carpathians and the Lower Dniester. The south of Moldavia’s flat regions divide into two distinct parts: the Romanian Plain, between the sub-Carpathians and the Prut, and the Bugeac Plain, or the Bessarabian Plain (included in the North-West-Pontic Plain), between the Prut and the Dniester. The Moldavian strip of the Romanian Plain is a low area, easily flooded in places. Seen from the Danube everglades, which it dominates in height, the edges of the plain look like a plateau, even if they are lower than the right bank of the river.

The Bugeac Plain (as part of the North-West-Pontic Plain) reaches 200 m in altitude, going down towards the sea-coast; some geographers have considered it to be a plateau. Delimited towards the Cogălnic Platform by the alignment marked by the localities Văleni, Căușani and Purcari, the Bugeac looks like a region of broad hillocks with even ridges and north-to-south inclinations, crossed by parallel longitudinal valleys, wide and deep, at long distances from one other. Some of the wider valleys end in prolonged depressions that open in Danubian and maritime shores. In the seventeenth century, around Akkerman (Cetatea Albă), Evlia Çelebi noted vast sand dunes, which in the meantime have become stabilized and cultivated.

The lowest plain regions lie about the Danube Delta, a unique territory of the European landscape. The Delta begins at the bifurcation

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83 Călători, VI, p. 412.
of the Danube into the arms of Chilia and Tulcea, respectively, the latter being also known as Ceatalul Ismail (the term çatal meaning “bifurcation” in Turkish); it ends where the river waters flow into the sea. The Danube Delta represents a young unit of relief, which is still in the making, by the joint action of river and sea, plus the contributions of wind and flora. That is why it is difficult to determine its real image at the beginning of the Middle Ages, to say nothing about earlier times. It has been estimated that the Danube yearly removes 67.5 million tons of solid materials, which are deposited along the banks or poured into the sea, so that the land advances by a few meters every year, especially on the Chilia arm. The vast spring flows, due to which only some higher fluvial, maritime or continental banks remain out of water, make permanent habitation in the Delta difficult. In spite of this, the endless possibilities of fishing and of hunting different species of birds, as well as the good facilities for sheep to spend the winter, were factors that attracted man to the Danube Delta.

In the south, along ca. 160 km of Moldavia’s border is the most important fluvial thoroughfare of Europe, the Danube, which dominates the whole Romanian hydrologic network and, at the same time, absorbs it almost entirely. From the junction with the Siret up to the Delta, the Danube is, on an average, 500–600 m wide and 6–7.5 m deep, on short distances being 25–34 m deep. The width of the Chilia arm varies between 220 and 500 m. Navigation was possible even for big crafts along its whole lower course, so that the river waters were steadily crossed by ships of fishermen or of merchants, as well as by military fleets. Dangerous enough obstacles for navigation were the alluvial sand banks deposited at the river mouths, where ships of less skilful sailors and of those who did not know the places often got stranded. Such difficulties were mentioned even by Polybius and by Strabo.

84 Ibidem, p. 283 (Paul de Alep).
87 The Geography of Strabo, III, pp. 216–219. When Ammianus Marcellinus, I (see above, n. 71), p. 269, referred to the rivers flowing into Pontus Euxinus making sand banks, he also took into account the Danube.
as well as by various travellers in the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{88} Herodotus\textsuperscript{89} and Pseudo-Scymnos\textsuperscript{90} information about the constancy of the Danube’s flow in all seasons was certainly inexact.

Downstream of Silistra—where its waters bifurcate and form the Ialomița marshes, and then, after joining again at Vadul Oii, the Brăila marshes—up to its flowing into the sea, the Danube is difficult to cross not only because of its width and of repeated high floods, but also as a result of the fact that the river divides into two or three arms lined by numerous lakes, backwaters and swamps. Along its course, the everglades are rich vegetation consisting of willows, poplars, common reed and mace reed. The crossing of the Danube is easy in the cold winter months, a fact known to nomadic peoples of the steppes north of the Black Sea, who organized raids into the Balkan Peninsula. A majority (78 percent) of the analysed samples from the lower river, stretching over 100 years, indicate the formation of a thick ice-bed lasting for about 49 days.\textsuperscript{91} Even Aristotle and Claudius Aelianus knew that the Danube froze in the winter and that it could be crossed on horseback or by carts.\textsuperscript{92} The Byzantine historians narrated that during the war with the Pechenegs in the middle of the eleventh century, the Danube’s waters froze for 15 cubits.\textsuperscript{93}

Because of hard frost, navigation was interrupted in late autumn. We know, for example, that, in order not to be caught by the ice sheet, the Burgundian fleet under Walerand of Wavrin’s command, retreated towards Constantinople; they raised anchor near Nicopolis at the beginning of October 1445 and cast it in the Bosporus’ waters about a month later.\textsuperscript{94} In years with normal temperatures, ships could freely navigate later in the cold season. A notary document written at Chilia on October 18, 1360, showed the imminent departure of a

\textsuperscript{88} Călători, II, p. 526 (G. Mancinelli); P. P. Panaitescu, Călători poloni în Țăriile Române (Bucharest, 1950), p. 212.
\textsuperscript{90} Géographes grecs, I, Introduction générale. Ps.-Scymnos: Circuit, p. 136. See also Périple du Pont-Euxin d’un auteur inconnu (see above, n. 73), pp. 152–153.
\textsuperscript{91} Ujvári, Geografia, pp. 221–222.
\textsuperscript{92} FHDR, I, pp. 112–113 (Aristotel), 650–651 (Claudius Aelianus).
\textsuperscript{93} Skylitzes, p. 458; Kedrenos, II, p. 585.
Genoese ship from that town upstream to Vicina, from where it was to sail back to Pera.\textsuperscript{95}

In the other seasons the only good point for crossing between the Bugeac and the Dobrudja was near Isaccea (Tulcea county). According to Heroditus' information, Darius' attack against the Scythians appears to have taken place on a bridge where the Danube divides into its arms.\textsuperscript{96} That bridge must have been built near the place where Isaccea lies today. The distinct strategic character of the Dobrudjan locality is also suggested by the fact that the Romans built an important fortress there, Noviodunum, where the Danubian military fleet established its base, classis Flavia Moesica.\textsuperscript{97} In the same place, at Noviodunum, Valens ordered a floating bridge to be built, in order to lead his army against the Ostrogoths and Athanaric's Visigoths in 369.\textsuperscript{98} The fortress regained its importance after the incorporation of the first Bulgarian Tsardom within the Byzantine Empire and again during Mongol rule. By the close of the thirteenth century, Saqdia (Isaccea) was to become a residence for the powerful emir Nogai, and then, after his fall from power, for Tükāl Buga, the son of Toqtai Khan;\textsuperscript{99} it was from there that they could efficiently control the Golden Horde's lands on the Lower Danube. The Ottomans would also pay much attention to Isaccea. The sixteenth-century chronicler Mustafa Gelažade indicated it as the most propitious place for crossing to the north of the Lower Danube,\textsuperscript{100} a fact that was also confirmed by Kiatip Çelebi (1609–1657).\textsuperscript{101} The crossing of the Danube near Isaccea (also called Oblucița) by travellers, missionaries,
or armies, by common boats, floating bridges or even on ice, was often mentioned in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. Another place for crossing the Danube between Moldavia and Dobrudja, often used during the medieval period, especially after the building of the Ismail raia, was the crossing point near the port of Galați, which provided a link with the road to Măcin.

Information on the remarkable richness in fish of the Lower Danube, including the low prices at which sturgeon and other fishes could be bought, often appears in the notes of the travellers who went along the Moldavian bank of the river in sixteenth-eighteenth centuries.

The whole plain between the Prut and the Dniester is divided by a range of lakes with two distinct groups: the Danubian lakes and the

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102 Hurmuzaki, II, 4, pp. 150, 152; Cronici turcești, I, pp. 225 (Nasuh Matrakci), 254 (Rustem-Pașa), 264, 271 (Mustafa Ğelalzade), 325 (Sa’adeddin Mehemd), 355 (Mustafa Ali), 523 (Ibrahim Pecevi), 556 (Kara-Celebi-Zade Abdul-Aziz efendi); Călători, I, p. 384 (Itinerar turc); II, p. 515 (J. Newberie); III, p. 354 (T. Korobeinikov); IV, p. 89 (J. v. d. Does); V, p. 411 (A. Suhano); VI, pp. 283 (Paul de Alep), 489 (Evlia Celebi); VII, pp. 249, 481 (Secre-tarul de la Croix), 359, 364 (Solia lui I. Gninski), 517 (G. Levasseur de Beauplan); VIII, pp. 410 (Frederic-Ernest de Fabric); 516, 525 (Aubry de la Motraye), 543 (J. Jeffries), 639 (C. E. Rönne); Iorga, Acte și fragmente, I (see above, n. 80), p. 93; Bezviconi, Călători ruși (see above, n. 24), p. 63; Nicolae Costin, Letopisele Țării Moldovei (see above, n. 40), p. 337; Acsinti Uricariul, A doua domnie (see above, n. 54), p. 125; Muste (attributed to), Letopisele Țării Moldovei și o samă de cuvinte (see above, n. 40), pp. 214 and 220; Cronica Ghicleștilor (see above, n. 40), pp. 80–81 and 382–385; D. Cantemir, Via lui Constantin Cantemir zis cel Bătrân, domnul Moldovei (Bucharest, 1960), p. 43; Pseudo-Enache Kogălniceanu, Ioan Canta, Cronici (see above, n. 40), pp. 5 and 137.

103 Călători, IV, pp. 347 (Simeon Dibr Lehați), 359–360, 365 (T. Alberti); VI, p. 24 (Paul de Alep); VIII, pp. 183 (Descrierea anonimă a soliei lui Rafael Leszczynski), 234 (J. Păpa); 240 (M. Bay and G. Păp); 328 (E. H. Schneider von Weismantel), 586 (S. Chomotowski), 596–597 (F. Gościacki); Panaitescu, Călători poloni (see above, n. 88), pp. 96, 97, 107, 108, 118, 119, 130, 174, 212, 221, 230; Bezviconi, Călători ruși, p. 62; Cantemir, DM, pp. 170–171; idem, Via lui Constantin Cantemir, pp. 20, 21, 30, 39; Acsinti Uricariul, A doua domnie, p. 130; Muste (attributed to), Letopisele Țării Moldovei, p. 11; I. Neculce, Opere. Letopisele Țării Moldovei și o samă de cuvinte, pp. 229, 307, 439, 494, and 855; Cronica Ghicleștilor, pp. 546–547, 608–609; Pseudo-Enache Kogălniceanu, Ioan Canta, Cronici (see above, n. 40), pp. 89–91.

104 Călători, II, pp. 516 (J. Newberie), 524 (G. Mancinelli); III, pp. 179 (François de Pavie), 368, 682 (Al. Comule); IV, pp. 87 (J. v. d. Does), 560 (Th. Alberti); V, pp. 83 (N. Barsă), 226 (P. B. Bakšić), 486 (R. Bargrave); VI, pp. 284–285 (Paul de Alep); VII, p. 525 (J.-B. Tavernier); VIII, pp. 190–191 (Leontie), 596 (F. Gościacki); Bezviconi, Călători ruși, p. 73; Panaitescu, Călători poloni, p. 139; Giurescu, Istoria pescuitului (see above, n. 82), pp. 25–29 and 87–91; P. Cernovodeanu, “Țările române în vizionarea călătorilor englezi (a doua jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea și primele decenii ale celui de-al XVIII-lea),” SMIM 6 (1973), p. 116.
maritime ones. The former have great fishing possibilities, in contrast with the latter ones, poor in fish, whose economic value is partially compensated for by the possibilities of salt production. The salt sediment obtained by closing the link with the sea can become thick enough; in only two years (1835 and 1836) 120 tons of salt were extracted at Alibei and Şagan. The profitability of such operations cannot be achieved without some appropriate arrangement. Strabo knew only two lakes between the Istros and the Tyras, that is between the Danube and the Dniester, and he mentioned that only one of them was linked to the sea and had harbour facilities. From his information, we may suppose that the Greek geographer took into account the Sasic bank-lagoon group and the one consisting of the Şagan, Alibei and Burnas lakes with their extensions, and not only the Sasic and Alibei lakes. By the formation of the offshore bars, maybe as far back as in antiquity, the lakes had separated from the sea and lost their importance for navigation, which explains why the Italian sea maps of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries totally ignore them, or simply show them schematically and arbitrarily. The only important bank for navigators was that of the Dniester, which, unfortunately, usually freezes from December until March and, evidently, becomes unserviceable.

Ligneous vegetation is rare in the plain, and it consists especially of shrubs. Owing to the lack of forests, and consequently of firewood, earlier inhabitants had to burn dry dung-and-straw bricks (tizie). Because of reduced precipitations, high temperatures in summer, and

106 The Geography of Strabo (see above, n. 74), III, pp. 218–219.
109 Santarem, Atlas, composé de mapppemondes, de portulans, et de cartes hydrographiques et historiques, depuis le Ve jusqu’au XVIIe siècle, pour la plupart inédites, devant servir de preuves à l’histoire de la cosmographie et de la cartographie pendant le Moyen Age et a celle des progres de la geographie (Paris, 1842–53); A. E. Nordenskiöld, Facsimile-Atlas to the Early History of Cartography (Stockholm, 1889); idem, Periplus, an Essay on the Early History of Charts and Sailing-Directions (New York, 1897); R. Almagià, Planisferi, carte nautiche e affini dal secolo XIV al XVII esistenti nella Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (= Monumenta cartographica Vaticana, I) (Vatican, 1944), passim.
endemic draughts, the great evaporation, and the mass of dry air, plants lack water, and that produces natural drying of a part of the vegetation and can imperil the crops during warm seasons.

Great calamities could bring about the invasion of migratory locusts (*Pachytilus migratorius*), whose main north-Danubian multiplying grounds lie along the Delta banks and in the Mășcăni-Cârja area of the Fâlcuș hills and plain. Old sources often mention the devastations caused by these locusts to crops and pastures. One of Moldavia’s voivodes, Ștefan Lăcătă (1538–1540), acquired a nickname (‘‘Locust’’) recalling the detested insects, which had devastated the country during his rule. Although the earliest information about their devastations east of the Carpathians is from the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries, it does not mean that they had not also occurred previously. Considering the direction of the penetration of those insects (*ex partibus Orientis*) into Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, Austria, and Lombardy in 1338, and in Poland in 1343, it can be admitted that the devastations also affected the Romanian territory. A similar assumption can also be made regarding the great invasion of the migratory locusts in the year 700 of the Armenian era (= 1251), on which contemporary

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113 Gr. Ureche, *Letopisul Țării Moldovei* (see above, n. 43), p. 149.


115 Martini Cromeri *De origine et rebus gestis Polonorum libri XXX* (Basileae, 1554), p. 303.
sources specify that they destroyed everything “east and west” of the Caucasian regions.116

From certain points of view, the great rivers everglades present differences due to the regions they cross. Some centuries ago, the dense ligneous vegetation in the meadows—especially in the Danubian one—provided a protection almost as efficient as that of the forests of the hills and mountains,117 the everglades being capable of providing easily obtainable food. Among the marshes and the forests along the Danube, shelter had been found by, among others, the Goths attacked by Valens’ armies,118 and later by the Pechenegs chased by the Uzes.119 The forests on the right bank of the Danube, in their turn, were used as shelter by the Bulgarians threatened by Byzantine attacks.120

In the Middle Ages the general aspect of the plain area of southern Moldavia remained, to the greatest extent, the same as in antiquity. Not accidentally did Strabo call the territory between Pontus Euxinus, Istros and Tyras “the desert (wasteland) of the Getae” (ἡ τῶν Γετων ἑρημία); he specified that it was totally flat and poor in waters.121 The first who accurately localized the territory described by the Greek geographer was Anton Verancsics (1504–1543), also known as Verantio, who showed that only shepherds and their sheep crossed that land, and that there were few wells to water those animals.122 A correct identification of the ancient Solitudo Getarum as Tartarie d’Akerman, the land between Ismail

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116 Grigor of Akanc’, History of the Nation of the Archers (the Mongols), eds. R. P. Blake and R. N. Frye, Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 12 (1948), no. 2, pp. 323 and 325. See also Kiracos de Gantzac (Histoire d’Arménie, in Deux historiens arméniens, trans. [M.-F] Brosset, I [St. Petersburg, 1870], pp. 173–174), who describes a catastrophic invasion of locusts in Armenia in 701 (= 1252), which also spread during the following year to Asia Minor, Persia, Mesopotamia, etc.


119 Skylitzes, p. 455; Kedrenos, II, p. 582.


121 The Geography of Strabo, III (see above, n. 74), pp. 216–217. V. Pârvan, Getica. O protoistorie a Daciei, ed. R. Florescu (Bucharest, 1982), p. 45, preferred to translate the phrase as the “steppe of the Getae”.

122 Ant[onius] Verantius, De situ Transylvaniae, Moldaviae (see above, n. 74), p. 93. About the collecting of the water for very deep wells in Bassarabia (= Bugeac), see also Cantemir, DM, pp. 82–83.
and Očakov, dominated by “the Tatars from Akerman (Cetatea Albă),” belongs to Aubry de Montraye (1674–1743). The French diplomat, who had reached the Bugeac in 1711, reported that in that “desert” he had not found more than two or three huts of the shepherds.

The well-known treaty of 1412 concluded at Lublau between the kings of Hungary and Poland mentions the “uninhabited” Moldavian plain near the sea. The formula “grans désers” used by Guillebert de Lannoy, who travelled to Moldavia in 1421, probably designated the same area, as well as the level country between the Dniester and Crimea. At the same time, a Polish source of 1523 mentioned “the deserts” between the Black Sea and Wallachia (= Moldavia in this case). An Italian Minorite, who crossed the area in February 1691, referred to Campi deserti in southern Moldavia. It is strange that he considered the Bugeac and Campi deserti as being two different geographical entities.

Many foreign travellers and geographers of the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries describe the Bugeac as a vast and waste plain, and more rarely as a “very rich” (abundantissimus) one. The term “desert” must not be interpreted as a wholly uninhabited place, but only as a steppe-like region, with few settlements and a low density of population.

The lowlands of southern Moldavia are directly opened to the vast Eurasian steppes, stretching over 4,000 km up to Central Asia. The Ural Mountains that separate two continents do not represent in fact a clear-cut geographic border. Only the Yenisei river precisely separates two geological-tectonically, morphologically and climatically distinct areas, since its lower course separates the steppe from the taiga. Though there is no full similarity between, on the one hand, the plain of East Europe and of Central Asia, and, on the other hand, the one north of

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123 Călători, VIII, pp. 514–515, 522.
126 Hurmuzaki, II, 3, p. 436.
127 Călători, VIII, p. 117.
128 V. A. Urechia (ed.), Codex Bandinus (see above, n. 24), pp. 42 and 202; Marco Bandini (see above, n. 24), pp. 106–107; Călători, II, p. 381 (A. M. Graziani); IV, p. 439 (G.-B. Malbi); VII, pp. 304 (Ph. le Masson du Pont), 516 (G. Levasseur de Beauplan); IX, p. 196 (J. Bell of Antermony).
129 Călători, II, p. 392 (Anonim ungur).
the Danube mouths, they do have numerous common characteristics in relief, climate, flora, and soil.131

The region north of the Black Sea was known in antiquity as “the Scythian desert,” and described as “a plain rich in pastures, without trees, watered with moderation”. 132 In the first centuries of the second millennium, that area was known as “the steppe of the Qipchaq/Cumans” (Desht-i Qipchaq).133 After that, formulae such as “the great field,” “the Tatar steppe”134 or “the wild plain” (Dikiie polia) 135 were also used. While travelling through “the vast deserts” north of the Black Sea in the middle of the thirteenth century, William of Rubruck found neither forests, nor mountains, nor stone, but the finest grass (nulla silea, nullus mons, nullus lapis, herba optima).136 In the subsequent century, the Armenian chronicler Hethum (Hayton) of Korykos noted that Comania—a name given at that time to the Golden Horde—, “one of the biggest kingdoms existing in the world,” was wholly flat and with no trees, being limited by Khwarazm and by a vast desert in the East.137

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131 V. V. Dokuchaev, Наши степи прежде и теперь (Moscow, 1953); L. S. Berg, Die geographischen Zonen der Sowjetunion, II (Leipzig, 1959), p. 2 ff.
132 FHDR, I, pp. 78–79 (Hipocrate).
One of the most suggestive descriptions of these regions belongs to the Arab traveller Ibn Battuta (1304–1377): “This wilderness is green and grassy with no trees, nor hills, high or low, nor narrow pass nor firewood. What they use for burning is animal dung (which they call *tazak*) and you can see even their men of rank gathering it up and putting it in the skirts of their robes. There is no means of travelling in this desert except in wagons”.138

One of his contemporaries, Hamd-Allah Mustawfi of Qazwin (Qazwini), who wrote in A.H. 740 (= 1340), revealed other features of Desht-i Qipchaq: “This is of the Sixth Clime, its plains bear excellent pasturage, [...] but there are here few houses or towns or villages. Most of the inhabitants are nomads of the plain. [...] Most of the lands here are swamps (Hāmūn) [...] The pasturage, however, being excellent, horses and cattle are numerous, and the population for the most part subsists on the produce thereof. The climate is cold, and their water comes from springs and wells”.139

The Bugeac is not represent the western limit of the Eurasian steppes, which actually continue further to the south-west. After they become narrower between the Prut and the Siret, there follows a plain drained by the Danube, stretching up to the junction of the Carpathian and Balkan ranges at the Danubian Iron Gates (*Portile de Fier*). The eastern part of that plain, the Bărăgan, has obvious steppe characteristics in temperature, precipitations, air mass motion, and vegetation.140 South of the Danube, the steppe climate and vegetation continue to the centre and the south of the Dobrudja. It was not by accident that the animal-breeding tribes in the north-Pontic regions were steadily attracted by the environment of the Dobrudjan Plateau, which closely resembles the native places of those pastoralists, so that the Greek and Roman authors used the name of Scythia Minor for today’s Dobrudja, in considering it an extension of the north-east territories.

The area between the heart of Asia and the Danube’s lower basin acted as a large passage for the movements of nomadic pastoralist

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horsemen. The direction of those movements was rather consistently from east to west, perhaps due to the fact that many Asian territories were semi-deserts, and they were more arid than those west of the Urals. The steppe’s climatic perturbations sometimes caused extreme damages to the herds of animals that made up the main subsistence of the nomads. Anomalies of the climatic factors account for some of the migrations from the steppe. Movements of peoples could also be motivated by the powerful tribes’ wish to plunder and conquer their neighbours, as well as by the retreat of those unable to face the attackers efficiently.

The waters of the Black Sea wash Moldavia’s shores between the mouths of the Danube and the Dniester, the distance between them being about one hundred kilometres. Between the Odessa Gulf and the Danube Delta, salinity is lower than in other parts of the Black Sea because of the great quantities of fresh water coming from the large rivers. The low salinity at the Danube’s mouth was remarked upon by ancient navigators, and Aristotle even wondered whether the white colour of the Pontus Euxinus was not due to the water of the large rivers flowing into it.

The climate of the neighbouring continental area greatly influences the maritime climate, so that the temperature of the superficial stratum of water varies from season to season, without preservation of caloric energy. As a result, in very cold years the sea water freezes near the shores, up to distances of hundreds of meters or even a few kilometres. Such phenomena are rare enough, and early sources mention them as singular too. As an exile at Tomis, Ovid noted that the sea waves were “frozen with frost.” According to Theophanes Confessor, in the winter of 763–764, because of the terrible frost, the Pontic shore became frozen as far as one hundred miles into the sea, and it reached 30 cubits in depth, from Mesembria (= Nesebăr), to the Danube’s mouths, the Danastris (= Dniester) and the Dnieper, all the way to Crimea. This

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141 FHDR, I, pp. 402–403 (Pliniu cel Bătrân); Ammianus Marcellinus, I (see above, n. 71), p. 269.
142 FHDR, I, pp. 112–113 (Aristotel).
information was also mentioned in the abridged chronicle of Nikephorus, patriarch of Constantinople.\textsuperscript{145} 

At sea, against the north-western shores, surface waters appear running from north to south, mainly caused by the air masses coming from the continent, and occasionally by the river waters. In its movement, part of the water flows through Bosporus to the Propontis (Marmara) and the Mediterranean. From Bosporus the running waters follow the line of the coast of Asia Minor, then they bifurcate eastwards and northwards. The existence of these cyclic streams was of major importance for navigation, the sailing along the flow-way being easier. In earlier times, in order to sail towards the Mediterranean Sea, the sailors at the Danube’s mouths would wait for favourable winds.\textsuperscript{146} The journeys by sea had the advantage of being much shorter than those by land. Thus, a tenth-century letter written in Hebrew at the Khazar court for Hasdai ibn Shaprut in Cordoba (the so-called Schechter text) specifies that a journey from Khazaria to Constantinople lasted nine days by ship and 28 days by land.\textsuperscript{147} Sailing in stormy weather was dangerous; storms, which were most frequent in winter, produced waves that exceeded seven meters in height. According to observations made near the Snakes’ Island (\textit{Insula Ţerphilor}), about 70 percent of the stormy winds blow from the north, that is, from the same direction as that of the hurricanes whose speed is over 28 m.p.s.\textsuperscript{148} The fame of a gloomy sea, with tumultuous winds and violent waves capable of causing shipwrecks, had reached the east Mediterranean Islamic world as well, at the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{149}

The bad weather of the cold season brought about temporary breaks in the navigation. The Spanish messenger at the court of Timur Lenk

\textsuperscript{145} Nikephoros \textit{Short History} (see above, n. 120), pp. 146–147.
\textsuperscript{146} Călători, VI, p. 284 (Paul de Alep); Panaitescu, \textit{Călători poloni} (see above, n. 88), p. 238.
(Tamerlane), Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, had to remain at Pera from 24 October 1403 until 20 March of the next year, when he managed to find a galiot to take him to Trebizond. As long as he stayed in the Genoese citadel near Constantinople, no seamen ventured north of Bosporus. But in November, Genoese and Venetian galiots coming from Caffa and Tana, respectively, dropped anchor at the Golden Horn.\textsuperscript{150} Because of the storms that had burst out before St Philip’s Eve (November 10), the Russian deacon and pilgrim Zosima, who went to the Holy Land in 1419, had to face great difficulties in trying to reach Constantinople from Cetatea Albă (Белград, Београд).\textsuperscript{151} Sometimes terrible storms started even earlier, in October, such as the one of 1323, which caught the Venetian, Genoese, Pisan and Greek merchants on the Black Sea (Mare Maggiore) and caused them great damage.\textsuperscript{152} Even on the more quiet area of the Mediterranean Sea, navigation might be interrupted in winters, with the exception of short local travels or of peculiar ones. Official interdictions against sailing (mare clausum)—for variable periods—were stipulated during the Roman Empire and afterwards, with the Byzantines, the Arabs, and other navigating peoples, but not with the Italian cities of the first centuries of the second millennium. Violations of such regulations, especially after the middle of that millennium (which witnessed gradual improvement in the quality of ships), often ended in catastrophic wrecks.\textsuperscript{153}

The sea coast between the mouths of the Dniester and the Danube is not sinuous, most of it having sand banks that separate the sea from the lakes of southern Bessarabia. The shallow sea and the lack of gulfs make that coast inadequate for great harbours.\textsuperscript{154} From that


\textsuperscript{151} Хождение инока Зосимы (see above, n. 134), p. 3; \textit{The Xemov of Zosima the Deacon}, in Majeska, \textit{Russian Travelers} (see above, n. 134), pp. 180–181.


point of view, the Dniester lagoon is somewhat better, even though the accumulation of alluvial deposits requires special upkeep. Even in antiquity, in the neighbourhood of the Dniester estuary, at Tyras, there developed an important Greek, and later a Roman harbour, which then enjoyed great prosperity under the Genoese, Moldavian and Ottoman rules as well.155

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The complex aggregate of geographic elements specific to the southern part of the east-Carpathian area could provide a favourable background for the life and activity of the human society. The generosity of the land, its fertility, the abundance of crops, the quality of the grazing grounds and the large number of cattle were mentioned by some early geographers, and by most foreign travellers who had the opportunity to cross Moldavia’s territory during the medieval period and at the beginning of modern times.156 Georg Reichestorffer, who knew Moldavia

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156 Georgii a Reichersdorff, Transilvani, Chorographia Moldaviae (see above, n. 55), pp. 99, 105, and 111; Călători, I, pp. 133 (G. M. Angiolello), 149 (M. Muriano), 192, 194, 202 (G. Reichestorffer), 465–466 (F. Mignanelli); II, pp. 406 (B. Paprocki), 631 (G. Ruggiero), 641 (B. de Vigenère); III, pp. 200 (Descrierea anonimă a Moldovei din 1587), 215 (I. C. Decsi de Baranya), 296, 680 (H. Cavendish), 368, 682 (A. Comuleo), 560 (G. F. Giordano), 637 (Ziarul expediției lui Žamojski în Moldova din anul 1595); IV, pp. 36 (B. Quirini), 383 (Ch. de Joppecourt), 439 (G.-B. Malbi), 569 (G. L. D’Anania), 586–587 (G. A. Maginî); V, pp. 81 (N. Barsi), 116 (Solia lui Krasinski), 223, 232 (P. B. Bakić), 275–276 (P. Beke); VI, p. 485 (Evlia Çelebi); VII, pp. 221 (G.-B. del Monte Santa Maria), 254–255 (Secretarul de la Croix), 296–297 (Ph. le Masson du Pont), 438 (Situația misionilor catolice din “provincia” Moldava), 511 (Anonim englez—1664), 521 (Relație anonimă olandeză—1687); VIII, pp. 188–189 (Leontie), 515 (Aubry de la Motraye); IX, pp. 388 (C. Dapontes), 400–402 (Ch.-C. de Peyssonnel); V. A. Urechia (ed.), Codex Bandinus (see above, n. 24), pp. 133–134, 309–310; Marco Bandini (see above, n. 24), pp. 368–373; Hurmuzaki, I, suppl. I, pp. 418, 422; Kurtze Beschreibung (see above, n. 66), pp. 13–14; M. Holban, “Pretinsele aventuri în Tara Românească ale unui pretins călător german din secolul XVIII,” in Izvoare străine pentru istoria românilor, ed. Șt. S. Goroaei (Români în istoria universală, III, 3) (Iași, 1988), p. 110; Boscovich, Giornale (see above, n. 28), pp. 113, 125. See also Cronica Ghiculeților (see above, n. 40), pp. 602–603; Cantemir, DM, pp. 108–109; M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca, “Economia
very well, made the following exaggerated statement: “This country
lacks nothing that man could make use of.”  

One century later, Peter Bogdan Bakšić, a bishop who travelled to the Romanian lands several
times, considered that Moldavia is “well proportioned and arranged.” and Philippe Avril was even more generous in epithets, in estimating
that Moldavia appeared to be “one of the most beautiful and pleasant
countries of Europe.”

Besides moderate and objective points of view, there have been some
in which the enthusiasm for the Moldavian landscape could not be
contained. For example, in 1594 Alessandro Comuleo wrote to cardinal
of San Giorgio that “there is no country more beautiful than this one
anywhere in the world” (non c’è paese in tutto il mondo piu bello d’essa).

Because of the authors’ aims, not all the evaluations made by him on
Moldavia’s riches and sceneries must be accepted at face value.

Taking such view into account, it is indisputable that medieval Molda-
via was known all over the continent, due to its remarkable agricultural
and animal-breeding capacities. From that standpoint, its southern half
was not provided in its entirety with the same resources. A very early
report indicated that the region near the mountains was “very unfruitful,
so that people eat millet bread there,” as the region was less adequate
for tilling. However, due to good grazing grounds, it was very favour-
able for animal breeding. Generally, it can be said that, because of its
roughness, the Carpathian mountainous area requires deep knowledge
of its specific natural phenomena, and great efforts are needed in order
to turn it to good account. Even today the demographic density within
the Carpathian area is significantly lower than that of the rest of the
Romanian territory. At the same time, because of the difficulties in
exploiting the level country, its population had also remained low until
modern times. 

 Under such circumstances, ever since ancient times

\[\text{agrară a Țării Românești și Moldovei descrisă de călători (seculele XV–XVII), } RÎs\]
\[21 (1968), no. 5, pp. 843–864.\]
\[Călători, I, p. 202.\]
\[Călători, V, p. 223.\]
\[Iorga, Istoria românilor prin călătorii (see above, n. 29), p. 272; Călători, VIII,\]
\[p. 104.\]
\[Călători, III, pp. 368, 682.\]
\[Călători, VII, p. 221 (G.-B. del Monte Santa Maria).\]
\[Emm. de Martonne, “Recherches sur la distribution géographique de la population\nen Valachie,” BSGR 23 (1902), no. 2, pp. 120–121, 128–129, and 139–141; S. Mehedinti,\n“Die rumänische Steppe. Eine anthropogeographische Skizze,” in Žu Friedrich Ratzels\nGedächtnis. Geplant als Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstage nun als Grabspende dargebracht (Leipzig,
the limits of the anthropic area were those of the territories we discuss, that is, the subalpine plateaus with severe climate, which were used and temporarily inhabited by shepherds and their sheep.

In regard to the fertility of the soil, and implicitly the possibilities of growing plants and breeding animals, the Carpathian-Dniestrian area has occupied a privileged position; but the same thing cannot be said in reference to its underground resources. Oil, natural gas and coal, found in the Carpathian depressions and in the sub-Carpathians, had no economic importance in ancient times; only salt was vital. By contrast, the east-Carpathian regions are, in general, poor in iron and non-ferrous ores. Nothing was known in the Middle Ages about the iron and manganese of northwestern Moldavia, which were first found in the late 1700s. The lack of iron and non-ferrous ores represented a real challenge, which explains why crafts in Moldavia depended upon raw materials from Transylvania and the neighbouring territories. Imports from those regions into Moldavia consisted either of ready made artifacts, or of raw materials necessary for the local manufacturing of similar artifacts.

Our observations refer to realities that developed in the time between the Neolithic and the period during which a unitary Romanian state came into being. One traditional view—according to which Moldavia’s mountains contained important gold and silver ores that the inhabitants would not exploit, lest they should rouse the Turks’ greediness—is totally untenable. The existence of such ores would have been welcomed, since they could ensure important exchange values.

For all the relative equilibrium of Moldavia’s climate, due to its position in the temperate zone, the occurrence of some anomalies was noted even in the past, before the disturbances brought about by the massive intervention of human activity. The natural phenomena causing material damage and loss of human life include droughts and


floods, as calamities against which people with rudimentary means could do almost nothing.

Various reports from the middle of the second millennium point out numerous climatic disturbances in the Carpathian-Danubian area. As already mentioned above, most dangerous were droughts and floods, to which severe frosts, hail storms, and earthquakes can added. Sometimes natural disturbances favoured invasions of insects (locusts, tree beetles), and of rodents (such as field mice). In their turn, all those factors could lead to loss of human lives and the destruction of crops, flocks, and dwellings, the usual results being famine, epidemics, pauperization, malnutrition, and emigration.164 The catastrophic consequences of the natural calamities were considerably greater when they were accompanied by wars. Such natural anomalies were also present in the space and the period we are dealing with, and they influenced all sectors of life.

The variety of the circumstances produced certain peculiarities in the spreading of human communities, as well as in their development, and such peculiarities did not remain the same through time. The inhabitants of the area, as well as different communities of intruders, took full advantage of the natural environment.

As its position remained strategically important over time, the southern half of the Carpathian-Dniestrian area was the stage for many important events. By virtue of its location at the western extremity of the Eurasian steppes, that territory was crossed by waves of nomadic peoples, who followed “the way of the sun” towards the Balkan Peninsula and the Lower-Danubian Plain. Also important was its access to the north-west coast of the Black Sea, to the most navigable great river of ancient and medieval Europe, as well as to the Danube Delta’ Black Sea. From another standpoint, Moldavia’s attachment to the Carpathian arch was destined to ensure its stability, a lasting stronghold for resistance to outside pressures and, at the same time, hidden channels of communication with other Romanian territories.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE CARPATHIAN-DNIESTER REGION AND OF THE NEIGHBOURING TERRITORIES

By being placed at the junction of the western extremity of the Eurasian steppes with the Lower Danube Plain, towards the northernmost limit of the Balkan Peninsula, southern Moldavia fell in the path of the great migrations. When they reached the Bugeac and the Bărăgan, the nomad peoples made their way either towards the Balkans, or along the Danube. On their way to the middle course of the great river, some of those peoples of eastern Europe avoided Moldavia, and they reached the Pannonian Plain through the Verecke Pass of the northern (Sylvanian, or Ukrainian) Carpathians. The direction of the nomad peoples’ advance was, without exception, from east to west, their return to the Black Sea steppes taking place only when their incursions failed.

During the first millennium, southern Moldavia was one of the European regions most affected by the movement of people. Ever since the first half of the seventh century, when the Danube ceased to be the northern frontier of the Roman (Byzantine) Empire, the territories on the left bank of the river were not any more among the political and diplomatic priorities of the Byzantine government in Constantinople. However, both before and after the Iconoclastic crisis, Byzantium remained concerned with the situation in the steppe lands north of the Black Sea and strove to maintain control of the Danube Delta, especially by means of the navy, as well as of skilful diplomacy aimed at manipulated the military potentials of the “northern barbarians.”

Tenth Century

By the end of the third quarter of the first millennium, a perceptible stagnation in the demographic dynamics of eastern Europe took place. This occurred due to the strengthening of the Khazar state north of the Caspian Sea, the Caucasus and the Black Sea. The Khazars were now a major power in eastern Europe. Their alliance with Byzantium,
consolidated during their confrontations with the Persians and the Arabs, was to remain stable until the end of the millennium, even if, temporarily, the interest of both in ruling Crimea also created discontinuities. The political circles on the Bosporus saw in Khazaria not only an ally against some common enemies, but also a barrier meant to stop the penetration of the nomad peoples towards the Byzantine boundaries. From the latter point of view, the Kaganate proved to be extremely efficient, by establishing a prolonged period of peace in the southern steppe lands of eastern Europe. At the same time, the Khazars effectively stopped the Arab advance into eastern Europe at the passes across the Caucasus Mountains, at about the same time Charles Martel was pushing the Arabs beyond the Pyrenees. Without those successes the balance between the Christian world and the Islamic one would overwhelmingly have weighed in the favour of the latter.

The infiltration of the Arab cultural influence in eastern Europe was but partially attenuated, and it materialized not only through the conversion of some communities to Islam, but also through getting some privileged positions in the caravan trade. Khazaria, a polity in which most inhabitants were Turanian pagans, was the target of missions from both the Caliphate and Byzantium. However, the confrontation between Christianity and Islamic did not lead to the conversion to either one of the two world religions, since the Khazar elites eventually chose to convert to Judaism.¹

The political supremacy of the Khazars extended westwards up to the Dnieper region. While some populations—including the Bulgars and the Alans—were under their direct rule, some Slav tribes—the Polianians, the Viatichi, the Severians, the Radimichi—had only to pay tribute. The archaeological correlate of the multi-ethnic and multi-confessional Khazar polity is the so-called Saltovo-Maiaki culture, which between the eighth and the tenth century spread within a vast territory between the Volga and Dnieper rivers, while displaying four regional variants perhaps reflecting ethno-cultural distinctions. Through the imposition of the Khazars’ political control over the steppes of eastern Europe the liberty of motion of the nomad communities was drastically restricted. At the same time, the Lower Volga, now occupied by the Kaghanate, became a true filter for other groups attempting to cross the river. Thus, by imposition of the Khazar political domination upon numerous populations, a period of stability and peace was established, a pax Chazarica as some historians have named it.

2 PVL, I, pp. 16, 18, 20, 47.


Due to these realities, north of the Black Sea and the Danube’s mouths there was a much more peaceful political climate. After the invasion of Asparukh’s Bulgars on the left of the Danube, no important invasions were recorded. The local population of the Carpathian-Danubian area fully profited from the pax Chazarica for almost two centuries. During the period of the evolution of the Dridu culture (eighth to eleventh centuries), the Lower Danube Plain area experienced a steady demographic growth, which distinguishes this period from both previous and subsequent centuries (Fig. 2). The increase of the population in the Bugeac and the Bărăgan was a natural consequence of the prevention of the trouble caused by migrations and raids. It seems that the same circumstances account, at least partially, for the shift of the Slav tribes to the Black Sea steppe lands.5

In the ninth century, the Khazar Khanate was confronted with new difficulties, both internal and external. Within the ethnical conglomerate subject to its authority there were centrifugal movements, such as the one caused by the Kabars. After repressing the Kabars’ rebellion, those of them who managed to escape joined the Hungarian tribes.6 Religious reasons—that is, the adoption of Judaism by the Khazar aristocracy—have been invoked as causes for the Khazar-Kabar divergence,7 and while we do not entirely reject that idea, it is not a very convincing explanation due to the confessional tolerance known to have been a dominant line of the Khanate’s policy. The separation of the Kabars from the Khazars and their joining the Hungarians did not probably take place before the middle of the ninth century.8 The break of the political balance in eastern Europe due to pax Chazarica represents, in our opinion, the result of two main factors, whose

5 Boba, Nomads, p. 39 with n. 1; V. V. Sedov, Славяне. Историко-археологическое исследование (Moscow, 2002), pp. 525–551.
6 DAI, I, pp. 174–175.
7 Dunlop, History, p. 203; Artamonov, История, p. 324.
simultaneous appearance, although non-corroborated, was facilitated by the internal convulsions in the Khazar tribal confederacy. On the one hand, the movements of the nomads from central Asia west of the Urals became more active, and, on the other hand, the Kievian Principality was established and grew stronger in the Middle Dnieper basin, by joint efforts of Varangians and Slavs. Both those moments directly affected the extra-Carpathian Romanian area too.

In the steppes north of the Caspian Sea, Khazaria had to confront the Pechenegs, whom the Khazars succeeded in defeating with the help of the Uzes in the late ninth century. An anonymous Persian geography of the tenth century mentions that, besides the “Turkish Pechenegs” (Boğanak-i-türk), there also was a branch of “Khazarian Pechenegs” (Boğanak-i-Hazar), the name indicating their acceptance of the Khazar sovereignty. The co-operation between the Khazars and the Uzes proved ephemeral, and shortly after the elimination of the Pecheneg danger their relationship became inimical. Oriental sources indicate that the battles against the Uzes weakened the strength of the Kaghanate and led to its fall. It is very likely that the Pechenegs had a certain role in that respect. During the second half of the tenth century, when Ibn Hauqal was writing and when the Rus’ struck heavy blows at the Kaghanate, the Pechenegs settled “through violence” between the Khazars’ territories and those of Byzantium, and they came to be perceived as allies of the Rus’. It is possible that, by approaching Kiev, the Pechenegs tried to counteract the effects of the military co-operation between the Khazars and the Uzes.

The impact of the the Varangians (as representatives of the great Viking expansion) on eastern Europe has specific traits on different regions, depending upon the social and political development, as well

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13 PVT, I, p. 47.
as the ethnic configurations in those areas. At the time the “people of the North” coming from Norway and Denmark were raiding the coasts of the British Isles, of northern Germany, France, and Spain, and Leif Eriksson was reaching the shores of North-America, five centuries before Christopher Columbus, the Vikings of Sweden (Varangians) took the opposite direction. A combination of piratical raids and commercial activities was a permanent practice with the Varangians, both on the route connecting the Baltic with the Black Sea and the one connecting the Baltic with the Caspian Sea along the Volga, that is, on the two main routes across eastern Europe ca. 1000. Through the co-operation between the Arab and Scandinavian tradesmen, the most stable and efficient connection between East and West was established in the last quarter of the first millennium. The reverberations of those

commercial relations with the Islamic Orient—made more dynamic by the east-Scandinavian merchants and those of the caliphate, as well as by participants from other populations—may also be detected in the Carpathian-Dniesterian area. One proof of that development is represented by discoveries of Arabic coins in the territory under discussion—an aspect to which we shall return below.

The contacts the Varangians and the eastern Slavs established with the Byzantine Empire were extremely active. Necessities, originally economic and later of other kinds as well, led to the opening of the famous “route from the Varangians to the Greeks,” which could only be covered by water. From the Baltic—also called the Varangians’ Sea—one could reach the Dnieper, either through the Gulf of Riga and on the Dvina, or through the Gulf of Finland, then on the Neva, Lake Ladoga, Volkhov, Lake Ilmen’ and the Lovat. The Varangians embarked on the Isle of Berezan at the estuary of the Dnieper, where the ships were equipped with sails and rudders, and sailed along the currents of the western Black Sea coast, to the estuary of the Dniester and the delta of the Danube. Constantine Porphyrogenitus pointed out that between the Dniester and the Sulina branch the Varangians stopped at the river called White (τόν ποταμόν τόν ἐπιλεγόμενον’Ασπρον). Its identification is difficult because in southern Bessarabia there is no river that flows directly into the sea, but only in riverine and sea lakes. Because the imperial scholar used information coming from various sources, it is possible that the Dniester was called the White River, which would explain why the fortified city located at its mouth was given the name of Asprocastron (Akkerman, Belgorod, Cetatea Albă = the White Castle).

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A proof of the Varangians’ way to Constantinople is represented by the images of dragons and ships carved on the walls of the small churches dug in limestone at Basarabi (former Murfatlar, Constanța county), with clear analogies in Scandinavian art.¹⁸ The recent identification of an incised representation of a heraldic sign of the Rurikid dynasty (on the wall of one of the little churches—No. B3) gives more credibility to the hypothesis according to which the Scandinavians who reached Dobrudja may have been in the service of Kievan prince Sviatoslav, during his ambitious campaign that started in 968.¹⁹

Along the way the Varangians could have come into contact with Romanians. A precise proof of such contacts—albeit a violent one—is provided by a memorial stone set at Sjonhem on the Isle of Gotland, by the couple of Rodvisl and Rodelf for their son Rodfos, killed by “Vlachs (Blakumen) during his trip abroad”. The stone with runes datable to the mid-eleventh century does not provide any other information about the place where the Varangian Rodfos met the Blakumen, but it was probably situated somewhere east of the Carpathians.²⁰ The writing on the stone at Sjonhem is the oldest source in which the Romanians outside the Carpathian range are mentioned.

The divisions and the conflicts among the Slav tribes facilitated the penetration of the Scandinavian groups east of the continent, and they even gained power in some important centres. The old Russian chroni-


the political history of the carpathian-dniester region  55

cle claims that in the mid-ninth century the Varangians forced several Slav and Finnic tribes to pay a tribute to them, and they imposed their domination on Novgorod, through Rurik, and on Kiev, through Askold and Dir. In 860 the latter attacked Constantinople with 200 ships, but the attack failed because of an unfortunate storm.21 The Empire was confronted with a new naval power coming from a direction along which it had not been attacked before. Within a century the Varangians that ruled the Rus’ principalities were assimilated by the Slav population, in a process similar to that suffered by the Scandinavians who settled in Normandy and southern Italy. By conquering the neighbouring Slav tribal unions and detaching them from the Khazar hegemony during the rule of Oleg (882–912), who had driven Askold and Dir out of Kiev, the authority and prestige of the Kievan state grew higher. In the early tenth century, in eastern Europe the balance of powers changed, with the Pechenegs and the Kievan Rus’ emerging strongest, whereas the Khazar Kaghanate was weakening. Such phenomena had consequences for the Romanian society as well.

The complexity of the military-political situation in the Lower Danube area was produced not only by the appearance of the new states in eastern Europe, but primarily by the traditional factors in that part of the continent. Both the Byzantine Empire and the Bulgarian Tsarate had had ambitions concerning their supremacy over the Lower Danube area. The disputes between Byzantium and the Bulgars over that area had started as soon as the latter settled in the north of the Balkan Peninsula. Although the Empire had gradually withdrawn from its western boundaries because of the penetration of the Slavs and the Bulgars in regions on the right bank of the Danube, the Byzantine rulers had not abandoned the idea of revenge and of recovered control over the Danube Delta. They aimed to materialize their naval supremacy


During Krum’s rule (803–814) the balance in the Balkans was decisively deteriorating because of the Bulgar successes. The cup out of which the Bulgarian ruler drank after his victories was made from the skull of Emperor Nicephorus I, killed in battle against the Bulgars in 811. The death of the emperor did not put an end to the confrontation. Two years later, the inhabitants of Adrianople, threatened with starvation by a long siege, opened it’s the city gates to Krum’s armies, who promptly banished 10,000 or 12,000 of them to the lands north of the Danube. The human element was extremely valuable in the Middle Ages; in the Balkans, forced colonization was current practice, frequently employed and constantly improved by the Byzantine Empire itself. Victims of that system would become, among others, the Vlachs around Constantinople, who were expatriated, by imperial orders, to the shores of Asia Minor about 1285–1286.\footnote{23 Georgii Pachymeris \textit{De Michaele et Andronico Paleologis libri tredecim}, ed. Im. Bekker, II (Bonn, 1835), p. 106; Georges Pachymérès, \textit{Relations historiques}, III, ed. A. Failler (Paris, 1999), pp. 121–122.} In an anonymous chronicle on the rule of Leo V the Armenian (813–820) it is mentioned that the banished Adrianopolitans were taken to the “Bulgaria beyond the river Istrōs” (Βουλγαρία ἐκείδεν τοῦ Ἰστροῦ ποταμοῦ),\footnote{24 Scriptor incertus, \textit{Historia de Leone Bardae Armenii filio}, in Leonis Grammatici Chronographia, ed. Im. Bekker (Bonn, 1842), pp. 345–346.} words which—taken \textit{ad litteram} by Symeon Magister\footnote{25 Symeonis Magistri \textit{Annales}, in Teophanes continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus, ed. Im. Bekker (Bonn, 1838), pp. 615–616. On the forceful removal of the inhabitants of Adrianople by Krum, see also \textit{Menologium Graecorum Basili in Porphyrogeniti imperatoris jussu editum}, in \textit{PG}, CXVII (1894), col. 275–278; \textit{Synaxarium Ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae}, ed. H. Delehaye, in \textit{Propylaeum ad Acta Sanctorum novembris} [63] (Brussels, 1902), col. 418; G. Moravcsik, “Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I,” \textit{Dumbarton Oaks Papers} 15 (1961), pp. 71–78 and 117–119.}—indicate the Bulgar Khanate’s desire of imposing its rule north of the river.

The precise location of the lands to which the Greeks from Adrianople were removed is not revealed by any sources. As a consequence, some believe the prisoners were transferred to the Bugeac,\footnote{26 V. N. Zlatarski, \textit{История на българската държава през средните векове}, I, 1 (Sofia, 1918), pp. 339–340 and 449; A. Decei, “Români din veacul al IX-lea pînă în al XIII-lea în lumina izvoarelor armenesci,” in idem, \textit{Relații româno-orientale},} others...
that they moved to the Romanian Plain. In fact, both locations are possible, and unfortunately the archaeological investigations have been inconclusive in this respect. Without rigorous control by the Bulgarian garrisons, the deported people could have reached the Danube easily, at a place from where the Byzantine ships could have repatriated them, since the Bulgars did not possess a naval force. For a quarter of a century the Bulgar control over the north-Danubian regions proved efficient. But we doubt that the deported Greeks ever gave up the idea of moving back to their country, or that the Byzantine rulers were not interested in helping them. During that period, a Greek inscription on a stone column erected by khan Omurtag mentions the organizing of an expedition which, after crossing the southern part of Moldavia reached the Dnieper (τὸν ποταμὸν τὸν Δάναπρην), where the kopan Okorses found his death. The aim of the Bulgarian expeditions is not revealed by the lapidary text, but it is supposed to have been an attack on the Hungarian hordes. Another column dating from the time of the same khan bears an inscription mentioning an expedition on the Tisza (Tisa), where the Bulgarian leader, the zera-tarkan Onegovon, had the same fate as Okorses. Those epigraphic sources are also proofs of the Bulgarian expansionist tendencies north of the Danube.


After Omurtag’s death (831) the general political situation turned against the Bulgars, so that in 837 the population banished from Adrianople decided to move back to their native places by the help of the Greek fleet. A Bulgar “count” crossed the Danube to stop them but he was defeated, and another army with the same task did not succeed in crossing the river, probably because it was stopped by the Byzantine ships. The Bulgars asked Hungarian horsemen in the north of the Black Sea for help, but the latter were defeated too, so the deported people succeeded in getting aboard the ships.\footnote{Georgii Monachi \textit{Vitae imperatorum recentiorum}, in Theophanes continuatus, pp. 817–819; Leo Grammaticus, pp. 231–233.} From that success of the people of Adrianople in coming back to Thracia it results that the Bulgars no longer kept permanent troops in the Lower Danube Plain. Under the circumstances, the weakening of the Bulgarian position on the left bank of the river appears as natural, so their rule must have been only nominal.

North of the Danube the Bulgars had succeeded in incorporating some territories on the left of the Tisza for a longer period, those that had belonged to the Avars but were taken away from them after the Avaric Kaganate had collapsed under the attacks of the Frankish armies.\footnote{K. I. Grot, \textit{Моравия и мадьяры с половины IX до начала X века (Записки Историко-Филологического Факультета Императорского С.-Петербургского Университета, IX) (St. Petersburg, 1881), p. 82 ff.; B. Hóman, \textit{Geschichte des ungarischen Mittelalters, I} (Berlin, 1940), pp. 89–90; V. Beševliev, \textit{Die protobulgarische Periode der bulgarischen Geschichte} (Amsterdam, 1981), pp. 280–283; S. Brezeanu, “La Bulgarie d’au-delà de l’Ister’ à la lumière des sources écrites medievales,” \textit{Études balkaniques} (1984), 4, pp. 122–125 and 129–132; G. Kristó, “К вопросу о болгарском владычестве на Альфельде в IX в.,” \textit{Доклади}, 6, Българските земи в древността. България през средновековиет} (Sofia, 1987), pp. 263–272.} In the opinion of several historians, Transylvania had also been under Bulgar control, a point of view primarily based on information...
concerning the German king Arnulf’s demand to the Bulgars in 892 that they not permit any more selling of salt to Moravia, a country with which he was at war.33 Because there were no salt mines in Bulgaria, a justified conclusion could be drawn that the salt sold to Moravia came from Transylvania. In order to hinder the selling of salt to Moravia, the Bulgars would not have had to watch the salt mines, but only the commercial routes across the Tisza valley, which they had temporarily under their control. In any case, when the Hungarians came to Transylvania there was no direct Bulgarian political rule there.34

For the time being, many specialists do not find very convincing the archaeological evidence35 invoked in support of the idea of Bulgar control over Transylvania or its southern part.36 The main reason is that since certain components of the material culture on both sides of the Danube are similar, influences from the Balkan Peninsula are the most that may be assumed. For the period immediately preceding (and even for the one following) the Hungarian settlement in the Tisza Plain, if there were any indications of state formations connected with or even dependent on Bulgaria,37 those are to be found within the Carpathian


arch (*terra Ultralisuana*), the region where Vlachs/Romanians and Slavs (*Blasi et Slavi*) were ruled by Gelou.38

The attestation of Gelou’s principality reveals that, a long time before the medieval states of Moldavia and Wallachia were founded, the Romanian society had been in an advanced stage of political organization. The fortresses within the principality, with moat-and-wall defences and a complex system of stockades, affirm the Romanians’ military qualities, which is recorded in the written sources as well.

The influence of Bulgaria on the territories on the left bank of the Danube, Wallachia and Moldavia, was different in intensity, duration and extension from that exercised in the Tisza Plain. That the Bulgars controlled southern Moldavia results from what Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus has to say about the Pechenegs of his own time, namely that they possessed a part of Bulgaria.39 In the mid-tenth century, that area could only have been north of the Danube. A *de plano* rejection of any possibility of Bulgar rule over the left bank of the Lower Danube40 ignores the political developments of the age of Krum and Omurtag and contradicts the information of the written sources discussed above.

On the other hand, it is equally wrong to assume that ninth-century Bulgaria included all territories on the left bank of the Danube now inhabited by Romanians. Such a view is a result of an exaggerated evaluation of the Bulgar expansion beginning with Krum. According to such theories, the whole territory of Moldavia, as well as of Wallachia, outer-Carpathian Transylvania, Banat and Maramureș were supposedly parts of ninth-century Bulgaria, whose northern limits would thus have been the upper course of the Prut,41 the lower42 or the middle course

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38 Anonymus, pp. 65–69; Die *“Gesta Hungarorum” des anonymen Notars*, ed. G. Silagi, with the collab. of L. Veszprémy (Sigmaringen, 1991), pp. 74–79.
42 V. I. Kozlov, “Към въпроса за хронологията на паметниците от североизточната провинция на Първото българско царство (връх материал от разкопките на селищата в степта на междууречието Дунав-Днестър),” in *Българите в Северното Причерноморие*, V (Veliko Tarnovo, 1996), pp. 109–125; I. Mladjov, “Trans-Danubian...
of the Dniester, or even to the springs of the Dniester. Ninth-century Bulgaria would thus have included a good part of what would later become the Rus’ principality of Galicia (Halych).

Concerning most of the dikes erected in the outer-Carpathian areas, some historians maintained that they were built during the First Bulgarian Tsarate and were meant to mark its borders. Such a function has been assumed in cases such as those of the dike in southern Bessarabia running between Vadul lui Isac on the Prut and the Sasicul Mare Lake; the dike in central Bessarabia, between the Prut and the Dniester, connecting Leova and Tighina; the so-called “Brazda lui Novac,” a dike crossing Wallachia longitudinally from Hinova to the river Cricov; as well as the dike in southern Wallachia, between the Olt and Lake Greaca. Without denying that possibility, one must note that some of those earthworks have been dated to the Roman period, while others were superficially and inconclusively investigated, their dating being uncertain. At the same time, there are opinions holding that the above-mentioned north-Danubian areas were inhabited by a Slavo-Bulgarian population, and that the ethnic border separating the latter from the eastern Slavs must have been the course of the Dniester. The assertion is based on some ambiguous narrative sources, on the attribution of the Dridu culture exclusively to the Bulgars, and on the attestation, in the late Middle Ages, of some south-Slavic toponyms in the Carpathian-Danubian area; but there is no argument in favour of the idea that those place-names were in use at the end of the first millennium.

About AD 900, the areas around the Danube mouths became the scene of some troublesome events, generated by multiple conflicts. On
chapter two

the one hand, there was a Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict, on the other hand, there were convulsions in the steppe lands north of the Black Sea, caused by fighting between the Pechenegs and the Hungarians, a development which coincided in time with an aggressive move of the Kievan Rus’ principality against the Slavic tribes in the Dniester region, the purpose of which must have been the control of the Black Sea trade.

During the last years of the ninth century, after a temporary diminution of the armed external conflicts under the rule of Boris I (Michael) (852–889), influenced by the extremely important act of Christianisation, Bulgaria experienced a new period of strength under tsar Symeon (893–927). His classical and theological education in Constantinople did not prevent him from leading a policy of war, especially directed against Byzantium. The hostilities started shortly after Symeon ascended to the throne, and they continued to the detriment of the Byzantines, who were simultaneously waging war against the Arabs. The Byzantine diplomacy appealed to the Hungarian hordes that inhabited areas north of the Black Sea. A few light ships, under the command of Niketas Skleros, were sent to the Danube to contact the Hungarians and to buy their co-operation, guaranteed by the delivery of some hostages, according to custom.

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48 Theophanes continuatus, Chronographia, in Theophanes continuatus (see above, n. 25), p. 358; Georgius Monachus (see above, n. 30), p. 853; Leo Grammaticus (see
The fact that the Byzantine messengers met the Hungarians at the Danube clearly proves that for that moment—corresponding to AD 895—one cannot even speak of a nominal Bulgarian domination of southern Moldavia. The region close to the Danube Delta was controlled by the Hungarian tribes, which were hardly pressed from the east by the Pechenegs. The presence of the Hungarians on the Lower Danube at the end of the ninth century seems to be also confirmed, among others, by the Old Church Slavonic Life of St. Methodius.\(^49\)

In the mid-eleventh-century geography of the Persian Gardizi, who made use of older Oriental texts, it is mentioned that the Hungarian (\textit{Madgharyan/Mağgariyân/M.ğfrîjân}) territory was flanked by two rivers, whose names were noted differently by various editors: \textit{Itil/Etel/Atel/Atil} and \textit{Duba/Duna}.\(^50\) The same sources were partially known to the Arab al-Marvazi’s treatise of geography, written about the year 1120, in which the rivers bordering the area occupied by the Hungarians were named \textit{Runa/Rūxā} and \textit{Atil}.\(^51\) In the universal chronicle by Shükrullakh, written in Persian about the middle of the sixteenth century, the names of the two rivers are \textit{Wefa/Wľa} and \textit{Etel/Ātīl}.\(^52\)

Most of specialists have identified them as the Danube and the Don, respectively,\(^53\) a conclusion drawn from the fact that in the Latin-Hungarian chronicles of the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries the Don is

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\(^{52}\) J. de Hammer, \textit{Sur les origines russes. Extraits des manuscrits orientaux} (St. Petersburg, 1827), p. 47; Zimonyi, \textit{Muslimische Quellen}, p. 47 (Ṣūkrāllāh). See also ibidem, pp. 45 (Aufit) and 49 (Muḥammad Kāthī; Ḥāǧǧī Ḥaltā).
consistently called Etul. However, all Arab and Persian medieval texts gave the name Itil or Etil to the Volga. There is therefore no reasons to believe that Gardizi and al-Marvazi had in mind any other river. It is difficult to imagine that the territory under Hungarian control could have stretched all the way from the Volga to the Danube.

Since their first temporary presence north of the Lower Danube, in 837, under the circumstances already described, and until the late ninth century, there had been consistent motion to the west of the Hungarian population accompanied by the Kabars in the so-called Atelkuzu/Etelkuzu (Ἀτέλκούζου/Ετελ καὶ Κονζου). The toponym represents, in the opinion of some specialists, a distortion of the old Hungarian term Etel-küžü, meaning “between the rivers” or “Mesoopotamia”. According to another point of view, Etelkuzu could be a corruption of Etelköz, which meant “the Don country”. As we have shown, by the term Etul, the Hungarians “from Scythia” meant the Don. Etelköz is supposedly similar to such place-names in present-day Hungary as Rábaköz, Bodrogköz, Sárköz, which derive from the names of the rivers Rába (Raab), Bodrog and Sár, respectively. It is known that in the mid-tenth century Atelkuzu was inhabited by the Pechenegs, whose settlements, taken over from the Hungarians, were located in the basins of five rivers: Baruh, Kubu, Trullos, Brutos and Seretos (Βαρούχ,
the political history of the carpathian-dniester region

According to some recent opinions, the Hungarian tribes’ movement to the west, as well as other populations’ migrations, was largely caused by the alteration of the environment in the steppes in eastern Europe. Paleo-geographic investigations have established an alternation in the pluvial regime between the forest and the steppe regions of eastern Europe. During the rainy seasons in the forest areas, the level of the Caspian Sea would rise considerably, flooding the neighbouring areas and the Volga Delta, whereas the steppes suffered from drought. The period of climatic humidity in the east-European steppes, beginning with the fourth century, appears to have stimulated agricultural activities even among populations with predominantly pastoral preoccupations. It lasted until the late thirteenth century, interrupted for about one hundred years in the ninth-tenth centuries. Such perturbations caused floods in the Caspian areas, the waters covering large cultivated surfaces and, probably, even the capital of the Khazar Kaganate, thus contributing to its decay and fall under the strikes of the Rus’ and the Uzes. At the same time, the dry climate in the steppes caused great economic damage to the nomad and semi-nomad pastoralists, which accounts, at least partially, for the migratory tendencies of the Hungarians, Pechenegs and Uzes towards areas unaffected by drought. In addition, numerous movements of the nomad cattle breeders of the Eurasian steppes, between the last centuries of the first millennium and

58 DAI, I, pp. 174–175.
the first half of the second one of our time, might have been caused by long periods of drought.\textsuperscript{61}

After the agreement concluded with the Hungarians, the Byzantine fleet got them across the Danube, by removing the lines set by the Bulgars in order to resume anchoring on the right bank.\textsuperscript{62} As the Bulgarians were engaged in battles with the imperial armies, they could not give an efficient response to the Hungarian attack, leading to great losses. Confronted with this danger, Symeon proved his prodigious diplomatic ability. On the one hand, he agreed to pay a ransom for the Bulgars taken prisoners by the Hungarians, in order to make the latter withdraw, on the other hand, he offered peace to emperor Leo VI the Wise (886–912). Succeeding in both attempts, he got the necessary respite to fight each of his adversaries. He made an alliance with the Pechenegs against the Hungarians. Together, they invaded and destroyed the Hungarian settlements, as the best Hungarian troops were away on a distant expedition.\textsuperscript{63}

This defeat and the Bulgar-Pecheneg threat made the Hungarians leave Atelkuzu and look for settlements in the Middle Danubian Plain, a crucial decision, probably premeditated for a long time, which meant their survival as a nation. The confrontations between the Hungarians and the Pechenegs should not merely be regarded as a consequence of Symeon’s instigations, as some chronicles and modern historians suggest. The imminence of the conflict became apparent when the Khazars and the Oghuz/Uzes managed to defeat the Pechenegs, who were thus forced to leave the east-European steppes in order to find a new homeland for themselves.\textsuperscript{64} At about the same time, the Hungarians were crossing the Danube to attack Bulgaria. Thus, the usual chain reaction of migrations took place: the Uzes drove the Pechenegs away, and the latter did the same to the Hungarians.

\textsuperscript{62} DAI, I, pp. 250–253.
\textsuperscript{63} Annales Fuldenses (see above, n. 33), pp. 412–413; Reginonis Chronicon, in MGH, SS, I (1826), pp. 599–600; Annales Mettense, in Gombos, I, pp. 156–157; FHB, XII (1965), pp. 45 (Sigeberti Chronica), 143 (Annalista Saxo); Theophanes continuatus, p. 387; Symeon Magister, p. 722; Georgius Monachus, p. 879; DAI, I, pp. 176–177, 250–253; Leo Grammaticus, p. 293; Skylitzes, p. 201; Kedrenos, II, pp. 282–284; Zonaras, col. 67–68.
\textsuperscript{64} DAI, I, pp. 166–167 and 170–171.
Though the written sources are unanimous in considering that the western extremity of the areas controlled by the Hungarian tribal union during the period prior to 896 was represented by the Danube and the Siret basin, the archaeological data do not attest to their presence on the two rivers. Several metal items with analogies among Hungarian antiquities have been found in the Carpathian-Dniesterian area. Those items include cordiform pendants—with a protuberance at the lower part—found in the Dridu-culture settlements of Dănești (Vaslui county) (Romania) (Fig. 8/2) and Hansca (Iași county) (Republic of Moldova). They belong to a category of objects very common among the tenth- and eleventh-century finds in present-day Hungary. All the above-mentioned metal items were in use with other eastern-central European populations as well, so they cannot be said to be specifically Hungarian. However, they could reflect contacts between the local people and the Hungarians.

Also, besides other populations, the Hungarian and Kabar tribes seem to have played a certain part in the adoption by communities of the Dridu culture of clay kettles, a ceramic form which appears sporadically in Moldavia on settlement sites in Bârlăștești, Epureni (Vaslui county), Spinoasa (Iași county) (Romania), Calfa (Anenii Noi county) (Republic of Moldova), etc. Their presence, like that of the above-mentioned cordiform pendants, suggest an some form of exchange between the steppe populations and the natives, but it does not necessarily indicate the presence of the steppe populations on any of the above-mentioned sites. Furthermore, in the Carpathian-Dniesterian area, no signs of destruction of the Dridu-type settlements have been found that might be connected to possible Hungarian raids. On the contrary, the late ninth century was a period of prosperity of the Dridu communities in the Romanian Plain and the Bugeac.

67 Riabtseva, Rabinovich, “К вопросу о роли венгерского фактора,” p. 209, fig. 2/1.
Several graves found in Moldavia and Wallachia have been attributed to the Hungarians. Some of those, such as the ones in the Republic of Moldova, at Brănești (Orhei county), Hansca—‘Căprăria’ (Ialoveni county), in Romania, at Grozești, Holboca, Probota (Iași county), Moscu (Galați county), Movilița (Ialomița county), in Ukraine, at Fridensfeld (Mirnopol) (Sărata district) and Şabalat (Sadovoe) (Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi district) (Odessa region), have been considered as probably Hungarian, whereas the grave at Frumușica (Florești county) (Republic of Moldova) has been considered as certainly Hungarian. As I have already stated, the ethnic attribution proposed for those complexes cannot be accepted, since it is not based on adequate knowledge of the relevant archaeological material. The graves of Brănești and Hansca—‘Căprăria’ belong to native cemeteries, and the others are specific to either the Pechenegs or the Cumans. Actually, the ritual features and the inventory of those graves differ to an important extent from those of the Hungarian graves found in the Pannonian Plain. By the items of its inventory, it is only the grave of Grozești (dated to the ninth-tenth century) that could belong, in principle, either to the Hungarians or to the Pechenegs. Unfortunately, the precise circumstances of the discovery were not written down, so the attribution remains uncertain. In regions north of the Danube Delta no burial assemblages have so far been proved to have doubtless connections with the ninth-century migration of the Hungarians. Nevertheless, I will not a priori exclude the possibility that such assemblages may be found in the course of extended field investigations in the future.

72 Idem, Realități etnice și politice în Moldova Meridională în secolele X–XIII. Români și turanci (Iași, 1985), p. 113 and figs. 29 and 48/6, 9–15.
According to the present stage of research, there is no evidence of a permanent presence of the Hungarians in the lands to the west from the Dniester River. This does not of course exclude the possibility that those lands were crossed by the Hungarian warriors, while on a plundering raid, such as that requested by the Byzantines against Bulgaria in 895. In fact, there are several clues indicating that during the last quarter of the ninth century, the Lower Danube area was not within the Hungarian sphere of interest. At that time, the Hungarians were mostly preoccupied with expeditions into central Europe, an opportunity that might have given them the idea of conquering a new country, according to some opinions, as their remaining in Atelkuzu had exposed them to the Pecheneg attacks, and the Balkans were closed to them by the still powerful Bulgarians. There is some information about the Hungarian and Kabar raids into central Europe, the former being mentioned in 862 in the eastern province of the Carolingian Empire, then in 881 around Vienna, and in Moravia and Pannonia; their allies—under the name of Cowari—participated in a simultaneous expedition in 881, but with a itinerary different from that of the Hungarians in the same year. The expedition of 894 presented an anonymous analyst of the Fulda monastery the opportunity to launch a real diatribe against the invaders, to whom the

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76 Annales ex annalibus Iwawensibus, p. 742.
most reprovable atrocities were assigned: “The Avars, who are called Hungarians, penetrated across the Danube at this time, and did many terrible things. They killed men and old women outright, and carried off the young women alone with them like cattle to satisfy their lusts, and reduced the whole of Pannonia to a desert.”

To the same effect is the information in the old Russian and Hungarian chronicles relating that on their way to Pannonia the Hungarian tribes passed by Kiev. Equally relevant in this respect is the chronicle of Reginald of Prüm, which states that the decisive battle between the Pechenegs and the Hungarians—a battle that compelled the latter to leave the steppe lands north of the Black Sea—was fought near the mouth of the Don. According to some, the name Dentumoger (Dentümgyer), which was given to the Hungarians’ ancestors, etymologically meant “Hungarians from the Don.” So, it is much more plausible that the main settlements of the Hungarians, before their crossing the northern Carpathians, lay in the Lower Dnieper basin and west of the Don, even if their active vanguard horsemen had reached the mouths of the Danube.

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79 Reginonis chronicon (see above, n. 63), p. 600.
80 Anonymus, p. 39.
Concerning the older supposition, occasionally still mentioned, according to which part of the ancient Hungarian inhabitants of Atelkuzu supposedly stayed in Moldavia after 896, being the ancestors of the Csangos,\(^{82}\) it has no scientific support whatsoever. According to the most trustworthy investigations in the field of history and linguistics, the Csangos came across the eastern slopes of the eastern Carpathians from eastern Transylvania several centuries after the Hungarians moved from Atelkuzu to Pannonia.\(^{83}\) Whereas Atelkuzu was situated east of the Siret basin and of the Danube, the Csangos who settled in Moldavia were grouped especially between the Carpathian and the Siret, where they influenced the toponymy and the hydronymy.\(^{84}\)

The passage of the Hungarians towards the Pannonian Plain took place through the Verecke pass in the northern Carpathians, along one of the most important connecting roads between the east-European Plain and the Middle Danube basin, a road used by many other migrants, including the Mongols in 1241. That route had previously been known to the Hungarians. In their movement the Hungarians passed through the territories of the future Galician Principality,\(^{85}\) thus avoiding Moldavia. The written sources and archaeological proofs do not indicate the passes in the eastern Carpathians or the Danube Iron Gates as means of penetration for the Hungarians and Kabars


towards Pannonia, as some scholars have tried to argue. The most suitable pass between South Moldavia and Transylvania—the one of Oituz—was not at all fit for carts without special arrangements, even during the Middle Ages. Nothing is known about such arrangements in the late ninth century.

In contradiction to other sources is only the information in *Chronicon Pictum Vindobonense* concerning the killing of Almos, Arpad’s father, in Erdelw, and the temporary stay of his troops in that region, before entering Pannonia. But this information is far from being reliable. In *Gesta Hungarorum*, written a century and a half before, Almos is no longer signalled as acting in Transylvania, but at the siege of the Ung fortress. It is possible that the form Erdelw/Érdő-elve (= “beyond the forest”/“Transylvania”) was not present in the source compiled by *Chronicon Pictum Vindobonense*, but rather erdő (= “forest”), a name which was used for the Ung woodland, where the Hungarians went immediately after crossing the Verecke pass. On the other hand, the idea of Almos’s contribution to the conquest of the new country does not seem entirely likely, being probably a fancy of the chroniclers at the Arpadians’ royal court, who were tempted to idealize the past of the dynasty. It is important to note in this respect that no mention is made of Almos during the last years of the Hungarian presence in the steppe lands north of the Black Sea. All Byzantine sources pertaining to that period indicate that Arpad and Cusan (Kurszan) were at that time leading the Hungarian tribal union.

The efforts that have been made to sustain the idea of a crossing of the eastern Carpathians by the Hungarians reflect, in most cases, the tendency of trying to prove by any means that the occupation of

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87 *CPict*, pp. 19, 133–134. See also *Chronicon Posoniense* (see above, n. 37), p. 32.

88 Anonymus, pp. 50–52.


Transylvania had taken place long time before it really happened. By admitting such an idea we would ignore, among others, the information in the *Gesta Hungarorum*, according to which the state formations led by Gelou, Glad and Menumorut were attacked by the Hungarians from the west, after their conquest of Pannonia. On the other hand, according to all written and archaeological proofs, the penetration and the domination of Transylvania by the Hungarians was made step by step from west to east. The Szeklers—who, according to some opinions that are gaining unanimous acceptance, must be seen as descendants of the Kabars—had also reached the eastern parts of Transylvania coming from the west.

The confrontation of the Hungarian tribal confederation with the populations of Pannonia and Transylvania gave rise to the first written mentions about the Romanians north of the Danube, in two different sources, for which the possibility of interference was impossible: *The Russian Primary Chronicle*, elaborated in the second decade of the twelfth century at the Pecherskaia Monastery near Kiev, and *Gesta Hungarorum*, written around the year 1200 by Magister P., the so-called Anonymous, who was the notary of King Bela [III] (1172–1192). Both works say that, when the Hungarians came in, they encountered Vlachs and Slavs. The matter contained in the two chronicles was the object of

95 *PVL*, I, pp. 21 and 210; *Ip.let.-2*, col. 18; Anonymus, pp. 45, 65, 66, and 90. On Vlachs in the *Russian Primary Chronicle* and the *Gesta Hungarorum*, see V. D. Koroliuk,
some fierce and not always objective historiographical disputes launched by the enemies of the Daco-Roman continuity on the left side of the Danube, controversies which we are not going to discuss here. The essence is that Robert Roesler\(^ {96}\) and his disciples say that the ethnonym *Vlachs* (*Blasi, Blaci, Влахи*) would not refer to the Romanians, but to the Franks or, possibly, to the Italians.\(^ {97}\) The main incrimination against Anonymous is that he transposed his contemporary historical realities to the previous periods, the first point of contention being his mention of the Romanians and the Cumans during the Hungarians’ settlement in Pannonia. Because, as concerns the Cumans, it is quite evident that their first contacts with the Arpadian Kingdom were recorded only towards the end of the eleventh century, *mutatis mutandis* it was admitted that the Vlachs must have been signalled in the chronicle around the year 900 by mistake as well.

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The elaborate studies of the last decades on the text *Gesta Hungarorum* have revealed that most of the reports are not inventions, but they have a real support, even if here and there some anachronisms occurred. Among other things, the opinion according to which Anonymous often designated the Kabar-Khazars by the name of *Cumani* has been almost generally accepted. Its double significance comes perhaps from the fact that the ethnonym *kun*, translated by Anonymous into Latin by the term *Cumani*, designated in the Hungarian language not only the Cumans, but the Turkic nomads in general, including the Kabars.

In other passages of his chronicle the substitution of the Pechenegs by the related Cumans is obvious. In the case of the Cumans there is no longer suspicion concerning the plausibility of the text belonging to the Anonymous notary of the king Bela. But nobody has thought of excusing him of the “error” of having mentioned the Vlachs at the end of the ninth century and the beginning of the tenth, and of recognizing that in reality he had not been wrong, a fact which dampens the prestige of the venerable scholar. Another Hungarian chronicler from the second half of the thirteenth century—Simon of Keza—stated that after the Szeklers had helped the Hungarians to conquer the Pannonian Plain, they received from them territories in the mountainous regions neighbouring those belonging to the Vlachs (*Blacki*), from whom they seem to have adopted their writing system.

Generally, those who contest the Daco-Roman continuity claim that the Romanian populations west of the Balkan Peninsula infiltrated slowly and progressively to the north of the Danube, directly into the Arpadian Kingdom, or even by making a detour through outer-Carpathian regions, with the consent or even at the solicitation of state

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100 Simon de Keza, pp. 162–163. See also *CPict*, pp. 16, 130.
authorities, approximately between the year 1200 (or during the eleventh century, at the earliest) and the fourteenth century. Undoubtedly, if in the period when Anonymous and Simon of Keza were writing their works the Vlachs had continued to flow from the Balkans towards Transylvania, or if their movement had begun only a couple of decades before, the two chroniclers might have been informed about that important event, especially because their position in the court circles offered them the possibility of access to all kinds of informative contemporary sources. It would have been incredibly strange to see an omission of the Romanian’s migration—if it had really taken place—just at the moment when it was meant to play an essential role on the opposite bank of the Danube, in the formation of a state and in founding a dynasty well-known all over Europe, that of the Asens.

The fact that a migration of such proportions left not even the smallest trace in the places where it supposedly had started, or in the ones where it ended, remains inexplicable. On the other hand, the eleventh-century Byzantine author Kekaumenos knew of clashes between Vlachs in Serbia and the Byzantine authorities. According to him, following those clashes, the Vlachs withdrew southwards, to Epirus, Macedonia, and Hellas, and not to the region north of the Danube. An anonymous author at the beginning of the fourteenth century, supposed to be a French Dominican, was also informed about an emigration of Romanian (blazi, blachi) shepherds from Pannonia towards the Balkans, again from the north towards the south, as a consequence of the coming of the Hungarians. That does not mean that there were no possible crossings of Vlachs from the Balkans to the left side of the Danube, taking into account that population exchanges from one side of the river to the other were frequent throughout history. Certain linguistic affinities prove the existence of contacts between speakers of

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101 For a presentation and refutation of such views, see A. Sacerdoțeanu, Considerații asupra istoriei românilor în evul mediu (Bucharest, 1936); I. Moga, Părerii istorice ungurești privitoare la românii din Transilvania medievală (Sibiu, 1941); I. Hurdubețiu, Die Deutschen über die Herkunft der Rumänen (Bucharest, 1977); N. Stoicescu, Continuitatea românilor (Bucharest, 1980); I. A. Pop, Istoria Transilvaniei medievale de la etnogeneza românilor până la Mihai Viteazu (Cluj–Napoca, 1997), pp. 73–152.


Romance languages on both sides of the river. The displacements of Romanian-speaking populations from the right to the left side of the Danube could not have been significant, and they did not mean, as the supporters of the “migration theory” claim, the implantation of the Romanic element in the Carpathian-Danubian region; at the most, it could only indicate the reinforcement of that element.

Being aware of how feeble the theory was, which identified with Franks the Vlachs of the period of the so-called “taking of the homeland” (honfoglalás, Landnahme) by Hungarians, some have relatively recently put forward a new, yet aberrant hypothesis concerning the Romanian ethnogenesis. As no one has yet responded to this hypothesis, I feel obliged to reply, even though what we have to deal with is a more than doubtful opinion. According to that opinion, the ethnic names Blac/Blaq and Vlach supposedly designated two distinct peoples, the former of Turkic, the latter of Latin origin. The Blaci/Blasi of Anonymus, the Blacki of Simon of Keza and Villehardouin, the Blaci of William of Rubruck, Roger Bacon and Johannes Schöner, or those of the Hungarian kings’ charters of 1222 and 1224—all of them among the oldest mentions of Romanians in history—would thus be nothing more than references to an obscure Turkic tribe named Bulaq, from the tribal union of the Qarluqs, who initially lived in the Ural area and in Bashkiria. The tribe was attested in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and after that only at the end of the sixteenth century, before having been conquered by the Russians. The presumed presence of the Bulaq population in Transylvania and the Balkan Peninsula was explained as the result of a migration taking place during the seventh century, in the company of the Onogur-Bulgars, who under Asparukh (Isperrikh) later moved to settle south of the Danube.

The idea of a correspondence between the Blacs in the Carpathian-Balkan area and the Bulaq tribe in the Ural Mountains was probably suggested to G. Bodor and L. Rásonyi by a remark made by William of Rubruck (Willem van Rubroek), the messenger of King Louis IX


to the Mongolian great khan. The Franciscan messenger signalled a population called Illac, beyond Pascatur (= Bashkiria), whose real name he considered to be Blac, the same name as that of the inhabitants of Asan's country, that is in the Vlach in Asenid Bulgaria (Second Bulgarian Tsardom): Et iuxta Pascatur sunt Illac, quod idem est quod Blac, sed B nesciunt Tartari sonare, a quibus venerunt illi qui sunt in terra Assani. Utrosque enim vocant Illac, et hos et illos.\(^{107}\) William of Rubruck knew that the Bulgars of the Balkans were natives from Bulgaria Magna, that there was the so-called Hungaria Magna situated beyond Etilia (= the Volga), and that the languages of the Bashkirs and of the Hungarians were very much alike—a fact that actually clarifies the starting place of the Hungarians. The Franciscan diplomat appears to have been convinced, even if he did not make the point explicitly, that the Romanians originated in a way similar to that of their neighbours, that is through a migration from eastern Europe.\(^{108}\) As a natural result, the historians that referred to the passages in Rubruck’s travel narrations grasped the inadvertences they contain, and therefore suggested other identifications of the Illac population.\(^{109}\)

Accepting the identification of the Turkic tribe Bulaq with the Vlachs mentioned by Anonymus, Simon of Keza, Villehardouin, and the other chronicles previously mentioned, would mean depriving the history of the Romanians not only of simple ethnonymical attestations, but also of a wealth of important events. The above mentioned remarks about the Blac, Blacki, etc., cannot be detached from the other references to the Romanians, in which they are designated by names with slightly different spellings: Βλάχοι, Vlachs, Volochs, Wlachen, etc.; sometimes variations in that ethnonym occur even in reporting on the same events. Situations of that kind are to be found, for instance, in

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\(^{108}\) Rubruck, pp. 218–219. The idea was accepted by some historians who were either not objective or less acquainted with the history of Eastern Europe. On this passage, see A. Sacerdoteanu, “Guillaume de Rubrouck et les Roumains au milieu du XIIIe siècle,” *Mélanges de l’École Roumaine en France* (1929), no. 2, pp. 258–259.

the presentation of the Romanians’ clashes with the Hungarians who had penetrated into Transylvania, made by Anonymus and by the old Russian chronicle, as well as in the case of the descriptions of the wars between Asenid Bulgaria and the Latin Empire, found in Frankish and Byzantine chronicles. Such facts obviously lead to the conclusion that the forms Blaci and Blacki indicated the same population as the other forms derived from the ethnonym Vlachs, as the Romanians were called by other peoples throughout the Middle Ages.

Concerning the identification of Blaci as Bulaq, it is not the linguistic difficulties— confined to the elision of the *u* in the latter ethnonym—that are impossible to surpass, but those of a historical nature. There is not the a single narrative or archaeological find indicating that the Bulaq tribe might have migrated from their country towards the Carpathian-Balkan area. If, however, this was the case, it is impossible to explain how such an unimportant group was able to keep itself unassimilated for several centuries, while living among numerous and powerful tribes far from the places from which it had been displaced. It is well known that during the great migrations small communities were swallowed up quite fast by larger ones. It would also be surprising that the alleged Bulaq could have preserved their ethnical identity both in Transylvania and in the Balkans, even after Christianisation, while the Proto-Bulgars themselves, although in dominant political positions, were assimilated by the Slavs. At the same time, we doubt that the Blacs/Vlachs on both sides of the Danube, unlike the Hungarians, would have ever claimed their supposed Asian origin. Instead, according to the historical tradition recorded in the text of King Bela’s Notary, the Vlachs in Pannonia were regarded as “the Romans’ shepherds” (*Blachi ac pastores Romanorum*), an idea that is to be found again, expressed identically, in an anonymous description of eastern Europe. No matter the strength of imagination one could be endowed with, it is impossible to understand how could

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111 Anonymus, p. 45.

a Turanic group from the Urals been labeled “the Romans’ shepherds,” a designation clearly implying a recognition of a Latin origin. On the other hand, it is known that the tribal union of the Qarluqs, made up of nine tribes, including that of the *B.laq/Bulāq*, migrated towards the “Islamic territories,” therefore south and not west, in a period prior to the beginning of the twelfth century.

The untenable views of György Bodor and László Rásonyi recall some similar opinions of the World War I period, according to which the Vlachs were descendents of Romanised Turko-Tartars, an idea that was rightly laughed at. In addition, these standpoints have traits in common with the strange supposition that the Vlachs were the same as some Slavic speakers on the Volga, known as Volkhvy, which would also place the origin of the Romanians in the eastern extremity of Europe, from where they were supposed to emigrate to the Carpathian-Danubian area at the dawn of the Middle Ages. Certainly, that bold supposition could not possibly enjoy the approval of medievalists.

Among the oldest attestations of the countries of the Vlachs on the left side of the Danube, there is a quotation of a passage from a book of geography attributed to the Armenian Moses Khorenats’i, a source first brought to the attention of Romanian historiography by Aurel Decei, who dated it to the ninth century. That passage refers to an “unknown country called Balak,” situated in the neighbourhood of the “Sarmatians’ country” and of *Zagura* (*Zagora = Bulgaria*), i.e. in the north of the Danube. According to the latest investigations, that geographical outlook might have been formulated in the seventh century by Ananias of Shirak (Shirakats’i), with only later copies of the work having been preserved. These later copies show signs of subsequent interpolations, including the aforementioned passage. It is obvious

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113 Marvazi (see above, n. 51), p. 31; Orient.Bec., p. 248.
118 Decei, “Români” (see above, n. 26), pp. 24, 32, and 70–72.
that this passage could have been written by neither Moses Khorenats’i nor Ananias Shirakats’i, who lived in the fifth and the seventh century, respectively. The interpolation is probably from the first centuries of the second millennium. Specifications in that respect will be possible after an exegesis of the numerous manuscripts of Armenian geography. The passage about the Balak country is not included in a remarkable recent publication of the treatise on geography attributed to Ananias Shirakatsi (that publication being based on more manuscripts and on some previous editions of that work). This fact confirms our supposition that the passage would represent an insertion dated after the seventh century. Regarding the presentation of the Carpathian-Danubians area in Armenian geographic writings, the latter specify that the Tyras (Dniester) separated Sarmatia from Dacia, and that “the large country of Dacia,” was inhabited by Slavs, who had had 25 tribes.

Another eleventh-century reference to the Vlachs’ country appears to be a passage inserted into the ancient Turkic chronicle Oghuzname (The Oghuz Khan’s Tale), which evokes events from the Oghuz ethnogenesis and migration under a mythical cover. Oghuzname is known in several versions, most of them being transcriptions written several centuries after the moment of the elaboration of the original oral version. Romanian historians have so far only looked at the most recent version of the chronicle, which is incorporated into the chronicle of Abu’l Gházi Behadur-Khan, written in the mid-seventeenth century in the chaghatay dialect. The Oghuzname narrates the battles of the Qipchaqs (= Cumans) against several peoples, including the Romanians (Ulak). In the account written by Rashid al-Din at the beginning of the fourteenth century, there are quite important differences in the presentation of the events. The Persian chronicler gives details about the conflict of the Qipchaqs with the population It-Baraq, an ethnonym that presents


only a vague resemblance with that of Vlach. We may also mention that a similar name, Batchaka/Barqan/Baraka, was attributed to a region. That information can be found in a fifteenth-century Uighur version of *Oghuzname*, in which the other details concerning the conflicts of the Qipchaqs are missing.\(^{123}\)

Considering that sporadic penetrations of the Cumans in the outer-Carpathian space are recorded only beginning with the last decades of the eleventh century, and the more lasting contacts with the Romanians were established during the following century, the quoted account cannot possibly mention events situated chronologically before the second half of the eleventh century. Therefore the references to Romanians in *Oghuzname* and in the interpolations in the Armenian chronicle, however interesting they may be, do not refer to the ninth century, but to a subsequent period. The arguments invoked by the historians who see the ethnonym *Ulak* referring to a population from the Urals and the Volga area\(^ {124}\) rather than the Romanians, do not seem to be convincing.

There is also Oriental information about the Romanians in which specialists have not been very much interested. In that respect, we may mention the passages from the chronicles of Mutahhar al-Maqdisi and Ibn al-Nadim as outstanding representatives of the tenth-century Arab historiography.

In the former Arab chronicle one can find the following statement: “they say that in the Turks’ neighbourhood there are the Khazars, Russians, Slavs, Waladj, Alans, Greeks and many other peoples that look like them.”\(^ {125}\) The same chronicle specifies that—in comparison with the Slavs and the Russians—the Waladj and Alans were “not very numerous.”\(^ {126}\) Without suggesting any identification with a specific east-European ethnic group and without providing other arguments,
Clément Huart, the editor and translator into French of Mutahhar al-Maqdisi assumed that Waladj referred to a population on the Volga. Some specialists believe however that the above-mentioned ethnonym designated the Wallachians, that is the Romanians, taking into account that Waladj are mentioned together with other peoples living in eastern and south-eastern Europe.

The author of a valuable Index of Arabian books (Kitāb al-Fihrist), Abu’l Faradj Muhammad b. Abi Ya’kub Ishak al-Warrak al-Baghdadi, known under the name of Ibn al-Nadim, stated that “the Turks, the Bulgar, the Blaghā’, the Burghaz, the Khazar, the Llān (Alans-?), and the types with small eyes and extreme blondness have no script, except the Bulgarians and the Tibetans write with Chinese and Manichaean, whereas the Khazar write Hebrew”. As B. Dodge (the editor and the translator of the scholar of Baghdad) intuited, the ethnonym Blaghā could refer to Wallachians/Romanians. Considering the long distance of the Arab author from the Carpathian-Balkan territories, it is not surprising that their names were slightly distorted.

At the end of the ninth century and during the tenth century the narrative and archaeological sources attest to the presence of the Tivertsians and the Croatians in the middle and in the superior basin of the Dniester, respectively, a fact that supposes direct contacts between those populations and the Romanians. The Kievan chronicle, The Primary Chronicle (the so-called Nestor letopis’) in its Laurentian version, points out that the Ulichians and the Tivertsians settled on the Dniester, spreading up to the Danube, and that previously they had inhabited the area between the Dniester and the Black Sea. At the same time, their large number is evoked, as well as the fact that they had possessed fortresses, whose traces were still visible at the moment when the chronicle was elaborated, i.e. at the beginning of the twelfth century. In other manuscripts of the chronicle the indications on the settlement of the

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130 Ibidem, p. 37 with n. 82.
131 PVL, I, p. 14; Лаврентиевская летопись, in PSRL, I (St. Petersburg, 1846), p. 5.
two populations differ, in the respect that they are presented as situated on the South Bug and the Dnieper, from where they are said to have spread up to the Danube. But according to the tradition recorded in other chronicles, the Ulichians and the Tivertsians initially lived on the Dnieper, subsequently shifting and settling between the South Bug and the Dniester, a piece of information that Lubor Niederle considers to be more exact than the others. In spite of the alteration of the original text of some chronicles by copyists, by collecting all the data they comprise and by taking into account the results of archaeological investigations of the last decades, we can conclude that the Ulichians and the Tivertsians had gradually moved west, to the South Bug and the Dniester.

The origin and settlement of these two tribes has been dated earlier by much of the literature, due especially to the laconism and ambiguity of the available written sources. If there have been no restraints concerning the appurtenance of the Ulichians to the southern group of the eastern Slavs, the hypotheses related to the origin of the Tivertsians have gained a much more varied character due, of course, to the unusual name the chronicle mentions for them: тиверцы, яже суть толковины. In regard to the meaning of the term толковины, most scholars have interpreted the term as translators/interpreters. By starting from that point, the conclusion has been drawn that the Tivertsians were bilingual. Quite recently it has been reconsidered that the short passage reproduced above must have been altered because of the subsequent abbreviations and distortions, so that its reconstruction in translation—which we do not share—would be like this: The Tivertsians who are called Scythians by some people.

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132 Ip.let.-2, col. 9.
133 NPL, p. 109. See also PVL, II, p. 226.
134 Niederle, Manuel, I (see above, n. 115), p. 216.
In addition to the generalized opinions, according to which the Tivertsians appear to have belonged to the southern branch of the eastern Slavs, or to have represented a hybrid ethnic group with a dominant Slavic component, other suppositions have also been put forth whose unusual character makes them unacceptable. Among other things, it has been considered that the Tivertsians were of Turkic\textsuperscript{139} or of Thracian\textsuperscript{140} origin. The name \textit{tolkoviny} that suggests the Tivertsians’ bilingualism might be due to the existence of mixed ethnic elements in the area occupied by them, those elements possibly containing an older Daco-Roman stock to which an east-Slavic component was added. For the time being it is difficult to specify whether that component had remained in the Dniester basin since the times of the Antes’ migration,\textsuperscript{141} or penetrated there during the ninth century. At any rate, the name of \textit{translators/interpreters} was not given to the Tivertsians for their knowledge of Greek,\textsuperscript{142} a language with which they could not have possibly been in contact. Instead, their qualities of translators must refer to their knowledge of Romanian, a language which would have been easy to learn from a neighbouring population.

In all probability one must associate the Tivertsians with the archaeological monuments dated between the ninth and the eleventh centuries and situated between the Dniester and the Râut rivers. These are fortified and open settlements, as well as cemeteries, some of them with barrows. Hillforts such as those at Alcedar (Şoldăneşti county), Echimăuți (Rezina county), Lucășeua (Orhei county), Rudi (Soroca county) and Țareuca (Rezina county) (Republic of Moldova) have earthen ramparts with palisades and deep moats. The archaeological evidence includes various iron tools and weapons, bronze and silver jewels, and Arab dirhams. The Slavic character of the communities established between the middle course of the Dniester and the Râut rivers is evident not only from the settlement finds with multiple analogies in other regions of eastern Europe, but also from the cremation graves in barrows, such as those discovered at Alcedar and Rudi, of a


\textsuperscript{140} Boldur, “The enigma” (see above, n. 136), \textit{passim}; idem, \textit{La Grande Thrace}, I (Madrid, 1980), pp. 53, 61, 139, 140, 195, and 201.

\textsuperscript{141} V. V. Sedov, \textit{Восточные славяне в VI–XIII вв.} (Moscow, 1982), p. 129.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibidem.

Towards the end of the ninth century the Kievan Principality continued its work of unifying the east-Slavic tribes. In a relatively short period of time its domination spread over the Drevlianians, the Severians, the Radimichi, and others. Among the tribes attacked by Oleg’s armies there were also those of the Ulichians and Tivertsians, an event which the Kievan chronicle fixed as having taken place in 885, without specifying the result of the war.\footnote{PVL, I, p. 21; Ip.let.-2, col. 17.} In any case, in 907 and 944, when Oleg and Igor started their expeditions against Byzantium, the Tivertsians were among the tribes that accompanied them,\footnote{PVL, I, pp. 23, 33; Ip.let.-2, col. 21, 34.} a piece of evidence indicating that between 885 and 907 they were included in the sphere of Kiev’s political influence. Being on the side of the Rus’ was not always the result of military defeat. Sometimes, such a political choice was a deliberate attempt to seek allies against the Pechenegs.

The same thing did not happen with the Ulichians, who were not among the participants in the above-mentioned campaigns. They had probably succeeded—although they lived much closer to Kiev—in maintaining their independence until 940, when a war that lasted three years put an end to their resistance, and resulted in the conquest of their capital Peresechen.\footnote{NPL, pp. 110, 436, 516. On the inadvertencies that appear in chronicles regarding the date of Peresechen’s occupation, see Spinei, Молдова, p. 71 with n. 10.} Already during the last century the residence of the Ulichians was identified as the village Peresechina, situated near Orhei (Orhei county).\footnote{N. Nadezhdin, “О местоположении древняго города Пересечена, принадлежавшаго народу угличамъ,” ЗОО 1 (1844), pp. 235, 245 and 256; Niederle, Manuel, I, p. 217; V. V. Mavrodin, Образование древнерусского государства (Leningrad, 1945), p. 237; E. A. Rikman, “Особенности исторического развития населения Карпато-Дунайских и Карпато-Дniestровских земель в X–XI вв.,” in История Молдавской ССР, I, gen. ed. L. V. Cherepinin (Kishinev, 1965), pp. 67–68.} At the same time, some maintained that Ulichians moved into the Bugeac, a name which in several Turkic languages means “corner,” the meaning of the Slavic word угол from which the
name of the Ulichians was supposed to derive.\textsuperscript{148} However, according to subsequent investigations, the residence of the Ulichians had nothing to do with the above-mentioned village in central Bessarabia, but was rather situated on the Stugna, right-bank tributary of the Dnieper.\textsuperscript{149} That settlement was also mentioned on the “list of the ancient and new Russian towns,” made at the end of the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{150} The evidence from archaeological excavations does not support the idea that Peresecina was ever a tribal centre: although materials dated to the end of the first millennium have been found in that settlement near Orhei,\textsuperscript{151} they have nothing to do with a tribal residence or any kind of fortified settlement.

Though it has been clearly established that the residence town of Ulichians was not in Bessarabia, an idea has arisen recently that the above-mentioned ninth-eleventh century vestiges between the Răut and the Dniester, as well as those between the South Bug and the Dniester, represent the Ulichians as well.\textsuperscript{152} Along the same line, finds that represent the Balkan-Danubian (= Dridu) culture were considered to belong to Tivertsians.\textsuperscript{153} Such conclusions have no credibility, taking into consideration the unity of the Dridu culture in all Carpathian-Danubian regions, and the fact that the Tivertsians could not possibly have spread over all of that space. In the present stage of investigation, the thesis according to which the Tivertsians lived between the Răut and the Dniester rivers and the left bank of the Middle Dniester, while the Ulichians occupied territories of the middle basin of the South Bug\textsuperscript{154} is the most trustworthy.


\textsuperscript{151} I. Hâncu, Vetre strămoșești din Republica Moldova. Materiale arheologice informativ-didactice (Chișinău, 2003), p. 312.

\textsuperscript{152} Fedorov, “Древнерусская культура” (see above, n. 143), pp. 109–110.


The withdrawal of some Ulichians—after the defeat of 940, as it has been supposed—to the west, up to the regions occupied by the Tivertsians between the Răut and the Dniester, does not appear to us to be sufficiently sustainable. Such a migration to lands on the left bank of the Dniester is not convincingly reflected in the archaeological finds that have thus far been investigated. On the other hand, during the mid-tenth century, the Oultines (Οὐλτίνοι) (= Ulichians), the Drevliani (= Drevlianians) and the Lenzenines (Λένζενινοι) (= Poles) were mentioned among the Slavic peoples tributary to the Rus’s, with the specification that they bordered on the Pecheneg “theme” of Javdi-Ertim (δέμα Ἰαβδιερτίμ). Taking into account the Drevliani’s existence on the right of the Middle Dniester, between the Goryn basin and the river Ros, as well as the position of the other Pecheneg tribes, the settlement of the Ulichians west of the Dniester becomes even less credible.

In regard to the political status of the Tivertsians’ territories in the tenth century, one can estimate that a full control of the Kievan Rus’ was not possible there, because those boundaries included the Ulichians, who were not among the subjects of the Riurikid rulers. The fact that, after their defeat of 940, the Ulichians took refuge between the South Bug and the Dniester, shows that that area was not under Kievan domination. It is obvious that the Tivertsians’ territory between the Dniester and the Răut rivers could not be efficiently controlled either.

Between the ninth and eleventh centuries, in northern Moldavia the Romanians and the Tivertsians had Croats (хорваты) as their neighbours, who lived on the upper courses of the Dniester and Prut rivers. The specification of the chronicle that the Croats accompanied Oleg in his expedition to the Bosporus in 907 is a sign that they had been under Kievan influence. The situation of the political relations appears to have changed in the subsequent decades, because the Croats were not among the allies of Kiev in 944. With the intention of imposing his authority on the Croats, prince Vladimir (Volodimer)

136 PVL, I, p. 23.
decided to wage war against them in 992.\footnote{Ibidem, p. 84.} The archaeological finds assigned to the Croats over the upper basin of the Prut include cremation cemeteries, some of them with barrows, as well as open and fortified settlements.\footnote{I. P. Rusaniowa, B. A. Timoshchuk, Древнерусское Поднестровье (Uzhgorod, 1981), pp. 34–36; Sedov, Восточные славяне, pp. 123–129; Mikhailina, Слов'яни VIII–X ст. (see above, n. 149), pp. 60–74.} The latter have close analogies with the fortified centres at Fundu Herței and Dersca (Botoșani county, Romania), in both building system and finds.\footnote{M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, D. Gh. Teodor, and V. Spinei, “Les principaux résultats des fouilles archéologiques de Fundu Herței (Roumanie, départ. de Botoșani),” Archeologia Polski 16 (1971), pp. 363–383; D. Gh. Teodor, “Les établissements fortifiés des régions est-carpathiques de la Roumanie aux VIIIᵉ–XIᵉ siècles de notre ère,” Slovenská archeológia 26 (1978), no. 1, pp. 69–77; M. Petrescu-Dîmbovița, D. Gh. Teodor, Sisteme de fortașătă medievale timpuri la est de Carpații. Așezarea de la Fundu Herții (Iași, 1987).}

In the tenth century, while waging wars against Slavic and Finnic tribes, the Kievan Rus’ also embarked upon several plundering raids on the Lower Volga, the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea, the most famous ones being those against Byzantium. After the first attack, organized in 860/866 by Askold and Dir, the ones of Oleg in 907 and of Igor in 941 and 944 followed.\footnote{PVL, I, pp. 19, 23–29, and 33–39; Ip.let.-2, col. 15, 21–31, and 33–35. See also G. Laehr, Die Anfänge des russischen Reiches (offprint from Historische Studien, 189) (Berlin, 1930); M. V. Levchenko, Очерки по истории русско-византийских отношений (Moscow, 1956), pp. 91–171; I. Sorîn, “Les traités de Byzance avec la Russie au Xᵉ siècle (I) (II),” Cahiers de Monde Russe et Soviétique 2 (1961), no. 3, pp. 313–360; no. 4, pp. 447–475; V. T. Pashuto, Внешняя политика Древней Руси (Moscow, 1968), pp. 57–89.} If Oleg’s action and that of Igor in 941 were based only on naval forces, Igor’s second expedition and Sviatoslav’s later campaigns in the Balkans were more complex, because they went by both sea and land. The Kievan expeditions to the imperial city, just as the commercial ships, followed “the route from the Varangians to the Greeks” along the north and west coasts of the Black Sea, with landings on the Moldavian and Dobrudjan shores. Coinciding in time with the strengthening of the Pecheneg tribal confederacy in the steppe lands north of the Black Sea, the success of both the warlike and the commercial expeditions of the Rus’ depended upon relations with the new lords of the steppe. The region of the Dnieper rapids, which the Rus’ could cross only by land, was the most vulnerable segment of the trade route between Scandinavia, Kiev and Constantinople, the point where that route could be strangulated in case relations with the Turkic nomads deteriorated.
The shift of Pecheneg power to the steppe lands north of the Black Sea in the last years of the ninth century was a consequence of the destruction of the Pecheneg camps in the Volga region by the Uzes allied with the Khazars. Through driving away the Hungarians in the area of Atelkuzu/Etelkuzu, the Pechenegs realised the possibility of a great enlargement of the territories they could control. A sudden conquest of the whole area where their enemies had lived is certainly difficult to imagine. In any case, in the first years of the tenth century the Pechenegs groups had already approached the Danube.

The Pechenegs also attacked the Transylvanian principality ruled by Gelou, which prevented Gelou from organizing the defence against the Hungarians: dux [...] Geleou [...] non [...] auderent stare contra audatiam Hungarorum, quia a Cumani et Piconatis multas iniurias paterentur. Although this piece of information has not been given much attention in modern historical literature, it is must be considered as credible, because the Pechenegs' mobility and military capacity are well-known. Unlike Gelou, who was attacked at the same time from two sides, Glad must have asked the Pechenegs for help, in order to face the Hungarian attacks. According to the Gesta Hungarorum, Glad’s army included Cumans, besides Bulgars and Romanians. Cumani is a name, which the chronicler probably used in lieu of Pechenegs. During the subsequent centuries, the presence of the latter is also recorded in Banat, where it left traces in toponymy. The Pecheneg contacts with Gelou’s and Glad’s principalities must have taken place before 907, the year of Arpad’s death. To reach the principalities in intra-Carpathian Transylvania and Banat, the Pechenegs had moved through Romanian outer-Carpathian regions, and then through mountain passes.

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162 Anonymous, p. 66.

163 Ibidem, p. 90.

A letter of Nicholas Mysticus, the patriarch of Constantinople, reveals that before the Byzantine-Bulgarian war of 917 broke, the Bulgarian ruler Symeon had sent several messengers to the Pechenegs, in order to convince them to come on his side against the Byzantines. Matrimonial alliances were contracted for that purpose. From John Bogas, the strategos (general-governor) of Chersonesus, or directly from the Pecheneg envoys, the Byzantine court learnt about those manoeuvres, and, by means of lavish gifts, it managed to discomfit Symeon’s actions and to bring the nomads on the Byzantine. The fact that the Turanians were not mentioned as being close to the Danube (a situation that recalls that of the Hungarians about a quarter of a century before), but in Crimea, would be a sign that their main forces were rather far from the river.

The Byzantine efforts of co-operation with the Pechenegs proved to be in vain, because the latter decided to withdraw and because of the disagreements that arose when the Byzantine fleet intended to cross the Danube. Deprived of that valuable help, the imperial armies were defeated by Symeon in the battle near the river Acheloos on the August 20, 917. An interesting piece of information about that battle was given by a Greek hagiographic sources about a miracle of St George. It was written perhaps in the tenth century by an unknown author; perhaps a monk named Markos. That writing enumerates the Hungarians, Scythians, Moesians and Turks among the allies of the Bulgars. The second ethnic names, Scythians, may very well refer to the Pechenegs, but if so, then the battle mentioned in the source was not that of 917, about whose development other Byzantine sources...

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167 Theophanes continuatus (see above, n. 48), pp. 389–390; Symeon Magister (see above, n. 25), pp. 722 and 724; Georgius Monachus (see above, n. 30), p. 879; Leo Grammaticus (see above, n. 24), pp. 295–296; Skylitzes, pp. 201–205; Kedrenos, II, pp. 283–288; Zonaras (see above, n. 48), col. 85–88; PVL, I, pp. 31–32.


provide quite different data. The unsuccessful attempt to co-operate with the Pechenegs in 917 did not discourage the politicians of Constantinople, which was directly threatened by Symeon’s armies. A few years later there were negotiations with various populations, “whether Turks (= Hungarians), or Alans, or Pechenegs, or Russians, or other Scythian nations,” in order to turn them against the Bulgars, if needed. The alliances with those populations were maintained by subsidies.\textsuperscript{171}

In the following years new motions of the Pechenegs towards the west were recorded. They now had a good opportunity to cross through the plain of southern Moldavia. Thus, for the year 932 (actually 934) an oriental source mentions the Pechenegs joining Hungarians and Bulgarians in an raid against Byzantium,\textsuperscript{172} which may have been planned by the Bulgarian ruler. That is the oldest certain narrative source about a crossing of the Danube by the Pechenegs, an expedition that corresponds with their first raid against Byzantium.

In 944 southern Moldavia was troubled by Igor’s troops that passed through there in order to meet their naval forces at the mouths of the Danube, from where they were to continue their advance to Constantinople separately. The Kievan prince was accompanied by forces from the Slavic tribes and from the Varangians, to which the Pecheneg groups were added. The gold and other gifts sent to the Rus’ and to the Pechenegs by the emperor, as well as the promise of periodical stipends, convinced Igor to give up continuing his expedition. Before returning he urged the Pechenegs to attack Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{173} We do not know if the nomads followed the prince’s advice. Instead, we have testimonies that, before the middle of the tenth century, they launched more raids into Bulgaria and White Croatia,\textsuperscript{174} thus crossing Bugeac and the Romanian Plain many times.

Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (945–959), who recorded that information in his famous teaching book dedicated to his son (the future emperor Romanus II), gives very valuable data both for the knowledge of ethnical and political realities, and for the historical geography of his time, taken from various sources. Since Herodotus and Strabo no other sources had provided such precise information about the steppe

\textsuperscript{172} Maçoudi, \textit{Les Prairies d’or}, II (see above, n. 11), pp. 58–64; Marquart, \textit{Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge} (see above, n. 1), pp. 61–63.
\textsuperscript{174} \textit{DAI}, I, pp. 52–53, 152–153.
lands north of the Black Sea. The book advised the future ruler what to do in case of conflicts with other peoples, and it revealed the refinement and the “Machiavellism” of the Byzantine diplomacy, which continued and improved Roman methods. The enemies’ attacks had to be stopped not only by force, but also by subsidies or by setting other peoples against them, according to the doctrine *divide et impera*. The work of the emperor is important because it discloses the great hegemonic ambitions and the amplitude of Byzantium’s political actions at a moment when its military forces had weakened, when the confrontation with the Islamic world was unresolved, and when the rise of the other empire of Europe, the Holy Roman Empire, could be anticipated. One of the concerns of Constantinople was to ensure the protection of Chersonesus, a territory in Crimea with an important strategic position, from where its influence spread all over the Black Sea area. The role of mediator that the Empire assumed in that area enabled the Byzantine emperors to obtain allies, to hire mercenaries and to establish profitable commercial relationships.

The conclusion of the compromise peace with Kievan Rus’ in 944 and of the treaty of 945 was at least partly a consequence of the Empire’s fears of a prolonged alliance of the Rus’, the Pechenegs and the Bulgarians against Byzantium. It is perhaps in connection with that situation that the date of the mission led by the prelate Gabriel to the Hungarians, in order to win them over against the Pechenegs, must be established. The persisting memory of the catastrophe in Atelkuzu prevented the Hungarian rulers from responding to the Byzantine instigations.

The most revealing information concerning the space controlled by the Pechenegs north of the Lower Danube is the one provided by Constantine Porphyrogenitus. Although the data about that people came from different sources—which he could not, or did not try to corroborate—, they do coincide in most of their essential aspects. As already mentioned above, the Pechenegs had taken from the Hungarians the region called Atelkuzu/Etelkuzu (Ατελκούζου or Έτελκούζο), whose western part was crossed by the rivers *Trullos* (= Dniester),

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176 *DAI*, I, pp. 56–57.
Brutos and Seretos.\textsuperscript{177} In a chapter of his work that did not have the same source of documentation, the emperor mentions that the rivers Danastris, Sarat and Burat (Δάναστρις, Σαράτ, Βούρατ) flowed through Patzinakia (Πατζινακία), which makes it possible to see those three names as referring to what is known as the Dniester, the Siret and the Prut. At the same time it was specified that Patzinakia stretched from the bank opposite Distra (modern Silistra) to Sarkel on the Don.\textsuperscript{178} From other excerpts we can find that the zone controlled by the Pechenegs was situated only half a day’s walk from Bulgaria, from which it was separated by the Danube.\textsuperscript{179}

Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus’ account of Patzinakia is confirmed by other tenth-century sources. Thus, the Jewish traveller Abraham Jakobsen (Ibrahim ibn Yakub), whose travel notes were kept in the Arab transcription of al-Bakri, knew that “Constantinople was situated south of Bulgaria; north of it were the Pechenegs.”\textsuperscript{180} According to a more recent translation the author appears to have referred not to the Pechenegs, but to their country, Patzinakia (Bádžánákija),\textsuperscript{181} which does not change the content of the matter in its essence. The Pechenegs were also presented as inhabiting territories beyond the north frontiers of the Byzantine Empire by the geographer Ibn Hauqal, who took into account the situation during the reign of Nicephorus II Phocas (963–969).\textsuperscript{182} An entry in the so-called Suidas lexicon drawn up at some point during the second half of the tenth century, claims that Dacians were now called Pechenegs.\textsuperscript{183} This can only mean that the Pechenegs were ruling over the lands of ancient Dacia, which were inhabited at that time by Romanians.\textsuperscript{184} In the early twelfth century,
another lexicon compiled by John Zonaras reproduce the note in the Suidas and claimed that the Pechenegs “had been called Dacians in earlier times”.185

The so-called *Josippon*—a Hebrew historical work written in southern Italy in the mid-tenth century, perhaps in 953—186—mentions the fact that “the Hungarians, the Bulgars and the Pechenegs dwelt on the great river called Danube”.187 The anonymous author referred, of course, to the Pechenegs established on the left bank of the river, in the southern Moldavia and Wallachia. Bishop Liudprand of Cremona may have had the same group in mind when writing about the northern peoples. He had become accustomed to the political reality ever since his first diplomatic mission to Byzantium in 949–950. The Lombard prelate recorded in one of his works, which contained various memoirs, that to the north from Constantinople were many warlike peoples, such as Hungarians, Pechenegs, Khazars, Rus’ (whom he called Normans) and Bulgars (Constantinopolitana urbs, quae prius Bizantium, nova nunc dicitur Roma, inter ferocissimas gentes est constituta. Habet quippe ab aquilone Hungarios, Pizenacos, Chazaros, Rusios, quos alio nos nomine Nordmannos apellamus, atque Bulgarios nimium sibi vicinos).188 That Patzkinakia (Πατζινακία) was adjacent to the Byzantine Empire is also mentioned in a military treatise composed in Constantinople in the early eleventh century.189

The news about the rapacious raids of the Pechenegs spread to central Europe as well. Consequently, they were promptly blamed for the martyrdoms of St Adalbert, bishop of Prague, and of St Bruno, bishop of Augsburg (known as Bruno of Querfurt), in the late tenth

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and early eleventh century, respectively. In reality, both men died while on mission to the Prussians.

The data above show that the Pechenegs had extended their political domination westward, up to the Bărăgan. Records on the repeated incursions into the Balkans beginning with 934 prove that the what Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus had to say about them had in fact happened at least ten years before he committed the information to writing. The continuation of Dridu-culture settlements after the middle of the tenth century does not preclude the nomads’ presence in the outer-Carpathian space. Even if the Turkic tribes’ migration was accompanied by great ravages and depopulation, it could not have possibly lead to a total displacement of local sedentary communities. Actually, in the outer-Carpathian regions, settlements of the Dridu type coexist with Pecheneg burial assemblages dated to the tenth and eleventh centuries. Also, in some of the native settlements various nomadic objects were found, a fact that suggests some kind of relationships with the migratory peoples.

Until the first half of the eleventh century, when the Uzes drove the Pechenegs away from the left bank of the Dnieper, the latter controlled the whole area north of the Black Sea, a quite large territory. Therefore, they may not have needed the strip of steppe stretching from the Bugeac to the Bărăgan, which was good for grazing, but which, unlike the steppe lands to the east from the Dniester River, was populated by agricultural communities. Archaeology shows clear differences between the left and the right banks of the Lower Dniester during the whole period between the ninth and the eleventh century. There are multiple settlements on the right bank (Fig. 2), every one of which was inhabited by people involved in agriculture, while the opposite bank has only a small number of settlements, linking this area to that between the Dnieper and the Don rivers, the core region of the Saltovo-Maiaki culture. The use of the plains north of the Lower Danube as grazing fields must therefore have posed difficult problems.

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192 V. Spinei, “Relations of the local population of Moldavia with the nomad Turanian tribes in the 10th–13th centuries,” in Relations, pp. 265–276.
to the nomads. On one hand, they had to remove the sedentary, local population, and on the other hand they had to turn the agricultural fields into pasture lands. However, given the low population density in the region north of the Lower Danube, the presence of the local, Romanian population was no obstacle in the way of the Turkic horsemen bent on raiding the Balkans or the regions beyond the Carpathian Mountains. In other words, the Pechenegs had neither the need, nor the means of exterminating or removing the natives from the plain region, all the more as the latter could be forced into paying tribute. It is obvious that under such circumstances, a Bulgar rule in that region could have only been nominal.

In the second half of the tenth century, the Pechenegs’ constant offensive against the Tivertsians probably began, and continued into the eleventh century, when the violent destruction of the fortifications between the Dniester and the Răut took place. After these events it was supposed that part of the Tivertsians took refuge towards the north, in the Croats’ regions, where the nomad tribes’ incursions would take place later. Nowhere in the old Russian chronicles is any help given to the Tivertsians by the Kievan Rus’ recorded, which is another reason for rejecting the supposition that the lands between the Răut and the Dniester belonged to the above-mentioned principality. Since the Tivertsian fortified settlements were centres of resistance against the Pechenegs, it is possible that they would have become more of a target of the nomads’ attacks than mere civilian settlements would have been. The hillfort of Dridu type excavated in Calfa probably suffered a fate similar to that of the Tivertsian defensive constructions.

The last decades of the tenth century correspond to a sudden change in the political life of the Byzantine state, magnified by an increase in its prestige, economic stability, revival of trade and of urban life, reforms in the administrative structure, the strengthening of the terrestrial army and navy, cultural regeneration—all changes that followed the representatives of the Macedonian dynasty taking power. After a long period of both failures and successes, of reasonable or irrational


attitudes, the political forces of the Empire adopted incisive positions towards the enemies who had taken important territories from them in the previous centuries.

The offensive capacity of Byzantium could be shown in all its amplitude due to the exceptional aptitudes of certain army commanders, who later also acceded to the throne, through their own merits. Such commanders included Nicephorus II Phocas (963–969) and John I Tzimiskes (969–976). Byzantium concentrated its forces especially in the East, where they stopped the Arab expansion and restored the imperial administration in vast and rich regions, and then in the northern Balkans. Just like the Arab emirates, the Bulgar went through a period of decline during the unusually long reign of Peter (927–969), Symeon’s successor. The Byzantine-Bulgarian conflict—which broke out again in 967, because the Bulgars allowed the Hungarians to cross their territories in order to plunder the Empire, and because Nicephorus Phokas decided to pay no more annual subsidies—assumed greater proportions due to the Rus’, who became involved in the strife. As he paid special attention to the war in Syria, the emperor thought he would be able to put an end to the dissensions in the Balkans. His intention was to resort to an older precept of the Byzantine diplomacy, that of instigating other peoples against the enemies. For this purpose he asked for the help of the Kievan prince Sviatoslav.

The Byzantine plans for the Rus’ involvement in the Balkans proved to be a great political mistake, because—after Sviatoslav’s landing south of the Danube, in the summer of 968, and after his victories against the Bulgars—he no longer acted in the service of the Empire, but only for his own interests and ambitions. His offensive in Bulgaria had to be interrupted, because the Pechenegs besieged Kiev, their attack possibly being the result of the Byzantine diplomatic intervention. After driving the Turanians back to the steppes, Sviatoslav returned to Bulgaria the following year. The famous confession of the prince—recorded in the old Russian chronicle—about the reasons that led him back to

the Lower Danube, is extremely relevant in regard to the prosperity of the above-mentioned regions, and it contains elements that, aside from some anachronisms, cannot be suspected of inadvertency. The fulfilment of his projects of expansion appeared to be facilitated by several convergent factors: the Rus’ coalition with a part of the Bulgars, the anti-Byzantine incursions of the Hungarians and the Pechenegs, the disorders that had burst in the Empire after Nicephorus II Phokas’ assassination, and the extension of Byzantine military activities in the East and in Italy.

After repelling a Rus’ attack south of the Balkan Mountains, the Byzantine forces led by the new emperor, John I Tzimiskes, started to pursue the enemy, and they conquered fortress after fortress. Scholars have considered it to be one of the most brilliant campaigns in the military history of the Empire. Besieged at Dristra (Dorostolon) for three months both by the Byzantine land army and by the imperial navy, the Kievan prince was forced to sign a treaty that stipulated his obligation to give up the lands on the right bank of the Danube, which now came under Byzantine control, after three centuries since the disappearance of the Roman administration from that area. On his way back to his own country, along the “route from the Varangians to the Greeks,” Sviatoslav was ambushed and killed by the Pechenegs at the rapids of the Dnieper in 972. The Pechenegs’ attitude of duplicity towards the Rus’, and their pendulation from neutrality and alliance to hostile positions, depended on the ability of the parties involved in the conflict to gain their benevolence.

196 PVL, I, p. 48. See also Nik.let., I, p. 34.
The result of John Tzimiskes’ campaign in the summer of 971 was also of a great importance for the outer-Carpathian area, which became a direct neighbour of the Byzantine Empire. Thus the Romanians on the left bank of the Danube could establish close commercial, confessional and political contacts with the Balkan centres. According to Greek sources, already during the siege of Dristra, emissaries of some fortresses north of the Danube came to the emperor to ask for his protection. The emperor agreed and sent garrisons to occupy the fortifications. On the left bank of the river, in the vicinity of Dristra, the only strongholds so far identified by means of archaeological excavations are the three fortresses at Slon (Prahova county, Romania). Located at the entrance through one of the most important mountain passes across the southern Carpathians, Tabla Buții, the three forts are made of stone and brick, with several building phases. It is difficult to decide whether these were fortresses where Byzantine garrisons were stationed. Some believe that the forts were built by Bulgars before the war between John Tzimiskes and Sviatoslav while others see the stronghold at Slon as the seat of a proto-Romanian dynasty of rulers. In addition, it has been proposed that the earliest fortress of Slon might have been built for the Bulgars by their Adrianopolitans prisoners of war, who had been moved into this area by Krum. Within the precincts of the fortress, some runic


\[\text{198 Skylitzes, p. 301; Kedrenos, II, p. 401.}


inscriptions have been found,203 which have analogies on sites south of the Danube. That may indicate a Bulgar presence in the region.

Once the war was over, John I Tzimiskes began the administrative and military reorganization of the newly conquered territories. Besides a thema named Paristrion or Paradunavon and covering the eastern parts of Bulgaria, a strategia of Western Mesopotamia (Μεσοποταμία τῆς Δύσεως) was set up in the vicinity of the Danube Delta. According to some historians, at least part of the latter’s territory lay north of the mouths of the Danube, in the Bugeac,204 a hypothesis which has been meanwhile rejected. In any case, though there is semantic coincidence between Mesopotamia and Atelkuzu, it is impossible for anyone to admit their geographical identity. Western Mesopotamia was probably situated in northern Dobrudja.205

Because of the civil wars that broke out in the Empire after John I Tzimiskes’ death in 976, parts of his conquests were lost. The so-called rebellion of the Comitopouloi erupted in Bulgaria, led by the brothers David, Moses, Aaron and Samuel—sons of a comes. Because the other three died in the course of the struggle, the leadership of the Tsardom was taken by the enterprising Samuel, who, during some


decades, succeeded in restoring and consolidating the Tsardom, whose power nucleus shifted towards the central regions of the Balkans. The account of the rebellion of the Comitopouloi related in the chronicle of John Skylitzes, written in the late eleventh century, includes one of the earliest attestations of the Vlachs south of the Danube. Even if the information about the Vlachs did not belong to John Skylitzes himself, it remains credible, since the interpolation appears to have used sources contemporary with the events.\textsuperscript{206}

\textit{Eleventh Century}

After defeating the inner rebellions and after appeasing the conflicts with the Arab emirs in favour of the Empire, Basil II (976–1025) became more and more insistent in regard to Balkan problems. In 1001 the armies led by the patrician Theodorokanos and by the protospatharius Xiphias regained the main fortresses in the eastern part of Bulgaria. In the following years, the anti-Bulgarian campaigns continued until the decisive victory at Kimba Longos (Κιμβα Λόγγος) in 1014, the conquests of Ochrid, the Tsardom’s capital, and then the last Bulgarian possessions in 1018.\textsuperscript{207} When the ecclesiastical organization of the con-


quered territories took place in 1020, among the suffragan dioceses of the archbishop from Ochrid there was the one set up especially for the Vlachs of the former Bulgarian state, which was also maintained under Alexius I (1081–1118). It is very likely that its influence extended over the north-Danubian Romanian territories as well.

The Byzantine presence in the northern Balkans during the reign of the powerful Emperor Basil II, later nicknamed Bulgaroktonos (“Bulgarian-Slayer”), a period of spectacular increase of the Empire in both size and power, brought peace to the whole Lower Danube area, which was not to be disturbed any more by riotous Turanian hordes. No invasion of Pechenegs is recorded during the long reign of Basil II. A short time before the Bulgarians’ final capitulation, in 1018, they could obtain the Pechenegs’ promise to attack the Byzantines.209 The planned invasion never took place, as it was thwarted by the diplomacy of Constantinople. The extension of the period of peace with the nomads is probably due to the renewal of the peace treaty concluded in 971 between the Byzantines and Pechenegs,210 in the last stage of the war against Sviatoslav.

During the reign of Basil II a big success of Byzantine proselytism occurred, with important consequences for the history of eastern Europe: the conversion of the Rus’ under Prince Vladimir, an event which, according to chronicles, took place in 988.211 During the following decades and centuries, Christianity spread from Kievan Rus’ to the other eastern Slav tribes. Taking into account that in the area between the rivers Răut and Dniester, as well as on the Upper Prut, inhumations began to replace cremations in barrows, it is very likely that Christianity was also adopted by Tivertsians and Croats.212 Shortly after the conversion of the Rus’, the Hungarian conversion also took


211 PVL, I, pp. 80–82; Nik.let., I, p. 54.

212 Timoshchuk, Пивнична Буковина (see above, n. 143), pp. 120–121; Fedorov, “Древнерусская культура” (see above, n. 143), p. 125.
place, ca. 1000, followed by the war King Stephen I waged against the Transylvanian prince Gyula, his uncle, who had refused to accept Christianity.\textsuperscript{213} As a result of all those developments, most peoples around the Romanians became Christian, with the only exception of the nomads in the steppe lands north of the Black Sea. The southern and eastern Slavs adopted the Byzantine, the Hungarians the Roman rite. In this way, the confessional isolation of the Romanians disappeared. Because Old Church Slavonic had been recognized as a sacred language much like Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, it was adopted as liturgical and state language by most powers in the Carpatho-Danubian area. Consequently, Old Church Slavonic was also adopted by the church and the chancery of the Romanian principalities to emerge in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. That language remained in use among Romanians for century, a phenomenon still insufficiently studied and understood.

Whenever they had to face the prestige of the Empire, whose forces were displayed along the Danube line, marked by newly built or rebuilt stone fortresses,\textsuperscript{214} the Pechenegs showed much caution, preferring to realise their expansive capacity in other directions. The confrontations with Kievan Rus’ were especially frequent, combined with interferences in the quarrels between different Rus’ principalities, or between different feudal parties. The Polish king Boleslav the Brave (Chrobry) secured an alliance with the Pechenegs’ (Pezinei, Pedunci, Petinei, Pecinegi) during his conflicts with the Rus’, in 1013 and 1018.\textsuperscript{215}

Both the Pechenegs and the Romanians were engaged in the disputes for the Kievian throne, beginning with 1015, when Vladimir died. The most interesting references concerning this event can be found in an Icelandic source, \textit{Eymundar páttr/saga}, preserved in a transcription dated to the end of the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{216} By cross-referencing the data

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{216} On the historical importance of the information contained in the \textit{Eymundar saga}, see S. H. Cross, “Yaroslav the Wise in Norse tradition,” \textit{Speculum} 4 (1929), pp.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
of the Russian *Primary Chronicle* with those of the above-mentioned saga, one can check the trustworthiness of the information recorded in the latter source. The information must have been obtained by the Icelandic author(s) of the saga from Scandinavian mercenaries in the service of Rus’ princes. According to *Eymundar páttr/saga*, during the struggle for power, Burizleifr, identified as Sviatopolk, appears to have taken refuge in Tyrkland, were he gathered a great army made up of “Turks, Wallachians and a good many other nasty people” (*Tyrkîr ok Blökumenn, ok morg önnur ill pjöð*).\(^{217}\) Despite such assistance for his war against Jarizleifr (= Iaroslav the Wise), it was the latter who eventually won. The Turks in the Icelandic saga must be identified as Pechenegs, among whom, according to the Russian chronicle, Sviatopolk found shelter. The battle in which Pechengs helped the Kievan pretender took place at Alta, in 1019.\(^{218}\)

As for *Blökumenn*, it was the name that designated the Romanians living in east-Carpathian regions. Sviatopolk could have come into contact with them either in 1015, when he chased his brother Sviatoslav up to the Carpathians, near the border with Hungary, or in 1018, when he himself had to flee to the Pechenegs.\(^{219}\) Since the Kievan prince did not extend his domination over regions inhabited by Romanians, the participation of the latter in the disputes for the Kievan throne must have been motivated, just as in the case of the Pechenegs, by rewards. The name *Blökumenn* given to Romanians in *Eymundar páttr/saga* is almost identical with that attested in the eleventh-century runic inscription of Sjonhem, *Blakumen*. Both terms recall the *Blökumennaland* (which

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\(^{218}\) *PVL*, I, p. 97; *Nik.let.*, I, p. 176.

\(^{219}\) *PVL*, I, pp. 94, 97; *Nik.let.*, I, pp. 74–76.
designated the land of the Balkan Vlachs) mentioned in St Olaf's Saga and Heimskringla (“The Circle of the World”) written by the great Icelandic chronicler and skald Snorri Sturluson (1178–1241), as well as in Egils saga einhenda ok Ásmundar berserkjabana written in the early 1300s. Whereas Snorri Sturluson spoke about a “land” of the Romanians in the Balkans, the anonymous saga about Egil and Asmund mentioned a “land” situated in an indefinite area of eastern Europe. It is obvious that all the Scandinavian ethnonyms mentioned above refer to one and the same people, identified by most scholars as Romanians. Throughout the years other opinions have also been expressed, according to which the name of Blökumenn/Blakumen designated the Cumans, or the White or Black Cumans. But the contexts in which Blökumenn and Blakumen are mentioned make any reference to Cumans untenable. For example, the Blökumenn of the Æymundar páttr/saga appear in the context of events taking place in 1018 or 1019, several decades before the earliest appearance of the Cumans in the steppe lands north of the Black Sea.

The supposition that Blakumen and Blökumannaland are etymologically derived from some old German terms (blök/blak = “black”, Kuman, Kumen = “Cumans” and Land = “country”) is even less credible. As is known, in medieval German the Cumans were designated as Valken, so

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222 Sagan uf Eigli einhenda ok Asmundar berserkjabana, in Fornaldar sögur Nordlanda, III (Kaupmannahofn, 1830), p. 377; Egils saga einhenda ok Ásmundar berserkjabana, in Drei Lygisogur, ed. A. Lagerholm (Halle/Saale, 1927), p. 29.


for the Black Cumans a name such as *Blakvalwen would have been normal. Had the Varangians adopted the east-Slavic terminology—which would have been quite natural—or Byzantine or Latin names, then the name of the Black Cumans would have appeared as somewhat related to, or derived from черные половцы, μαυρο Κομανοι or cumanī nigri, respectively. Nothing like that is attested in the available sources. A mixed form, made up of a German adjective and a proper name from Greek or Latin is highly improbable. Thus one has to reject the idea that Blökumenn or Blakumen referred to any other people but the Vlachs.

At the beginning of the second quarter of the eleventh century the Pechenegs’ invasions in the Balkan Peninsula assumed greater frequency and amplitude. Such attacks against Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia took place in 1025/1027, 1032/1033, 1034, 1035 and 1036.228 In 1036, when three incursions against the Empire are recorded, the Pechenegs could also organize a great expedition against Kiev. Iaroslav the Wise returned to his capital with help from the Varangians and from the people of Novgorod; he defeated his enemies, so that they did not dare to attack Rus’ anymore,229 as they were also hindered by their clashes with the Uzes, as well as by their own intertribal disagreements. Records on their attacks against the Arpadian Hungary are fewer. That nomads were not familiar with the mountain passes may explain why the Pechenegs rarely crossed the Carpathians. At least one such raid into Transylvania took place during the reign of Stephen I (997–1038),230 and must have gone through one or many of the passes across the eastern Carpathians. According to Heinrich of Mügeln, the Pecheneg raid took place in 1028.231

The intensity and regularity of those raids indicate the considerable increase in the Pecheneg offensive capacity north of the Lower Danube, made possible by the nomads’ movement towards the Bugeac and the Bărăgan plains. The shift of the Pecheneg power from the left to the right bank of the Dnieper was a consequence of the pressure exerted by the Uzes, who, in their turn, had to move west from the steppes

231 Henric de Mügeln (see above, n. 54), pp. 109–111.
along the Volga, since they were pressed by the Cumans. In the period immediately preceding the mass migration of the Pechenegs into the Byzantine Empire, during the reign of Constantine IX Monomachus (1042–1055), the narrative sources mention several attacks of the Uzes against the Pechenegs. Those were repelled due especially to the efforts of Kegen, a skilful, yet minor chieftain. Unlike Kegen, Tyrach, the paramount chief of the Pechenegs, showed less courage, as he avoided a direct confrontation on the occasion of one of his enemies’ incursions, when he took refuge among the lakes and marshes of the Danube Delta.\(^ {232} \)

After the climax of the last years of the reign of Basil II, Byzantium encountered a period of political decline. The throne was taken in turn by a number of emperors who were representatives of the civilian aristocracy; they lacked both energy and the qualities necessary for strategy or diplomacy. That fact was immediately felt at the Lower Danube, where the Pechenegs’ devastating attacks came one after the other for a decade. At last, a treaty put an end to the Turanian invasions\(^ {233} \) and restored peace in the northern Balkans. But on the left bank of the Danube the Pechenegs’ migration certainly caused great disturbances, so that an important part of the local population had to move from the plain to the hilly regions protected by woods. Against the background of the latent crisis that affected Byzantium after Basil II’s death, the last attempt of the Rus’ to attack Constantinople took place in 1043. The expedition had the same route between Kiev and the Bosporus, off the Danube mouths. The Rus’ again had no chance of victory, because a storm sank part of their ships and made the task of the Byzantines easier.\(^ {234} \)

In the second quarter of the eleventh century, when the Uzes threat became inevitable, two Pecheneg groups, led by Kegen, refused to obey Tyrach’s supreme authority; but in the clashes with Tyrach’s superior

\(^ {232} \) Skylitzes, p. 455; Kedrenos, II, p. 582.


forces made up of eleven tribes, Kegen’s people were defeated and took refuge first in the Danube everglades, and then on an island near Dorostolon, situated, very probably, in the Ialomița marshes (Balta Ialomitei) of the Danube. As a consequence of the negotiations with Constantinople, the tribes led by Kegen were allowed to settle on the Danube frontier, the conditions being their conversion to Christianity, and service as allies of the Empire. Their integration in the Byzantine military system is proved, among other things, by two seals that have been published recently: one of them discovered at Durostorum (modern Silistra), and another whose place of discovery is not known. On their reverse there is the name of Ioannes Kegen, with his title as “magistros and archon of Patzinakia,” which indicates the bestowing of some military prerogatives in a territory conceded to the Turanians. The name of Ioannes was given to Kegen when, obliged by the imperial authorities, he agreed to be christened together with his companions. Between the Pechenegs on the opposite banks of the Danube the clashes continued. By invoking the treaties concluded with Byzantium long before, Tyrach asked the emperor to stop Kegen’s incursions to the left bank of the Danube. The Greek chronicles mention that, because his demand was not observed, Tyrach decided to invade the Empire. They also mention that the whole of the Pecheneg people moved over to Byzantium. However, both statements must be treated with caution.

On the one hand, the crossing of the bulk of the population led by Tyrach over the frozen Danube was a decision taken as a result of the impossibility of stopping the Uzes. Relevant in that respect is a passage in Michael Psellus’ chronicle (taken up by Anna Comnena), which describes the war of Isaac I Comnenus with the Pechenegs. Before narrating the battles proper, Michael Psellus reports that the whole people of the Missians had crossed the frozen Danube and had moved into the Empire because of the attacks of the Getæ.\footnote{Psellus, II, p. 125; Anne Comnène, Alexiade, I, ed. B. Leib (Paris, 1937), pp. 127–128.} Using the ancient names of Missians and Getæ, the Byzantine authors actually referred to the Pechenegs and the Uzes. Because the specifications regarding the settlement of all Missians (= Pechenegs) within the borders of Byzantium, and those referring to the crossing of the Danube on the ice are also found with the chroniclers who describe the Pecheneg exodus of 1046/1047, it is possible that both Michael Psellus and Anna Comnena referred to that event, even if in their text the episode under discussion appears to refer to Isaac I’s reign. The identification of the Getæ with the Romanians of Wallachia\footnote{I. Barnea, “Stăpânirea bizantină asupra Dobrogei între anii 971–1185: Thema Paristrion (Paradunavon),” in DID, III, p. 132.} is improbable; the latter did not have, by that time, the military capacity necessary to drive away the Pechenegs from the Lower Danube region. Nevertheless, that region did not provide security for Tyrach’s Pechenegs, which is demonstrated by the fact that they would not return there after having been defeated by the the Byzantine armies, and instead preferred to submit to the Empire.

Not all the Pecheneg forces accompanied Tyrach to the Balkans. Some groups of Pechenegs eluded Tyrach’s authority and decided to stay in the steppes; their presence there is mentioned in documentary sources from the second half of the eleventh and the twelfth century. The Pechenegs could not maintain their autonomy and were obliged to enter other Turkic tribal unions, or to offer their services to the Rus’ princes, who allowed them to settle at the borders of their states
in the vicinity of the steppes. Some Pecheneg groups continued to live side by side with the Oghuz/Uzes, after the latter, in alliance with the Khazars, had driven away the bulk of their forces from the Volga basin. The Pechenegs that did not leave the Volga territories were mentioned in 922 by the Arab traveller Ibn Fadlan. It is not very clear if the “barbarians”—supposed to be Pechenegs—who set about incursions into Hungary in 1053, belonged to the group of Turanians established in the Balkan Peninsula, or to the enclaves on the Lower Danube.

As for the Pechenegs who migrated into the Balkans, for four decades they represented a source of great troubles for the European provinces of Byzantium. By profiting from the general crisis of the Empire, from the incursions of the Seljuq Turks into Asia Minor, and from the effects of internal uprisings, the Pechenegs often refused to submit to the provincial governors and found support in local communities discontented with the Byzantine taxes, or they allied themselves with other nomadic groups who crossed the Danube for plunder. As a consequence of such a situation the Empire lost control over vast regions of Paristrion, for longer or shorter periods. Most of the praises addressed by Michael Psellus to Constantine IX Monomachus for the latter’s contribution to


246 *Vita Theodorici abbatis Andegavensis*, ed. W. Wattenbach, in *MGH,SS*, XII (1856), p. 44.

the Christianization and settlement of the Pechenegs were unfounded. Naturally, in the second half of the eleventh century the influence of Byzantium over the outer-Carpathian Romanian lands decreased at the same time as the strengthening of the nomadic Turkic tribes’ strategic positions.

The aggressive presence of the Pechenegs between the Danube and the Balkan Mountains brought about difficult problems for Byzantine authorities, so that their description—in a typikon of Gregory Pakourianos, written in December 1083 for the monastery of Bachkovo, near Philippopolis (modern Plovdiv)—does not appear as excessively exaggerated: “most terrible and most arrogant enemies, who set themselves not only against the Roman Empire, but also every race of Christians, whose defeat and complete destruction is altogether one of the most difficult things to set down in writing”.  

The usual discord-breeding Byzantine policy could not be applied efficiently in the Carpathian-Balkan regions between the reigns of Basil II and Alexius I Comnenus. On the contrary, the neighbours of the Empire often united their forces when planning incursions across the Danube. Isaac I Comnenus (1057–1059) was forced to react to such a joint raid, planned by the Hungarians and the Pechenegs of Paristrion. First the emperor energetically repelled the Hungarians, and then he went against the Pechenegs; some of the latter submitted to him, others continued the fight in the Danube everglades until they were defeated. The Armenian chronicler Matthew of Edessa (Urha) (Matt’eos Urhajec’i) reports that Isaac I himself crossed the Danube in pursuit, information which suggest that the Pechenegs with whom the Byzantine armies had clashed were from the region to the north of the Danube. However, the imperial expedition to the north of the Danube River is not mentioned in any Byzantine source. The restora-

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tion of order in Paristrion by authorities from Constantinople was short, because of the new nomadic waves that crossed the Danube.

Meanwhile the crisis within the Christian church took an irreversible turn, due to the general political conditions and to the intransigent positions of Patriarch Michael Cerularius and Pope Leo IX, which led to the great schism of 1054. In the outer-Carpathian region, which was under the confessional influence of the Constantinopolitan patriarchate, the effects of this event were to be felt much later, during the political and confessional offensive of the Arpadian Kingdom. After the settlement of the tribes led by Kegen and Tyrach in the Balkan Peninsula, nothing could stop the Uzes’ advance up to the Lower Danube Plain. In the tenth century, the Oghuz (Ghuzz, Uzes) lived in the space bordered by the Aral Lake, the Syr-Daria, the Caspian Sea, the Volga, and the Upper Irtysh. Because of inter-tribal conflicts, they split into two groups: one going to the south-west, led by Seljuq (after whom they were designated as Seljuk Turks); the other heading westwards. In less than half a century the latter group covered the hundreds of kilometres between the Lower Volga and the Danube; they were driven away by the Cumans, and in their turn chased the Pechenegs. One of the 22 branches that, according to Oriental sources, made up the tribal union of the Oghuz were the Bajanak/Baj’nak/Băičănăk (= the

252 On conflicts between different Turkic Ghuzz (= Oghuz) tribes, see Ibn Hauqal (see above, n. 14), I, p. 379.
They were naturally not all of the Pechenegs, but just a small group who had been defeated and forced to accept the Oghuz/Uzes supremacy.

The first clash between the Uzes and the Rus’ took place near Voin, in the region of Pereiaslavl, in 1055, and five years later the Kievian prince Iziaslav, together with his brothers, who had the power in Chernigov and Pereiaslavl, and with Vseslav Briachislavich of Polotsk, organized a great expedition against the Uzes. According to Russian sources, the Torki (Uzes), overcome by the great number of their enemies, left their settlements and never returned. The Cuman attacks also contributed decisively to the departure of the Uzes from the steppes north of the Black Sea. In 1064–1065 the Uzes migrated from the Lower Danube region into the Empire. The efforts of the Byzantine military commanders to stave off the nomad flood were useless, so that the invaders advanced up to Illyricum and Greece. The severity of winter, epidemics and starvation caused more damage than the imperial armies, so that in the following year the scattered groups of the Uzes were easily destroyed by provincial troops and by the Pechenegs of Paristrion. One part of the Uzes submitted to Byzantium and they were colonized in Macedonia; others returned to the region north of the Danube and sought refuge in the domains of the Rus’ princes, who accepted them as mercenaries, much as the Byzantines had done.

Not all the Uzes in the region of the Black and Caspian seas chose to migrate to the Byzantine Empire. Some of their groups stayed behind in the basin of the Lower Volga. They were mentioned around the town of Saskin by an Arab traveller from Spain. His specification that they were divided into 40 tribes led by independent emirs seems to be

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unlikely for a period in which the Cumans had firmly established their supremacy in the area. Even more numerous groups of Uzes (мопку) were hired by Rus’ princes; the chronicles mentioned them in that role between the last decades of the eleventh century and the first part of the thirteenth century. They appear especially in the basin of the river Ros, a right-hand tributary of the Dnieper River.258

The first Uzes detachments reached the Bugeac and the Romanian Plain probably a short time after the displacement of Tyrach’s tribes to the south of the Danube, about 1050. The bulk of the Uzes population moved into north-Danubian plain regions only after the Cuman’s pressure became very strong and the Rus’ princes’ coalition drove them away from the Dnieper basin in 1060. Their stay on the left bank of the Lower Danube was short, because they forced the crossing of the river in 1064. Taking into account the houses excavated in Dinogeria-Garvău (Tulcea county, Romania), all of which were apparently destroyed by fire, as well as some of the coin hoards found in Dobrudja, which could be dated to the mid-1060s, it is quite possible that the Uzes came to the Balkans through the Bugeac.259

In spite of the concentration of the Uzes hordes on the left bank of the Danube, which occurred less than two decades after the migration of the Pechenegs to the Balkans, there are no signs of a total destruction of the native population of the plain region (Fig. 2). In this respect the testimony of the Byzantine chronicles is self-evident; according to them the Uzes used, for crossing the Danube, not only leather bags, but also ships and boats.260 The information given by many sources of that time indicates that the nomadic horsemen usually crossed the large water courses by means of leather bags, which they made by themselves from animal skin.261 They quite rarely made wooden crafts,262 so it is

258 *Ip.let., passim.*
natural for one to conclude that the boats and the ships the Uzes used in crossing the Danube were supplied by the Romanian communities of the Danube everglades. Several bands of Uzes who had taken refuge in the Romanian Plain and the Bugeac after the failure of the invasion of 1064–1065, could have returned to live side by side with those Pechenegs who had chosen to stay behind.

In the older historical literature, the hypothesis that the Hutzuls, a Ukrainian population on the eastern side of the northern Carpathians, represented a remainder of the Uzes, enjoyed a certain popularity. That assumption was based mainly on an alleged relationship between the two ethnonyms, Hutzuls and Uzes, which has never been adequately demonstrated. In addition, one cannot explain how a Turkic group of the steppes could have chosen to settle in a mountainous area, a possibility supported neither by archaeology, nor by written sources.

Shortly after the Uzes migration to the Balkans, the Cumans—another Turkic tribe of the steppe tribe—approached the Danube Delta. Their vanguard entered the Bugeac at some point between 1065 and 1078. Evidence of the first Cuman expedition to the Balkans, undertaken together with the Pechenegs, was recorded in 1078. The medieval texts do not tell us whether the incursion of 1078 against Adrianople involved the Pechenegs from the north or the south of the Danube. In any case, the Cuman forces participating in the raid were not strong enough, since they needed the collaboration of the Pechenegs. During the same year the Cumans engaged in the wars against the Rus'. In the middle of the eleventh century the Cumans reached the Dnieper, by driving the Uzes away to the west. In 1055 the Cumans (Polovtsy) advanced towards Pereiaslav, but Prince Vsevolod reached an agreement with them in order to avoid a military confrontation. The first battle between the Rus’ and the Cumans took place in 1061, when the Cumans under their chief Sokal obtained a major victory, the first of a long and bitter war that would last 175 years.

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264 Attaliates (see above, n. 234), pp. 300–301; Skylitzes, Excerpta (see above, n. 250), in Kedrenos, II, p. 741.
265 PVL, I, p. 132.
The political history of the Carpathian-Dniester region

In the steppes north of the Black Sea were strengthened even more after the victory they obtained in 1068 against a coalition of forces led by the Kievian prince Iziaslav I Iaroslavich, who had defeated the Uzes (Torki) eight years earlier. The Cumans now controlled the entire territory between the Aral Lake and the Lower Danube.

It appears that, even if we admit that some Cuman enclaves had been established in the Bugeac and the Bărăgan by the end of the eleventh century, a significant Cuman presence in those territories was recorded only later on. In referring to the migration of the Turkic peoples Michael the Syrian, who wrote his chronicle of the world in the late 1100s, maintained that their northern groups, made up of Cumans (Qumanayê), had settled at the frontiers of the Greek Empire and had “joined the Christian people” who lived there. The Christians living together with the Cumans at the northern border of Byzantium were probably Romanians. According to a variant of the oldest Turkic chronicle, Oghuzname, inserted in the Turkish Genealogy by Abu’l-Ghazi Behadur Khan (1603–1663), the Cumans—personified in the eponymous hero Qipchaq—fought against the countries of the Rus’, the Romanians (Ulak), the Magyars and the Bashkirs, who had refused to submit to their authority. With troops from Oghuz Khan, Qipchaq was ordered to conquer the region of Ten (= Don) and Itil (= Volga), which he promptly did. The unknown author of the chronicle thus claimed that all four countries were controlled by the Cumans, which may be true for the Romanian lands, but certainly not for Rus’ or Hungary.

During the second half of the eleventh century, hordes of Pechenegs continued to inhabit the left bank of the Danube. In 1068, led by Osul, they launched a great attack against Transylvania and Hungary through

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270 Michel le Syrien (see above, n. 250), p. 155.
the mountain passes across the Carpathian range. After they had crossed the Mezeș Gate and robbed the province of Nyr, they advanced to the fortress of Biharea. On their way back, they were ambushed and defeated by King Salomon (1063–1074) and his sons near the Dâbâca stronghold. Whereas Simon of Keza and the Annales Posonienses ascribe the attack to the Pechenegs (Bessi), the Latin-Hungarian chronicles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries ascribe it to Cumans (Cuni). The latter may not be just an adaptation of a piece of information taken from older sources, since at the time of the raid the Cuman vanguard was already in the vicinity of the Carpathian Mountains. One thing seems to be certain, namely that the marauders of 1068 were not Uzes. A west-Russian chronograph misdated the raid to 1059, but blamed it on Cumans and Romanians (Валахи). The unknown author of the Russian chronography then explained that Cumans were also called Половцы and Кум. Historians now agree that the marauders of 1068 were Pechenegs and that those medieval authors who wrote of Cumans made a mistake, given that the ethnic name Cuni did not have a very clear meaning in the Latin-Hungarian chronicles.

The movements of the Turkic populations from the steppe lands north of the Black Sea were too fast for the Byzantines to monitor, much less control them. Emperor Romanus IV Diogenes was defeated in 1071 by the Seljuq Turks in the great battle of Mantzikert (Malazgyrt), which resulted in important territorial losses in Asia Minor. The concomitant abandonment of the last Byzantine possessions in southern Italy and the

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272 Simon de Keza, p. 182 (where the invasion is dated in the time of Ladislas I); Annales Posonienses, ed. E. Madzsar, in SRH, I, p. 126.
273 Chronici Hungarici compitst sacciuli XIV; ed. A. Domanovszky, in SRH, I, pp. 366–368; CPet, pp. 55–57, 175–177; Chronicon Monacense (see above, n. 37), p. 73; Chronicon Posoniense (see above, n. 37), p. 38; Henric de Mügeln (see above, n. 54), pp. 176–177 (where the invaders are identified with the Tatars!); Chronicon Budense, ed. I. Podhradczky (Budae, 1838), pp. 127–129; Chronicon Dubnicense, in Historiae Hungaricae Fontes Dominici, III, ed. M. Florianus (Quinque-Ecclesiis, 1864), pp. 75–76; Johannes de Thurocz, Chronica Hungarorum, I, Textus, eds. E. Galántai and J. Kristó (Budapest, 1985), pp. 98–99.
275 Русскій хронографъ, 2, Хронографъ Западно-Русской редакції, in PSRL, XXII, 2 (Petrograd, 1914), p. 211.
loss of Belgrade to the Hungarians contributed much to the decrease of state resources and implicitly of its defensive power.

Taking advantage of the receding Byzantine power in the area, the multi-ethnic population of Paristrion joined the Pecheneg hordes previously established or recently arrived from the left bank of the Danube. They were all trying to get rid of the Byzantine administration of the theme and to become autonomous. The dissident groups of Driistra, Vicina and the other cities of the Lower Danube were led by three chieftains named Tatos (or Chalis), Sesthlav, and Satza. Fierce disputes have erupted among historians of the modern age concerning the ethnicity of the three chieftains, as well as that of the population they commanded and of the nomadic tribes who had settled north of the Danube River. The debate was fueled by much misunderstanding originating from the ambiguity of the corresponding account in Anna Comnena’s biography of Emperor Alexius I (1081–1118). There seems to be some agreement that Vlachs (Romanians) said to have lived near the Danube had a significant contribution to the movement. Michael the Syrian’s chronicle appears to confirm this conclusion. He mentioned the Vlachs (Balakayê), together with Franks, Cumans and Serbs, among those peoples who caused the greatest difficulties to Emperor Alexius.

The Pechenegs north of the Danube had also contributed to the strengthening of the Byzantine camp in Paristrion. They came to the

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279 Anne Comnène, II, p. 193.
Balkans in 1086, as the Cumans kept devastating their settlements. Anna Comnena seems to suggest that north of the Lower Danube, in the Romanian Plain and in the Bugeac, there were still Pecheneg groups, which the Cumans wanted to subdue, in order to control the Danube line at will. Taking advantage of the political and military crisis in the Empire, the Cumans joined the Pechenegs led by Tzelgu and the Hungarians led by the former king Salomon, and they all plundered the Balkan provinces. After Tzelgu’s defeat, the Cumans came back to the left bank of the Danube, but soon returned to the Balkans, in response to a call for support from Tatos, the lord of Dristra. The disagreement between the Cumans and the Pechenegs regarding plunder shares produced a decisive breach between the two Turkic peoples, a breach which Alexius I skilfully exploited in the spring of 1091. At Lebunion, with the Cuman support, he managed to obtain a decisive victory over the Pechenegs. The battle of Lebunion effectively put an end to the Pecheneg problem in the Balkans and led to the re-establishment of Byzantine authority on the Danube. The victory against the Pechenegs, obtained almost at the same time as that against the Turkic emirs of Asia Minor, signalled a new (and final) rise of Byzantium to the status of European political power, a position the Empire maintained throughout the entire period of the Comnenian dynasty.

The Pecheneg disaster at Lebunion seems to have also been a warning to the Cumans in the Balkans, who consequently withdrew quickly to the lands beyond the Danube. A few weeks after the destruction of the Pechenegs, however, a Cuman invasion hit the Balkans at the same time as the Byzantine rule was seriously challenged in Dalmatia. Since no clashes are mentioned between Emperor Alexius and the Cumans


282 Anne Comnène, II, p. 145.

283 Ibidem, p. 147.
of 1091, it is possible that the marauders preferred to returned to their abodes north of the Danube before encountering the Byzantine army. It is worth mentioning that the Cuman armies that helped Byzantium against the Pechenegs were led by the chieftains Tugorkan and Boniak,284 famous for their repeated and extremely energetic expeditions against Kievan Rus’, as still mentioned even in the Ukrainian folklore.285 They especially had much military success in the basin of the Dnieper, where the centre of the Cuman tribal union was located at the end of the eleventh century. Their involvement in the military developments in the Balkans suggests that the Cuman hordes living near the Danube Delta were not sufficiently strong to organize raids on their own.

Shortly after their return from the campaign into the Byzantine lands, in 1091 or 1092, the Cumans led by Kopulch launched another raid into Transylvania and Hungary, most likely crossing the Carpathian Mountains from southern Moldavia. From the central Transylvania, the Cumans then moved to Bihor and then as far as the Tisza, the Timiș and the Danube rivers. They split into three groups, each now loaded with captured goods and prisoners. The marauders were attacked and defeated by King Ladislas (László) the Saint (1077–1095), who then accused the Rus’ of having instigated the Cumans and subsequently organized an expedition of reprisals into Galicia.286 After many years of war incursions into the Byzantine Empire and Hungary, during which the Cumans crossed southern Moldavia several times, the targets of their main attacks shifted again to the Rus’ regions of the Middle Dnieper. The incursions against Rus’ resumed in 1092, when the nomads also attacked Poland, most likely as a consequence of a particularly harsh drought in the steppe lands.287

Though fully involved in fighting in southern Rus’, the Cumans answered in 1094 or 1095 to a request for military assistance from an alleged son of Romanus IV Diogenes, and invaded the Balkans. The fact that the pretender contacted the Turanians in Chersonesus288 and

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284 Ibidem, p. 136 (where they are called Togortá and Maniáč).
286 Chronici Hungarici (see above, n. 273), pp. 412–414; CPict, pp. 75–76, 197–198; Chronicum Monacense, p. 78; Johannes de Thurocz, I, pp. 116–117. See also P. Golubovskii, Половцы в Венгрии (Kiev, 1889), pp. 3–4.
287 PVL, I, p. 141.
288 Anne Comnène, II, p. 191.
that one of their commanders was Togorták (Tugorkan) strongly suggests that the Cumans who invaded the Balkans belonged to a group controlling the steppe lands north of the Black Sea. The invasion went well and the Cumans (Polovtsy) do not seem to have had any problem conquering Paristrion, as least in part because of Emperor Alexius lack of popularity during the first years of his reign. That much results from the fact that the local Vlachs led the Cumans through the passes of the Balkan Mountains, while some strongholds even opened their gates for them. That the Balkan Vlachs were hostile to the imperial authorities was also noted, as we have seen, by Michael the Syrian, and may explain subsequent developments throughout the twelfth century, up to their uprising led by the Asenid brothers. The Vlach hostility towards the Byzantines was also noted by Kekaumenos and of Benjamin of Tudela.

The Cumans advanced up to Anchialos and Adrianople, but they could not manage to conquer them. The capture of the pretender to the throne produced confusion in his camp, so the imperial troops defeated the Cumans and drove them away. They would not dare to trespass the frontiers of Byzantium again for two decades. Nevertheless, the threat of Cuman invasions did not disappear. Following the passage of the crusaders through the Empire, the Danube line was kept under control by the Byzantines. Anna Comnena relates that, in order to temper “the barbarians” who were fussing at the borders, the emperor offered them prestige titles and gifts. Since, in a previous sentence, that author had referred to the unrest of Cumans and Hungarians, it is

289 Ibidem, p. 198.
291 Ceccaumeni Consilia (see above, n. 103), pp. 254–265 and 270–271.
294 Anne Comnène, II, pp. 202–204.
very probable that they were “the barbarians” in question. This could also explain, at least in part, the good relations the nomads subsequently maintained with the Empire. In order to ensure the security at the Danube frontier, the Byzantine emperor recruited Cuman mercenaries. Cuman, as well as Pecheneg auxiliary troops were attested near the Danube on the occasion of the crusaders’ passing through the western region of the 1096 and 1097.296 Some Western sources also mention the Uzes (Usi297 Husi)298 among those auxiliary troops.

**Twelfth Century**

The Cumans appear also in a number of late eleventh- and early twelfth-century political developments in the lands his headquarters in north of the Lower Danube. In 1097 a nomadic army, led by Boniak and Altunopa, is recorded as helping the princes in south-western Rus’

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against the Hungarian king Coloman (1095–1116), the call for help coming from great prince Sviatopolk II (1093–1113). The Cuman attack caused the total destruction of the Hungarian army, whose remnants retreated through passes of the northern Carpathians.  

A few years later, in 1106, a Cuman incursion into Volhynia was repelled by Sviatopolk II, with the Turanians subsequently seeking refuge at the Danube frontier. This particular detail noted in the Russian chronicles shows that the nomadic group that had launched the raid lived in the vicinity of the river. The Cumans who invaded the Empire in 1114 came from the neighboring territories, namely from the western region of the Romanian Plain. At least this is the conclusion to which leads Anna Comnena’s remark that Emperor Alexius first moved against in the region of Vidin. As the nomads’ forces were reduced, they did not dare engage in fights with the Byzantine armies; instead they immediately crossed the Danube to its left bank, where they were pursued for three days and three nights. The military developments of 1114 suggest that a tight Byzantine control over the Danube region. Before crossing the river, the Byzantines had been warned about the intentions of the Cumans, so that Alexius had enough time to establish Philippopolis (present-day Plovdiv), and to place troops at different strategic points in the northern Balkans.

During the second part of Alexius I’s reign, the Empire resurfaced as the main political force in the region close to the steppe lands north of the Lower Danube and the Black Sea, even though the Byzantine possessions in the Balkans and in Crimea were now threatened by the Rus’ princes, Hungary, and the Cumans. In response to this new political configuration, Emperor Alexius offered in 1104 a matrimonial alliance to Prince Volodar of Premysl, who was at the time an ally of the Cumans, but an enemy of both Hungary and Kiev. In response, the Kievan prince established dynastic ties with Hungary. The end result of such diplomatic moves was that the Empire now strove to remain on good terms with the Cumans, while hostile to Kievan Rus’ princes.

Russian sources mention a temporary conquest, in 1116, of a few towns on the Danube by the armies of prince Vladimir II Monomakh.

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300 NPL, pp. 19 and 203; Let.Voskr., p. 20; Летописный сборник именуемый Тверскою летописью, in PSRL, XV (1863), col. 189.
301 Anne Comnène, III, pp. 177–178 and 182–183.
302 PYL, I, p. 185.
(1113–1125), but also his failure to conquer Dristra. Some have rightly raised doubts about the trustworthiness of that information, not only because of a possible confusion with other events (Cumans’ expedition of 1094/1095), but also because neither Anna Comnena, nor any other Byzantine source mentioned a Byzantine-Rus’ military confrontation on the Lower Danube. Nevertheless, when taking into account other pieces of information from the chronicles, it seems safe to conclude that Vladimir II Monomakh was genuinely interested in the Danube area. Considering the 1097 testimony of prince Vasilko Rostislavich, it seems that Sviatoslav’s old dream to extend his rule south of the Danube had not been completely forgotten.

In any case, Kievan dreams of expansion into regions at the mouths of the Danube were thwarted by the nomads who controlled the steppe lands north of that river and of the Black Sea. Nevertheless, there is now archaeological evidence from the Byzantine towns in Dobrudja of twelfth- and thirteenth-century goods produced in Rus’. ‘This evidence suggests a commercial expansion of Rus’ to the Lower Danube, which is a much more likely possibility than a military occupation.

The peace established in the Lower Danube area by the Commenian rulers was disturbed again in 1122–1123, when a “Scythian” army of nomads from the steppes north of the Black Sea invaded the Balkans.
Niketas Choniates normally used the name “Scythians” in reference to the Pechenegs, but Michael the Syrian maintains that the invaders were Cumans. There may have been some connection between the above-mentioned incursion into the Empire and Vladimir Monomakh’s action of driving the Berendei away from Rus’, followed by the Torki (= Uzes) and the Pechenegs (Прозна Володимерь Беренъдици изъ Руси, а Торци и Печенеги сами бежаша) in 1121. Since the Cumans had driven the Uzes and the Pechenegs away from the lands along the Don, it is difficult to believe that those tribes also sought refuge in Desht-i Qipchaq (= the Cumans’ Steppe).

The Berendei first moved to Hungary, and then, in 1139, returned to Rus’. As for the Pechenegs and the Uzes, they probably turned towards the Balkan Peninsula, crossing the Danube together with their families on their carts. It is not impossible that Cuman groups on the Lower Danube joined them. In any case, from Byzantine sources one can infer that several tribes with their own chieftains took part in the expedition of 1122–1123. The Pechenegs must have had the leading role in the campaign, because after the victory of Emperor John II Comnenus over the invaders, a celebration was instituted in Constantinople of the so-called “festival of the Pechenegs” (Πατζινάκων τελετή). After this last outbreak, the Pechenegs never created any problems for Byzantium, and were only rarely mentioned in sources pertaining to the Balkans. In fact, they only reappear in reports of the Second and


309 Choniates, pp. 20–23.

310 Michel le Syrien, p. 206. On this problem, see also I. Ferent, Cumanii și episcopiile lor (Blaj, [1931]), pp. 36–37; Diaconu, Cowmans, pp. 66–71; Stephenson, Byzantium’s Balkan Frontier (see above, n. 197), p. 106.

311 Ip.let., p. 8. See also Let.Voskr., p. 25; Hast.let., p. 292; Холмогорская летопись, in PSRL, 33, ed. K. N. Serbin (Leningrad, 1977), p. 42. In Продолжение Лаврентиевской летописи, in PSRL, 1, p. 128, mention is made only of Torki and Berendei running away from Rus’ in 6628 (= 1120).

312 Ip.let., p. 8.


314 Choniates, p. 23. See also Eustathii metropolitae Thessalonicensis Opuscula, p. 44.
Third Crusades. In 1147 and, again, in 1189, the crusaders crossing the Balkans are said to have been harassed by Pechenegs and Cumans, who were either in Byzantine service or allies of the Asenids. In the south Russian steppes, the Pechenegs disappear from the historical record after 1169.

For twenty-five years, no invasion of Turanian horsemen has troubled the Balkan provinces of Byzantium, an indication that John II Comnenus (1118–1143) had been just as concerned as his father and predecessor, Alexius I, with the protection of the northern frontier of the Empire. It is difficult to decide whether the Cumans were kept at bay by the military garrisons of Paristrion or the gold paid to them as gifts. In any case, Moldavia ceased to be the launching pad for raids into the Balkan provinces of the Empire. Maintaining peace with the Cumans seems to have been a high priority for the Byzantines, given that the imperial armies were already engaged in struggles against the Seljuq Turks, the Normans of southern Italy, the Hungarians, and other enemies. Twice during the wars with Hungary, in 1128 and 1156, the imperial fleet sailed along the Danube for joint actions with the land forces.

At the same time, the campaigns, which Vladimir II Monomakh led against the nomads in the steppes created great problems for the Cumans and effectively prevented them from raiding other territories. It is possible that Vladimir II’s offensive convinced the horde led by Atrak (Otrok), Sharukan’s son, to accept the invitation of King Davit II Ağmashenebeli (the Builder) (1089–1125) to settle in northern Georgia,
and to become his mercenaries. 321 It was only after the Kievan great prince’s death that the nomadic Turks became aggressive again, and they began to interfere in the conflicts between different Rus’ princes. A Cuman invasion of Poland is also mentioned in 1135. 322

Under Manuel I Comnenus (1143–1180) the Byzantine presence was felt outside the Empire’s frontiers. The emperor’s unreasonable ambitions, which centred upon his idea of dominating the seas, implied an exhausting involvement of the imperial armies on various battlefields. Though the still rich Byzantium and its dynamic ruler could not avoid some failures, there were favourable results in the Balkans. After Manuel’s ascent to the throne his relationships with the Cumans deteriorated; the latter crossed the Danube in 1148 and took to plunder. The Turanians did not have enough forces to fight directly against Manuel’s armies, so they went back across the river, and were pursued up to Tenu Ormon, 323 which must have been somewhere in the Lower Danube plain. Numerous hypotheses have been proposed for its exact location. 324 The similarity between Tenu Ormon and the Romanian place name Teleorman, a Turkic loan meaning “crazy forest,” has been taken as a decisive argument. However, a new interpretation of the account of those events in the chronicle of John Kinnamos, proposes the reading of τὸ ὅρος (= mountain, height), the noun associated with the place


322 Monumenta Poloniae Historica, II, ed. A. Bielowski (Lwów, 1872), pp. 832 (Rocznik Traski) and 875 (Rocznik Sedziwoja). See also D. Rassovsky, “Половцы, IV, Военная история половцев,” SK 11 (1940), p. 120.

323 Ioannis Cinnami Epitome (see above, n. 308), pp. 93–94. See also Chomiates, pp. 103–104.

name Tenu Ormon (ἐπι ὀρος τένου ὀμυον) as ὁ ὀρος (= edge, territory),\textsuperscript{325} which makes much more sense. In his account of the fighting between the Byzantines and the Cumans, John Kinnamos mentions a “barbarian” chieftain, named Lazarus,\textsuperscript{326} an obviously Christian name. Lazarus may have been a Romanian ruler allied with the nomads.\textsuperscript{327}

The involvement of the Byzantine in the disputes over the northwestern parts of the Balkan Peninsula was the opportunity the Cumans used to return to the Empire in 1150, when they sacked the fortresses on the Danube and defeated the troops sent against them.\textsuperscript{328} Manuel I’s response consisted not just in bringing troops to the Lower Danube, but also in sending a Byzantine army, which landed on the shore of the Sea of Azov 1152 or 1153. The expeditionary corps was meant to strike the Cuman settlements by surprise.\textsuperscript{329} All we know about military action undertaken by the emperor comes from a panegyric written by Michael Rhetor, a Byzantine churchman.\textsuperscript{330} The result of the expedition is not known, which suggests that it was not very successful.

Another invasion of the Cumans occurred in the subsequent years.\textsuperscript{331} Since they immediately withdrew north of the Danube when Manuel I moved against them, one can infer that the military capacity of the nomads was rather weak. However, the Cuman forces do not appear diminished, given that the emperor led his armies in battle against them


\textsuperscript{326} Ioannis Cinnami Epitome, p. 95.


\textsuperscript{328} Choniates, pp. 123–124.


\textsuperscript{331} Ioannis Cinnami Epitome (see above, n. 308), pp. 201–202. The dating of this invasion is disputed, with some placing it in 1156 or 1157 (FHDR, III, p. 237), other in 1157 or 1158 (Ferenț, Cumana [see above, n. 310], p. 43), and others 1159 (Diaconu, Coumans, p. 90) or 1161 (F. Chalandon, Jean II Comnène et Manuel I Comnène [Paris, 1912], p. 474).
in 1048. The fact that Byzantium was confronted with three raids within a single decade indicates the growing power of the Cumans north of the Danube. In referring to the neighbours of the Hungarian Kingdom in the middle of the eleventh century, bishop Otto of Freising shows that to the north and the east (in fact south-east), Hungary was bounded by the large country of the Pechenegs and the Cumans, which was rich in game, but without agriculture (unter aquilonem et item orientem Pecenatorum et Falonum maximam venationum copiam habente, sed campania). Unfortunately, it remains unclear whether the bishop, when mentioning the Pechenegs, had in mind an earlier or a contemporary situation. The existence of some Pecheneg groups under the Cuman domination in the Bugeac and the Romanian Plain is quite possible. After the third raid, the Cumans did not cross the Danube any more, which suggests that some settlement may have been reached between Manuel I and the nomads.

The positive course of those relationships can be deduced from an anonymous chronicle written in a monastery of Cologne. The chronicle refers to events that occurred in the year 1161. According to that source, at that moment the “king of Greece,” that is Manuel I Comnenus, warned the “kings of Turkey, Babylon, Persia and Cumania” against Frederick I Barbarossa’s upcoming attack against them: Scripsit etiam idem rex Greciae regibus Turchiae Babiloniae, Persidis et Comaniae, nuncians illis, quod Romanus imperator terram suam et illorum occupare intendat. It is, of course, highly unlikely that Frederick, who was at the time involved in military expeditions in Lombardy, would have taken any such military undertaking. However, Manuel’s message to the rulers of the East and Desht-i Qipchaq may have been designed to energise them with a view to a foreseeable future conflict with Frederick I.

In the mid-twelfth century the outer-Carpathian area was troubled not only by Cuman horsemen, but also by plots of pretenders to the Galician and Byzantine thrones, as well as by Manuel I Comnenus’ campaign across the Danube. Ivan Rostislavich, who coveted the power in Galicia, and Andronicus Comnenus, who plotted to gain the imperial crown, sought temporary refuge in the region to the east of the Carpathian Mountains. As if descending from the world of Shakespearian dramas, the two characters of princely extraction, driven by fate into the Romanian lands, were in many respects similar, in ambition, spirit of adventure, and tenacity doubled with inconstancy.

Ivan Rostislavich, nicknamed “the Berladnik,” first appeared on the Danube in 1144, after an unsuccessful attempt to seize power in Galicia. Hoping to obtain assistance from Kiev, which had been in conflict with the Galician principality, he went first to Kiev, and then wandered around other princely courts, getting involved in the conflicts that afflicted Rus’ after the death of Vladimir II Monomakh. In 1159, he came to the region north of the Lower Danube, where he began preparing an expedition designed to remove Iaroslav Osmomysli (1153–1187) from power. Before the beginning of the expedition, Ivan, together with his Cuman allies, is said to have looted two boats belonging to Galician fishermen on the Danube. Ivan’s army consisted of 6,000 Berladniks and “many Cumans” from southern Moldavia. They made for Kuchelmin and Ushitsa, both towns on the southern frontier of Galicia. Ivan’s troops were not strong enough to remove the prince, so that following the first encounters, they disbanded and Ivan fled to Kiev.

The Berladniks did not return to Moldavia either, since in 1160 they are mentioned near the estuary of the Dnieper River as attacking Oleshia, a locality recently identified with the twelfth- and thirteenth-century settlement on the Velikopotemkinski Isle in the Dnieper estuary. Ivan Rostislavich’s wanderings ended in Thessalonike, where he

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335 Ip.let., p. 20.
336 Ip.let., pp. 83–84; Let.Voskr., p. 68; Летопись по Уваровскому списку, in PSRL, XXV (Moscow-Leningrad, 1949), p. 64.
337 Ip.let., p. 86; Let.Voskr., p. 71; Летопись по Уваровскому списку, in PSRL, XXV, p. 67.
had fled in 1162. He was killed by the Byzantines, which may be interpreted as a Byzantine attempt to please the powerful Galician ruler at a moment of strenuous Byzantine-Hungarian relations.

Two years later, however, when he had the opportunity to respond in kind, Iaroslav Osmomysli, who hesitated politically between Byzantium and Hungary, took a different attitude. Andronicus Comnenus, Emperor Manuel’s cousin and political rival, had escaped from prison and fled to Halych. Before crossing into Galicia, Andronicus was caught by Romanians from Moldavia. He managed to escape again and reached Galicia, where he was well received. Niketas Choniates’ account of Andronicus’ adventures contains one of the earliest mentions of Romanians north of the Danube. The fact that the Romanians acted in Manuel I’s interest suggests that the Empire had a strong political influence beyond its Danube frontier. In fact, Manuel’s expeditions to the lands north of the Lower Danube aimed not only to discourage enemies endangering Byzantine interests in the area, but also to extend the Byzantine political control beyond the Danube.

Among Manuel I’s great campaigns, there is one which he undertook in 1166 through the Romanian Plain against Hungary. During the ample display of forces on the Danube, with some simulated attacks and manoeuvres designed to divert the attention of the enemy, an important role was played by Leo Vatatzes’ army, which contained a large number of Vlachs. John Kinnamos notes that those were probably descendents from Roman colonists from Italy, a remark which may go back to information he may have obtained from Vlachs themselves, who were proud and obviously aware of their Roman origin. According to the emperor’s order, Vatatzes and his troops moved against Hungary from the Black Sea shore, perhaps crossing the Danube in northern Dobrudja in order to approach the Carpathian Mountains in the region of their bend. The recruiting of Vlachs must therefore have been a measure

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341 Choniates, p. 171.
342 Ioannis Cinnami *Epitome* p. 260.
designed to secure a safe access of the Byzantine troops through a region inhabited by Romanians.\textsuperscript{344}

In targeting Transylvania, the Byzantine expedition may have aimed at something more than just weakening the military forces of the Hungarian Kingdom. The twelfth-century Hungarian coins found in Wallachia and Oltenia\textsuperscript{345} point to the existence of trade relations with Hungary, a situation that does not exclude the possibility of Arpadian kings intending to expand militarily across the Carpathian Mountains. As a hypothesis—that requires verification—I suggest that the imperial armies moving through the Romanians may have been an attempt to thwart any possibility of Hungary’s entering the outer-Carpathian Romanian lands. Any action against the Hungarians through the Lower Danube plain was also a move to neutralise the Cumans, who could otherwise spoil the Byzantine military intervention. The Byzantine diplomacy had taken that element into account. The information according to which Cuman detachments fought as mercenaries in the Byzantine armies,\textsuperscript{346} as well as the fact that for many years the Turkic invasions in the Balkans had been interrupted are proofs in that respect. Furthermore, Manuel I envisaged reconciliation with his cousin Andronicus, who was endeavouring to persuade the Cumans to join him for a combined invasion of the Empire.\textsuperscript{347} At the same time, the Byzantine messengers sent Galicia succeeded in securing the alliance with Iaroslav Osmomysl, who thus abandoned his previously pro-Hungarian policies.\textsuperscript{348}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Choniates, p. 230.
\item Ibidem, pp. 172–173.
\item Ioannis Cinnami Epitome, pp. 235–236. On the Byzantine-Galician relations during the reign of Manuel I, see G. Vernadskij, “Relations byzantino-russes au
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
The Hungarian kings relied heavily on auxiliary troops recruited from among the populations within and outside the kingdom. The employment of Romanian auxiliaries is not attested before the early thirteenth century. During the twelfth century, the Romanians in Transylvania were either not interested to fight side by side with Hungarians, or they were considered untrustworthy because of living within a region in which the Hungarian kings had not yet brought fully under their control. Instead the twelfth-century Hungarian kings employed mercenaries recruited from among pagans or Muslim populations of eastern Europe. On their way to Hungary those mercenaries probably passed through the outer-Carpathian Romanian lands, or through the Verecke pass in the north. An Arab traveller and missionary, Abu Hamid Al-Garnati (born in Andalusia), who lived in Hungary (Báosgárd) between 1150 and 1153, mentions military units under the Hungarian king’s command, which were made up of Khwarazmians and “Magribians” (Pechenegs). Al-Garnati also mentions that Hungary had no less than 78 cities, as well as gold and silver mines. The mines, as well as some of the cities, must have been those of Transylvania.

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350 Abu Hamid el Granadino, Relación de viaje por tierras eurasíticas, ed. C. E. Dubler (Madrid, 1953), pp. 65–66; Путешествие Абу Хамида ал-Гарнати в Восточную и
As for twelfth-century Moldavia, some historians believe it to have been under Galician control.\textsuperscript{351} That opinion is primarily based on the so-called “Bârlad diploma,” a charter allegedly issued by Ivanko Ros-tislavich in 1134 and claiming that the Galician prince’s rule extended as far south as Bârlad, Tecuci and “Malyi Galich,” which has been identified as the present-day city of Galați. However, the diploma has been convincingly shown to be a forgery more than a century ago,\textsuperscript{352} although some still continue to believe in its authenticity.\textsuperscript{353}

Another argument in favour of the idea of a Galician rule over Moldavia is a line from the poem \textit{The Lay of Igor’s Campaign} referring to Iaroslav Osmomysli: “O Iaroslav of Halich [Galicia],/the prince of Централную Европу (1131–1153 гг.), eds. O. G. Bolshakov, A. L. Mongait (Moscow, 1971), pp. 38, 39, and 54.


eight senses!/You sit high on your throne wrought of gold./Your iron
regiments defend the Hungarian mountains./You bar the way to the
[Hungarian] king./You close the gates of the river Danube./You hurl
stones over the clouds./Your law reigns up to the river Danube./Your
thunder resounds above the lands./You keep the gates of Kiev open./
From your father’s golden throne you shoot at the sultan/beyond the
[Russian] lands”. The passage is obviously hyperbolic, the intention
being here to raise the status of Iaroslav, perhaps because he was a
relative of Igor of Novgorod-Seversk, the poem’s hero. Leaving aside
the impossibility of using such hyperboles as evidence of Yaroslav’s rule
over Moldavia, all the way to the Danube, the authenticity of the The
Lay of Igor’s Campaign, about which doubts had already been raised in
the 1930s, has recently been disputed with very strong arguments by
two outstanding Slavists, the Russian Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Zimin
and the American Edward L. Keenan. The former claims that the
poem was composed by a Russian monk named Ivan (Ioil) Bykovskii,
who lived in the late 1700s, while Keenan identifies the forger as no
other than the Czech scholar Josef Dobrovský (1753–1829). Dobrovský
appears to have written the poem shortly after his journey of study to
Russia, at some point between 1792 and 1793, when Ossian (alias James
Macpherson) was first translated into Russian. As for the presence of
the small crosses and other artefacts of Rus’ origin in Moldavia, they certainly show trade and confessional relations, not military conquest or political rule.358

The fact that Ivan Rostislavich, during his disputes with the princes of Galicia, twice fled to the lands by the Danube, in other words to southern Moldavia, clearly shows that his security was not endangered in that region. If so, that same region could not have been under the rule of those same princes from whom Ivan Rostislavich was fleeing. As for the events taking place in the vicinity of the Danube, a region in which Galician rulers appear to have been only occasionally and indirectly involved, their sway must have covered an area farther to the north. In fact, there is no evidence for either a Rus359 or a Byzantine rule360 over the lands on the left bank of the Lower Danube, a territory which was at that time inhabited by, and under the control of nomads such as the Cumans. The Romanians in the outer-Carpathian regions were certainly under the rule of those nomads, not of Galicia.

Another idea favored by some historians is that the Lower Danube was a “no man’s land” to which Rus’ princes fled when faced with social or political challenges.361 Such an idea is ultimately based on the belief that the Berladniks, the Brodniks and of other “Scythian” peoples mentioned in Byzantine sources were eastern Slavs. Southern Moldavia thus appears as a place where any political refugee could find shelter.362 From an archaeological point of view, however, eleventh- and

359 Pashuto, Внешняя политика (see above, n. 160), p. 195; Rusanova, Timoshchuk, Древнерусское Поднестровье (see above, n. 158), p. 85.
360 Diaconu, Сомы, pp. 99–100.
362 Several alternative points of view, based on well-informed and objective research, have been expressed in recent years by various Russian historians. See V. B. Perkhavko, “Князь Иван Берладник на Нижнем Дунае,” in Восточная Европа в древности и средневековье. Политическая структура древнерусского государства (Moscow, 1996), pp. 70–75; I. O. Kniaz’kii, Славяне, волохи и кочевники Днестровско-Карпатских
twelfth-century sites in the region produced artefacts very different from those in Rus’, even when accounting for genuinely Rus’ artefacts, which testify to trade relations with Rus’ towns. There is, in other words, no evidence for a population originating from, or somewhat related, to that of the Rus’ lands to the north-east. To the contrary, the above-mentioned artefacts have clear analogies on sites discovered elsewhere in Romania, on both sides of the Carpathian Mountains.

It is worth mentioning that recent studies have show than the Cuman presence in the Lower Danube region during the eleventh and twelfth century was temporary and episodic, and that the bulk of the hordes occupied the lands to the east of the Dnieper River. The region north of the Danube appears to have been inhabited at that same time by groups of Pechenegs and Uzes, who, at a certain moment, obeyed Byzantine military orders. In my opinion, the available archaeological material appears to point out to the maintenance of Pecheneg and Uzian elements on the left side of the Lower Danube, but it is very unlikely that the two populations could have elude the Cuman hegemony, who also had important positions near the river. That much is clear from the analysis of the narrative sources presented above.

The outbreak of the 1185 Vlach and Bulgar rebellion led by the Vlach brothers Peter and Asen took Byzantium by surprise. After almost two decades of sustained, but ultimately fruitless efforts to quell the uprising, the Byzantines were forced to admit defeat. The


rebellion began in the mountainous region of Haemus (= the Balkan Mountains), which was at that time inhabited by Vlachs and where strongholds perched on cliffs offered good conditions for natural protection. However, the population on both sides of the Danube played a decisive role in the success of the Asenid uprising. In 1186, when Emperor Isaac II Angelus (1185–1195) undertook his first campaign in the northern against the rebels, Peter and Asen crossed to the left bank of the Danube and returned with Cuman assistance. From that moment on the Cuman light cavalry, attracted by the possibility of plundering rich regions, fought together with the Vlachs and the


365 Choniates (see above, n. 261), p. 482. For strongholds in the Balkans during the first centuries of the second millennium, see A. Popov, Крепости и укрепительные сооружения в кривисата средновековна област (Sofia, 1982); P. Balabanov, S. Boiadzhiev, N. Tuleshkov, Крепостно строителство по българските земи (Sofia, 2000), p. 191 ff. There is of course no way to distinguish the mountain strongholds of the Vlachs from those of the Bulgarians.

Bulgarians against Byzantium, and later against the Latin Empire. The Romanian lands north of the Danube could escape the political influence of the Byzantine Empire. Nonetheless, Byzantine coins continued to be circulated in the Romanian Plain throughout the period of the Angelus dynasty, some of them collected in hoards buried precisely because of the vicissitudes of those times.

Most historians dealing with the Vlach-Bulgarian uprising believe that the Cumans whose alliance the Asenids were able to secure were the nomads of the region immediately to the north of the Lower Danube. Two passages in the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle reveal a different situation. Among events of 6695 (= 1187), that chronicle lists the conquest of Cuman strongholds beyond the Dnieper (i.e., on its left bank of the river) by troops of Black Caps (Chornye klobuki) dispatched by prince Sviatoslav III Vsevolodovich. The success of that military action seems to have been facilitated by the bulk of the Cuman troops being at that time on the Danube, which left the strongholds without defenders (Половцы до бяхут илри в Дунай, и не бе ихъ дома въ вежахъ своихъ). According to the same source, three years later, in the winter of 6698 (= 1190), the Cumans from the Dnieper region again moved to the Danube (Подунайцы), thus offering a new opportunity to the Rus’ and the Black Caps to attack their settlements.

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370 Ip.let., p. 136.

371 Ibidem, p. 140.
both cases, what the chronicler had to say about the Cumans must be understood in the context of the Cuman assistance to the Vlach and Bulgarian rebels in the northern Balkans. It appears, therefore, that Peter and Asen’s allies were not just neighboring Cumans from the Lower Danube plain, but also those whose camps were at that time in the Dnieper region.

Romanians on the left of the Danube also participated in the uprising against Byzantium. Vlachs and “Scythians” (= the Cumans) crossing the river from north to south are explicitly mentioned by Niketas Choniates among the military events of 1199, the year in which the leadership of the newly emerging state was taken by the younger Asenid brother, Ioannitsa (nicknamed Kaloyannes—“the Handsome John”). It is quite possible that even before 1199, Romanians from Wallachia had participated in the fighting, much like the Cumans. According to Niketas Choniates, another group joining the “Scythians” (Cumans) was that of the Bordones. Many believe the latter to be the same as the Brodniks, who are mentioned several times in southern Moldavia during the decades leading to the great Mongol invasion of 1241. If so, then the Brodniks must have moved to the east-Carpathian lands as early as the late twelfth century.

First Half of the Thirteenth Century

Unable to control the situation in the Balkans all by himself, Emperor Alexius III Angelus asked for the assistance of Roman Mstislavich (1199–1205), prince of Galich-Volhynia, whom he urged to attack the Cumans. Roman’s repeated incursions (in 1201/1202 and 1203/1204) against the nomads put a temporary end to their raids into Thrace.

372 Choniates (see above, n. 261), p. 663.
375 Choniates, pp. 691–692; FHDR, III, pp. 432–433 (Teodor Skutariotes), 472–473 (Efrem); FHB, XV, p. 260 (Theodori Scutariotae Compendium chronicum); Продолжение
but the Byzantines were not able to use the opportunity thus offered to gain the upper hand in the northern Balkans. Roman’s expeditions were cut short by the counter-attack of Rurik II Rostislavich (1203–1210), prince of Kiev, who attacked Roman together with the Cuman princes Kotian (= Kuthen) and Somogur.376

When Roman died, dissensions between aristocratic factions facilitated the temporary imposition of Hungarian rule over Galich-Volhynia, after many decades of unsuccessful Hungarian attempts to expand into Rus’. With the rule over Galich-Volhynia barely consolidated, King Andrew II hastily adopted in 1206 title of *Galiciae Lodomeriaeque rex*,377 a title which Hungarian rulers would sport long after their rule on Galich-Volhynia ceased. Andrew II’s title, however, was meant to convey a clear sense of the claims to the Rus’ territories beyond the Carpathian Mountains. Such claims were not limited to Galich-Volhynia, but were also directed at the neighboring territories to the south and east from the mountains, which were at that time inhabited by Romanians.

The consolidation throughout the second half of the twelfth century of the Hungarian rule in Transylvania was accompanied by the arrival of the Saxon and Szekler “guests.” By 1200, the Hungarians built on the cliff at Bâteca Doamnei (Piatra Neamț, Neamț county) a stronghold designed destined to monitor access to the the route from Moldavia to Transylvania along the Bistrița valley and across the Carpathian Mountains.378 Archaeological excavations on that site produced a number of crosses of Rus’ origin, a clear indication that the inhabit-

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ants of the stronghold were Orthodox. Since Romanians were the only Orthodox population in the area at that time, it is likely that the stronghold’s garrison was recruited from among Romanians. According to Tholomeus of Lucca (1236–1327), whose information was adopted by other authors, Romanians and Szeklers (Olleraci <Ollaci> et Siculi) guarded the mountain passes in the eastern Carpathians at the time of the Mongol invasion. It is precisely at this time that Romanians began to be recruited for the auxiliary units under the command of the Hungarian kings.

Cumans were simultaneously involved in military operations not just in Rus’ and in the Balkans, but also in the Caucasus. In order to get the better of his neighbours, and especially in order to face the attacks of the Seljuq Turks, king David IV of Georgia paid much attention to co-operation with the Cumans, so that 40,000 horsemen together with their families were settled on his estates, some of them accepting conversion to Christianity. With a view to consolidating the alliance, the Georgian king married Goranduxt (or Guaranduxt), the daughter of the Cuman chieftain Atrak (Otrak). The Cuman presence in the north-Caucasus region is also archaeologically confirmed by recent finds of graves of horsemen.

On April 13, 1204 one of the greatest events on world history took place: the West European participants in the Crusade conquered Constantinople, which became (and remained, until 1261) the capital of the Latin Empire. The Byzantine Empire was broken up and divided (Partitio Romaniae) among the crusaders, Venices and various Greek princes,

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on whose estates the successor states were set up: Nicaea, Trebizond, and Epirus. In the aftermath of the Vlach and Bulgarian rebellion, the catastrophe of 1204 had much more serious consequences for the decline of the Byzantine influence over the lands north of the Lower Danube. In the Balkans, the disputes between Byzantines and Asenids were now replaced with a fierce confrontation between the Second Bulgarian Tsardom and the Latin Empire. The Cumans remained on the side of Ioannitsa (1197–1207), who used them against his new enemies. In 1205, Ioannitsa obtained against a major victory against the Latins under the walls of Adrianople. The commander of the Latin forces, Baldwin I, who had just been crowned emperor in Constantinople, was captured and died in a prison in Târnovo.

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The Cuman alliance was not always working to the advantage of the Vlach emperor of Bulgaria. If we are to believe the Miracles of St. Demeterius, Ioannitsa was murdered by a group of conspirators led by the Cuman chieftain Manastras.384 Given their frequent involvement in fighting, first against Byzantium, then against the Latin Empire, some Cumans chose to move permanently south of the Danube. As a consequence, the military potential of the of the Cumans in the outer-Carpathian regions must have been diminished. That much results from the repeated defeats they suffered during the subsequent years. Around 1210, an army from Transylvanian led by Joachim (Iwachin) of Sibiu and made up of Saxons, Romanians, Szeklers and Pechenegs (associatis sibi Saxonibus, Olacis, Siculis et Bissenis) advanced on Vidin after probably crossing Oltenia and met with “three chieftains from Cumania,” one of whom was called Karaz (a name of Turkic origin). That Karaz was from “Cumania” does not indicate the exact region of his origin, because “Cumania” was a name applied not just to the east-European steppes, but also and more specifically to the outer-Carpathian lands inhabited by both Romanians and Cumans. In any case, the Cumans were no match for Joachim’s army. In the ensuing battle, two chieftains...
died and Karaz was taken prisoner (tres duces de Cumania ipsis occurrentes, cum eis prelium commiserunt, quorum duobus occisis tertium nomine Karaz comes Jwachinus vinctum transmisit ad regem).  

In 1211, the Hungarian king invited the Teutonic knights to the Bârsa Land (Ţara Bârsei), in order to put an end to the frequent incursions of the Cumans into Transylvania. From that point of view fulfilled the expectations of the Hungarian king and effectively curbed the Cuman raiding expeditions. However, they were not content to secure south-eastern Transylvania, an area in which they began building timber forts, but decided to expand “beyond the snow-clad mountains” (ultra montes nivium) and managed to impose their military control over territories outside the Carpathian arch. It is difficult to estimate the extent of the land under their control. According to a royal diploma dated to the beginning of 1222, and to a bull dated December 19, 1222, the territories allotted to the knights stretched to the boundaries of the Brodniks (ad terminos prodnicorum) and to the Danube (ad Danubium). A few decades ago, the authenticity of those documents was contested by Wojcieck Ketrzyński and Iosif Şchiopul, but reinstated by Max Perlbach and Emil Lăzărescu. No more doubts could apparently be raised about their authenticity. More recently, however, through a detailed analysis of both diploma and bull in the context of their time, Maria Holban concluded that both documents were apocryphal, having been forged in 1231 or 1232. But even with such caveats in mind,
the basic facts about the rule of the Teutonic knights in the Bârsa Land and on either side of the Carpathian Mountains remain the same.

The growth of the Arpadian Kingdom through the actions of the Order was anticipated by a charter issued for the Knights by King Andrew II in 1211. There is no question that, whether sanctioned by royal grant or not, the Teutonic knights could not have conquered all the land to the Danube in such a short period of time. At the most, the knights must have established military control over a strip of land to the south and to the east of the Carpathian Mountains, next to the Bârsa Land. Meanwhile, major disagreements arose between the king and the knights. Because they refused to abide by the stipulations of the charter, ignoring the royal authority and recognizing only that of the Holy See, the Teutonic knights were removed by force from Transylvania in 1225.394

The establishment of the Teutonic knights in south-eastern Transylvania greatly contributed to the consolidation of royal power in the area. The regions to which the Teutonic knights and the Saxons moved

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were neither deserted nor depopulated (vacua et inhabitata)\textsuperscript{395} or deserta et inhabitata),\textsuperscript{396} as claimed by contemporary documents of the Hungarian chancery. In fact, some of them even mention that the royal “guests” were given land bordering on Romanian settlements, a land said to be sparsely populated and partly untilled.\textsuperscript{397}

While the Teutonic knights advanced into the Romanian regions that had been under the military control of the Turanians, whose domination was thus diminished, at the opposite, easternmost frontier of their lands, the Cumans were attacked by Muhammad, the shah of Khwarazm. They eventually had to surrender a part of their territory to the shah.\textsuperscript{398} Because the Cumans lived in communities scatter over a vast area, without any political unity, and their forces were engages simultaneously on multiple fronts, the military ability of the Cuman tribal confederacy greatly diminished in the early thirteenth century. In 1221/1222, when the Seljuk sultan from Konya (Iconium) launched a surprising naval attack on Sudak in southern Crimea, the Cumans, who until then had controlled the city, were defeated, in spite of the assistance they received from the Rus’ princes.\textsuperscript{399}

In his account of the Seljuq expedition, the Turkish chronicler Iazyčyoğlu Ali, who wrote in the early 1400s, has the army moving both by sea and by land. The land forces crossed the Straits and advanced along the seashore across the “land of the Vlachs”. After defeating the Cumans and the Rus’ and establishing they own garrison in Sudak, the Seljuqs returned along the same route. The passage concerning the Seljuq land troops is absent from Ibn Bibi’s detailed Persian

\textsuperscript{395} Hurmuzaki, I, p. 63; Zimmermann, Der Deutsche Orden (see above, n. 386), p. 167.

\textsuperscript{396} Hurmuzaki, I, pp. 74 and 76; Zimmermann, Der Deutsche Orden, pp. 170 and 173.


chronicle, the main source for the Cuman-Seljuq conflict in southern Crimea. Iazyçyoğlu Ali certainly used Ibn Bibi’s chronicle, but he must have also had access to other sources, which did not survive.\textsuperscript{400} Assuming that a Seljuq army truly travelled by land from Konya to Crimea, that army must have crossed the frontiers of the Nicaean Empire, of the Latin Empire, of Bulgaria, before entering the Desht-i Qipchaq. At the time of the expedition, relations between the sultan of Konya (Rum) and Nicaea were tense, while those between John Asen II and the Cumans were cordial. There is therefore little evidence to support the idea of such a military expedition at a distance of more than 1,000 km from Konya, through several countries, many of which were both militarily strong and not particularly friendly to the Seljuqs. Iazyçyoğlu Ali’s account may be the result of some confusion with other events to be attributed either to him or to one of his unknown sources. The expedition is certainly not mentioned in older sources, such as Ibn Bibi’s chronicle.

Shortly after the failure of the Sudak expedition, the Cumans received a new, unexpected, and strong blow. After initially setting forth against Khwarazm, a Mongol army led by Jebe (Ǧebe, Jäbä) and Sübütäi went south of the Caspian Sea, then north of the Caucasus. The Cuman-Alan alliance was rapidly broken, as the Mongols defeated both peoples one after the other. In Crimea, the Mongols sacked Sudak and scattered its population.\textsuperscript{401} Jebe and Sübütäi then moved into Desht-i Qipchaq, causing panic among the Cumans, whose khan, Kuthen (Kotian), immediately requested the assistance of Mstislav III and of the other Rus’ princes.\textsuperscript{402} Though divided by bitter rivalry, which had


\textsuperscript{402} NPL, pp. 62, 265; Троицкая летопись, in PSRL, I (St. Petersburg, 1846), pp. 216–217; Новгородская четвертая летопись, in PSRL, IV (St. Petersburg, 1848), p. 28; Let.Voskr., pp. 129–130; Hуст.лет., p. 335; Густынская летопись, in PSRL, 40, eds. V. A. Kuchkin (gen. ed.), L. L. Murav’eva, A. M. Panchenko (St. Petersburg, 2003), p. 115; Летописный сборник именемый Тверскою летописью, in PSRL, XV (St. Petersburg, 1863), col. 339; Рогожский летописец, in PSRL, XV, 1 (Petrograd,
lasted for over a century and a half, the Rus’ gathered their forces and came on the side of the Cumans with an impressive army. Some of the Galician forces dispatched to help the Cumans sailed down the Dniester and then moved by sea, and up the river Dnieper.403 This was not the first time the river Dniester was used for the transportation of Galician warriors: a few years before, Daniil Romanovich’s expedition to Oleschia has done the same.404

The ensuing battle, which took place in 1223 on the little river named Kalka, was a brilliant Mongol victory over the Cuman-Rus’ alliance.405 The disaster was amplified by the fact that the Brodniks under their chieftain (“voivode”) Ploskynia switched sides in the middle of the battle. The immediate consequences of the battle at Kalka were not as damaging as the battle itself. The Mongols were at the end of a long campaign (in which, among other things, they had been

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1922), col. 27; Постниковский, Пискаревский, Московский и Бельский летописцы, in PSRL, 34, eds. V. I. Buginov, V. I. Koretskii (Moscow, 1978), p. 83 (Пискаревский летописец); Новгородская летопись по списку II. II. Дубровского, in PSRL, XLIII, ed. A. Koshelev (Moscow, 2004), p. 85.
defeated by the Volga Bulgars), too weak and too far from their bases to be able to begin the conquest of the territories through which their army passed. They eventually withdrew from eastern Europe, for the moment content with the booty collected and with the occupation of a part of the steppe lands on the right bank of the Volga. After the Mongols’ withdrawal from the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian seas, the Cumans lost again the control over Sudak, when a new naval expedition undertaken by the bey of Kastamonu imposed the Seljuq rule over in that city. In respect to territorial losses, the wars with Khwarazm were more detrimental to the Cumans than Jebe and Stibüttäi’s incursions. However, the impressive demonstration of military strength during the expedition of 1222–1223, the conquest of certain regions of central Asia, including perhaps the easternmost Cuman territories, were clear signals for the nomads in Desht-i Qipchaq that a new power had emerged in Eurasia. The Cuman (Kim čaq = Qipchaq) lands in central-western Asia, close to Qangli, are mentioned in the so-called Secret History of the Mongols for a period before the famous quriltai of 1206 when Temugin (Genghis Khan) was still fighting against the Merkits and the Naimans.

The eastern Qipchaq/Cuman territories occupied by the Mongols during Genghis Khan’s lifetime (i.e., before his death on August 18, 1227) were given to Jochi, the elder son of the great khan. Genghis Khan’s heir appeared to be very much interested in expanding his domination over the whole Desht-i Qipchaq, and it was only his death that prevented him from doing so. A contemporary Persian chronicler

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expresses Jochi’s enthusiastic appreciation for the regions controlled by
the Cumans: “in the whole universe, there could not be a more delight-
ful land, a more pleasant climate, softer water, meads more verdant,
and pasture-land more extensive”. The words assigned to Jochi are
relevant for the ideals of the nomads of the Eurasian steppes, and
those words account for the bitter fights among those populations. A
similar characterisation of the same area is to be found in an earlier
work, written in the earliest decades of the thirteenth century by the
Arab Abdallatif al-Bagdadi and compiled by ad-Dahabi at the begin-
ning of the following century: “The Qipchaqs’ [Cumans’] country is
large, [having] a moderate climate, fresh waters, full wells and whishing
streams. It is a cool country, having rich lands”. Fully aware of the gravity of the situation, the Cumans sought
to befriend the Hungarian king, and in 1227 asked to be converted
to Christianity by the archbishop of Esztergom (Strigonium). As the
contemporary chronicles and the papal documents clearly testify, the
initiative had come from the nomads. The Teutonic knights may
have had some contribution to the conversion of the Cumans, but
their work does not seem to have made any progress, for it had been
a forceful conversion. The Hungarian heir to the crown, future King
Bela IV, whose father, Andrew II, had entrusted him with the rule of
Transylvania in 1222, hurried to take advantage of the Cuman request.
He conferred upon it not only a strictly confessional meaning, but also
a political one. To that purpose, he closely collaborated with Robert,
Archbishop of Esztergom, who had been appointed as papal legate for Cumania and the Brodnik lands.\textsuperscript{414}

The Cuman willingness to accept conversion through the church of Hungary is not unique. Before the battle at Kalka, in 1223 the Cuman prince Basty, afraid of the Mongols, accepted conversion to Christianity in Rus',\textsuperscript{415} the land from which he hoped to secure assistance against the new enemy. Several other “Polovtsian princes” had converted before him in the Rus’ principalities. Unfortunately, nothing is known about the circumstances forcing them to do so. The Rus’ chronicles simply mention that, for example, Amurat was baptized in Riazan’ in 6640 (= 1132),\textsuperscript{416} while Aidar placed himself in 6676 (= 1168) the service of the great prince of Kiev, Izyaslav Mstislavich, and after a while converted to Christianity.\textsuperscript{417} It is possible to see both “Polovtsian princes” as forced into exile in the foreign lands by internal strife A few years later, in 1239, when khan Kuthen was granted asylum in Hungary, he also had to accept the religion of the host country.\textsuperscript{418} The same had happened to the Pecheneg chieftains Kegen and Tyrach as soon as they were allowed to move to Byzantium.\textsuperscript{419} The Byzantine policy of conversion towards the Pechenegs was also applied successfully to the Seljuk Turks and to other Turkic groups (Τουρκόπουλοι, Turcopuli, etc.), which were subsequently integrated into the imperial armies and dispatched to the Anatolian and Balkan provinces.\textsuperscript{420} The same is true for the Cumans who under Atrak (Otrok) had settled in Georgia in the early twelfth century.\textsuperscript{421} Those examples show that most Christian powers used proselytism to obtain political advantage. At the very least,
the Christianisation of the nomads was expected to make their political manipulation easier.


\footnote{423 Hurmuzaki, I, p. 111; \textit{Acta Honorii III} (see above, n. 412), pp. 208–209; Albric (see above, n. 412), p. 921.}

\footnote{424 N. Backmund, \textit{Monasticon Praemonstratense}, III (Staubing, 1956), p. 402.}

\footnote{425 Rogerius (see above, n. 418), pp. 33, 72.}

the steppe nomads. Judging by the information in the papal bull of November 14, 1234, most inhabitants of the Cuman bishopric were Romanians (Walati, Walathi), under whose influence both Hungarian- and the German-speaking locals appear to have converted to Orthodoxy (In Cumanorum episcopatu [...] quidam populi, qui Walati vocantur, existunt [...] et nonnulli de regno Ungarie, tam Ungari, quam Theutonic et alii orthodoxi, morandi causa cum ipsis transeunt ad eodem, et sic cum eis, quia populus unus facti cum eisdem Walathis…). The Romanians had their own bishops, called “pseudo-bishops” in the papal letter, who did no obey to Theodoric. Consequently, Pope Gregory IX urged urge prince Bela to take drastic measures against them.426

Bishops and bishoprics thus appear to have existed among the Romanians of the outer-Carpathian lands well before the Cuman Bishopric or the Teutonic knights’ attempts at forceful conversion. The existence of local ecclesiastical structure does not seem to have been at all prevented by Catholic proselytism. Given the close relation between lay and ecclesiastical power throughout the Middle Ages, the existence of Romanian bishoprics begs the question of what political entities may have also existed in the area. Neither the size, nor the form of such an entity can be established at the moment, but the existence of “pseudo-bishops” and the Romanian resistance to Catholic proselytism cannot be explained away simply as Orthodox activism by churchmen coming from the Bulgarian lands south of the Danube or as an attempt by the Asenid rulers to expand their influence to the lands north of that river.427 There is simply no basis for such an explanation in the evidence of the papal bull. Nonetheless, the confessional dependence of the north-Danubian “pseudo-bishops” on the ecclesiastical structures of the Second Tsardom seems to be normal for the first half of the thirteenth century, when the Bulgarian church took over the prerogatives held before 1204 by the Constantinopolitan Patriarchy.428

The name of the Cuman Bishopric does not seem to correspond to the realities on the ground at that time, for neither its location, nor its inhabitants had anything to do with the Cumans. The Cuman Bishopric

was in fact located in an area inhabited by Romanians and marked by hilly and mountain landscape, which was not suitable for nomadic life. Consequently, the name of the new bishopric was not a reflection of the achievements of the Dominican mission, but an anticipation of future successes of both that mission and the military expansion of the Hungarian Kingdom. Its goals were limited to the activity of missionaries and royal agents, without much concern for the creation of either military and ecclesiastical structures. The conversion of the Cumans would have given the Holy See and Hungary the opportunity to expand to the eastern lands of the continent. In that respect, it is important to note that just ten years after the conversion of the Cumans, several missions were sent to the pagan tribes of the Middle Volga, to the so-called Magna Hungaria—a region believe to have been the homeland from which the Hungarians had migrated to Pannonia.429 The Cuman Bishopric thus illustrates the ample vision and the tenacity of the leaders of the Church of Hungary.

The enthusiasm generated by the initial success of the Cuman conversion of 1227–1228 slowly faded away as it became clear how difficult it was to spread Christianity into a cultural area very different from Catholic Europe. The Dominicans may have been ill-prepared for the enormity of the task and may have greatly underestimated the effort of converting the nomads to Christianity. Moreover in the ideological confrontation taking place in the steppe lands between Christianity and Islam, the latter seems to have prevailed, perhaps because that religion too had originated in a nomadic milieu, and was therefore better adapted to the lifestyle of the east-European nomads.

For all those difficulties, the Hungarian kings followed in the footsteps of the Teutonic knights and slowly consolidated their position of power in the outer-Carpathian Romanian lands, despite the opposition of both natives and nomads. Some Cuman groups, certainly those in the region north of the Lower Danube, who had partly adopted Christianity, may have favored a military alliance with Hungary. When Prince Bela crossed the “Hungarian Mountains” (i.e., the northern or Ukrainian Carpathians) and moved in 1229 against Galicia, he had on his side the Cumans led by Begovars. In turn, Daniil Romanovich, the prince

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of Galicia, demanded the assistance of both the Poles and the Cumans of Kotian (Kuthen). For the first time in their recorded history, two Cuman tribes living in the immediate vicinity of the Romanians lands found themselves on opposing sides, a clear sign of internal strife and of the disintegration of the Cuman tribal confederacy. In the end, Bela was defeated by the Galicians with their Cuman allies, and quickly crossed the Dniester River near Vasileu (= Vasilev), on the southern frontier of Galicia, to withdraw to Moldavia. From there he led his armies towards the Prut, and then, as the Hungarians were harassed by enemies and epidemics, he crossed the mountains back into Transylvania. Being too far from the safety of the Verecke pass, Bela may have moved across the mountains along the valley of the river Moldova and then along that of the Someșul Mare until reaching Rodna.

That route was again by the Mongol army led by Kadan, who entered Transylvania in 1241. Before that, Prince Rostislav, the son of the prince of Chernigov, may have employed the same route when fleeing to Hungary after he had failed to eliminate Danilo. The Galician-Volhynian chronicle dates the event to 6743 (= 1235), but it must have taken place a little later. In any case, Rostislav is said to have run away “on the Hungarian road” (бежа во Угры путьемъ), moving Borsukov “to Baia, called Rodna, and then to the Hungarians” (и пріиде къ Бани, рекомей Родна, и оттуда иде во Угры). The passage indicates that Rodna was also called Baia, no doubt because of the adjacent mining settlement. Similarly, a settlement named Molda (Molga, Mulda) on the other side of the Carpathian Mountains, in Moldova, was also known as Baia. The location of Borsukov is not known, but the chronicler may have had in mind the site of the modern village of Bursuceni (Verești commune, Suceava county, Romania), situated on the right bank of the river Siret, east of Suceava.

While expanding to the south, across the Carpathian Mountains, Hungarian kings took a serious interest in both Wallachia and Bulgaria. When adopting the title “king of Cumania,” which first appears in his

430 Ip.let., p. 170.
432 Rogerius, pp. 33, 72.
433 Ip.let., p. 175.
charters in 1233. King Andrew II already ruled over a number of territories previously under local Cuman and Romanian chieftains. It is no accident that the new title was adopted at the time the Severin Banate was established. During the first four decades of the thirteenth century, for all its inner turmoils, the Hungarian Kingdom appeared to be the main political force in the Middle and Lower Danube area. The Arpadian kings of Hungary had ambitions of expansion directed towards the territories inhabited by “schismatics” (i.e., Orthodox) and pagans. Such a political program had not only the approval, but also the full support of the Holy See. Moreover, Hungarian expansionism took advantage of the Bulgarian involvement in affairs in the southern Balkans. Meanwhile, neither the Rus’ principalities, nor the Cumans seem to have had sufficient political and military clout to be a serious obstacle. Therefore, during the first part of the thirteenth century, Hungary became a much more serious threat for the local Romanian communities than the nomads of the steppe.

The conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders drastically diminished the prestige of Orthodoxy, given that none of the competing centers of power—Nicaea, Târnoo, Thessalonike, Trebizond, or Galicia—had the authority to replace Constantinopolitan Patriarchate in order to counterbalance the increasingly successful offensive of Catholicism. Although various Greek and Slavic rulers showed themselves open to the union with the Church of Rome, Catholic proselytisms in south-eastern and eastern Europe never gained much support among common people. The cooperation between the military and political structures, on one hand, and the church hierarchy in Hungary was viewed by both sides as an opportunity for the advancement of their own, specific goals. The resistance to Hungarian expansion into the Orthodox lands was thus viewed as resistance to the conversion to Catholicism.


Among the nomads who lived in southern Moldavia, similar to the Cumans were the Brodniks, attested in several contemporary diplomas and bulls. The first of those are two documents of 1222,\(^{437}\) considered by some to be apocryphal. If so, however, the forgery cannot have taken place more than a decade after the date indicated in the documents. In documents issued in 1227, 1231 and 1250 the land of the Brodniks appears together with Cumania in the region to the east from the Carpathian Mountains,\(^ {438}\) the Brodniks’ being mentioned under the name of Bordones (Βορδόνης), together with Scythians (= Cumans) who supported the Vlachs and the Bulgarians in 1186.\(^ {439}\) In 1146/1147\(^ {440}\) and in 1216\(^ {441}\) the Brodniks were mentioned as being involved in wars between the Rus’ princes, and in 1223 they participated in the battle at Kalka.\(^ {442}\)

Given that in all sources, they are mentioned along with other ethnic names, the Brodniks must have been a distinct ethnic group, not a social category. The vast area within which they are said to have been able to move, from Suzdal to the steppes north of the Black Sea and the Lower Danube, point to them being nomads. Their name or their “country” was often associated with Cumans or Cumania, and their special mobility may indicate that the Brodniks’ belonged to the family of Turkic peoples. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, besides the great Turkic tribes—Pechenegs, Uzes, Cumans—and the remainders of the Bulgars and Khazars, there were also smaller groups, such as the

\(^{437}\) Hurmuzaki, I, pp. 74–77; DRH, D, I, no. 1 and 2; Zimmermann, Der Deutsche Orden (see above, n. 386), pp. 170 and 173.

\(^{438}\) Hurmuzaki, I, pp. 102, 114, and 260; DIR, C, v. XI, XII and XIII, I, pp. 228, 245, and 345.

\(^{439}\) Uspenskii, Образованіе (see above, n. 374), p. 35; Nicetae Choniatae Orationes (see above, n. 373), p. 93.


\(^{441}\) Новгородская четвертая летопись, in PSRL, IV, p. 22; Let. Voskr., p. 122; Летопись по Уваровскому списку, in PSRL, XXV, pp. 112–113.

\(^{442}\) NPL, pp. 63, 266; Троицкая летопись, in PSRL, I (see above, n. 402), p. 218; Let. Voskr., p. 132; Летописный сборник именуемый Тверскою летописью, in PSRL, XV, col. 342; Ермолинская летопись, in PSRL, XXIII (see above, n. 405), p. 71; Летопись по Уваровскому списку, in PSRL, XXV, p. 120; Вологодско-Пермская летопись, in PSRL, XXVI (see above, n. 405), p. 69; Холмогорская летопись, in PSRL, 33, p. 64.
Berendei, the Turpei, the Kaepichi, and the Koui.\textsuperscript{443} Their respective homelands and origins remain unknown, but they may have all become distinct groups in central Asia, or during the migration to the west. Some of them may have simply been clans of the larger tribes.

Earlier studies maintained that the Brodniks were Romanians,\textsuperscript{444} most of those who advocated the idea being misled by an erroneous transcription of names in a document of 1222.\textsuperscript{445} As often happens, even after the mistake was revealed, that misconception continued to be reproduced. The fact that the Brodniks appear in the Romanian lands to the east from the Carpathian Mountains during a period of much ethnic change and population movement is not sufficient proof for them being natives to those lands, especially considering that they also appear in territories at a long distance from the Carpathian Mountains. Furthermore, we cannot ignore the fact that in contemporary sources the Romanians are consistently identified by other names, all of which derive from the ethnic name Vlach or Voloč. However, it would have been nonsensical for Niketas Choniates and for the emitters of the two documents of 1222\textsuperscript{446} to have used two different names for the same ethnic group.

The idea that the Brodniks were Rus’ or semi-nomadic Rus’ mixed with Turkic nomads (\textit{avant-la-lettre} Cossacks of sorts)\textsuperscript{447} is equally ground-
less. Against the idea is the fact that the term *kosak*, which is of Cuman origin\(^\text{448}\) means “sentinel,” or “watch guard,”\(^\text{449}\) and is thus very different in meaning from “brodnik.” The name Brodnik most probably derived from the Slavic verb *бродить* (“to wander,” “to roam”), so the original meaning must have been “wanderer,” “vagrant,”\(^\text{450}\) which does not exclude a Turkic origin for the Brodniks.\(^\text{451}\) An undoubtedly Turkic tribe was known by a Slavic name, the *Chornye klobuki* (черные кlobуки, Black Caps), perhaps a translation of the Turkic *Qara-börkli*.\(^\text{452}\)

Equally controversial is the ethnicity of the Bolokhovens, a population mentioned as living in the Rus’ regions to the north-east from Moldavia. On the basis of similarity with the name of the Volokh/Wallachians, some have regarded them as of Romanian origin, the more so since during the Middle Ages there seems to have been many Romance speaking enclaves within the Galician-Volhynia Principality.\(^\text{453}\) Archaeological investigations undertaken in the last few decades have precisely detected the settlements of the Bolokhoven princes mentioned in the


\(^{\text{451}}\) Some believe the Brodniks to have been Alans. See O. B. Bubenok, *Ясы и бродники в Восточной Европе* (VI–начало XIII вв.) (Kiev, 1997), pp. 131–136.


chronicles, and defined the features of their material culture.\textsuperscript{454} Those features are specific to western Rus’ territories, a fact that is believed to be relevant for defining the ethnicity of the Bolokhovens. The idea that the Bolokhovens were Rus’ is also supported by evidence of relations between Bolokhoven princes and Galician noble families.\textsuperscript{455}

Some believe that prior to the battle at Kalka, the lands of the Bolokhovens were ruled from Kiev.\textsuperscript{456} Bolokhoven princely were sworn enemies of Daniil (Danylo) Romanovich, against whom they fought in 1231, 1235, 1241, and 1257.\textsuperscript{457} As the confrontations were between unequal military forces, the Bolokhovens allied themselves with Daniil’s enemies, the Hungarians and the Mongols. Their fortified settlements enabled the Bolokhovens to opposed the Galicians for many decades. However they could not stand the campaign organized by Daniil in 1257, and thus their chances of political emancipation were ruined.

Medieval places names and the existence of villages organized according to the so-called Romanian law (\textit{jus Valachicum}) on Galicia-northern slopes of the northern Carpathians, which were part of Galych-Volhynia, indicate a numerous Romanian population and point out certain features of its organization.\textsuperscript{458} The adoption of numerous


\textsuperscript{455} P. P. Tolochko, “Київська земля,” in \textit{Древнерусские книжества} (see above, n. 269), p. 13.


\textsuperscript{457} \textit{Ib.}, pp. 172, 174, 179–180, and 194–195.

words of neo-Latin origin in the Ukrainian language is due, to a great extent, to the influence of those Romanian enclaves.

Meanwhile, in the lands on the left bank of the Danube, which witnessed the disintegration of the nomadic power, Romanians succeeded in creating several political entities, some of them covering vast territories. Nothing is known about such entities in the years prior to the great Mongol invasion. By contrast, there are several references for the years following that invasion. The 1247 diploma granted to the Knights of St John lists in Oltenia and western Wallachia, the principalities of two voivodes named Litovoi and Seneslau, and two knezes names John and Farcaș.459 In that same year, on his way back from the great khan, John of Plano Carpini (Giovanni di Pian di Carpine) met a “duke” named Olaha, who was on his way to the court of Batu Khan.460 The name of the duke is striking similar to the ethnic name for the Romanians, oláh, in Hungarian.461

The Franciscan William of Rubruck, who took a message from the king of France to the great khan in 1253, reported that at the court of Sartak he encountered messengers of the Russians, of the Romanians and of other peoples. They had stopped there on their way to the Volga, to the court of Batu Khan, to whom they carried their gifts: *Ipse enim est in itinere christianorum, scilicet Rutenorum, Blacorum, Bulgarorum minoris Bulgarie, Soldainorum, Kerklorum, Alanorum, curiam patris sui, defferentes ei munera, unde magis ampectitur eos.*462 The fact that Romanian princes sent emissaries to Sarai, or even had personal contacts with the Mongol leaders of the Horde indicates that such actions were necessary in getting confirmation of the status of regional rulers. Since immediately after the great

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459 Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen, I, eds. F. Zimmermann and C. Werner (Hermannstadt, 1892), no. 82; DRH, B, I, no. 1.
460 Plano Carpini, p. 129.
462 Rubruck, p. 209.
invasion several Romanian political formations or their rulers were mentioned in documents, we may assume that those structures had existed previously, and that they were strong enough to survive the shock of the Mongol invasion. They cannot possibly have been organized in the few years after the invasion, especially if we take into account the damage inflicted upon the whole Romanian society.

The traditional relations that had brought together the populations on both sides of the Danube continued after the victory of the Vlach-Bulgarian uprising in the Balkans, and the rise of the Second Bulgarian Empire. Hordes of Cumans continued to be included in the military forces of Ioannitsa’s successors, and those horsemen were used in the disputes south of the Balkans. In order to consolidate his reign and his alliance with the nomads of the steppes, Boril (1207–1218) married a Cuman woman, his uncle Ioannitsa’s widow. In addition, the pretender to the throne, John, Asen’s son—the future John Asen II, who was Boril’s cousin—fled with his supporters to the “Scythians” (= Cumans) in the lands north of the Danube. Possibly they came in touch with the Romanians of that area too. In 1218, after having obtained the neutrality of the Cumans of the Romanian Plain, John Asen II, with help from the Russians, returned to Bulgaria and overthrew Boril. In the 1230 great battle at Klokotnitsa, in which the new tsar defeated the armies of Theodore Angelus, the emperor of Thessalonike, John Asen II (1218–1241) had Cuman forces on his side as well. A little later, in 1234/1235, the Nicaean emperor John III Ducas Vatatzes (1222–1254), who aimed to recover Byzantine possessions from the Latins, concluded a peace treaty with John Asen II, not only in order to have him as an ally against the Latin Empire, but also because he feared the good relationship between the Cumans and the tsar.

As they wasted their military capacity in supporting the Asens, the Cuman tribes of the Lower Danube ignored the great threat represented by their own relatives of the extreme eastern territories of Desht-i Qipchaq. About 20,000 Cumans were said to have participated—together with Georgians, Armenians, Lezghians, Abkhazians, and other groups—

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463 Acropolites (see above, n. 261), col. 1019.
465 Acropolites, col. 1048; FHB, XV, pp. 269–270 (Theodori Scutariotae Compendium chronicum).
466 Gregoras, I (see above, n. 261), p. 29.
in the coalition formed against Jalal-al-Din (Jalaluddin)—the successor of the shah Muhammad, who had invaded the Caucasian area in a.H. 625 (= 1227–1228). As they were diplomatically lured by Jalal-al-Din, the Cumans eventually stopped fighting against him. Their forces had come, probably, from the above-mentioned extremity of Desht-i Qipchaq, that is, from territories bordering on Khwarazm. It was at that point, after the destruction of the Khanate of Khwarazm, that the Mongols reappeared in Europe, enthusiastically preparing themselves to move to the west. Their plans were delayed due to the death of Jochi, to whom his father, Genghis Khan (who also died shortly thereafter), had granted as ulus the western territories to be conquered.

The kuriltai of 1229 again raised the question of invading Desht-i Qipchaq and the neighbouring regions. Before launching that great campaign, the Mongol hordes undertook some manoeuvres on the Volga, which were meant either to consolidate their positions on the left bank of the river, or to scatter enemy forces. For 1229 and 1231/1232 Russian and Oriental chronicles mention raids against the Bulgars and other populations on the Volga. On the occasion of the first expedition, an attack against the Cumans took place too, dated by Ibn Wasil to a.H. 627 (= Nov. 20, 1229–Nov. 9, 1230). The Mongol advance to the west was also facilitated by the disputes between the Cuman tribes of Durut and Toksoba, as presented by authors belonging to the Mamluk state. That conflict, as result of a competition for hunting grounds, led to the murder of Mangush, Kotian’s (Kothen’s) son, of the tribe of Durut. The reprisals launched by Kotian against the tribe of Toksoba forced the khan of the latter, Akkubul, to ask for Mongol aid. Accurate tensions among various Cuman tribal groups were also


469 Tiesenhausen, I, p. 73.

470 Ibidem, pp. 541 (an-Nuwairī), 542 (Ibn Khaldun).
observed by the Dominican Julian, an emissary to *Hungaria Magna* in 1237. Several protagonists of those intertribal conflicts called for the assistance of both Khwarazmians and Mongols, in order to get the upper hand and to destroy their opponents.\(^{471}\)

In 1236 a huge Mongol army, under the supreme command of Batu Khan, Jochi’s son, set forth to the west, in one of the greatest invasions in the history of the world. It was to produce radical changes in the political and ethnic structure of eastern Europe, as well as in the Carpathian-Danube region. It seems that the ample operations of 1236 were preceded by some attacks undertaken in Desht-i Qipchaq, as mentioned above, in a.H. 632 (= 1234–1235), by the Persian chronicler Rashid al-Din.\(^{472}\) The bulk of the Mongol forces began to move only after those initial attacks. The first victims of the invasion were the populations living on the Lower and Middle Volga, Cumans included. The Cuman leader Bachman, in alliance with the Bulgars and the Iassians, offered vigorous resistance to the aggressors.\(^{473}\) The fact that he received no help from the Cumans in the steppe lands north of the Black Sea speaks volumes about of the political blindness of the Cuman chieftains.

Towards the end of 1237 the Mongol hordes attacked the principalities of Riazan’ and Vladimir, which were conquered before the following spring. According to Rashid al-Din, in a.H. 635 (= Aug. 24, 1237–Aug. 13, 1238) the Mongol actions focused on the steppes north of the Black Sea,\(^{474}\) which were inhabited by Cumans and by other nomads still living in Desht-i Qipchaq under their rule. The attempted

\(^{471}\) Bendefy, “Fontes authentici” (see above, n. 429), pp. 35–36, 39–40; Dörrie, “Drei Texte” (see above, n. 429), pp. 170–171 (Julianus).

\(^{472}\) Rashid al-Din, *Successors*, p. 61; Rashiduddin Fazlullah, II, p. 328.


\(^{474}\) Tiesenhausen, II, p. 37 (Rashid-ad-Din); Rashiduddin Fazlullah, II, p. 327; Korobeinikov, “A broken mirror,” p. 391.
resistance, under Kuthen’s command, was in vain, although the results of the first clashes were favourable to the Cumans. The development of the battles in Desht-i Qipchaq was not very well recorded in the documents, but the Cumans’ subsequent migration to the south and to the west is eloquent enough. One part of the Cumans made for the the Caucasian passes, another for the Balkans and Panonnnian Plain.

Hordes of Cumans crossed the Danube on leather bags stuffed with straw, then they moved to southern Bulgaria, plundered Thrace and Macedonia along the way. Ibn Tagribirdi relates that the Vlach chieftain Unus Khan attacked the Cumans after initially having allowed them to settle within his territories. Taking into account that the Bulgarians opposed the crossing of their country by the Cumans, and that medieval authors frequently referred to the state of the Asens as the “Land of the Vlachs,” the above-mentioned “khan” must have been John Asen II. Although the military collaboration with the Cumans had been very profitable for him, and although in his youth he had taken refuge among them, John Asen II could not accept the idea of having to deal with more nomads within his own country. He certainly could foresee what ravages hordes of at least 10,000 people could cause.

In having to choose between fighting the Turkic tribes and using them as auxiliary troops, John III Ducas Vatatzes opted for the latter. His rivals, the Latins of Constantinople, were also preoccupied with getting the Cumans on their side. The emperors of Nicaea had hired Cuman detachments in Asia Minor, but they also used them in their campaigns in south-eastern Europe. Those detachments were frequently mentioned in the armies of John III Ducas Vatatzes’

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475 Rogerius (see above, n. 418), pp. 23, 61.
476 Tiesenhausen, II, p. 38 (Rashid-ad-Din); Rashiduddin Fazlullah, II, p. 332.
477 Acropolites, col. 1062; Gregoras, I, pp. 36–37.
478 Tiesenhausen, I, p. 542.
479 Acropolites, col. 1062.
481 Gregoras, I (see above, n. 261), p. 37.
successors, Theodore II Lascaris (1254–1258) and Michael VIII Palaeologus (1258–1282). Among other campaigns, they took part even in the reconquest of Constantinople from the Latins in July, 1261.\textsuperscript{483} Other Cuman mercenaries came from various Balkan provinces. They were not always reliable. For example, in 1327 and the subsequent years, 2,000 Cumans who were suspected of planning a coalition with the Mongols were carried from Thrace to three islands in the Aegean Sea: Lemnos, Thasos and Lesbos.\textsuperscript{484}

In order to consolidate the cooperation with the Turkic nomads the imperial house resorted to matrimonial alliances, a method that recalled that previously employed in relationships with Rus’, Georgia, Bulgaria and Hungary. Very significant in this respect is the case of a late-thirteenth-century Cuman leader’s son, Sytzigan (baptized as Syrgiannes), who married a member of the Palaeologus family and got positions of honour at the court of Andronicus II (1282–1328).\textsuperscript{485} As a result of such matrimonial arrangements, descendants of Cumans were related to the members of the royal house of Georgia, and they also came to appear as members of the imperial family of the Grand Comneni of Trebizond in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{486} The Cumans scattered over such a vast area that their assimilation came naturally, especially when facilitated by conversion and the adoption of a sedentary way of life.

The third Cuman branch, which came from the steppes north of the Black Sea under the rule of Kuthen, was allowed by king Bela IV to settle in the Hungary despite being very large, about 40,000 people, according to Rogerius. Because of the troubles caused by the settlement of the Turkic nomads in Hungary, the authorities undertook reprisals against them. Kuthen was killed and the Cumans took refuge in Bulgaria, thus depriving the Hungarian Kingdom of important assistance


\textsuperscript{484} Ioannis Cantacuzeni Historiarum libri IV, ed. L. Schopen, I (Bonn, 1828), p. 259.


just at the moment when the great Mongol invasion was on its way.\textsuperscript{487} Only a few years after the withdrawal of Batu’s armies, the Cumans were again allowed to settle in Hungary, where they were to become a strong constituent of the royal armies for more than a century. Under such circumstances, the Cumans often fought side by side with the Romanians recruited by Arpadian and Angevin kings. They appear together in the Hungarian campaigns of 1260\textsuperscript{488} and 1271\textsuperscript{489} against Bohemia, in those of 1291\textsuperscript{490} and 1296\textsuperscript{491} into Austria, and in that against the Polish magnates of 1383.\textsuperscript{492} Cuman troops accompanied Charles Robert in his unfortunate expedition to Wallachia in 1330.\textsuperscript{493} In 1282 the Cumans who had rebelled against Ladislas IV the Cuman fled to the Mongols,\textsuperscript{494} certainly after crossing the territory of Moldavia.

After the conquest of Desht-i Qipchaq in 1238–1239, the Mongols resumed their campaign against the Rus’ principalities, which had not yet been conquered. In 1241–1242 they invaded the Romanian regions, Poland, Bohemia, Hungary and Bulgaria. The human losses and the destruction of settlements and of cultivated fields were enormous, and many years were needed for recovery. In the Carpathian-Danube area some perturbations took place on the occasion of the Cuman exodus

\textsuperscript{487} Rogerius (see above, n. 418), pp. 22–24, 26, 28, 29, 35–37, 61, 62, 64, 65, 67, and 74–76; Dörrie, “Drei Texte” (see above, n. 429), p. 175; Marinus Sanutus, p. 236.


\textsuperscript{491} Anonymous Leobiensis Chronicon, in Scriptores rerum Austriacarum, I, ed. H. Pez (Lipsiae, 1721), col. 874; Gombos, I, p. 279.

\textsuperscript{492} Kalendarz Krakowski, in Monumenta Poloniae Historica, II, ed. A. Bielowski (Lwów, 1872), p. 931; Calendarius Cruciiensis notae historiae ad annorum diemque ordinem redactae, ed. W. Bruchalski, in Monumenta Poloniae Historica, VI (Cracow, 1893), p. 657.

\textsuperscript{493} Cronici Hungarici (see above, n. 273), p. 499; CPict, pp. 111, 233; Chronicon Budense, p. 249; Johannes de Thurocz, I, p. 151.

\textsuperscript{494} Cronici Hungarici, pp. 471–472; CPict, pp. 97–98, 221; Chronicon Posoniensi, p. 44; Henric de Mügeln, p. 209. See also Chronicon Zagrabiense cum textu Chronicarum Varadensis collatum, ed. E. Szentpétery, in SRH, I, p. 213; Chronicon Budense, p. 207; Johannes de Thurocz, I, p. 139.
from eastern Europe. The steppes of that part of the continent were conquered by Batu Khan’s armies and became parts of the Golden Horde, whose western frontiers were on the Lower Danube. Among the major consequences of the great Mongol invasion was the destruction of the Turkic tribes in the steppes north of the Black and Caspian seas. That situation extended over the plains of the outer-Carpathian space, where a great part of the Turkic groups were exterminated, subjugated or forced to migrate to other lands, because neither the Bugeac, nor the Romanian Plain offered sufficient protection against the enemy.

The massacre of the Cumans and their exodus did not lead to total evacuation of Desht-i Qipchaq. John of Plano Carpini, the messenger of Pope Innocent IV to the great khan, travelled throughout the Mongol Empire in 1245–1247, and he related that the Tatars had slaughtered the Cumans, but some of the latter could flee and return later, whereas others were taken away as captives: *Istos autem Comanos Tartari occiderunt; quidam etiam a facie ipsorum fugerunt, et aliis sunt in eorum servitutem redacti.* *Plurimi tamen ex eis qui fugerunt, revertuntur ad ipsos.*

Some Turkic groups were subdued by the new rulers of the Eurasian steppes, and they had to accompany Batu in his great expedition to Hungary. Shortly after the invasion, the messengers of the pope and of the king of France, as well as different oriental travellers mentioned the presence of numerous groups of Cumans in the steppes north of the Black Sea and in Crimea. Evidence regarding their presence in the territories conquered by the Mongols can be found in many passages of contemporary chroniclers. The information is also confirmed by archaeological excavations of numerous burial assemblages of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century nomads. Such assemblages show the continuation of the Turkic burial rites, especially the inhumation under
The political history of the Carpathian-Dniester region

barrows, with human skeletons accompanied by sacrificed horses.\(^{498}\) The Cuman communities maintained their individuality for a long time in central Asia as well. Their detachments are mentioned as part of Sari-bugha Jalayir’s armies, sent against the Moghuls in a.H. 766 (= 1365) by Timur Lenk (Tamerlane). In a.H. 777 (= 1373–1377) they joined the uprising against Timur. Many Qipchaq emirs were also in the service of Timur Lenk during the last years of the fourteenth century.\(^{499}\)

The evolution of the Mongol-Cuman co-habitation was rightly understood by the Muslim scholar Al-‘Umari (1301–1349), who used the detailed and accurate information provided by merchants travelling across Desht-i Qipchaq. Here is his presentation of the geographic and ethnic background of the Golden Horde: “In the past the Empire had belonged to the Qipchaq Turks. Defeated by the Tatars and subdued to them [in the course of time], they mixed and became related to them, the territory defeating [little by little] the nature and the character [of the conquerors]; therefore, the Mongols who had established here, married the Qipchaqs, took their country, became similar to them and [today together with them] seemed to descend from the same race. Using this way of staying for a longer time in each town and in each country, they can reach a corresponding assimilation of the [human] nature and an equalization of the original elements of the specific features from the respective territory”.\(^{500}\)

The close and long contacts between Mongols and Cumans had linguistic consequences, as the Cuman language was eventually adopted


by their conquerors and rulers. Some of the official documents issued by the Mongol khans (jarlyks) in the late fourteenth century are written in Qipchaq.\footnote{501} Various other sources from that period testify to the use of that language in eastern Europe.\footnote{502} In addition, it was not an accident that one of the Tatar tribes of sixteenth-century Crimea was called Kiptchak\footnote{503} (Qipchaq). The great proliferation of names such as Comania, Cumania, or terra Comanorum in the twelfth and in the first decades of the thirteenth century, as well as the survival of the Cumans in the aftermath of the great Mongol invasion, account for the existence of such names, in identical or derivative forms, in travel notes,\footnote{504} chronicles,\footnote{505}


documents,\textsuperscript{506} maps,\textsuperscript{507} after the creation of the Golden Horde as well, both in the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian seas, and in the Carpathian-Danube region. At the same time, eastern sources continued to use the name Desht-i Qipchaq after the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{508}

Judging by all this evidence, it appears that the Cuman element remained a solid one in the southern region of the eastern Europe, without endangering the Mongol political and military supremacy. The history of the world has many other examples of conquerors adopting the language of the conquered, because the latter were either numerically or economically superior to the former. Things happened in much the same manner with the Franks and the Romanised Gauls in Gaul, with the Bulgars and the Slavs in the Balkans, with the Normans and the French in Normandy, with the Langobards and the Italians in northern


\textsuperscript{508} Tiesenhausen, I; II; Материалы по истории киргизов и Киргизии, I, ed. V. A. Romodin (Moscow, 1973); Материалы по истории казахских ханств XI–XVIII веков, eds. S. K. Ibragimov, N. N. Mingulov, K. A. Pishulina, V. P. Iudin (Alma–Ata, 1969); Cronici turcesti.prinăvă Tăriile Române. Extrace, I, eds. M. Guboglo and M. Mehmet (Bucharest, 1966); II, ed. M. Guboglo (Bucharest, 1974); Aboul-Ghâzi Bèhâdour Khan, Histoire, II (see above, n. 271), passim.
Italy, with the Varangians and the Slavs in the Kievan Rus’, and with the Normans and the Anglo-Saxons in England, to name a few. Taking into account the indubitable proofs of the massive presence of the Cumans in the steppe lands north of the Caspian and Black seas, it is safe to assume the continuity of certain Turkic groups in the region during the Golden Horde period. If so, the contacts between the Romanians and the nomadic Turks must have continued for several decades after the 1241 invasion, albeit under very different circumstances.

Some features of special significance can be pointed out in the analysis of the disparate and often vague data concerning the political events in the southern half of Moldavia and the surrounding regions. Between the tenth and the thirteenth century the last migrations of took place in eastern Europe, a part of the continent with a medieval history of migrations longer than that of the western parts by several centuries. The evolution of Romanian communities in the regions to the east from the eastern Carpathians (Fig. 2–3) took place in a context of long and complex contacts with various nomads. The presence of the nomadic horsemen considerably slowed the general development of the local society, and sometimes it even threatened its existence.

Those migrating to the steppe lands north of the Black Sea between the tenth century and the great Mongol invasion of 1236–1242 were exclusively of Turkic origin (Fig. 4). Such migrations began with the Hungarian exodus of 896 and ended with the Mongol invasion. Although they occurred in the last part of the so-called Völkerwanderungszeit, the late Turkic movement of people was no feeble imitation of earlier migrations. On the contrary, the movements of the Pechenegs, the Uzes and the Cumans had a force that was not inferior to that of their predecessors, the Avars and the Bulgars. Moments of weakening of their power were recorded in certain periods, especially towards the end of their stay in the plains north of the Danube and the Black Sea. Those moments were mainly determined by the scattering of their own forces, by the more active centrifugal tendencies within tribal confederacies, and by the severe blows coming from other nomad groups and from neighbouring states.

The general political background of the tenth to thirteenth centuries was considerably different from that of the previous period. Beginning with the end of the first millennium, in the eastern half of the continent there was not just one very strong state, the Byzantine Empire, but several: Bulgaria, Rus’, Hungary, each of them capable of great military and political initiatives. Their actions, when added to those
of Byzantium, affected at various moments and to various degrees the ethnic and political configuration of the Carpathian-Dniester area. Both the Romanian communities and the Turkic nomads in the Carpathian-Dniester area were under the conspicuous and multilateral influence of the Byzantine Empire and they depended on its military potential and firm control of the Danube. The rise of the Second Bulgarian Empire and the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders temporarily interrupted the Byzantine influence of the Byzantine world on the Romanian lands north of the Danube, a phenomenon with long-term consequences. In the thirteenth century, the Cuman power was on the decline and Desht-i Qipchaq became the stage of new disputes, as Khwarazm, Kievan Rus’ and Hungary strove to increase their own spheres of influence. Under those circumstances the Turkic domination of Romanian society weakened considerably, and the Carpathian-Danube area became the target of Hungarian expansion. Arpadian Kingdom emerged as the most active and enterprising political and military force in the area.

The equilibrium of forces in the eastern half of the continent was shattered by the great Mongol invasion, which produced great changes in the demographic and political situation of the region, as it stopped, for about one century, the Hungarian penetration across Carpathians. Also, the vigorous advance of the Mongols practically eliminated the Turkic nomads from the political map of eastern Europe. The Mongols thus put an end to the migration period in that part of the continent, and the consequences of their invasion remained manifest for a long time, both within the Carpathian-Dniester area and the lands farther to the east.
CHAPTER THREE

CONTRASTING WAYS OF LIFE: ROMANIAN AGRICULTURISTS AND TURKIC PASTORALISTS

One of the main features in the history of the outer-Carpathian region at the turn of the second millennium was undoubtedly the interaction between Romanians and Turkic nomads. In order to understand the complex nature of that relationship, its multifaceted character, and the large number of phenomena it involves, an method of analysis is needed, which should take into consideration the most relevant aspects of the two kinds of society. Such a method is appropriate given that most sources concerning the relations between Romanians and nomadic Turkic populations often contain only vague and equivocal information. Understanding the social structure of each community may contribute to a better understanding of the relations between them. This is also a way to avoid broad, but ultimately meaningless generalizations despite the fact that the scarcity of sources may inevitably lead to omissions and inadvertences. Where no written sources exist to help with the interpretation, archaeological excavations have produced a large and very detailed body of information. Not only can the archaeological evidence refine the chronologies of developments, but at times and in certain cases it can even clarify the ambiguity of the written sources.

A presentation side by side of the distinctive features of the native and nomadic ways of life is best suited for their easier identification, and for a better understanding of the mutual relations between those ways of life. Such a presentation allows for a comparative treatment of the issues. If Plutarch’s “parallel lives” scrutinized the destiny of some celebrities of the Greek and Roman Antiquity, the target here is to pinpoint the interactions between various ethnic groups in the outer-Carpathian region during the Middle Ages.

Linguistic and Ethnic Aspects

At the time of their contact with the late nomads, the ethnogenesis of the Romanians was a fait accompli. This has been a relatively long-drawn
process involving a numerous population on both sides of the Lower Danube. Most linguists believe that the Romanian vernacular separate from both late (or “vulgar”) Latin and Romance appeared between the eighth and ninth centuries, after the incorporation of a relatively strong influence of Late Common Slavic. That influence decisively marked the distinction of Romanian from other Romance languages in phonetical and morphological terms. The subsequent influence of Common Slavic or of Slavic vernaculars on Romanian is commonly interpreted as the historical equivalent of the influence of old Germanic dialects upon the western Romance languages. Linguists speak of proto-Romanian after the eighth century, and of a pre-literary phase of development of Romanian between the tenth and the fourteenth century.1

The gradual ethnic and linguistic individualization of the Romance-speaking population in the East is reflected in the consistent use in contemporary sources of the term Vlach or of its variants in reference to Romanians, first those on the right, then those on the left bank of the Danube. That the first Vlachs mentioned in the sources were those in the Balkans is a consequence of their proximity to the sources of information, especially to Constantinople. There is no serious reason to believe that such a priority can be interpreted as an indication of a Vlach migration from the southern to the northern banks of the river Danube. Were that the case, then, by the same token, one should assume a migration from the Continent to Scandinavia, given that the Germanic-speaking population on the Continent appears in written sources at a much earlier date than that in Scandinavia.

It is important to note that all names employed by outsiders to refer to Romanians referred to speakers of Romance languages, in general. That Romanians were fully aware of the Roman origins of their language and ethnic identity is repeatedly mentioned in contemporary sources, especially by such authors writing about the eleventh- to thirteenth-century Balkan Vlachs2 as Kekaumenos3

and John Kinnamos. The same is true for the correspondence between Pope Innocent III and Ioannitis Kaloyannes. Romanians living north of the Danube may have been equally aware of their Roman origins, but all evidence for that is rather late.

One of the earliest mentions of the name, which Romanians used to refer to themselves appears in an Italian description of the world, probably drawn up in Tuscany and now in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (ms. Chigi M.V 116, ff. 65 r°–72 r°). Among the peoples living in the region (prouincia) of Ungaria (Hungary), the unknown author lists i Rumeni e i Valacchi, obviously without knowing that the two names referred to one and the same people. The Italian author also wrongly described the Rumeni and the Valacchi as pagans. An approximate date for this source may be established on the basis of another reference to “emperor” Osbeccho, no doubt the Italianized form of the name of Golden Horde khan Özbäg (1313–1342).

Migration and expansion have been invoked to explain the distinction between the language in use among Romanians north of the

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Danube river (“Daco-Romanian”) from the dialect spoken by Romanian communities in Macedonia calling themselves “Aromanians” (Macedo-Romanian). If so, then the same may certainly be true about the separation of two other dialects, the Megleno-Romanian in the Moglena region of Greece, and Istro-Romanian in Istria and the surrounding islands of the northern Adriatic sea.\(^{10}\) While several dialects of Romanian exist south of the river Danube, Daco-Romanian displays a remarkable linguistic uniformity within the entire Carpathian-Danube region to the north, in spite of the political separation of Romanians into three different states throughout the Middle Ages and until the modern era. There are in fact no linguistic arguments for the idea of a separate, east-Carpathian dialect of Romanian, and even less for a language different from Daco-Romanian.\(^{11}\) What is often presented as the Moldavian language is in fact (Daco-)Romanian, in spite of the political circumstances behind recent attempts to draw a distinction. Despite regional variation, Daco-Romanian is in fact the only Eastern Romance language still spoken north of the Danube River.

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As already mentioned, most tribes of nomadic horsemen entering the outer-Carpathian area at some point between the Hungarian migration to Pannonia and the great Mongol invasion of 1241–1242 were of Turkic origin and originated in central Asia.


None of the tribal confederacies created during that period were ethnically or linguistically homogenous, first and foremost because such confederacies were conglomerates of smaller groups of population, which had been forced to migrate by their neighbors. Nonetheless, a predominantly Turkic character of the Pecheneg, Oghuz / Uzes, and Qipchaq / Polovtsy / Cuman confederacies is beyond any doubt. The old idea that Pechenegs spoke an Ugrian language has now been entirely discredited, much like the nineteenth-century concept of Pechenegs of "Mongol race". True, late nomadic tribal confederacies were often multinational and multilingual. In that respect, some have argued in favour of Iassians living among the Pechenegs but speaking Iranian languages. Others believe some Cuman dynasties to be of "proto-Mongol" origin.

At some point during the second half of the early eleventh century, after living for a long time among Turkic populations and studying their languages and traditions, Mahmud al-Kashghari produced a well-documented work about the "Turks." According to him, only the Qirqiz, the Qipchaq, the Oghuz and five other tribes spoke a pure Turkic language, while the languages of the Bulgars, Suvars and Pechenegs (Bäčinäk), while undoubtedly Turkic, had been altered by foreign influences. Mahmud al-Kashgari believed that initially there were very

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14 A. D. Xenopol, Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiană, 1, 4th ed. V. Mihăilescu-Bîrliba (Bucharest, 1985); C. Koşgânilceanu, Istoria veche a românilor (Bucharest, 1938), p. 6.
few differences between all those languages, all phonetical. He saw the linguistic fragmentation as a natural phenomenon, given the vast area, between the Byzantine and the Chinese frontiers, in which those peoples lived. Mahmud al-Kashghari’s examples support his idea of a great similarity between Qipchaq and Oghuz, both different in some respects from the language of the Pechenegs. However, to outsiders such nuances do not seem to have been obvious, as Byzantine authors believed that Pechenegs and Cumans spoke one and the same language, without any difference.

To Ibn Khordâdhbeh, the Ghozz, the Badjanâk and the Khîfshâkh were Turkic countries. Most other medieval sources written in Arab explicitly regarded the Oghuz, the Pechenegs, the Qipchaq as “Turks.” This is the case not only for Mahmud al-Kashghari, but also for al-Marvazi, Idrisi, Shams al-Din al-Dimashqi, Mahammad Ibn Mansur Merverrudi, Abu’l-Fida, Ibn Khaldûn and Shükrüllakh


The Pechenegs appear as “Turks” in al-Qazwini, al-Wardi, the Oghuz in Ya’kubi, al-Istakhri and Birdzhandi; both Pechenegs and Oghuz in Mas’udi, Ibn Hauqal, al-Bakuvi and Yakut al-Hamavi. The Qipchaq / Cumans are mentioned as “Turks” in Ibn Abi l-Hadîd al-Madâ’inî, but also in Jacques de Vitry. It is important to note at this point that in Arab, Persian, and Turkish sources a “Turk” is simply another word for a nomad from the Eurasian steppe lands, the equivalent of what pedantic Byzantine authors called “Scythian.” This may explain what otherwise well-informed authors such as Ibn...
Rusta,\textsuperscript{40} Mas’udi,\textsuperscript{41} the unknown authors of the late tenth-century Persian geography \textit{Hudūd al-Ālam},\textsuperscript{42} Gardizi,\textsuperscript{43} al-Marvazi,\textsuperscript{44} Abu’l-Fida,\textsuperscript{45} Shūkrullakh,\textsuperscript{46} Muhammad Kātib (Mohammed the Writer),\textsuperscript{47} and many others treated the Hungarians as “Turks.” In doing so, they were certainly not alone: Byzantine authors, especially Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, consistently called the Hungarians “Turks.” “Turks” were also the Mongols of Ibn Battuta.\textsuperscript{48}

The ethnic names of the Pecheneg, Uzes (Oghuz), and Cumans (Qipchak), as well as a great number of names of chieftains mentioned in the sources testify to the Turkic character of their languages. Pecheneg names such as Boga, Temir and Küchüg appear with other Turkic peoples as well. The Pechenegs have been associated with runes and runic inscriptions found in the Maiaki and Sarkel (Belaia Vezha) strongholds, as well as on items from the the Sânnicolau Mare (Nagyszentmiklós) (Timiş county, Romania) hoard.\textsuperscript{49} The population of the Saltovo-Maiaki culture was undoubtedly multi-ethnic, with Khazars, Bulgars, Alans, and Pechenegs living side by side. However, the presence of the Pechenegs is not documented in any of the urban centers of the Khazar Khaganate and, consequently, the runes from Maiaki and Sarkel are hardly Pecheneg. As for the 18 to 20 runes on the vessels found in the Sânnicolau Mare hoard, which has recently been re-dated much earlier and associated with the Avars,\textsuperscript{50} it is important

\textsuperscript{41} Al-Mas’udi, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{44} Marvazi (see above, n. 21), p. 35; \textit{Orient. Ber.}, p. 252.
\textsuperscript{45} Aboulêda (see above, n. 25), II, 1, p. 324.
\textsuperscript{47} Hammer, \textit{Sur les origines russes}, p. 64; Zimonyi, \textit{Muslimische Quellen}, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{50} F. Daim, “Avars and Avar archaeology. An introduction,” in \textit{Regna and Gentes. The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of}
to note that only six or seven of them have analogies among known Turkic runes. If indeed the runes in question render a short text in the Pecheneg language, than whoever carved them certainly had a poor knowledge of that or of any other related, Turkic language. The old Turkic runes, first attested in southern Siberia and central Asia during the eighth and ninth centuries, was in use with several ethnic groups, some of which eventually migrated to the southern regions of eastern Europe. The use of Turkic runes is attested among Khazars, Bulgars and Avars. Besides runes, the Turkic tribes within the territories to the east from the Ural Mountains used other scripts borrowed from neighbouring populations in central Asia.
According to the Rus’ learned tradition of the early twelfth century, the Pechenegs, the Torki (Uzes), and the Cumans (Polovtsy) were all related to each other, as successors of the Biblical sons of Ishmael. On the other hand, Seljuq legends also reflect the awareness of a common descent of the Oghuz and the Cumans. The Slavs called the Oghuz Torki because they regarded them as of Turkic origin.

According to N. A. Baskakov, most groups of nomads moving into the Carpathian-Danube region between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries spoke Turkic-Western Hun languages of the Oghuz and Qipchaq groups. The former includes such language subgroups as Oghuz-Turkman, Oghuz-Bulgarian, and Oghuz-Seljuk. The language of the tenth- to eleventh-century Oghuz belonged to the Oghuz-Turkman subgroup. The language of the Pechenegs, of the later Oghuz and of the Gagauz are all of the Oghuz-Bulgarian sub-group. The oldest language in the Qipchaq subgroup is Qipchaq (Cuman, Polovtsy).

Cuman is the best-known old Turkic language, largely due to the Codex Comanicus a collection of Latin-Persian-Cuman texts preserved in a manuscript of the San Marco (Marciana) Library in Venice. The manuscript includes a Latin-Persian-Cuman glossary, as well as a collection of prayers, sermons, sacred stanzas and other religious texts written in the Cuman language. According to the most recent studies, the earliest part of the collection must be dated between and attributed to a Genoese merchant familiar with, and involved in the Black Sea trade network. The later parts of the manuscript were written by a monk in eastern or central Germany at some point between 1330 and 1350. The idea that some Cuman entries in the glossary may be of

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57 PVL, I, pp. 152–153; Nik.let., I, p. 126.
59 PVL, I; Ip.let.; Let.Voskr.; Nik.let., I, passim.
61 G. Kuun, Codex Cumanicus bibliothecae ad templum divi Marci Venetiarum (Budapest, 1880); Codex Cumanicus, Cod. Marc. Lat. DXLIX in Faksimile, ed. K. Gronbech (Copenhagen, 1936); V. Drimba, Codex comanicus (Bucharest, 2000).
62 D. Drüll, Der Codex Cumanicus: Entstehung und Bedeutung (Stuttgart, 1979), pp. 24–43. On details concerning Cumanian language, see G. Golubovich, Bibliotheca biblio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell’Oriente Francescano, III (dal 1300 al 1332) (Quaracchi /
Romanian origin is not supported by any piece of evidence. Instead, scholars have identified Greek, East Slavic, Mongolian, Arab, Persian, Hebrew loans, as well as a strong influence on the Cuman language of the specialized vocabulary of Christianity.63 Fragments of the Cuman language have also been preserved in some texts originating from the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Armenian communities in the towns of Kam’ianets Podil’s’kyi (Kamenets-Podolsk) and L’viv (Lvów), which were written in the Armenian alphabet.64

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Turkic nomadic societies were typically multi-ethnic, first and foremost because conquered groups were forcefully incorporated into the political and military structures of the conquering group. Equally important in that respect were alliances between different groups against common enemies. Such ephemeral associations are mentioned in the sources for the Hungarians and the Kabars; the Khazars and the Uzes; the Pechenegs and the Uzes; the Pechenegs and the Hungarians; the Pechenegs, the Uzes and the Berendei; the Cumans and the Berladniks; the Cumans and the Alans and the Mongols and the Cumans.

**Demographic Aspects**

The objective assessment of the relationship between the Romanians and the nomads is still unconvincing, unless we establish or at least estimate the numerical relationship between these populations. From the very beginning, it is necessary to specify that the narrative sources provide little reliable information in this respect: they tend to underestimate the Romanian element and exaggerate the number of Turkic nomads. That those sources would reflect the ethno-demographic realities in such a way is hardly surprising, given that not only in the Middle Ages, but at all times in history it is the spectacular—usually violent—events and their protagonists that attract particular attention. Peaceful events and historical characters tend to be ignored, irrespective of their contribution to the society in which they happen to live. This serves to explain the paucity of information refering to the Romanian population in the tenth to thirteenth centuries and the incomparably more substantial sources we have for the nomads, as well as the more generous assessments of their number.

A particularly relevant source for the demographic weight of the natives in southwestern Moldavia and north-eastern Wallachia is the aforementioned bull of November 14, 1234, according to which Hungarians and Germans in the Catholic Cuman diocese had adopted the

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religion of the Romanians. This could only have been possible if within a region under direct Hungarian control, the Romanians were not only numerous, but also well organized. This is not a unique episode in the confessional history of the east-Carpathian region. The conversion of Catholics to Orthodoxy, without any pressure from the authorities, is mentioned in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. By that time, the political circumstances have considerably changed.

Some estimate that an ideal ratio of farmers to nomads within one and the same territory is 10 to 1. This is commonly explained in terms of agricultural fields supporting a much larger population than the equivalent area used as pasture land. It is not possible at this moment to evaluate the demographic ratio of Romanians to nomads. However, judging from the archaeological evidence, it is not too far-fetched to advance the 10 to 1 ratio for the tenth to twelfth centuries. The Romanian population in Moldavia substantially decreased during the thirteenth, possibly beginning in the late twelfth century, and increased again in the fourteenth century.

There is currently no way to assess the relative population growth of Romanians and nomads other than by archaeological means. However, the demographic interpretation of the archaeological evidence is only at the beginning. There is nevertheless a sufficient amount of data for attempting to advance some preliminary estimates.

The local population in tenth- to twelfth-century Moldavia is known from excavations of sites attributed to the so-called Dridu (or Carpathian-Danube) and Răducăneni cultures. It was imperative to abandon these names as soon as a general consensus (not yet possible, apparently) would be reached in regard to some of the main aspects about the genesis and evolution of these cultures. Since the basic features of the Dridu and the Răducăneni cultures, as well as those of the thirteenth-century settlements, are essentially the same, they can be presented together.

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67 *Călători*, IV, pp. 43–44 (B. Quirini) and 187 (Șt. Balthazar).

The population of the Dridu culture appears to have been multi-ethnic, with Romanians, Bulgarian Slavs, and Turks living side by side, as indicated by large cemeteries excavated in the Romanian Plain. For example, some of the burial assemblages found in southern Wallachia on such sites as Izvoru (Giurgiu county), Păuleasa (Teleorman county), Platoneşti (Ialomiţa county), and Sultana (Câlăraşi county) have numerous analogies in the northern Balkans, as well as in the Lower Volga region. To some, this appears as sufficient for a blanket attribution of such assemblages to the Bulgars.

Settlement sites dated to the same period have also been excavated in southern and central Moldavia at Gara Banca, Bârlad–“Prodana,” Bârlăleşti, Dodeşti, Epureni (Vaslui county), Brăşăuţi (Neamţ county), Câmpineanca (Vrancea county), Hlincea-Iaşi, Şorogari.

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76 Spinei, *Moldova*, pp. 84, 90, 96, and 103.
82 Zaharia, etc., *Aşeţări*, pp. 219–220.
(Iași county), Oituz, Oncești (Bacău county), Şendreni, Vânători (Galați county) (Romania), Calfa (Anenii Noi county), Hansca (Ialoveni county), Etulia (the Gagauz Autonomous Territorial Unit), Giurgiulești (Cahul county) (Republic of Moldova), Bogatoe, Safian, Suvorovo (Ismail district), Şaba (Bilhorod Dnistrovs’kyi

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district) (Odessa region) (Ukraine). Later settlements attributed to the Răducăneni culture have also been excavated in Brădicea,\(^95\) Hlincea-Iași,\(^96\) Răducăneni\(^97\) (Iași county), Dănești,\(^98\) Oltenești\(^99\) (Vaslui county) (Romania), Hansca,\(^100\) Molești\(^101\) (Ialoveni county), Durlești\(^102\) (in Chișinău) (Republic of Moldova), while twelfth- and thirteenth-century villages have been unearthed in Dobrovăț,\(^103\) Hlincea-Iași,\(^104\) and Iași-“Nicolina”\(^105\) (Iași county) (Romania). I shall return shortly to the burial assemblages dated between the tenth and the thirteenth century and attributed to the local population.

According to a recent study, there are 107 tenth- to eleventh-century sites in southern, and 87 in central Bessarabia. Forty-eight of those 87 sites (56 percent) also produced evidence of an eighth to ninth-century occupation, an indication of continuity.\(^106\) The number of known sites within the same region substantially diminishes for the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by as much as 40 percent. The greatest decrease occurs in southern Bessarabia, where so far only three settlements have been found, which could be dated between the twelfth and the

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\(^95\) Excavations carried by Constantin Iconomu.


\(^103\) Excavations carried by Maria-Voica Pușcașu and Nicolae Pușcașu.

\(^104\) Zaharia, etc., *Ageșen*, pp. 136–137.

\(^105\) Excavations carried by the author.

thirteenth century.107 In Moldavia, to the west from the Prut River, field surveys identified 129 ninth- to tenth-century sites attributed to the Dridu culture (Fig. 2), with 121 settlements, 4 cemeteries or isolated burial assemblages, and 4 coin finds. Forty-one of those sites were located in the plain and hilly region, 80 in the highlands, and only eight in the mountains.108 The number of sites is substantially greater for the tenth to eleventh centuries. Out of 296 sites, 247 were settlements, 16 cemeteries or isolated burial assemblages, 23 coin finds, three coin hoards, and seven hoards of agricultural implements and weapons. Most tenth- to eleventh-century sites cluster in the plain and in the hills (107), as well as in the highlands (173), with only a few in the mountain region (16).109 Judging from the published archaeological evidence, there are about 100 sites of the Răducăneni culture dated to the eleventh and twelfth centuries known from the area east from the Carpathian Mountains (Fig. 3). By contrast, only 35 sites are known, which have been dated to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.110 The small number of thirteenth-century sites is certainly a problem of the current research, and must therefore be treated with caution.

The evidence of field surveys thus shows that native Romanians were far more numerous than the Turkic nomads. There is a clear decrease in the number of sites at the time of the migration of the Turkic nomads. The greatest variation in the number of sites is that

109 Ibidem, p. 27.
from the plain region between the Siret and the Dniester rivers. The field surveys also indicate that the largest population, judging from the number of sites, was that of the tenth- and eleventh-century southern Moldavia, followed by a sharp decrease in that same region during the subsequent centuries. Many sites were abandoned in that region, no doubt because of the Turkic steppe nomads moving in the neighbourhood. The smallest number of sites throughout the entire period between the tenth and the thirteenth century was that of the mountain region, clearly not suitable for a population of agriculturists.

Given the current state of research, it is not possible to estimate the absolute numbers of the local population in the Carpathian-Dniester area. Some believed the population of Moldavia in the mid-fourteenth century to have raised to some 85,000, the majority of whom were Romanians and Slavs. Others advanced a much larger figure of 400,000, with 500,000 and 900,000 for contemporary Wallachia and Transylvania, respectively. Judging from the military forces at the disposal of Prince Ștefan cel Mare (Stephen the Great) during the late 1400s, the population of Moldavia may have been as large as 600,000. Until the second half of the eighteenth century, a period for which there is more consistent census data, the demographic evolution in Moldavia must have had its ups and downs, depending largely upon wars and military campaigns. A census of 1591 lists 46,860 families. If the average family consisted of five persons, then the total population of Moldavia before 1600 must have been 234,300 strong.

Throughout the Middle Ages the natural increase in population was greatly limited by high rates of infant and child mortality. The anthropological study of skeletal remains from twelfth- to fourteenth-century

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112 V. Georgescu, Istoria românilor de la origini pînă în zilele noastre, 2nd ed. (Los Angeles, 1989), p. 28. Others reached similar conclusions regarding the population of Transylvania (Șt. Pascu, A History of Transylvania, trans. R. Ladd [Detroit, 1982], p. 67) and of the three large Romanian provinces, the population of which was estimated at 1,800,000–1,900,000 (V. Trebici, Demografia [Bucharest, 1979], p. 457).


115 P. G. Dmitriev, Народонаселение Молдавии (Kishinev, 1973), p. 82.
rural cemeteries excavated in the region to the east and south from the Carpathian Mountain suggest a rate of infant mortality as high as 40 percent and an average age of no more than 30.116

Those travelling through Moldavia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century estimated the population of the country to have been 500,000 (J. L. Carra—1777),117 525,000 (Ch. F. Reinhard—1806),118 600,000 (Struve—1793),119 F. Káracsay—1812120 or 730,000 (D. Bantysh-Kamenski—1808)121 strong. By contrast, abbot Ruggero Giuseppe Bosovich estimated in 1762 that about 150,000 people lived in Moldavia, while twenty years later Raičevich believed the population of Moldavia and Wallachia was one million strong,122 which seems to fit the above-mentioned estimates. Such figures are also confirmed by census data for the years 1772–1774, which recorded 2,299 settlements, excluding those under Turkish administration. According to some calculations, in those settlements there were about 113,600 houses, which means 568,000 inhabitants.123 A century ago, a Dutch source

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119 Iorga, Istoria românilor în cadrul populațiilor străine, p. 410; Gh. Teodorescu, Mânturii geografice despre țările noastre de la Herodot până la Wilkinson (450 i.Hr.–1820) (Buzău, 1942), pp. 102–103.

120 Țărări străine despre Țările Române în secolul al XIX-lea, SN, I, p. 763.

121 Ibidem, p. 405.

122 D. A. Lazărescu, Imaginea României prin călători, I, 1716–1789 (Bucharest, 1985), pp. 64 and 198.

123 Dmitriev, Народонаселение Молдавии (see above, n. 115), pp. 62, 78–79, and 83. Others advanced different figures. See I. A. Kotenko, N. A. Mokhov, P. V. Svetov “О тенденции роста народонаселения Молдавии в эпоху феодализма,” Ученые
indicated a greater number of villages for Moldavia: 3,000. According to French statistics, the total population of Moldavia in 1808, that is after the annexation of Bucovina by the Habsburgs, was of about 800,000 inhabitants, in addition to 20,000 in the Hotin raia and 140,000 in “Bessarabia” (= Bugeac). The figures are finally confirmed by internal ecclesiastical statistics (1810), which indicate 814,884 “souls” in Moldavia and “Bessarabia” (= Bugeac).

Taking into account the dynamics of the demographic increase, which results from the evidence mentioned above, as well as from the archaeological studies, it is possible to give a rough estimate of the local population of Moldavia between the tenth and the thirteenth century. Given the uneven development of the archaeological research on ninth- to eleventh-century sites, the number of rural settlements from that period must have been higher the 400 sites so far known, perhaps as large as 2,000. Judging from the evidence of systematically excavated sites, such as Băiceni (Iași county), Bârlăești, Dodești, Gara Banca (Vaslui county) (Romania), Calfă (Anenii Noi county), Etulia (the Gagauz Autonomous Territorial Unit) and Hansca (Ialoveni county) (Republic of Moldova), an average number of 25 houses per village may be advanced, which would produce a total number of 50,000 households for the entire Carpathian-Danube area. Further assuming five members per household, this will give a total population of some 250,000 inhabitants for the period between the ninth and the first half of the eleventh century.

The removal of the agricultural communities from the Bugeac and the substantial decrease in population in eastern Moldavia, led to a diminishing demographic index for the second half of the eleventh and the twelfth century. The population may have been no more 150,000–200,000 strong, with even lower levels of 100,000–150,000 inhabitants for the thirteenth century, the period of the most serious
demographic depression. The population began to increase again only after 1300, without however ging beyond the tenth-century level.127

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As for the nomads, different sources provide different population estimates. According to John Skylitzes, when crossing the Danube into the Empire in 1046/1047, Tyrach brought with him 800,000 people, divided into 11 tribes.128 If so, then each Pecheneg tribe must have been some 72,700 strong. Before Tyrach’s horde, two other Pecheneg tribes, led by Kegen, had settled in the Balkans. John Skylitzes estimates that they were 20,000 strong. The total number of Pechenegs in the mid-eleventh-century Balkans was thus one million, which is clearly exaggerated. Omeljan Pritsak’s estimate of 2.8 to 3 million Pechenegs is equally unlikely.129 The figure of 600,000 Uzes invading the Empire in 1064–1065 must also be treated with suspicion.130 The army of “Sauromanthians” (Cumans), “Scythians” (Pechenegs) and “Dacians” (Hungarians), who crossed the Danube in 1087 under the command of Tzelgu, is said to have been 80,000 strong,131 whereas the Pechenegs gathered in 1091 to battle Alexius I Comnenus at Lebunion were believed to have been 600,000.132 Both estimates can hardly be accepted at face value. Their rhetorical flavour is enhanced by what one of emperor Alexius I’s panegyrist had to say about the emperor’s enemies: “their multitude exceeds the number of spring bees.”133

More reliable appear to be the figures advanced for the Cuman forces fleeing the Mongols: 10,000 went to the Balkans134 and 40,000 to Hungary.135 If these figures are close to reality, then those about the

131 Anne Comnène (see above, n. 18), II, p. 87.
133 FHDR, III, pp. 18–19 (Theofilact al Ohrid).  
135 Rogerius, pp. 23 and 63.
Pechenegs and the Uzes must be grossly exaggerated and altogether reliable. Given the subsistence economy of the Balkans in the eleventh century, a sudden surplus of 800,000 or even 600,000 people would have meant a real catastrophe for both natives and invaders.

In their desire to emphasise the great danger caused by the migration of the nomads and thus to find an excuse for Byzantine defeats, the Greek authors exaggerated the military potential of the nomads, a sufficient reason for not taking their information at face value. True, the figures advanced did not refer to all Pechenegs, for no Byzantine author seems to have been concerned with just how many nomads were out there, in the steppe lands north of the Black Sea. It is perhaps safe to assume no more than one million Pechenegs, Uzes, and Cumans altogether.

Large concentrations of military forces such as mentioned in the Byzantine sources were unique episodes in the history of nomadic societies, the end result of which was mass migration. By contrast, even large raids to the south or to the west implied only a relatively small number of participants. The organization of the great forays against neighbouring states frequently involved warriors not only from hordes scattered in the Bugeac and the Romanian Plain, which were never sufficient, but also from the entire area north of the Black Sea. Since in the early eleventh century there were still native settlements in the lowlands of the outer-Carpathian area, the Pechenegs must have at that time come from farther to the east. They moved into the Bugeac and the Bărașgan only after the mid-eleventh century, mainly because of an increasing need for grazing fields, and in doing so they forced the native population out. This was a clear increase in the nomadic population, but just how large that population was, it is impossible to decide.

Nonetheless, some idea may still obtained by means of comparison with later Tatar forces settled in the Bugeac. During the second quarter of the sixteenth century, Georg Reicherstorffer knew that the Tatars in south-eastern Moldavia had some 500 farms (sessiones), while more than a century later Elvya Çelebi mentioned only 200 settlements and 45,000 Tatars. The figures advanced for the military forces of

136 Călători, I, p. 197. See also Călători, VIII, p. 635 (Descriere “curioasă” a Moldovei și Țării Românești, 1699).
137 Călători, VI, p. 413. Elsewhere, Elvya Çelebi evaluated the Tatar forces at 40,000 (see Călători, VI, p. 434) or 47,000 (Ibidem, p. 632).
the Tatars by French travellers of the second half of the seventeenth century are contradictory: François Gaston de Béthume has 25,000 horsemen, and Guillaume Levasseur de Beauplan—probably closer to truth—only between 4,000 and 5,000. In 1806, at the time of their final removal from the Bugeac, count Langeron estimated the Tatar army was 30,000 strong. This is obviously exaggerated, because such an army would require a population of more than 100,000 inhabitants. Others believed the total Tatar population to have been 40,000, and that only as a result of the Ottoman-led colonization following the wars with Russia. A part of the Nogai-Tatars fled to the Turks south of the Danube, while those who remained behind (about 6,404) were forcefully removed by the Russian armies.

It is possible to admit numbers as large for the eleventh- to thirteenth-century Turkic populations as those advanced for the later Tatars. Until the Mongol invasion, most Turkic populations in the steppe were practicing nomadism, whereas the Tatars living during the late Middle Ages and the modern era in that region had already begun to settle and to adopt agricultural occupations, which contributed to a demographic increase far superior to that of purely nomadic communities. This is further substantiated by the comparatively larger numbers of people buried in Tatar cemeteries in the Bugeac.

Archaeological excavations have so far offered extremely helpful indication of the population numbers for the Turkic nomads in the Carpathian-Dniester area (Fig. 4). I will return to those problems in the section dedicated to burial assemblages.

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138 Călători, VII, pp. 410 and 516.
Chapter Three

Settlements and Life Style

The ninth- to thirteenth-century native villages are quite large, sometimes covering several hectares. They were located on exposed positions, in river everglades, on hills with mild slopes, or in the lowlands. They are not normally found at high altitude, away from arteries of communication or bodies of water. Some in fact are right on the banks of rivers or on lake shores. Throughout the whole period under discussion, native fortified settlements appear only exceptionally, as most settlements were open. By contrast, in neighbouring Transylvania; ever since the end of the first millennium, a number of earthworks were built with ditches and palisades. The same is true about the mountain region in the northern Balkans, where according to the written sources the Vlachs had their own stone fortresses. The Slavic tribes living in the Middle Dniester and Upper Prut regions also had settlements fortified with earth walls and palisades, like most other peoples of central and eastern Europe at that time.

The scarcity, if not total absence, of earthworks in the Romanian lands south and east from the Carpathians requires some explanation. It cannot have been either the level of development reached by local com-

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143 Nicetae Choniatae Historia, ed. Im. Bekker (Bonn, 1835), p. 482.

contrasting ways of life

munities, or some technological inability to erect strongholds. Instead, one should perhaps look elsewhere for a credible explanation. In my opinion, the lack of strongholds is to be associated to the particular relations between natives and nomads. Strongholds are bastions of resistance, so any political or military power trying to suppress the ability of the conquered population to rebel would begin by demolishing the existing strongholds and preventing the building of new ones. This was certainly the logic behind the measures taken by the Mongols in 6758 (= 1250) against the Rus’ of Galich-Wolhynia to prevent them from building new forts, and in 6769 (= 1261) to destroy the fortresses of the principality. Prior to that, the Mongols had not only extracted tribute and military cooperation from the Caucasus region, but also asked for all fortifications of Armenia and Georgia to be destroyed. The same is true for Ilkhan Hülägü, who in a.H. 654 (= 1257/1258) demanded that all fortifications on in the lands of Khur-shah (Khwar-shah) be destroyed. When allowing the rebuilding and resettlement of Kantzag, the Mongols nonetheless forbade the restoration of the city’s ramparts. During the sixteenth century, the Ottoman asked the princes of Moldavia to demolish the walls of their own fortresses and forbade them to build new ones. It is very likely that a similar prohibition applied to the Romanian communities in the outer-Carpathian region under Bulgar, later nomadic rule. The destruction, at some point between the tenth and the eleventh century, of Tivertsian strongholds, as well as of the fortress at Calfa (Anenii Noi county), by either Pechenegs and Uzes, or by Cumans must be understood as a stern warning to anyone challenging their power.

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145 Ip.let., p. 184.
146 Ibidem, p. 198.
The settlements in Moldavia (Figs. 2–3) were rural, as no towns came into being before the great Mongol invasion. The delayed urbanization of the east-Carpathian region is most likely the result of the absence of any viable urban traditions.\textsuperscript{151} Since the cities in existence during Antiquity in the Lower Danube region disappeared during the subsequent centuries, no traces were left in the Romanian language of the Latin vocabulary of city life.\textsuperscript{152}

In the densely forested hilly and sub-Carpathian regions, villages were isolated. Such villages are in existence even to the present day, and their number must have considerably larger in the recent past. River valleys served as arteries of communications, along with roads crossing natural barriers. Land needed for new housing, agricultural or grazing fields was obtained through clearance of the forest. Neighbouring woods also provided shelter in case of emergency. In the eastern Carpathians, permanent settlements, consisting of hamlets or isolated buildings, may be found today up to an altitude of 1,000 to 1,200, with seasonal settlements, especially those associated with transhumance going as high as 1,300 to 1,500 m.\textsuperscript{153} Although no archaeological evidence exists so far in that respect, it is likely that such seasonal settlements must have also existed on mountain peaks at the beginning of the second millennium, given the pastoral traditions of the Romanians.

Since no single settlement dated between the ninth and thirteenth century has been so far totally excavated, one has only a partial view of intrasite arrangement of houses and adjacent buildings. As a consequence, very little may be surmised in terms of population density. Nonetheless, some conclusions can still be drawn on the basis of ampler and more methodical excavations of settlement sites, each one with some 20 to 30 features. Judging from that evidence, buildings in ninth- to eleventh-century villages in the hilly regions of central and


\textsuperscript{152} S. Pușcariu, Limba română, I, Privire generală, ed. I. Dan (Bucharest, 1976), p. 361.

\textsuperscript{153} T. Morariu, A. Bogdan, and M. Mihail, “High-zone settlements in the Romanian Carpathians,” Revue Roumaine de Géologie, Géophysique et Géographie, Série de géographie 12 (1968), nos. 1–2, p. 156.
southern Moldavia were clustered together, their position depending on the shape and stability of the ground. Ethnographic studies have shown that villages with houses placed at a small distance from each other are typical for communities involved in mixed farming (intensive agriculture and stock breeding), while villages with dispersed houses set at a greater distance from each other are of communities specializing in stock breeding. The tight correlation between natural conditions and the intrasite structure of villages is particularly manifest in mountain villages, where networks of villages tend to expand tentacularly among valleys.

The great variety of types of relief, climate, soil and vegetation of the east-Carpathian territory, much like that of other regions in the Carpathian-Danube area, had a great influence on the classification of (modern) Romanian villages according to the position and density of their houses. The Romanian geographer Vintilă Mihăilescu classified Romanian inter-war rural settlements into three main categories: grouped (or concentrated), dispersed, and scattered (or spread-out) villages (Fig. 5). Accepted by most ethnographers, geographers, historians and sociologists, Mihăilescu’s classification was later expanded by Romulus Vuia. It is likely that that classification applies to medieval villages as well, given that the types of villages depended upon economic requirements, which did not change much for centuries. Most villages in central Moldavia were of either the grouped or of the dispersed kind. In the early twentieth century, those were the most common forms of villages. Systematic research in Moldavia and in the Șomuzul Mare area showed that between the thirteenth and the sixteenth century, as well as in modern times, dispersed villages predominated in the

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region. There are also cases in which parts of a village have the characteristics of one kind, whereas the remainder those of another kind of village.

Much like in Wallachia, in modern Moldavia compact villages typically appear in hilly regions and in the lowlands (the Bugeac, the Romanian Plain, the Bălți Plain), in which the chernozem soil type and the steppe flora prevail. It is from this region that, beginning with the eleventh century, the nomads evacuated the native agricultural communities. Their resettlement by agriculturists took place only after the nomad were driven away. The expansion of the grouped kind of villages in this region appears to be a recent phenomenon.

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The steppe Turkic tribes were primarily nomads on horseback, with all that that mode of life implies in material and spiritual terms. In contemporary sources, the explicit category of “nomads” applied to all important peoples of Turkic origin living in the east-European steppes: the Pechenegs, the Uzes and Cumans. This is demonstrated, among other things, by the fact that all three were called “Scythians” in Byzantine sources, precisely because of their supposed similarity with the most famous nomads of Antiquity. In Arab sources, the Pechenegs appear as “a nomadic people who search for places that are wet

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and rich in pastures,164 with their chieftain being constantly on the move.165 The Cumans maintained their nomadic way of life for many decades after being allowed by King Bela IV to enter his kingdom,166 just like his comrades who had remained in Desht-i Qipchaq under the Mongol rule.167

All activities of the steppe Turkic populations, from family to social-political life, were influenced by pastoralism. Loss of animals was fatal for nomadic communities, since hunting, gathering, or, where possible, sporadic cultivation of crops could substitute for more substantial subsistence strategies only for brief periods. As a consequence, except plundering raids, all movements of Turkic populations took place together with whole families and flocks. Even when undertaking long-distance expeditions, Turkic warriors were accompanied by herds of horses used for riding, for drawing carts, and for food.

The basic features of equestrian nomadism remained the same from Antiquity to modern times. Consequently, Greek and Roman ethnographic descriptions of the tribes living in the steppes of Eurasia are strikingly similar to those found in Byzantine, Arab, Persian, Russian, and Western medieval sources, as well as to those from the period just before the expansion of Muscovy beyond the Volga. As a result, details about the pastoralist mode of life during a certain period may sometimes be used to fill in the gap of information regarding other periods.168

164 Al-Bécri, p. 14; Marvazi (see above, n. 21), p. 32; Orient.Ber., pp. 221 (al-Bakrī) and 250 (al-Marwazī).
165 Maçoudi, Les Prairies d’or (see above, n. 33), II, 1863, p. 59; Al-Mas’ūdī (see above, n. 33), p. 103.
166 Rogerius, pp. 23, 26, 62, and 65.
The ancient tribes of central Asia, the region from which countless populations moved to the west, shared the same mode of life. Quite suggestive in that respect is the description of the Hiung-nu to be found in the Chinese Shi ki (“Historical Writings”): “Their stock is made mostly of horses, cattle and sheep. Less frequent are domestic animals such as camels, donkeys and mules. They roam to and fro, in search of water and pastures. They have no fortified cities, nor stable settlements, and they practise no tilling either, although they do each possess a plot of land. They have no writing. Alliances among them are established verbally. Children are allowed to ride rams and sheep, and to shoot arrows at birds, weasels and rats; when they grow, they hunt foxes and hares, for food. The valiance of their warriors is demonstrated in archery. They are all armoured horsemen. In keeping with their customs and abilities, they move around with their stock in times of peace, and they also hunt birds and animals, for more food. When they are threatened, men prepare for war. They provoke and launch impetuous attacks, according to their temper. Their shooting weapons are bows and arrows; for close combat they use sabres and spears. When they have some advantage, they attack promptly, but when they are at bay they are quite ready to retreat suddenly, and even in such situations they maintain favourable positions [...] Both their princes and their commoners eat meat and dress in animal skins, over which they put on yet another fur coat.”

The movements of the Turkic populations were either locally limited or determined by transhumance. Practically speaking, no nomadic community could settle in any place for more than a few weeks, since

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the pasture land would have been exhausted by intensive or prolonged grazing, and regeneration required a rather long time. That is why flocks led by shepherds and their families were constantly moving to neighbouring pastures. In referring to Scythians, Hippocrates, the founder of ancient medicine, noticed that they “remained in the same place as long as their cattle had enough grass to eat. When they ran out of grass, they moved somewhere else”. Alans and Avars are known to have done the same.

At the beginning of summer, when humidity decreased in the plain and the grassy vegetation was no longer abundant, the nomads drove their animals to the north, along the river everglades at the limit of the steppe and forest-steppe belts, where grass was still fresh. The pastoralist community returned to the south in winter, with brief stops near lakes, near the sea, or at points where rivers flow into the sea. There, under the influence of the Black Sea microclimate, the weather was a little warmer than in the interior. The snow was blown away or melted quickly enough, for the animals to feed on dry grass. Indeed, until modern times, the nomads of Eurasia had but only small quantities of stocked fodder.

The pastoralists’ seasonal wandering over the steppes is one of the essential features of nomadic life, specific to all the tribes in the southern area of eastern Europe. According to the folk tradition of the Turkic peoples, their ancestor—Japheth (Ulğay-Khan), Noah’s son—was a nomad who had his summer and winter camps in Turkestan. The summer migration of the Pechenegs to the Dnieper is mentioned by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, and that of the Oghuz north of the Caspian Sea by an anonymous, tenth-century Persian geographer, as

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170 FHDR, I, pp. 80–81 (Hipocrate).
172 Pohl, Die Awaren (see above, n. 55), pp. 163–170.
174 DAI, I, pp. 56–57.
well as by Mas’udi.\footnote{176} Similar data concerning the Cumans north of the Caucasus appear in a Georgian chronicle about Davit II Ağmashenebeli (The Builder) (1089–1125).\footnote{177} The Kimak tribe wintered together with their flocks in the Oghuz country.\footnote{178} It is known that before their migration in the east of Europe, the Cumans belonged to the tribal union led by the Kimaks.\footnote{179} A variant of Oghuz-Khan’s legend (Oghuzname) mentions the summer and winter camps of the Oghuz, who lived by a un-named sea.\footnote{180} Similar accounts exist for the Toquz-Oghuz, one of the main branches of the Oghuz, who lived on the western border of China: “In summer and winter they wander from place to place along the grazing grounds in the climates which [happen to be] the best”.\footnote{181} In Antiquity, the Sarmatians wintered in the swampy region near the Meotic Lake (Sea of Azov), and moved to the steppe lands in the summer.\footnote{182}

A revealing description of pastoralist nomads is that of the Oghuz (called Turks or Turkomans) by William of Tyre, the outstanding chronicler of the crusades. The “Turks” entered northern Persia to live a nomadic life, which is described as follows: “They were constantly roaming about here and there in search of the best pasture for their flocks. They had no cities or towns or permanent place of abode anywhere. When they wished to change their location, the people of the same tribe went together, some elder man of their tribe acting as chief. All questions which arose in the tribe referred to him, and his word was obeyed by both disputants, for no one was allowed with impunity to set aside his decision. In their wanderings, they carried along with them all their substance: studs of horses, flocks and herds, servants and maid-servants; for in these lay all their property. They paid no atten-
tion to agriculture. Buying and selling were unknown to them, for they obtained only by exchange whatever was necessary for existence.”

Transhumance is deeply rooted in the traditions of nomadic life, and is preserved even by populations who moved towards semi-nomadism and towards state organization. This was the case of the Khazars, Bulgars and Mongols. About the former, Ibn Rusta, Gardizi and al-Marvazi knew that in winter they stayed in two towns, and when spring came they moved to the steppes, where they remained until the cold season returned. Such accounts are substantiated by the tenth-century author Mutahhar al-Maqdasi and by the anonymous author of Muğmal al-tewarih writing in the early twelfth century. Moreover, the seasonal wanderings of the Volga Bulghars are described by Ibn Hauql.

The Mongols had a very similar organization of pastoralist traditions. The Golden Horde khans—among the others, Batu and Özbäg—did the same: left their residence at Sarai in the spring and moved to a temporary camp, situated in a cooler region to the north. Naturally, the practice of seasonal nomadism was also adopted by the ilkhans of Persia. Transhumance was also practiced by ordinary Mongols, as

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187 Ibn Hauql (see above, n. 34), p. 387.
188 Rubruck, p. 212; Al-Umari (see above, n. 167), p. 147. See also B. Spuler, Die Goldene Horde. Die Mongolen in Russland, 1223–1502, 2nd ed. (Wiesbaden, 1965), pp. 264–266.
well as by numerous other populations of the Eurasian steppes, up to modern times. The length of the seasonal routes varied from region to region, depending upon local climate and flora. Twice a year the Turkmen and the Qirqiz covered distances ranging from 20–30 to 150–200 km, but the Kazakhs are said to have moved over distances of 1,000–1,500 km. The routes of the nomads in the east-Carpathian region, who wintered near the Danube and the sea lakes were perhaps between 250 and 600 km long for each season.

When gathering together for winter, the nomads were more vulnerable to attack, because their mobility was comparatively more restricted. Not surprisingly, the Rus’ princes regularly attacked the Cumans in winter time. Illustrative in that respect is also the “barbarian” saying, which John Skylitzes puts in the mouth of Kegen, who was urging the Byzantines to slaughter Tyrach’s men that had crossed the frozen Danube: “You must kill the snake in wintertime when it cannot move its tail; for, after having warmed up in the sun, it will bring us great miseries and troubles.” On the other hand, it is equally true that the nomads may sometimes take advantage of the winter time to cross rivers on the ice and plunder neighbouring lands.

Earlier opinions maintained that only the transhumance of the Romanian shepherds in Transylvania was a rhythmic movement, on well-established routes, whereas that of the tribes in the Eurasian steppes was more chaotic. This is contradicted by the fact that the movement of the nomads were neither accidental, nor irregular wanderings within the territory they controlled politically and militarily. On the contrary, their seasonal migrations occurred on previously fixed routes to avoid the risk of starvation for their flocks. It is not an accident that the late Turkic burial assemblages may be found on the same sites that earlier nomads (such as those of the Bronze-Age Yamnaia, Pit-Grave and Sruby cultures, as well as the Sarmatians) buried their dead.

Soon after the Mongols obtained supremacy in Desht-i Qipchaq, precise demarcations between the grazing grounds of each clan were

192 Лаврентієвська летопись, in PSRL, I (St. Petersburg, 1846), pp. 121 and 176 (expeditions of 1109 and 1202); Ip.let., pp. 136, 141 (expeditions of 1187 and 1192).
established for all seasons. It is certain that such boundaries were used also by the nomads moving in the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian seas before the Mongol invasion. It is also true that the repeated movements of peoples through the steppes disrupted the organization of tribal societies. Medieval sources often mention conflicts between different tribes, sometimes of one and the same confederacy. This created a relatively permanent state of tension and conflict over the control of the pasture lands. That several groups of Pechengs, Uzes, Berendei, and Cumans offered their services to neighbouring states is simply an indication that in the most of the case those nomads were losers in the struggle for grazing fields.

The nomadic way of life thus implied a fundamental contradiction between the need to impose rigorous rules for the distribution of lands, and the desire to increase those lands and the stock. Although in their essential characteristics, the Turkic communities of pastoralists in the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian seas may be regarded as nomads, elements of sedentism, including the cultivation of crops, are readily apparent. I will return shortly to this key change in the life of those communities. For the moment, it is important to note that the origin of such a semi-nomadic lifestyle may perhaps be the winter camps, which the nomadic communities occupied for an extended period of time. Unlike large grazing fields of the summer months, the wintering pasture lands were much more limited. While most of the clan returned to the north, it was likely that elderly or poor people remained behind to form permanent settlements. The consolidation and growth of such settlements were often curtailed by the invasion of new nomads.

Russian chroniclers often refer to the strongholds (бежы) of the Polovtsy / Cumans, which were probably simple, fortified settlements, built for the purpose of wintering and for defense against attacks from Rus' or from their proxies, the Black Caps. In 1111 and 1116, the same sources mention the Cuman “towns” (грады) of Sharukan, Sugrov and Balin. Those towns have not yet been unidentified, but are believed to have been somewhere in the region of the Northern Donets. Sharukan and Sugrov were apparently named after two Cuman khans.

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195 Rubruck, p. 172.
197 Ip.let., pp. 2 and 7–8.
198 К. В. Кудриашов, Половецкая степь (Moscow, 1948), pp. 91–95.
(Sharukan, Sugr), while Balin may be an altered form of the Turkish word for town, balıq. It is not clear whether or not those “towns” were truly urban settlements, all the more so as the Cuman tribes, as it has already been proved, did not want to perpetuate the town-like life at Sarkel-Belaia Vezha after conquering it in the early twelfth century. As for the Pechenegs and the Oghuz, the author of Hudūd al-ʿĀlam specifically notes that they had no towns. By contrast, the unknown author of the Persian chronicle mentioned above knew that the Toquz-Oghuz confederacy near the borders of China had two towns. During the second part of the eleventh century, Mahmud al-Kashghari wrote about the “towns” of the Oghuz in central Asia. One century later, the Arab geographer Idrisi too had learned of Oghuz fortresses. The existence of several urban centres in the territories occupied by the Pechenegs, Oghuz and Cumans in central Asia is attested in other oriental sources as well, but their testimony cannot be entirely trusted. It is not clear whether the nomads had built those towns by themselves or had conquered them from some other peoples. In the territories dominated politically by the Cumans, there were several truly urban settlements, such as Sudak in Crimea and Saksin on the Lower Volga. Both were important trade centres, but the majority of the inhabitants were not Cuman. In the east-Carpathian area, there is no evidence of either fortifications of Turkic nomads, or of towns.


201 Hudūd al-ʿĀlam (see above, n. 42), pp. 100–101; Orient.Ber., pp. 206 and 208.

202 Hudūd al-ʿĀlam, p. 94; Orient.Ber., p. 192.


204 Édrisi, Géographie (see above, n. 22), II, p. 339.

205 Ibidem, p. 437; Konovalova [ed. and trans.], Ал-Идриси (see above, n. 22), p. 128; Aboul’ledba (see above, n. 25), II, 1, p. 293.


208 Tiesenhausen, I, pp. 26 (Ibn el Asyr), 303 (Ibn Battuta); Shems ed-Din Abou-ʿAbdallah Moh’ammed de Damas, p. 381. See also J. Marquart, “Über das Volkstum”
Dwellings and their Annexes

Houses in native settlements are either above-ground buildings or sunken-floor features. The above-ground buildings are houses either with ground-level floors or with slightly sunken floors, commonly by no more than 0.30–0.45 m.

The walls of the above-ground buildings were made of wattle-and-daub. It is very difficult, if not impossible in some case, to establish the contours of such houses, given that remains of daub and burnt soil have not always been discovered in coherent positions. However, judging from the existing evidence, it seems that such buildings were modest in size and were commonly of a rectangular plan. They were usually equipped with stone hearths of various sizes or of a circular rough cast surrounded by river stones. Such buildings have been found in relatively large numbers in Spinoasa and Băiceni (Iaşi county) (Romania), but only sporadically on other settlements of the Dridu and Răducăneni cultures. It is likely that the number of above-ground buildings on contemporary settlement sites was larger than that, but most were almost completely destroyed and thus left no traces in the archaeological record.

Above-ground buildings with slightly sunken floors, which are used nowadays as barns, kitchens and stables in the valleys of the Moldova and Siret rivers, were quite common on ninth- to thirteenth-century sites. All were rectangular and each had a single room with 2.5 to 5.0 m long walls. Holes for posts (used to support the walls and roofs) lined the contours of the buildings, but some may have also had wooden beams placed laterally. Where post holes have been found in the middle of the


building floor, it seems safe to assume that the posts served as supports for a gable or hip roof, which may have been covered with shingles or simply thatched. No traces of wooden floors have been found, but they may have existed at least in some of those houses with sunken floors. A few houses produced evidence of a sort of bench along the wall, fixed in the ground. Above-ground buildings with slightly sunken floors were equipped with open stone or clay hearths, with stone ovens of circular or rectangular plan and walls of stones bonded with clay mixed with pebbles, or with clay ovens of semi-oval or rectangular plan with vault, niches and front walls polished with gravel or broken glass and covered with clay. The number of such buildings with stone ovens is relatively larger in central Moldavia, on such sites as Băiceni (Iași county), Brășaști (Neamț county) (Romania), Calfa (Anenii Noi county), Lucășeauca (Lucasovca) and Orhei-“Petruha” (Orhei county) (Republic of Moldova), while sites in southern Moldavia such as Bârlăști, Epureni (Vaslui county) (Romania), and Hansca (Ialoveni county) (Republic of Moldova) have produced more clay ovens. Both ovens and hearths were commonly placed in the corner opposite the entrance, and only rarely in the middle of the building.

Only a few sunken-featured buildings have so far been identified, and they are all similar in shape and size to above-ground buildings with slightly sunken floors. Sunken-featured buildings had the advantage over above-ground buildings of retaining heat longer in winter, as well as of offering a cool environment in the heat of the summer. Pits for sunken-featured buildings were dug to between 0.70 and 1.20 m from the ground level. The walls of such buildings must have reached above the ground. An exception to this is a sunken-floored building found in Lucășeauca, the pit of which was 2 metres deep and was more than 31 square metres in size, being divided into two rooms.210 All other sunken-floored buildings known so far are single-roomed, much like contemporary above-ground houses. Sunken-featured building produced no open hearths, but either clay ovens carved into one of the walls or stone ovens placed in a corner. The tradition of building sunken-featured or above-ground houses with slightly sunken floors, equipped with hearths or ovens goes back to the Neolithic Age and continues through the post-medieval period, in certain regions up to

210 Hâncu, “Жилища на территории Молдавии,” p. 95.
early twentieth century. After visiting the Romanian Principalities in 1788, the Italian scholar Domenico Sestini aptly described the sunken-floored dwellings in villages in the lowlands, which had been stricken by poverty, as having "a sad, miserable aspect." He wrote: "The houses are rather dense; they are dug in the ground and they are called pit-houses (bordei). From the distance you can see only the smoke coming out of chimneys and when you get closer you can notice the roofs only a little higher above the ground, made of pillars covered with earth on which the grass grows."212

Associated with clay ovens or hearths, archaeologists found in ninth- to tenth-century houses so-called "portable fireplaces," made of daub in the form of a square tray, with a flat bottom, 4–8 cm wide, and borders raised to 10 cm.213 "Portable fireplaces" appear frequently on contemporary sites in eastern Europe.214 Some of them are as much as 1 m long. One specimen of rectangular shape was found Brâșațuți (Neamț county), flanked by large river stones.215 "Portable fireplaces" were commonly attached to the upper part of clay ovens by means of daub, an indication that they were not portable at all. However, there are also examples of large trays, which were certainly moveable, such as the round specimen found in Bârlad—"Prodana" (Vaslui county), with a wide opening in the middle and a back wall of the same height and thickness as the lateral one, through which smoke could pass without affecting the rest of the oven. This unique type of tray, without any parallels on any medieval sites in the extra-Carpathian area, is known in modern Oltenia as cirimna (or ciripnea), and is used for baking loaves of unleavened bread.216 This strongly suggests that rectangular specimens may have also been used for baking bread or cereals.

Houses in ninth- to thirteenth-century settlements were often surrounded by baking clay or stone ovens, silos, and refuse pits. Silo pits

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213 Teodor, Teritoriul, pp. 74–75.
215 Spinei and Monah, "Așezarea prefeudală" (see above, n. 79), p. 375.
are known since the Neolithic Age, are mentioned in the Latin literature, and in certain parts of Romania are still employed. The walls of the silo pit were commonly fired for insulation and protection against rodents.\textsuperscript{217} Several ninth- to eleventh-century settlements produced evidence of clusters of two to three buildings within less than 5 metres from each other. Such clusters do not necessarily indicate the existence of different families, as has been suggested. They may rather represent compounds inhabited by two or three generations of the same kin group, with each generation inhabiting a separate house, and houses abandoned after the death of their owners being turned into barns. There are clear ethnographical analogies for such practices.\textsuperscript{218} A family may have built several buildings at the same time for various purposes. Thus, buildings found next to each other may not all have been used at the same time. Rather, when one building was abandoned, another was built next to it. There is no evidence of stables, and judging from the ethnographic analogies, it is likely that animals (cattle and sheep) were kept either in open air or in corrals.\textsuperscript{219}

The building style of the native settlements found within the entire region between the eastern Carpathians and the Dniester River, as well as the associated finds (Figs. 6–22), bespeak the sedentary character of their inhabitants.

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Equestrian nomadism has a strong influence upon the shape and function of buildings erected by pastoralists in the Eurasian steppes. Most contemporary authors with good knowledge of the nomadic lifestyle emphasize the absence of permanent, stable dwellings, the use of carts or wagons, and of tents, sometimes replaced by felt huts. Several Byzantine and Arab sources describe the Pechenegs as living in tents


\textsuperscript{219} Ibidem, p. 116; Vlăduțiu, Etnografia (see above, n. 160), p. 254. That horses in sixteenth-century Moldavia were not kept in stables is specifically mentioned by A. M. Graziani. See Căldăuți, II, p. 383.
and in wagons or carts. Carts were also used for the protection of the camps, even during military campaigns. On the basis of earlier sources, Sharaf al-Zaman Tahir Marvazi wrote in the early 1100s that some of the Ghuzz (= Oghuz) of central Asia “live in wastelands and deserts, having tents and felt-huts (khargah); their wastelands are on the border of Transoxiana and partly also of Khwarazm”. In the early 900s, a chronicler in Baghdad made the following remarks about the Qarluqs, the Toquz-Oghuz, the Turkash, the Kimak and the Oghuz of central Asia: “These Turkic populations had neither halting places nor fortification: they lived in Turkic tents, with rings whose straps are made of horse or ox skin, covered with felt, because the peoples are very skilful in making felt, as they used to make clothes of it”.

A French chronicler of the Fourth Crusade had similar things to say about the Cumans: “They are a wild people who neither plough, nor sow, nor have any cabin or house, but they have some felt tents, dwellings where they hide, and they feed on milk, cheese and meat” (Ce sont une gent sauvage, qui ne arent ne sèment, ne n’ont borde ne maison, ains ont unes tentes de feutre, habitacles où il se mussent, et si vivient de lait et de fromage et de chair). This in turn dovetails an-Nuwairi’s comments about Cumans under Mongol rule: “These [people] live in shelters not in houses, they do not have stable settlements, and they spend their summer in one place and the winter in another”. The illuminations of the Radziwill Chronicle, dated long after the conquest of Desht-i-Qipchak by the Mongols, show Cumans using, besides carts or wagons, some

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220 Hudūd al-ʿĀlam (see above, n. 42), p. 160; A. P. Martinez (trans.), Gardizi, p. 151; Orient.Ber., pp. 164 (Gardżef), 215 (Hudūd al-ʿĀlam); Attaliates (see above, n. 130), p. 30; Psellos, II, p. 127; Skylitzes, p. 455; Kedrenos, II, p. 582; FHDR, III, pp. 84–85 (Anna Comnena), 222–223 (Zonaras); IV, pp. 32–33 (Psellos, Discursuri).


223 Al-Masʿūdi (see above, n. 33), p. 91; Marquart, “Über das Volkstum” (see above, n. 19), p. 26; Minorsky, History of Sharvan (see above, n. 162), p. 150.


225 Ya’kubi (see above, n. 30), p. 113.


227 Tiesenhausen, I, p. 540.
rectangular or circular beehive-like structures as winter dwellings. That Cumans, like Mongols, used tents is repeatedly mentioned in several sources.

Even the Turkic and Mongol khans lived in cloth tents or felt yurta called *orda* or *ürgä*. The latter were quite large, hundreds of people. Évariste-Régis Huc, a nineteenth-century French traveller and missionary, describes similar tents in use among the nomads on the northern frontier of China: “The Mongol tent, about three feet from the ground, is cylindrical in form. It then becomes conical, like a pointed hat. The woodwork of the tent is composed below of a trellis-work of crossed bars, which fold up and expand at pleasure. Above these a circle of poles, fixed in the trellis-work, meets at the top, like the sticks of an umbrella. Over the woodwork is stretched, once or twice, a thick covering of coarse linen, and thus the tent is composed. The door, which is always a folding door, is low and narrow. A beam crosses it at the bottom by way of threshold, so that on entering you have at once to raise your feet and lower your head. Besides the door there is another opening at the top of the tent to let out the smoke. This opening can at any time be closed with a piece of felt fastened above it in the tent, which can be pulled over it by means of a string, the end of which hangs by the door”.


John of Plano Carpini’s description of the Mongol yurts, used both in peacetime and on campaign, points to tent-like round structures made of sticks and wattle. Each had an opening at the top for both light to come in and smoke to get out. The fireplace was located in the middle of the yurt. The walls, the roof and the doors were all covered with felt. The size of the yurt corresponded to the rank and wealth of the owner. Some of them were permanent, others could be carried around on wagons pulled by oxen; they could be transported as such or dismantled.\textsuperscript{233} The details of this description are substantiated by the travelogue of William of Rubruck.\textsuperscript{234} An eighteenth-century lithography shows Kalmuks still living in yurts similar to those described by John of Plano Carpini (Giovanni di Pian di Carpine).\textsuperscript{235}

The felt huts of the Pechenegs, the Khazars and the Oghuz, which are mentioned by an anonymous Persian author of the tenth century,\textsuperscript{236} were probably not much different from those of Mongols. Until very recent times, the kind of yurt described by John of Plano Carpini remained in use among the nomads of central Asia and the south of eastern Europe\textsuperscript{237} (Fig. 60). Numerous other sources reveal that Mongols also lived in wagons.\textsuperscript{238} The Moldavian chronicler Grigore Ureche


\textsuperscript{236} Hudūd al-ʾĀlam (see above, n. 42), pp. 100 and 160; Orient.Ber., pp. 206 and 215.


\textsuperscript{238} The Travels of an Alchemist (see above, n. 229), p. 67; Meng-Ta pei-lu und Hei-Ta shih-liüeh (see above, n. 190), pp. 104–105 (Hei-Ta shih-liüeh); Guiragos (see above, n. 149), p. 457; Laonic Chalcocondil, Expaneri istorice, ed. V. Grecu (Bucharest, 1958),
(c. 1590–1647) knew that the Tatars did not live in houses, but on carts, and western travellers of the fourteenth to the seventeenth century confirm that the Tatars in the Bugeac were nomads who lived on carts or wagons. When arranged in a circle and tied together, the carts formed a kind of corral.

For transport, the nomads of the first half of the second millennium used horses, oxen and sometimes camels. When large rivers were not frozen, and no fords were available, the nomads crossed them on large, inflated skin bags, on which both people and wagons were loaded. Horses were tied to such skins and they had to swim and pull them. The nomadic lifestyle and use of tents and wagons by the Turkic and Mongol populations continued the traditions of the nomads of Antiquity and the early Middle Ages (Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, and Avars). Many interesting written references about them have been preserved.

The wagons were not only a shelter and a means of locomotion; they also had an important strategic role, as they could make up real mobile fortresses of the steppe tribes. During campaigns, they were arranged in a circle and tightly tied together, in order to protect the warriors, as well as their families, herds and wealth. During the battle on the Catalaunic Fields (Châlons-sur-Marne) in 451 Attila is said to have rescued his army from disaster by withdrawing to his camp encircled

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240 Călători, III, p. 179 (François de Pavie); VII, p. 516 (G. Levasseur de Beauplan).
by wagons. The same tactics was used by Khazars against Arabs, by Pechenegs against Byzantines, and by Mongols against all their enemies. John Kinnamos mentions that during a battle with Emperor John II Comnenus in 1122–1123, the Pechenegs and their allies used wagons as battlements. In this respect, moving the army flanked by the carts to the battlefield was a specifically nomadic tactic, much like fortifying the camp by surrounding it with carts. Such tactics were also adopted by non-nomadic peoples, from Byzantines and Scalvenes, to the Cossacks, Poles and Hussite rebels in Bohemia.

Agriculture

In the economic structure of the Romanian communities two traditional occupations prevailed during the tenth to thirteenth centuries: agriculture and stock breeding. Given the favourable environment, this economic profile was sufficient for subsistence and could occasionally produce a surplus for exchange.
One of the features of the Romanian rural economy is the absence of any contradiction between the two main occupations. On the contrary, they worked together and harmoniously completed each other almost everywhere in the Carpathian-Danube region. Tilling the fields requires animals, the food supply for humans depended not only on pastures, but also on the growing of various grassy species. Such a concord could not exist between the sedentary societies of agriculturists, on one hand, and nomadic or semi-nomadic societies specializing in pastoralism, because of disputes over land use. What a farmer may wish to use for the cultivation of crops, a shepherd may like to be turned into a grazing field. Such dissensions do not seem to have affected Romanian communities, whose rural economy was mixed but also autarkic. Each family combined the growing of the cereals and other crops with animal breeding, and sometimes with handicrafts that did not require too much specialization. This subsistence economy was designed to produce everything necessary without resorting to exchange with other communities. Vegetables made the greatest contribution to the daily diet, especially since meat and dairy were prohibited by church canons for three days a week and another 95 days during Lent and other fasting periods before major holidays.252

The archaeological, linguistic, and ethnographic evidence combined emphasize the role of agriculture in economy, even prior to the rise of the independent medieval states. The location of settlement sites next to some of the most fertile soil types is typical for a population of agriculturists. Finds from the settlements themselves confirm that conclusion: agricultural implements, querns, silos containing charred seeds. The implements come in a large variety of coulters, sickles (Fig. 7/10, 11, 15), hoes, billknives (Figs. 7/12, 13; 9/10) and scraping tools. In comparison to the previous period, ninth- to eleventh-century agricultural implements show a certain degree of technological progress. They have also been found in much larger numbers.253 Hoards of

agricultural implements and weapons are particularly relevant in this respect. Many such hoards have been found in the Carpathian Bend area of present-day Vrancea, in Răstoaca and Dragosloveni (Vrancea county) as well as Budești (Buzău county). A large number of tools have been found on the settlement site at Gârbovăț (Galați county) (Fig. 7/5, 7, 11–15). The sharp increase in the number of agricultural implements ever since the last centuries of the first millennium is a clear sign of an increasing demand of food, which in turn signal significant demographic changes.

Given that agricultural implements in the Carpathian-Dniester region are very similar to those in other neighbouring areas, it appears that at least from a technological point of view, communities of agriculturists in that region were not very different from others in central and eastern Europe. Until the eighteenth century, productivity in agriculture was very low, with relatively small yields, in spite of field and crop rotation, as well as the use of manuring. As it was very difficult to store, and no cereals could be imported, a year with a poor harvest must have had a catastrophic impact on local communities. Much like elsewhere in Europe at that time, the local population was thus exposed to starvation in years of famine, a phenomenon which persisted in Moldavia during the subsequent centuries.

The paleobotanical analysis of charred seeds found on several sites dated to the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth century, has revealed that the main crops were several species of wheat and barley, as well as rye, oats, millet, and peas. Many of them were known in the area since the
Neolithic Age, an indication of a very long continuity of agricultural practices. Equally relevant for the long traditions established in agricultural occupations among Romanians are the many names of crops, tillage and harvesting, as well as gardening practices and tools, all of which are of Latin origin: câmp (Latin “campus”) = field, a ara (“arare”) = to plough, a săpa (“sappare”) = to dig by means of a hoe, a semâna (“seminare”) = to sow, sămânță (“sementia”) = seed, a secera (“sicilare”) = to reap, a treiera (“tribulare”) = to thresh, a culege (“colligere”) = to gather, a măcina (“machinare”) = to grind, seceră (“sicilem”) = sickle, sapă (“sappa”) = hoe, furcă (“furca”) = pitchfork, grâu (“granum”) = wheat, secără (“sicalem”) = rye, orz (“hordeum”) = barley, spic (“spicus”) = corn, pâi (“palium”) = straw, mei (“milium”) = millet, in (“linum”) = flax, cânepă (“canapa” < “cannabis”) = hemp, legumă (“legumen”) = vegetable, ceapă (“cepa”) = onion, and varză (“viridia”) = cabbage.

There are also a great number of Slavic loans in Romanian for all sorts of agricultural tools and techniques. It has long been noted that such a diverse terminology could not have been adopted by speakers of Romanian, if indeed at the time of their linguistic contact with the Slavs, Romanians would not have already practiced an advanced agriculture that needed such a terminology.

Many beliefs and ritual practices, some of clear pre-Christian origin, have been preserved in connection with agriculture. In fact, rituals connected with agriculture are among the most important in rural areas and reveal the enduring continuity of agricultural occupations in the areas populated by Romanians. Most significant in this respect is the fact that such rituals and magic practices concern the cultivation of wheat and not of maize, which has been introduced only in the seventeenth

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261 Ivănescu, Istoria (see above, n. 1), p. 259.
century. Most such practices revolve around the concept of fertility, for which people used to make various invocations in order to bring the rain, to stop or prevent the hail, to protect the cattle, or to secure the regeneration of crops.

The data mentioned above show how wrong those are who continue to assert the idea that the Romanians were a people almost exclusively of shepherds in the early Middle Ages, with only secondary agricultural occupations, which they supposedly adopted from their Slavic and Hungarian neighbours, after the foundation of national states. Such ideas are based exclusively on the situation in the mountain region of northern and central Balkans, where transhumant pastoralism was the major economic strategy of communities of Vlachs. However, in the lands north of the Lower Danube the environment, as well as the social and political circumstances were different, and consequently no parallels can be drawn between Vlachs in the Balkans and Romanians in the Romanian lands.

The relation between agriculture and cattle breeding must have been different from that of the modern period, given that grazing fields were larger than cultivated fields. By 1850, the latter spanned an area that was only half of that of the pastureland in the Romanian Principalities. In addition, forests, which occupied a much larger area in the past, were also used for grazing. One must also keep in mind that while the profits of cattle breeding were relatively speaking the same, the adoption of technological innovations and new practices increased yield in agriculture, which encouraged the growth of cultivated fields at the expanse of pastureland. The use of marginal areas with less fertile soils led to their rapid exhaustion, a phenomenon that was much faster than if the fields would been used as pastureland. With fields left fallow, productivity rapidly declined. The threat of crop failure or famine thus compelled local communities to be more flexible and adopt a mixed economy, with an equal emphasis on cattle breeding.

Just as in modern times, the importance of agriculture and stock-breeding in the peasant farming of the Middle Ages was not the same

262 Gh. Iordache, Ocupații tradiționale pe teritoriul României, I (Craiova, 1985); Al. Popescu, Tradiții de muncă românești în obiceiuri, folclor, artă populară (Bucharest, 1986); D. Pop, Obiceiuri agrare în tradiția populară românească (Cluj–Napoca, 1989).
for all the regions of Moldavia. Close to the mountains, in marginal areas with poor soils and harsh weather, the cultivation of crops was not particularly profitable. Instead, local communities relied on the breeding of small horned cattle. Dimitrie Cantemir claimed that during his lifetime, people in the in hilly districts of Vrancea and Câmpulung Moldovenesc had no idea what a plough was, their main occupation being cattle breeding\textsuperscript{264} By contrast, in the lowlands with fertile soils the cultivation of crops was comparatively much more important.

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Since they were nomads, the Pechenegs, the Uzes / Oghuz, and the Cumans were not interested in agriculture. Most authors insist that they had an exclusively pastoralist economy. Otto of Freising specifically mentions Pechenegs and Cumans neighbouring Hungary, who did not till the soil\textsuperscript{265} With different words, Robert de Clari nonetheless confirmed Otto of Freising’s earlier account\textsuperscript{266} However, Abd ar-Rashid al-Bakuvi insisted that the Pechenegs ate millet\textsuperscript{267} “This bit of information, though from an early fifteenth-century geography, must not be dismissed, for it most certainly is of an earlier date. According to Abul-‘Abbas Ahmed Yak‘ubi, millet was the only crop cultivated in Turkestan, among the Qarluqs, the Toquz-Oghuz, the Turkash, the Kimaks, and the Oghuz\textsuperscript{268} Recent archaeological studies have confirmed the existence of agricultural practices among the Huns, the Avars and the Bulgars\textsuperscript{269} That the same must have been true about late Turkic groups Rabbi Pethachia from Ratisbona (modern Regensburg), Desht-i Qipchaq in the twelfth century, noticed the existence of sown fields and the fact that the Kédars—a Biblical name used in reference to the

\textsuperscript{266} Robert de Clari (see above, n. 226), p. 50.
\textsuperscript{267} Al-Bakuvi (see above, n. 35), p. 102.
\textsuperscript{268} Ya’kubi (see above, n. 30), p. 113.
Cumans—prepared a meal of rice and millet, but, as confirmed by other contemporary sources, they did not eat bread. The diet of the Turkic-Mongol population of Desht-i Qipchaq, as described by travellers crossing the region after the invasion of 1236–1242, contained millet, barley, rice and beans. As most cereals were not baked, but used in the preparation of drinks, it follows that the harvest was rather poor. Moreover, this is a situation shortly after the rise of the Golden Horde, when the economic and social configuration in the steppe had changed. Under Mongol rule, the Cumans were surely deprived of their herds, and maybe some of them were forced to learn how to work the land. Judging from the existing ethnographical analogies, most scholars agree that pastoralists do not adopt agricultural occupations, unless constrained by poverty.

Speaking about the sowing of millet and wheat by the “Scythian people” (γένος τι Σκυθικὸν) who attacked the Byzantine Empire in 1086 and concluded an alliance with the rulers of the Paristrian towns, those people cannot be considered to have been Pechenegs, as some specialists believe. By the above-mentioned designation, Anna Comnena must have meant the natives, who had joined the nomads, because it is not conceivable that the latter practised tillage themselves during a plunder expedition.

Between the tenth and the thirteenth century, agriculture played only a secondary role in the pastoralist economy of the Turkic tribes, as their way of life did not allow them to take care for cultivated fields.

272 Rubruck, p. 175; Ibn Batoutah, II (see above, n. 48), p. 364; Al-Umari (see above, n. 167), p. 137.
273 Pletneva, Pechenegi, p. 188; Fedorov-Davydov, Kocheniki, p. 199.
274 Anne Comnène (see above, n. 18), II, p. 82.
Animal Husbandry

The second important occupation of the local communities, animal husbandry, also has old roots in the whole Carpathian-Danube area. Consequently, it is no wonder that the general pastoral terminological retains great number of words of Geto-Dacian origin: baci (= chief shepherd), balegă (= dung), brânză (= cheese), cărlig (= hook), ghioagă (= club), mânz (= colt), strungă (= sheepfold), țap (= billy goat), țarc (= corral), urdă (= cheese obtained by boiling whey), țăr (= whey).\(^{276}\) The great extent to which that occupation was practised and the movements of Romanian shepherds into neighbouring lands led to the adoption in Czech, Polish, Russian, Slovak and Ukrainian, of many words of Romanian origin, which refer to pastoralism.\(^{277}\)

Zooarchaeological studies of faunal assemblages found on settlement sites show the importance of cattle breeding and the various ratios of domestic animals. Bone assemblages found in Bârlălești (Vaslui county), Iași-“Nicolina” (Iași county) (Romania), Calfa (Anenii Noi county), Hansca (Ialoveni county), Orhei-“Petruha” (Orhei county) (Republic of Moldova), Krinichnoe (Odessa region) (Ukraine), etc. indicate the breeding of cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses, with ratios between those animal species varying from one settlement to another.\(^{278}\) Zoo-

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archaeological studies have revealed that some species were used for work in the fields or for transportation, others as a source of meat and dairy products. That remains of domestic animals were found inside houses substantiates the idea of a mixed economy. This further confirms that the forms of pastoralism practiced by local Romanian communities were directly associated with the cultivation of crops and were not linked to the practice of transhumance beyond the limits of any individual community.

By contrast, near the mountains, herds may have indeed been sent for the summer to high-altitude pastures in the company of temporarily hired shepherds. During their stay in the mountains, shepherds may have built temporary sheepfolds, where they prepared the dairy produce and sheared the sheep. In more recent times, shepherds and their flocks remained in the mountains until September 14 (the feast of the Elevation of the Cross), when the sheep were returned to their owners. For the duration of the autumn, until the first snow, the sheep grazed on the communal fields, guarded by shepherds. During winter, each owner kept his own sheep close to home, until the following spring. Communal sheepfolds were occasionally built in the fields or even in the mountains, where haystacks were brought well in advance.279
Ethnographic studies show that a different form of cattle breeding was practised on a large scale in densely forested mountain and hilly regions, and in major river everglades, as well as in the Danube Delta. In all those areas, cows, pigs, and horses roamed freely, sometimes for as long as an entire season.\(^{280}\)

Such an archaic system may not have been too profitable, given the relatively large numbers of animals who may have fallen prey to predators or who may have turned feral and consequently could not have re-captured. On the other hand, sedentary grazing required large quantities of hay to be stored for the winter. To this end, the majority of the the population in the mountain region moved for almost a month to areas rich in grass, which members of the community mowed, gathered, stocked, and turned into hay for transport. This activity, of utmost importance for the economy, known as “the migration of hay,”\(^{281}\) has a long tradition in Romania, where it is widespread and well organized.

No information exists on Romanian transhumant pastoralism on the eastern slopes of the Carpathian Mountains. Until several decades ago, flocks of Transylvanian shepherds could still be descending from the pastures in the eastern Carpathians to spend the winter in the lowlands of southern Moldavia, by the Danube and the sea lakes, in southern Bugeac, in the Danube Delta, next to the marshy areas on both sides of the river Danube, along the sea coast of Dobrudja, or and even on the left bank of the Dniester River. Contrary to a widespread misconception, transhumant pastoralism is not nomadism, because the shepherds are not accompanied by their families, who in this case remained home, in Translyvania.

The movements of shepherds and flocks were not chaotic, but followed well-known routes to the pastures in the Carpathian Mountains, and then to the lowlands in winter. Transhumance was also not a system of generalised grazing. Instead, it appears to have been limited to a small number of rich Transylvanian families. Most animals were bred on the farm, within the limits of the village, and did not travel at


any great distances. When the Turkic nomads entered the Bugeac and the Romanian Plain, they must have disrupted the seasonal moving of flocks to the plain along the Danube and the Black Sea, as Romanian shepherds were now exposed to raids by nomads using the same areas to spend the winter season.

The diet of the local population was complemented with game and fish from the rich forests and rivers of Moldavia. Both hunting and fishing seem to have been practised, according to techniques that were both archaic and somewhat rudimentary. In addition, hunting was practised for the procurement of furs or the control of the predator population, in order to protect cattle and people. The zooarchaeological analysis of faunal remains from Bârlăleşti, Calfa, Hansca, and Orhei—“Petruha” revealed the presence of wild animals such as stags, roebucks, wild boar, aurochs, elks, rabbits, and foxes. Hunting seem to have been practised more by bow and arrow than by traps. Several types of arrow-heads found in archaeological assemblages may have been used exclusively for hunting.

By contrast, little archaeological evidence exists of fishing, which, however, does not in any way indicate that it was not practised. Calfa, for example, was located on the shore of Lake Bâc, at the confluence of the Bâc and Dniester rivers. If fishing implements are rare in the archaeological record, faunal remains often include bones and scales of carp, pike, sheatfish, and other species. Fish bones were found in Krinichnoe, a settlement located on the shore of Lake Ialpug. The Lower Danube was apparently sufficiently rich in fish to attract fishermen from other neighboring countries. Galician fishermen are mentioned on the Lower Danube in the mid-twelfth century. Except on settlements located next to the Danube or to lakes, fish, much like venison, does not seem to have ever been a major component of the local diet, which relied heavily on agricultural products, on meat, and dairy products.

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282 See above, n. 278.
283 Chebotarenko, *Kal'pa*, p. 83.
285 *Ipat.*, pp. 83–84; *Let. Vosk*, p. 68.
Both before and after the Mongol invasion, all Turkic communities in the southern regions of eastern Europe were pastoralist. Since the practised the cultivation of crops only occasionally, their diet was mostly of meat and dairy products. In addition, cattle breeding provided hides for clothing, saddles, and trade goods. Consequently, large numbers of animals were necessary, for the breeding of which itinerant grazing was not sufficient, hence the adoption of a nomadic lifestyle. Contemporary sources point out the great number of animals, which the nomads owned and the nature of food required for maintaining such a large livestock. The Pechenegs owned cattle and sheep\(^{286}\) (in other sources, horses\(^{287}\) and sheep\(^{288}\) and they were known for engaging in business with cattle, horses, and sheep.\(^{289}\) Likewise, the Oghuz owned horses, cows, and sheep.\(^{290}\) At the time of its separation from the tribal confederacy of the Oghuz, the Seljuks had a great number of horses, camels, sheep, and oxen.\(^{291}\) Ibn Fadlan claims that rich Oghuz / Uzes who owned up to 10,000 horses and 100,000 sheep.\(^{292}\) The unknown author of the Persian geography of 982 describes the Kimaks (the western tribe of whom were called Qipchaqs, i.e., Cumans) as people who live “in felt-huts and in both summer and winter wander along grazing-grounds, waters, and meadows. Their commodities are sable-martens and sheep. Their food in summer is milk, and in winter preserved meat.”\(^{293}\) This account is substantiated by the information provided by Gardizi\(^{294}\) and al-Marwazi. The latter adds that Kimaks are “a people without villages or houses, who possess woods, water, and pastures; they have cattle and sheep in plenty, but they have no camels, for camels will not live in their country more than a year. They also have no salt, except

\(^{286}\) Hudud al-‘Ālam (see above, n. 42), p. 160; Orient.Ber., p. 215.
\(^{287}\) Al-Bécri (see above, n. 162), p. 15; Orient.Ber., p. 222.
\(^{288}\) A. P. Martinez (trans.), Gardizi (see above, n. 43), p. 152; Orient.Ber., pp. 165 (Gardzī), 250 (al-Marwazī). That Pechenegs had many sheep is also mentioned in the first half of the fifteenth century by Ahmed of Tus (See Hammer, Sur les origines russes [see above, n. 27], p. 33), who most likely relied on much earlier Persian sources.
\(^{289}\) DAI, I, pp. 50–51.
\(^{290}\) Hudud al-‘Ālam, p. 100; Orient.Ber., p. 206.
\(^{292}\) Ibn Fadlan, p. 33.
\(^{293}\) Hudud al-‘Ālam, pp. 99–100; Orient.Ber., p. 203.
what may be imported by merchants, who for a heap of it obtain a fox and sable skin. In summer they live on the milk of mares, in winter on jerked meat."

Cumans in their turn owned very large flocks. When the Rus’ armies plundered their settlements or camps in 1095, 1103, 1111, 1165, 1170, 1183, 1184, 1185, 1190, 1191, 1193, or 1193, they always took as booty many horses, sheep, oxen, and camels. Some years later, when Kotian (Kuthen) and other Cuman princes came to Galicia and to other Rus’ courts in 1223 to ask for assistance against the Mongols, their gifts included Rus’ horses, camels, buffaloes, and young female slaves. In their migration to Hungary and to the Balkans the Cumans moved together with their herds.

Following the rise of the Golden Horde, the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian seas continued to impress foreign travellers with the richness of the herds, most of which had most likely been captured by the Mongols from the Cumans. Pointing out the great number of camels, oxen, sheep, goats, and especially horses, which the Mongols had in large numbers than all other peoples taken together, John of Piano Carpini noticed at the same time the scarcity of pigs. Such an observation should not surprise, given that pigs are not suitable for a nomadic lifestyle. John of Piano Carpini’s remark reminds one of Herodotus noting that Scythians had no pigs. Al-‘Umari described

295 Marvazi (see above, n. 21), p. 32; Orient. Bex., p. 249.
297 PVL, I, p. 185; Ip. let.-2, col. 255.
298 PVL, I, p. 192; Ip. let.-2, col. 268.
299 Ip. let.-2, col. 525.
300 Ip. let.-2, col. 540.
301 Ip. let.-2, col. 625.
302 Ip. let.-2, col. 636.
303 Ip. let.-2, col. 637.
304 Ip. let.-2, col. 669.
305 Ip. let.-2, col. 673.
306 Ip. let.-2, col. 677.
309 Rogerius, pp. 23–24, 26, 62, and 65; FHDR, III, pp. 404–405 (Akropolites), 440–441 (Teodor Skutariotes).
310 Plano Carpini, p. 36.
311 Herodotus, II (see above, n. 241), pp. 260–261.
the situation in Desht-i Qipchaq under Özbäg Khan as following: “The population of his empire consists mainly of nomads, who live on herds of horses, oxen and small cattle […] Meat is very cheap here, and horses are slaughtered very often, but the nomads do not buy and sell meat among themselves. Their food consists mostly of venison, milk, butter and millet.”\textsuperscript{312} Such remarks echo the account of the Song envoys sent to Mongolia in the early thirteenth century.\textsuperscript{313} In recording the great number of livestock that the Tatars had, Hethum listed cows and mares.\textsuperscript{314} John Kinnamos wrote about the Seljuqs of Asia Minor that they did not know how to do agriculture, but consumed instead milk and meat.\textsuperscript{315}

Very revealing in this respect are the words, which the author of the Mongol chronicle \textit{Altan tobchi}, writing during the second half of the seventeenth century, put in the mouth of Jöchi, the oldest son of Chingis Khan: “To me the greatest pleasure is found in herding our animals and finding the best area for pasture, in determining the best place for the royal camp to settle and in having all our people there together with a great feast, this is the best”.\textsuperscript{316}

The animals, which the nomads were grazing in the steppes, were strong and sturdy, perfectly adapted to the continental climate in the area. Travellers through the steppe repeatedly noted that, for example, during winter, the sheep of the Oghuz\textsuperscript{317} or the horses of the Mongols\textsuperscript{318} rummaged in the snow with their hooves to find grass. The camels and the cattle of the Tatars in the Bugeac were equally adapted to harsh winters.\textsuperscript{319} The pastoralist economy provided nomads with large quantities of milk and dairy products. \textit{Kumys} (kymys), a drink typical for the Turkic populations and the Mongols, which was prepared by

\begin{footnotes}
\item[312] Al-Umari (see above, n. 167), p. 137. For this issue, see also Ibn Batoutah, II (see above, n. 48), p. 264; Tiesenhausen, I, pp. 286–287.
\item[313] Meng-ta pei-lu und Hei-Ta shih-lieh (see above, n. 190), pp. 58 (Meng-ta pei-lu), 110, and 112 (Hei-Ta shih-lieh).
\item[315] Ioannis Cinnami \textit{Epitome} (see above, n. 4), p. 9; John Kinnamos, \textit{Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenos} (see above, n. 4), p. 17.
\item[317] Ibn Fadlan (see above, n. 162), p. 33.
\item[318] Plano Carpini, p. 104.
\item[319] \textit{Călători}, VIII, p. 288 (M. Eneman).
\end{footnotes}
the fermentation of mare milk,\textsuperscript{320} is still consumed in central Asia and Siberia.\textsuperscript{321} The \textit{kumys} was not only a daily drink for common nomads; it was also offered during the diplomatic ceremonies at the courts of the Mongol khans\textsuperscript{322} and of the Mamluk sultans.\textsuperscript{323}

At the time the steppe lands had not yet been turned to agriculture, the diet of the nomads in Desht-i Qipchaq included also venison.\textsuperscript{324} As they were excellent archers, hunting must have posed no problems to them. Fishing, on the other hand, appears to have been less important for both Turkic populations and Mongols. William of Rubruck even claimed that the Mongols did not know how to fish.\textsuperscript{325} His observation is probably right, as fishing seem to have been associated more often with sedentary populations.

\section*{Crafts}

Crafts and household industrial activities played an important part in the economy of the local communities. They confined themselves to the manufacturing of objects and tools for household and personal use, and to the preparation of food and clothing for their own families. The tasks were gender-specific. As for craftsmen proper (i.e., people specialised in trades that were not available to all members of the village community), they produced more than was necessary for their own households; and thus they also marketed the results of their work in the whole village, or even in some other localities.

Ironworking was one of the most important crafts, as it involved not just smelting, but also the production of tools and weapons. Since no iron ores exist in the region east of the Carpathian Mountains, looking for iron resources required great efforts to trace and explore the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{321} \textit{Etnografia continentelor}, II, 2 (see above, n. 237), pp. 52, 291, 308, 362, etc.
\item \textsuperscript{322} Makrizi (see above, n. 175), p. 215; \textit{Ip.let.-2}, col. 807.
\item \textsuperscript{323} Ayyubids, Mamlukes and Crusaders. Selection from the Tarikh al-Duwal wa’l-Muluk of Ibn al-Furat, 2, eds. U. and M. C. Lyons (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 166–168.
\item \textsuperscript{324} Rubruck, p. 180; Al-‘Umari, p. 137.
\item \textsuperscript{325} Rubruck, p. 197.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
sporadic accumulations of iron in various deposits.\footnote{Șt. Olteanu, V. Cazacu, “Condițiile economice și social-politice ale dezvoltării științei și tehnicii medievale,” in Istoria gândirii și creațiilor științifice și tehnice românești, I, ed. Șt. Pascu (Bucharest, 1982), pp. 276–281.} The efforts to obtain metal were however absolutely essential for the production of numerous agricultural tools and other things, because the demographic growth of the population required better crops, which could guarantee its subsistence. Signs of the extent of smelting, such as iron blooms and slag, may be found in most ninth- to twelfth-century settlement sites, on which investigations have gone beyond the stage of trial excavation. Of course, the evidence for ironworking consists of the very tools and weapons found on the same settlement sites.

Pottery production was the second most important craft, for which there is now evidence of considerable progress beginning with the ninth century. It is at that time that the handmade pottery, as well as that produced on a tournette (slowly revolving wheel), which had been present in every sixth- to eighth-century ceramic assemblage, was gradually replaced with wheel-made pottery. The adoption of that advanced, foot-activate type of wheel coincided in time with a significant improvement of the fabric, tempered now by sand, not by crushed potsherds, as well as of firing. The range of forms was relatively limited. Most vessels found in Dridu-type sites are pots (Figs. 11; 12/1–11; 13; 15; 16/1, 3) or bowls (Fig. 12/12). Settlement sites attributed to the Răducăneni culture produced pots (Figs. 16/2, 4; 17/1, 2, 4, 6, 7; 18/3, 5–7, 9), bowls, and clay kettles (Figs. 17/3, 5, 8; 18/1, 2, 4, 8), while those of the twelfth and thirteenth century produced only pots (Figs. 19; 20/3–10). Besides the pottery of brick-red fabric, with combed decoration, Dridu pottery assemblages produced also fine pottery of grey or yellow fabric, with burnished decoration (Fig. 12/1), the origin of which is still debated. Part of the grey or yellow pottery with burnished decoration may have well been produced locally, but such pottery was certainly produced also in Bulgaria, south of the Danube. Clay kettles appear in large quantities in Răducăneni ceramic assemblages, but are not very common on sites attributed to the Dridu culture. Conversely, the grey or yellow pottery cannot be dated later than the second half of the eleventh century. Much like the pots of brick-red fabric with combed
contrasting ways of life

While numerous finds of querns bespeak the practice of the household production of flour, spindle whorls (Fig. 9/5) indicate the equally household-based production of textiles. There is little evidence for any other crafts, although it is only natural to surmise that cart-making, for example, played a key role in the local economy. However, judging by the existing evidence, it appears that crafts had already become independent, separate activities within rural communities.

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As far as crafts in communities of Turkic nomads, narrative sources are less conclusive, as precise data are practically absent. William of Rubruck’s account of nomadic occupations during the Mongol rule may also apply to the previous centuries. According to the French king’s envoy, household occupations were gender-specific, except the guarding and milking of cattle. Men built houses and carts, made bows and arrows, harnesses and saddles, prepared the kumys and tanned hides, while women cooked and made clothes, footwear, or bedclothes. That the Pechenegs and the Oghuz had a great number of weapons and other implements is mentioned in various Arab sources. Gardizi noted that “these Pechenegs are the possessors of [great] wealth [...]. They have many gold and silver vessels (or utensils). They have many weapons. They have silver belts. They have flags and pennants which they raise up in the battle, [as well as] bugles [made] from the horns of oxen which they sound in battle”. Obviously, most weapons and implements must have been manufactured by Pecheneg smiths. Much

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328 Rubruck, p. 184.

329 Al-Bécri (see above, n. 162), p. 15; A. P. Martinez (trans.), Gardizi (see above, n. 43), p. 152; Marvazi (see above, n. 21), p. 33; Orient.Ber., pp. 163 (Gardtzi), 222 (al-Bakrî), 250 (al-Marwazî); Shūkrîllah, in Hammer, Sur les origines russes (see above, n. 27), p. 46.

330 Hudâd al-‘Ālam (see above, n. 42), p. 100; Orient.Ber., p. 206.

like other related tribes of central Asia, the Oghuz made their own arrow-heads of bone, because iron was not easy to procure.

The artefacts found in burial assemblages attributed to the Turkic nomads illustrate the abilities of their craftsmen. The relative uniformity of the panoply of such artefacts demonstrates that most of them were made by the nomads themselves. This is certainly true for weapons, horse gear, as well as some household items made of metal, antler, or bone. Burial assemblages have produced relatively large numbers of sabres, lance- and arrow-heads, daggers, knives, axes, stirrups, buckles, scissors, flint steels, ear- and lock-rings, bronze, silver and gold rings, kettles, pendants, bronze mirrors, wooden bows with bone or antler reinforcement plates, as well as bone or antler arrowheads and buttons (Figs. 24–42, 44–56). The quality of some of those artefacts is by no means inferior to that of similar specimens known from the steppe lands farther to the east. Given that the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian seas are devoid of bog iron deposits, the question of how did nomads procure the metal for their weapons and horse gear remains unanswered. It is nonetheless clear that the smiths were also responsible for finding the ore.

The vocabulary of the *Codex Comanicus* pertaining crafts and specific products can be of only partial assistance in illuminating this aspect of nomadic society, given that such terms may have also referred to non-nomadic craftsmen or to imported artefacts. However, the absence of any word for pottery may not be an accident. Judging by the archaeological evidence, Turkic nomads do not appear to have used the potter’s wheel. All the pottery found in assemblages attributed to them, except of course the imported pottery, is handmade (Figs. 38/9; 39/9; 40/6; 56/18). Nothing can currently substantiate the idea the wheel-made clay kettles with combed decoration (Figs. 17/3, 5, 8; 18/1, 2, 4, 8) were made by Turkic nomads. The clay kettle was a ceramic form widely spread within the valley of the Lower and Middle Danube. That the form itself may have been of eastern origin has no implications for its supposed production by nomads.

332 Ya’kubi (see above, n. 30), p. 113.
Most crafts practised within nomadic communities were household-based, each tribal community providing by its own means most of the products necessary for the household and for other activities.

_Trade_

Despite the autarkic tendencies of their domestic economy (Hauswirtschaft), Romanian rural communities were not isolated from the outside world. They had commercial exchanges with their neighbours, even if only to supplement the needs of everyday life. In fact, even the most primitive societies, despite the secluded character of their subsistence economies, never lived in complete isolation from other tribal communities.\(^{336}\) Total separation from other populations existed only in exceptional cases imposed by special geographical conditions. The Romanian communities had various relationships with other, similar communities in the east-Carpathian region. That communities in southern Moldavia shared so many cultural features, from house construction and pottery to tools and dress accessories, could not be explained without such contacts, in other words without the existence of a network of communication. Such communication was not restricted to southern Moldavia, but extended also to other neighboring regions inhabited by Romanians and other ethnic groups.

Though no hard evidence exists in that respect, it is likely that Romanian communities may have offered for exchange largely the same goods as available at the time of the medieval states: horned cattle, horses, sheep, cheese, fish, honey, wax, hides, furs, cereals and salt. Most, if not all those goods appear consistently in later medieval sources.\(^{337}\) Animals seem to have been preferred

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\(^{338}\) *Călători, VIII*, p. 349.
for foreign trade, both because of the numbers, and because flocks did not require any special means of transportation. Exchange relations existed with communities in the northern Balkans, as well as in the east-Slavic regions. The return of Byzantium to the Lower Danube and the revival of city life in the centres of Paristrion marked an intensification of the exchange contacts with the Balkans. As the archaeological discoveries indicate, ceramic and metal artefacts (such as simple and double crosses; Figs. 9/12 and 21/1) were brought from Byzantium. Other double crosses originated in Rus\(^339\) (Fig. 21/2).

An accurate way to gauge the intensity of trade contacts is to look at coin circulation. Besides Byzantine coin, which circulated outside the Empire within the entire east-Carpathian region, there are also a few ninth- to tenth-century Islamic coins. During the the last quarter of the first millennium, Islamic coins enjoyed a special prestige not only in the East, but also in eastern and central Europe. Impressive amounts of dirhams, often associated with dress accessories of eastern origin, have been found in the Scandinavia and in the Baltic countries, as well as in the east-Slavic regions.\(^340\) The Carpathian-Dniester region felt


the effects of the trade networks established between Scandinavia and the Muslim markets in the south by Vikings, Khazars, Volga Bulghars, Slavs, and others. Several dirhams discovered in the region illustrate those effects.

Islamic coins have so far been found primarily on settlement sites. A silver coin struck for Nasr II ibn Ahmad (914–943) and an imitation of a kufic dirham, struck around 947/948 in Suvar or Bulgar, were found in Alcedar (Șoldănești county, Republic of Moldova). Two anonymous bronze coins, struck under the rule of Marwan II (747–750) are known from Bosia (Iași county, Romania).

From Echimăuți (Rezina county, Republic of Moldova): no less than nineteen kufic dirhams are known, which were minted for the Samanid emirs Ismail ibn Ahmad (in a.H. 291 and 293, i.e., A.D. 903/904 and 905/906), Ahmad ibn Ismail (in a.H. 296 or A.D. 908/909), Nasr II ibn Ahmad (914–943, in a.H. 314 [A.D. 926/927], 322 [A.D. 933/934], and an unknown year). A dirham struck for the Buyid emir Adud al-Dawla (949–983) in a.H. 363 (A.D. 973/974) in Arradjan has been found in Iacobeni (Vlădeni commune, Iași county). A still unidentified Islamic coin is said to have been found in Șcheia (Iași county). Finally, seven dirhams, issued between a.H. 140 (A.D. 757/758) and a.H. 190 (A.D. 805/806) during the Abbasid caliphs Al-Mansur (754–775), Al-Mahdi (775–785) and Harun al-Rashid (786–809) (one from each of the former caliphs, and five from Harun al-Rashid) have been found in a hoard assemblages, in Răducăneni—“Bazga” (Iași county), together with silver, bronze, and billon dress accessories (earrings, pendants, beads, bracelets, appliqués),


345 Zaharia, etc., Așezări, p. 333.
as well as silver ingots.\textsuperscript{346} One of the richest hoards of dirhams in eastern Europe, which includes some 400 coins (368 of which have been identified) minted in the central Asian towns in the late 800s and early 900s, was found in an unknown location (not in Hust/Huszt, as it was supposed in the past) in the neighboring region of Maramureş (either in the Maramureş county of Romania, or the trans-Carpathian region of Ukraine),\textsuperscript{347} i.e. in another region inhabited by Romanians.

After a period of sharp decline in the Byzantine coin circulation within the territory north of the Danube, which was primarily caused by the settlement of Slavs and Bulgars in the northern Balkans and by economic crisis, a revival is visible beginning with the late tenth century, especially after emperors John I Tzimiskes and Basil II took northern Balkans from the Bulgars. From Southern Moldavia not only stray hoard finds are known (Dolheşti and Paşcani surroundings, Iaşi county, Romania; Goian, Chişinău municipality, Republic of Moldova; Arciz surroundings, Ismail, Reni and Suvorovo, all in the Odessa region of Ukraine). Most known specimens are of bronze, a clear indication that they were used as coins, and not selected for their intrinsic value. The so-called anonymous \textit{folles} were struck in the early eleventh century, the period during which the lands on the left bank of the Danube witnessed the highest degree of monetization.

By contrast, coins struck for the Comnenian emperors are rare in the region to the east from the Carpathian Mountains. It is of course possible that that is the result of the current stage of research. A true decrease in the number of Byzantine coins in the region took place only after the rebellion of the Vlachs and Bulgar, the rise of the Second Bulgarian Empire and the conquest of Constantinople by the crusaders.\textsuperscript{348} Following those dramatic developments, the Byzantine


\textsuperscript{347} A. V. Fomin, L. Kovács, \textit{The Tenth Century Máramaros County (“Huszt”) Dirham Hoard} (Budapest, 1987); L. Kovács, “A Máramaros megyei («huszti») dirhemkincsről,” in \textit{Honfoglalás és Árpád-kor} (Ungvár, 1997), pp. 234–244. See also A. Bartha, \textit{Hungarian Society in the 9th and 10th Centuries} (Budapest, 1975), pp. 114–115. The hoard was certainly not found in Hust/Huszt, as previously thought.

coins appeared only sporadically in the region to the east from the Carpathian Mountains. When they do, they now tend to be not bronze, but gold coins, specifically hyperpyra struck for the Nicaean emperors. The name of those gold coins, which re-established the prestige of the Byzantine currency, was also adopted in Romanian as *perper*. Both Byzantine and Genoese merchants were responsible for the spread of hyperpers in Black Sea and Caspian regions.349

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The movement of the Turkic nomads into the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian seas disturbed the trade routes previously established through those lands by Khazars, Vikings, Arabs, and Byzantines. The lack of a centralized political organization, the periodical migration and the endemic warfare made any crossing of the steppe lands from north to south or viceversa impossible. However, exchange relationships did not disappear. The great rivers of eastern Europe,
the Volga, the Don, the Dnieper and the Danube, continued to be used as avenues for trade. Those rivers solidly maintained the traffic of goods, given that, even though they had no ability or interest in sailing along the rivers, like most nomads, the late Turkic populations of the Eurasian steppes were nonetheless interested in protecting transiting of goods—slaves, fur, silk, animals, etc.—through territories they had conquered or controlled.

Although they had no tradition in engaging in long-distance trade, Turkic nomads took advantage from the exchange of goods. The narrative sources claim that the Pechenegs sold to the Rus’ horned cattle, horses, sheep, and (at Chersones) furs and wax. In exchange, they received fine textiles, pepper, furs from the East, and other goods. The Pechenegs even traded the prisoners captured during expeditions against neighbouring peoples. In return, the Pechenegs also suffered from their neighbours’ incursions, especially from those of the Khazars, who not only plundered, but also to took prisoners. In addition, the Khazars bought Slavic slaves from the Rus’ (Varangians). The Hungarians, who had controlled the steppe lands north of the Black Sea before the Pechenegs, also conducted raids against the Slavs and the Rus’. They too sold their prisoners on the markets in Byzantium.

According to told local traditions, the trade with prisoners captured


355 Ibn Dasta [Ibn Rusta] (see above, n. 40), p. 27; A. P. Martinez (trans.), Gardizi, pp. 161–162; Marvazi (see above, n. 21), p. 35; Orient.Ber., pp. 73–74 (Ibn Rusta), 177 (Gardızî), and 252 (al-Marwazi); Hammer, Sur les origines russes (see above, n. 27), pp. 47, 65, and 71; B. N. Zakhoder, Каспийский свод сведений о Восточной Европе,

The Cumans exchanged goods with the Byzantines in Chersones.\footnote{Anne Commène (see above, n. 18), II, p. 191.} From Sudak they bought cloth and sold female and male slaves, furs of black-fox, beaver and squirrel.\footnote{Ibn Hauqal (see above, n. 34), II, p. 460.} The main trade centre for the Oghuz of central Asia during the tenth century was the town of Djurdjianiya, situated in a region under Khwarazmian control.\footnote{Ibidem, p. 437.} The Oghuz used to trade with merchants from Khorasan, where the fine wool of their sheep was highly appreciated.\footnote{Hudūd al-‘Ālam, p. 100; Orient.Ber., p. 206.} It has also been noted that the Oghuz/Uzes of the Volga region were visited by many merchants.\footnote{Ibn Hauqal, pp. 382 and 385.}

The evidence of the written sources shows that the late Turkic populations traded almost the same commodities as the Khazars before them,\footnote{Ibn Hauqal, pp. 382 and 385.} including slaves captured from the neighbouring peoples, furs of hunted animals, and especially the animals they bred. The fact that they wanted luxury goods in exchange is an indication of social differentiation, with a tribal elite striving to obtain foreign or “exotic” items. Grave goods from assemblages attributed to Pecheneg, Uzes, and Cuman warriors reveal the existence of weapons and dress accessories of foreign origin. Before entering the archaeological record, they must have been obtained either through booty or be means of commerce.

Particularly illustrative in this respect is the very rich grave goods found in a “princely grave” in Zamozhnoe (Zaporozhie region, Ukraine), on the Chingul river. Among such goods was a mantle adorned with
pieces of golden sheet, two vessels with enamel decoration, a chalice with a lid, a gilded silver belt kit of West European origin, an old Rus’ helmet, and many other dress accessories made of precious metals.\textsuperscript{365} The Cumans benefited from trade in Crimea and along the Volga, two regions on which they imposed their political control, especially on flourishing urban centres such as Sudak and Saksin.\textsuperscript{366}

Judging from the archaeological evidence, monetary exchanges in pre-Mongol Turkic societies played a less important role than barter. The number of coins deposited in graves increased considerably in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, an indication of an increased monetization of nomadic society. That, however, does not seem to have trickle down to the lower strata of society; but remained restricted to the elites.\textsuperscript{367} The fact that most of such coins were not of bronze, but of silver substantiates the idea of a limited monetization. So far the only burial assemblages in the region to the east from the Carpathian Mountains, which produced coins are those excavated in Suvorovo (Ismail district, Odessa region, Ukraine; with thirteen late twelfth-century Byzantine scyphates)\textsuperscript{368} (Fig. 38/1, 2, 5–8), Pârteștii de Jos (Suceava county, Romania; late thirteenth-century Mongol coin),\textsuperscript{369} and Grădești (Reni district, Odessa region, Ukraine; with a groat struck in Prague in the 1300s).\textsuperscript{370}


\textsuperscript{367} Fedorov-Davydov, \textit{Kochevniki}, pp. 214–216.


Social and Political Life

The basic structure of the social and political organization of the local population in the Carpathian-Dniester region was the rural village community (obstea). Its structure was outlined as early as prehistory and survived with remarkable vigour almost into modern times. Territorial communities derive from pre-existing social formations based on kinship. There is yet no agreement as to the way in which Romanian villages appeared. However, there is no need of a single scenario: in some cases, the inhabitants of a village could indeed have had common ancestors, but not in other cases. Because until the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries, the only communities in existence in the east-Carpathian area were exclusively rural, no influence existed from urban communities. The understanding of the social relations in existence prior to the rise of the medieval state of Moldavia is still at an incipient stage. The structure of the village communities of the late Middle Ages and the modern period have the been the subject of a number of high-quality studies. However, because of the complete absence of any written sources, reconstructing the defining features of the rural communities of the early Middle Ages remains hypothetical. Some analogies may be advanced from the late medieval period or from even from the ethnographic record of relatively recent communities, either in Romania or elsewhere in Europe. But the most important source of direct information is still archaeology.

There is no evidence so far of wealth differentials within the local communities in the region to the east from Carpathian Mountains. Moreover, a certain homogeneity has been noted in the grave goods associated with burial assemblages dated between the tenth and the thirteenth century. The only indications of sharp differences in wealth are hoards of coins and dress accessories. Petre P. Panaitescu described

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the rural village community as a community of labor, “that is a community performing labor directed by the community and having communal rights to land use. Indeed, the essential aspect for defining a village community is labor and its organization, not possession of land.” Panaitescu’s sharp distinction appears to suggest that access to farming lands or pastures played only a secondary place in the organization of rural communities. However, ethnographic analogies show that quite is true: the entire structure of the community was dictated by rights of access to land. Most typical in that respect was the communal use of pastures, forests, as well as courses or bodies of water. The land under cultivation was periodically divided between individual families by means of drawing lots. There is in fact no evidence that within Romanian village communities in existence before the rise of the medieval state, landed property had already become hereditary and was therefore not divided periodically any more. Following his two visits to Moldavia in 1633 and 1639, respectively, Friar Niccolò Barsi from Lucca described local villages as following: “No one, townsman or villager, can say: ‘This land is mine, and that is yours.’ At sowing time all townsmen go out in the fields, where the sołtuz (judge) and the pârgar (member of the town council, syndic) divide and distribute the lands in keeping with the members of the family: if there are eight people in the family, they give eight plots; if there are ten, they give the same number of plots. They are so numerous that people can never sow them all, so they sow one part in two years, then in the other part in the next two years”.

The Italian monk described communities in towns, but the situation cannot have been much different in the countryside, either at that time or centuries earlier. Barsi insisted on the availability of arable land, a phenomenon duly noted by other travellers to medieval Moldavia as well. A periodical redistribution of lands among members of the village community is a practice, which survived well into the early modern period in Transylvania. During the sixteenth-century, several princes

374 *Călători*, V, p. 80 (N. Barsi).
375 *Călători*, IV, p. 575 (G. Botero).

Village communities (obști) were independent social and political units. They had economic, as well as administrative, juridical and fiscal functions. Communal meetings were not regular, but summoned as needed. The village community as a whole was involved in all aspects of life, including family affairs. The village community was taxed collectively by both rulers of medieval states and by the nomads. It also had juridical freedom in criminal cases involving members of the community or crimes committed within the community boundaries, irrespective of the status or origin of the persons involved. A village community consisted of several groups of people, all with equal rights, who were also members of the same kin group, i.e., were descendants of the same ancestor.\footnote{Stahl, Contribuții (see above, n. 371), I, pp. 55, 169; II, pp. 152–174; Panaitescu, Obștea (see above, n. 371), p. 50.}

The internal stability of village communities was dramatically altered by the emergence of wealth differentials and of the private property of the family. To regulate activity within such communities, a council of “good and old people” was selected from among experienced and respected heads of households, whose prestige was often based on wealth. In time, members of the council transformed their position into one of power, as they became the mediators between village communities and the nomads. They collected the tribute and enforced the prestation of corvées imposed by the new rulers. It has long been noted that that position of power turned such men into leaders of later village confederacies.

The structure of the Romanian village community bears some resemblance to the village community known to have been in existence in Byzantium. This is especially true for the balance between communal and individual property, as well as for composition and prerogatives of the rural elite.\footnote{V. Al. Georgescu, Bizanțul și instituțiile românești până la mijlocul secolului al XVIII-lea (Bucharest, 1980), pp. 61–71.} During the second half of the first millennium, in some villages of the Prôtomeria district, a council of old people was in existence, a body known as the “elders who held the main offices,” led by “a chief of the old people” (πρωτοπρεσβύτερος). Other village
leaders were also noted at the same time in other regions of the Empire under different names, but it is not known whether or not they were recruited from among elders.\(^379\) The “old people” or “good and old people” (людди добри и стари) are also mentioned in sixteenth- and eighteenth-century documents relating to several towns in Moldavia.\(^380\) They were often consulted in matters of administration, which were of concern for all members of the community.\(^381\) Their summons followed an old custom going back, without any doubt, to the period before the rise of the medieval town and state in the region between the eastern Carpathians and the Dniester River.

The perimeter of every village community was clearly demarcated by boundaries often in the form of pillars or stones. Several medieval charters refer to “boundaries” (hotar) in existence “for centuries.” The bounded perimeter included not only the houses, but also the arable land, the pastures, and the forest collectively owned by the community.


Maintaining the boundary depended upon the success of the cyclical redistribution of land among members of that community. Following the appearance of social stratification—much earlier than the rise of the medieval state—the institution of the local lord (knez) was introduced. Knezes are mentioned not only for Romanians in Moldavia, but also for those in the western Balkans, Transylvania, and Wallachia. In Moldavia, knezes and judges (iudices) first appear in charters during the first half of the fifteenth century. In Romanian, the word for knez (cneaz) is of Slavic origin, that for judge (jude) of Latin origin. A village normally had only one knez (only exceptional cases are known of villages with two or three knezes), and his office appears to have been hereditary from the very beginning. In Romanian villages of the Galician territories annexed by the Polish Crown in 1349, which were organized according to the “Romanian law” (jus Valachicum), villagers had to work for several days on the estates of their knezes. The office of knez, which is the equivalent to what was known in western Europe as comes, appears also among southern, eastern, and western Slavic peoples, with varying attributions.

The community as a whole was supposed to approve any levy of goods and the acceptance of foreigners within the community. Such prerogatives were abrogated only when there was no a protective political organism. Foreigners were sometimes allowed to live the village, but without the privileges, which other, regular members of the community enjoyed. An indication of an enclave of foreigners within a local village community may be detected in the cemetery at Hansca—“Limbari”. Anthropological studies have indicated a sharp distinction between dolicocephalic females and brachycephalic males, some of them with Mongoloid features. This has been interpreted as evidence of a group of newcomers from the eastern Europe, who shared a number of forensic features otherwise typical for cemeteries attributed to Alans

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and to Bulgars within the Saltovo-Maiaki culture.\textsuperscript{386} As the graves with male skeletons displaying the above-mentioned anthropological features do not cluster anywhere within the territory of the cemetery, but instead appear among other graves of men, women, or children, this can only mean that the immigrants were quickly integrated within the local community. A rather similar situation was discovered in the medieval cemetery at Dinogetia-Garvăn (Tulcea county) (Romania), where, except for some inhumations with anthropological features indicating a group of foreigners, which have been buried on the cemetery fringes, all other graves with similar skeletal remains have been found among graves of the native population.\textsuperscript{387}

Members of the village community had to perform a number of communal activities, from the cleaning of the forest and the pastures of briers and weeds to the fencing of plots. To elude such duties could have led to penalties consisting primarily in the suspension of the right of access to communal lands.\textsuperscript{388} Several late medieval and early modern sources show that even priests cultivated their respective plots by themselves, and sometimes went to the forest to fell trees.\textsuperscript{389} This strongly suggests, on one hand, that the performing of the liturgy and of other ritual celebrations did not bring to any priest a sufficient income to survive, and, on the other hand, that members of the village communities had no obligation to work on the lands of the parish. That the clergy had no special privileges within the village community and that they had to perform the same kind of work as the other members of that community is strikingly similar to the situation in Byzantium after the tenth century. Some priests were even ranked lowest in the local hierarchy, for they were \textit{paroikoi}, dependant, not free people.\textsuperscript{390}

\textsuperscript{386} M. S. Velikanova, \textit{Палеоантропология Прутско-Днестровского междуречья} (Moscow, 1975), pp. 114–138; Chebotarenko, \textit{Население} (see above, n. 100), p. 54.


because they were involved sometimes too much in gaining their own bread, those priests are said to have neglected their duty as priests, which caused the intervention of emperor Alexius I in 1107.391

In short, the situation of the Orthodox clergy in the Romanian lands during the first centuries of the second millennium could not have been better than that of the Byzantine clergy at that same time. In Galician villages of south-eastern Poland, which were organized according to *jus Valachicum*, there were significant wealth differences between the priests. Some grew rich through trade and had mills and ponds with fish on lease. Others were poor and tilled their own fields, which were exempt from taxes. They had to pay for cultivating the parochial plots. The lack of education had serious consequences on the quality of the liturgical service.392 Following the rise of the medieval state of Moldavia, priests had landed property, and commonly worked their own fields,393 a situation which apparently was hindered their priestly duties. As most of them were of peasant origin, and, before modern times, with no access to formal education, local priests and monks were completely ignorant of theological subtleties and sometimes of questionable moral behaviour. Another impediment in assimilating the ecclesiastical dogma was the Old Church Slavonic language, which most clergymen did not master. They must have known it only to a degree sufficient for performing the liturgy.394 Nothing indicates that priests had any privileged position prior to 1300. In medieval Moldavia, clergymen of all ranks were not just ministers in the altar, but also men with juridical competence, who also assumed responsibilities in guiding social and family life. At the same time, both priests and monks benefited from individual fiscal exemptions, and sometimes from donations from the prince.395

Many Romanian historians still endorse Dimitrie Cantemir theory, according to which the regions of Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Vrancea, and Tigheci were “republics” of sorts, as remnants of political entities pre-dating the rise of the medieval state. The Moldavian scholar claimed that, in spite of paying tax to the prince, the inhabitants of those regions enjoyed great freedom and had their own laws and judges. Like many other parts of Moldavia, the three regions in question may have preserved a number of features of a self-governing body most typical for village community confederacies. That, however, is no indication of their status prior to the rise of the medieval state. It has been demonstrated that Cantemir’s description of the Câmpulung Moldovenesc region contains a number of inaccuracies and contradictions, especially when compared to data from diplomatic sources. For example, there is no evidence whatsoever that the inhabitants of the Câmpulung Moldovenesc region were able, as Cantemir claimed, to depose the officials whom the prince had delegated to their region. Nor is there any evidence that they were eager to accept the Polish rule. Cantemir’s odd statement must be interpreted in the light of the conflict between his father, Constantin Cantemir (1685–1693), and the townsmen of Câmpulung Moldovenesc, which had taken place shortly after a brief occupation of Northern Moldavia by Polish troops. Dimitrie Cantemir collapsed the two events and thus gave a spin to the story, which had no relation to what had actually happened. Moreover, his idea of the Câmpulung Moldovenesc region being independent is in sharp contradiction to the existence of no less than two officials and to the collection of tax from the region for the treasury. There is therefore no serious reason to put any trust on the idea of so-called “republics.” This information, like many other passages in the Descriptio Moldaviae, a work Cantemir wrote in his Russian exile, is simply inaccurate, written when the author was far away from his native land, has proven to be accurate. The privileges of the inhabitants of the Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Vrancea, and Tigheci regions resulted instead from their military


duties. Câmpulung Moldovenesc was near the Polish border, not far from the most important road across the Carpathian Mountains, from Northern Moldavia and Transylvania. The region of Vrancea, which next to the Oituz Pass, bordered on Wallachia, while the woodlanders of Tigheci were neighbours of the Tatars of the Bugeac.

Rejecting the idea that Câmpulung Moldovenesc, Vrancea, and Tigheci were pre-state political structures does not imply excluding the possibility of such structures having actually been in existence in the lands east of the Carpathian Mountains before the fourteenth-century “dismounting” (descălecat = state formation established by the coming of an external elite) of Dragoș and Bogdan. Important historical sources in fact support such an idea. At the basis of those political structures were confederacies of village communities, whose presence was determined by the internal evolution of the native communities and by the need to protect them against both Turkic nomads and neighbouring medieval states.

There must have been a pre-state political structure in the region of the Carpathian Bend, in which a papal letter of 1234 located the Romanian “pseudo-bishops,” given what is known about the link established in the Middle Ages between bishoprics and secular political organization. Without any doubt, that political structure must have appeared before the Teutonic Knights and the Cuman bishopric gained privileged positions outside the Carpathian Mountains. A “duke Râmunc of Wallachia” (herzoge Râmunc üzer Vlăchen lant) is mentioned in the _Nibelungenlied_, an indication that by 1200, the latest date which can be assigned to the last stage in the composition of the Old German epic, there was Romanian political entity—duchy or otherwise—somewhere in the Carpathian region. That that entity may have been located to the east from the Carpathian Mountains results from another passage in the epic, in which Wallachians are associated with Rus’, Greeks, Poles, and Pechenegs, all ethnic groups in the vicinity of Moldavia. In addition, _Eymundar þátr / saga_ mentions east-Carpathian Romanians (Blökumenn) among the participants in the conflicts between the princes of Rus’ who attempted to take over Kiev in the early eleventh century. Again, the military assistance provided under such circumstances

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indirectly points to a social and political structure capable of sustaining that military organization. The increasing military power of the local society is otherwise illustrated by the great number of weapons found in the archaeological record: axes, maces, arrowheads, and coats of mail. Along with an increasing quantity, an improvement of earlier types of weapons is also visible.\footnote{Spinei, \textit{Moldova}, pp. 103–104; idem, “Incipient forms of statal organisation with the Romanians East of the Carpathians,” \textit{Transylvanian Review} 5 (1996), no. 2, pp. 44–54.}

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At the basis of nomadic society was the patriarchal clan made up of several related families. Such a structure is represented by the Mongol clan (\textit{oboq} or \textit{oboh}), with a common ancestor (\textit{äbügä}).\footnote{Vladimirtsov, \textit{Le régime social} (see above, n. 234), p. 56.} That clan practiced exogamy, blood-revenge, and levirate.

Conspicuous wealth differentials within clans manifest themselves in burial assemblages. While some were devoid of both grave goods and horse skeletons, many grave goods have been found in others. Rich burial assemblages have been found in Balabanu (Taraclia county, Republic of Moldova; Fig. 25/3–6), Bădragii Veche (Edineț county, Republic of Moldova; Fig. 27/11), Fridensfeld (Mîropol), Limanscoce-“Fricătei,” Pavlovca, Plavni, Sărata, and Tuzla (Fig. 38/3; 4) (all in the Odessa region of Ukraine). Each produced golden rings and other luxury artifacts. Golden mounts have been found in Pogonești (Vaslui county, Romania; Figs. 28/7, 8; 55/1, 2), which were part of a belt kit. The burial assemblage found in Moscu (Galați county, Romania) included an iron helmet with gilded silver decoration, while that from Seșițe (Orhei county, Republic of Moldova) produced small silver plates with Arabic inscriptions (Fig. 37/7) and several other artifacts (Fig. 37). Forty years ago, between 17 and 18 percent of all burial assemblages attributed to the Turkic nomads of the pre-Mongol era had one or several grave goods made of gold. Once the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian seas were under the control of the Golden Horde, there no more golden artefacts in any burial assemblages attributed to the nomads.\footnote{Fedorov-Davydov, \textit{Kochevnik}, p. 220.}
When noting that the Pechenegs were rich and had gold and silver, weapons, adorned belts and flags, al-Bakri\textsuperscript{403} certainly had in mind not all Pechenegs, but just the rich ones. Both the large number of cattle, which wealthy Oghuz are said to have owned, and conspicuous display of wealth in ceremonies of Cuman chiefs bespeak the remarkable wealth differentials in nomadic society. Domestic animals, especially horses and camels, were not just an economic asset, but also a way to show off and compete for status.\textsuperscript{404}

Several clans made up a tribe. The number of Turkic tribes varied over time. In the mid-tenth century, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus knew that the Pechenegs were divided into eight “themes” (\textgreek{θεματα}), by which he certainly meant “tribes,” each further subdivided into five smaller “districts” (clans). Four of these themes / tribes, namely Giazichopon, Kato Gyla (\textgreek{κάτω Γύλα}), Charaboi and Iabdiertim (\textgreek{Γιαζιχοπόν}, \textgreek{Χαραβόη}, \textgreek{Ιαβδιερτίμ}), were on the right bank of the Dnieper River, with the other four on the left bank: Kuartzitzur, Syrukalpei, Borotalmat and Bulatzopon (\textgreek{Κουαρτζιτζούρ}, \textgreek{Συρουκάλπεη}, \textgreek{Βοροταλμάτ}, \textgreek{Βουλατζζόπον}).\textsuperscript{405} The original names are thought to have been Jazi-Qapon, Jula, Qara-Baj, Javdi-Ertim, Küer-Čur, Suru-Külbej, Boro-Talmač and Bula-Čaban.\textsuperscript{406} A Hungarian scholar even tried to associate Bulatzopon and the name \textgreek{Bulala zoapan} (zhupan-? Chaban-?) (BOYHΛΑ ZΟΑΠΙΑΝ) from the Greek inscription on the golden cup from the Sân-nicolau Mare hoard (Timiș county) (Romania).\textsuperscript{407}

The number of the tribes is confirmed by Mas’udi’s account, while Bruno of Querfurt has only four Pecheneg tribes,\textsuperscript{408} perhaps because he knew nothing about those to the east from the Dnieper River. Mas’udi gives the following names for the Pecheneg tribes: Ārtim, Čur, Ģyla, Kulpej,

\textsuperscript{403} Al-Bécri (see above, n. 162), p. 15. See also A. P. Martinez (trans.), Gardizi (see above, n. 43), p. 152; Marvazi (see above, n. 21), p. 33; Orient.Ber., pp. 165 (Gardiz), 222 (al-Bakrî), 250 (al-Marwazî); Zakhoder, \textgreek{Κασπιйский свод сведений} (see above, n. 357), p. 74 ff.


\textsuperscript{405} \textit{DAI}, I, pp. 168–169.


\textsuperscript{407} Németh, \textit{Die Inschriften} (see above, n. 51), pp. 9–14 and 31–33.

\textsuperscript{408} \textit{Epistola Brunonis ad Henricum regem}, in \textit{Monumenta Poloniae Historica}, I, ed. A. Bielowski (Lwów, 1864), p. 225.
Charawoj, Talmač, Chopon and Čopon.\(^{409}\) These may be closer to the original names. The Pechenegs of three of the themes mentioned by Constantine Porphyrogenitus—Javdi-Ertim, Küerći-Čur, and K’abukşyn-Jula (Χαβυξιγγυλά)—are said to have been called Kāŋgar (κάγγαρ) because of being the most valiant and powerful of all Pechenogs.\(^{410}\) The names of the Pecheneg tribes have been explained as referring either to personalities or to horses. For example, K’abukşyn Jula is translated as “the tribe of Jula, who had bark-coloured horses,” while Giazichopon (= jazy K’apan) is “K’apan’s tribe.”\(^{411}\) According to some, the term of Giazi (probably jazy) means “flat land” or “steppe.”\(^{412}\)

For the themes to the west of the Dnieper River, the emperor-chronicler tries a general localisation: the province of Jazi-Qapan bordered on Bulgaria, Jula on Turkey (= Hungary), Qara-Baj on Rus’, and Javdi-Ertim on the country of the Ultinians, Dervlenians and Lenzenians (that is Ulichians, Drevlianians and Poles). Elsewhere in the De administrando imperio, Constantine Porphyrogenitus claims that Patzinakia is only a half-day’s walk away from Bulgaria, a whole day’s walk from Rus’, and four days from “Turkey.”\(^{413}\) The understanding of the precise location of the Pecheneg tribes depends upon the coordinates of Emperor Constantine’s account, especially on the rivers mentioned in his work and on their neighbours. Thus, Jazi-Qapan must have been in the Romanian Plain, Jula between the Siret and the Dniester, Javdi-Ertim between the Dniester and the Bug, and Qara-Baj between the Bug and the Dnieper. All the tribes mentioned above occupied only the steppe lands on the lower courses of those rivers. It is doubtful that the Kato Gyla tribes were located north of Giazichopon, on the


\(^{413}\) \textit{DAI}, pp. 168–169.
same river courses, i.e. in southern Moldavia, as maintained by many scholars. Turkic nomads did not share the steppe lands with anyone, and their direction of their transhumant movements was from south to north, not from east to west.

A century after emperor Constantine’s account, the Pechenegs driven away from the steppe between the Dnieper and the Danube by the Uzes, are said to have been divided into thirteen tribes, eleven under Tyrach and another two under Kegen. Although those tribes eventually moved to the Balkans in 1046–1047, the Byzantines experienced two more Pecheneg invasions, in 1086 and 1122–1123, respectively. This goes against the idea that by 1050, there were only thirteen Pecheneg tribes. No doubt, there were many more, which escaped the attention of the Byzantine authors, because of not getting involved in Balkan affairs.

The number of Oghuz / Uzes tribes also varied in time. During the second half of the eleventh century, Mahmud al-Kashghari knew 22 groups: Qiniq, Qayigh, Ba’yundur, Iwa, Salghur, Afshar, Baktily, Bukduz, Baya’t, Yazghir, Aymur, Qr’bulk (Qara bölık), ‘Lqa’buluk (Alqa böyük), Ikdiar, Urakir, Tuvtiq, Uvla’yundlugh, Tuvkar, Bajanak, Juvuldar, Jabny and Jaruqlugh. In addition, two other branches, made up of the Khalaj, had long separated from the Oghuz confederacy. Mahmud al-Kashghari’s information is partly confirmed by Rashid al-Din, who listed 24 Oghuz tribes at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Of these, 21 had names similar to those mentioned above. The Persian scholar (a Jewish convert to Islam) in all probability wrote on the basis of sources dating back to Mahmud al-Kashghari’s time.


During the first half of the twelfth century, almost a century after the group led by Seljuk had separated from the Oghuz confederacy, al-Marvazi knew of only twelve Oghuz tribes.418

The information about the number of the Cuman tribes is contradictory, with the most trustworthy testimony being written in the 1300s. Shams al-Din Dimashqi lists eight main Qipchaq tribes—Bärgü, Toqsapa, Itapa, Barat, Il-äris, Burğ-oglu, Mingür-oglu, Jimak—to which he adds six smaller ones: Tog-Jašqut, Qumangü, Buzangi, Bäčänä, Qara böklü and Uzu čartan.419 In his encyclopaedia, an-Nuwairi lists eleven Turkic tribes from the “Northern countries” (the Golden Horde), most likely on the basis of the information obtained from Rukn al-Din Baibars: Toksoba, Ieta, Burdźogly, Burly, Kangogly (or Kangarogly), Andžogly, Durut, Karabarogly, Džuznan, Karabirklı and Kotian.420 Ibn Khaldun has the same tribal names, with slight differences of spelling.421 However, these lists can hardly be accurate or complete. For example, during the pre-Mongol period, the Qara böklü (more precisely the Qara börklü) or Karabirkli, that is the Black Caps (черные клобуки) of the Rus’ chronicles were subjects of the Kiev princes, and as such they fought against other Cumans. Moreover, it appears that the lists are based on information pertaining to the mid-thirteenth-century situation, given that they list the Kotian tribe (so called after the Kotian Khan) as under the Golden Horde rule.

Judging from the map and the accompanying text written of Idrisi’s geography written in 1154, as well as from several Hungarian and Italian chronicles of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it appears that both the White and the Black Cumania were north of the Black Sea.422 Beyond that, the descriptions are too imprecise to allow for

418 Marvazi (see above, n. 21), p. 29; Orient.Ber., p. 241.
contrasting ways of life

more detail. Some believe that the two names refer to two separate tribal confederacies living on the right and left bank of the Dnieper, respectively.\textsuperscript{423}

The examination of the Rus’ chronicles produces yet another classification of the twelfth-century Cuman tribes. The chroniclers knew of several distinct groups living in the steppe lands along the bend of the Black Sea (\textit{lukomorskie} / 
\textit{лукоморские}) and on the Danube, on the Dnieper, in Orel, near the Sea of Azov, on the Donets and on the Don.\textsuperscript{424} Several other groups are mentioned: on the Volga, north of the Caucasian Mountains, and in Crimea.\textsuperscript{425} According to other opinions, the Cumans were divided into five autonomous groups, situated in central Asia, between the Ural and the Volga, between the Volga and the Dnieper (with power centres on the Don and the Donets), on the right of the Lower Dnieper, and on the Lower Danube.\textsuperscript{426} More recently, the idea of eleven Cuman groups has been put forward. They were located on the Volga, the Don, the Donets, on the left bank of the Dnieper, the Dnieper meadows, around the Sea of Azov, Crimea, right bank of the Dnieper, Kiev-Korsun, the Bug, \textit{lukomorskie}, and the Danube.\textsuperscript{427}

Any attempt to establish a precise number of Cuman tribal confederacies will stumble upon the problem of instability and continuous merging and splitting according to the changing political and military circumstances. Sometimes the Cumans of the Bugeac and the Bărăgan enjoyed autonomy, while at other times they were under the rule of the tribal confederacies in the Dnieper region. Their loss of autonomy seems to date back to the period during which the nomads gathered

\begin{itemize}
\item Kudriashov, \textit{Половецкая степь} (see above, n. 198), pp. 130–138.
\item D. Rassovsky, “Половцы, III, Пределы ‘Поля Половецкаго’,” \textit{SK} 10 (1938), pp. 166–175.
\item Pritsak, “Polovcians” (see above, n. 16), pp. 342–368.
\end{itemize}
their forces on the Lower Danube in preparation for raids into the Balkans.

On the basis of the classification of stone statues—which were found primarily in the region between the Ingules and the Volga rivers—as well as due to an uncritical use of information culled from chronicles, some authors believed that the Cumans lived only between the Ingules and the Volga. According to those authors, nomads in the steppe lands north of the Danube were in fact Pechenegs and Uzes subject to the Cumans.\footnote{Pletneva, \textit{Половецкие каменные изваяния}, pp. 275–276; eadem, \textit{“Половецкая земля,”} in \textit{Древнерусские княжества X–XIII вв.}, eds. L. G. Beskrovnyi (gen. ed.), V. A. Kuchkin, V. T. Pashuto (Moscow, 1975), pp. 275–276; eadem, \textit{Кочевники южно-русских степей в эпоху средневековья IV–XIII века. Усобное пособие (Voronezh, 2003)}, pp. 175–176.} That groups of Pecheneg and Uzes remained behind under Cuman rule cannot be denied. However, there is no reason to believe that the Cumans would have stopped at the Ingules. In fact, all available information, both from chronicles (including Rus’ ones) and from archaeological excavations proves the contrary.

The evidence strongly suggests that no political unity existed in the lands inhabited by Pechenegs, Uzes and Cumans. Wilhelm Barthold (V. V. Bartol’d) once wrote that “under normal circumstances, no nomadic people strives for political unity,” because of customary law and its resulting application for the settlement of disputes among individuals, clans, and tribes.\footnote{W. Barthold, \textit{Histoire des Turcs d’Asie Centrale} (Paris, 1945), p. 8. See also P. B. Golden, \textit{“The Qipchaqs of medieval Eurasia: an example of stateless adaptation in the steppes,”} in \textit{Rulers from the Steppe. State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery}, eds. G. Seaman and D. Marks (Los Angeles, 1991), pp. 138–139.} Barthold’s remark obviously applies to all nomadic population and not tribal elites, whose interests converged towards the organization of centralized states in order to control the intensification of social conflicts among various classes, or to oppose any threats from the outside. There is some evidence that it was not only the Huns and the Mongols who dreamt of world domination, but the late Turkic populations as well, particularly the Cumans and the Uzes, as can be seen in the \textit{Oghuznâme}.\footnote{O. Turan, \textit{“The ideal of world domination among the medieval Turks,”} \textit{Studia Islamica} 4 (1955), pp. 77–90; P. B. Golden, \textit{“Imperial ideology and the sources of political unity amongst the pre-Genghisid nomads of Western Eurasia,”} \textit{AEMA} 2 (1982), pp. 37–76; S. Koca, \textit{“The state tradition and organization among ancient Turks,”} in \textit{The Turks}, 1, \textit{Early Ages} (see above, n. 412), pp. 698–701.}

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Each tribe had a specific grazing area with well-established routes of seasonal migration, and collective sharing of lands. If during peacetime the centrifugal tendencies of the tribes or regional tribal unions were obvious, when external dangers appeared, elements of these political organizations merged. The greatest threats to any nomadic community did not come from sedentary societies, but from other nomads coveting their flocks and pastures. That is why the association and the solidarity of the main groups of Pechenegs was shown when the Uzes arrived; those of the Uzes when the Cumans arrived; and those of the Cumans at the same of the Mongol invasion.

The growth in power of the Rus’ principalities encouraged attempts at political consolidation by several Cuman tribes, especially the confederacies led by Boniak and Tugorkan west of the Dnieper, that of by Sharukan east of river, and later on that led by Konchak, which was the closest to a state formation. Because of their leaders’ personalities, their energy and appetite for war, such tribal confederacies were weak and short-lived. The lack of political centralization in Desht-i Qipchaq is obvious in Pethachia’s estimation, according to which the Cumans did not have a “king”, but only “princes and noble families.”

Sometimes, great expeditions, such as those against Byzantium organized by the Uzes in 1064–1065, or by the Pechenegs in 1122–1123, were not led by a single leader but by several, and they did not always act in concert.

Intra-tribal strife seems to have virulent and did not decrease even at times of great threats from the outside. The confrontation between Tyrach and Kegen during the Uzes attack is significant in that respect.

The same is true about the less known conflict between the Cuman tribes Durut and Toksoba, the leaders of which, following the battle of Kalka, called for Mongol military arbitration between them in an astounding show of political myopia. Such dissension prevented the Turkic tribal unions from reaching the level of state organization, achieving the political unity of all the nomads, maintaining the authority of the khans, and developing an efficient administrative and fiscal system.

The high official tribal titles became the attribute of aristocratic families and precise rules concerning succession were issued. With the Pechenegs, the position of chief was hereditary, but was passed not to

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431 Péthachia (see above, n. 271), p. 10.
432 Tiesenhausen, I, pp. 541 (an-Nuwairi), 542 (Ibn Khaldun).
sons or brothers, but to cousins and their sons. When the Cumans settled in the steppe lands north of the Black Sea, the position of khan was hereditary, but it was transmitted not from the father to the son, but to the brother or the nephew. Therefore, after the death of Sharukan the Elder, who was the oldest in his family, power passed onto his brother Sugr, then to Sugr’s nephew and Sharukan’s son, Syrchan, who in turn passed the title of khan to his brother, Atrak (Otrok). In the early thirteenth century, along with other social changes, the hereditary rules changed too and the son could inherit power directly from his father, as with Iurii Konchakovich, Konchak’s son and follower.

The council of elders, which was made up of representatives of the tribal aristocracy, checked the power of the khan. Decisions concerning the most important problems of tribal communal life were made by that body. When several tribes gathered for common incursions, their chiefs made decisions together and chose a single leader. This was the case with the expedition against the Byzantine town Walandar reported by Mas’udi as having taken place in a.H. 320 (= January 13 to December 31, 932), which most likely took place however in 934. When the khan disregarded the interests of the tribe, the tribe sometimes disregarded his commands. For example, in 1103, the majority of the Cumans disagreed with the passivity of khan Urusoba towards the Rus’, and appointed Altunopa chief of the tribal union. Urusoba still had to take part in the disastrous campaign against the Rus’.

Most Pechenegs also opposed their chiefs’ decisions to kill the prison-
ers captured in battle against Byzantium, for they hoped they would obtain a good ransom for each one of them.439

Besides freemen, there were slaves in the Turkic society, but their number was small and their economic role unimportant. The slaves were actually prisoners captured during raids against the neighbouring peoples. Such prisoners were an important source of income, to the extent that they could be ransomed,440 or sold into slavery in Sudak441 or on other markets in Crimea or on the Volga. Some were kept as domestic servants. That in 1103, the princes of Kiev took a great number of slaves from the Cuman camps they had raided shows that there were slaves among the Cumans.442 The Turkic populations may have compelled stronger prisoners to accompany them on their expeditions, as the Hungarians were known to do.443

When large territories were occupied, vassalage relations were established between the conquerors and the conquered. As the attacked tribes ran away to other regions, the conquering nomads demanded their return, as people were needed within the newly conquered territory. In a similar way, Cumans chose to attack the Rus’ simply because they had refused to expel the Torki (= Uzes) and the Pechenegs.444

One of the main accusations targeted at the Hungarian king by the Mongols, in order to offer a pretext for war—casus belli—was that he had offered shelter to Cuman refugees, whom the Mongols regarded as their “servants” (servi).445

Relationships of a different nature were established between the nomads and their neighbours with limited military power. More often than not, a tribute payment was imposed on those populations. Even the Byzantines paid annual stipends to the Turkic populations, in order to buy the peace. There is also evidence of Cumans forcing towns and fortresses in Crimea to pay tribute.446 Before the arrival of the later

439 Anne Comnène (see above, n. 18), II, p. 103.
441 Tiesenhausen, I, p. 26 (Ibn el Asyr); Extrait d'Ibn-Alathir, in [Ch. F.] Defrémery, “Fragments de géographes” (see above, n. 360), p. 80.
442 PVL, I, p. 185.
443 Simon de Keza, p. 192.
444 Fedorov-Davydov, Kochevniki, pp. 229–230.
Turkic populations, the Khazars had forced several eastern Slavic tribes into paying tribute. Later, the Mongols established an improved system of collecting periodical taxes, employing specialised officials and conducting the census of the subject population.

The necessity to protect the flocks against raids from other tribes, as well as the nomadic lifestyle in general may explain the existence of special military rules among the Turkic populations. Nomads rarely dismounted, especially when watching over their herds. Acquiring riding skills at an early age was therefore a key requirement. Nomadic armies consisted of horsemen, with no pedestrians. Sparingly equipped, but with several horses in tow, troops of nomads were highly mobile and capable of covering long distances in a relatively short time, which enabled them to take their enemies by surprise and to withdraw without serious losses in case of failure. Noticing that the plunder incursions could be great sources of wealth, the Turkic nomads raided periodically the territories of their sedentary neighbors. Simon of Keza showed a deep understanding of nomadic life when estimating that the sources of income for both Hungarians and Cumans were stockbreeding and raids. Contemporary sources show how regular and devastating such raids could be.

Michael Psellos’ idea that the Pechenegs fought chaotically, without any knowledge of military art, is obviously unsubstantiated. Actually, such a remark shows Psellos’ inability to understand a different warfare style. The Turkic populations, as well as the Mongols and some Iranian tribes, employed a decimal organization of their armies, that is to say military units consisted of 10, 100, 1,000 or 10,000 people. The decimal system was maintained in the army of the Crimean Tatars until the second half of the second millennium. When enemy forces

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447 PVL, I, pp. 16, 18, and 20.
449 Simon de Keza, p. 192.
450 Psellos, II, p. 125.
452 L. J. D. Collins, “The military organization and tactics of the Crimean Tatars, 16th–17th centuries,” in War, Technology and Society in the Middle East, eds. V. J. Parry
prevailed, the nomads pretended to withdraw, so that the enemies break formation and disband their troops. The nomads carried out long expeditions on carts, also used as camps, as already shown. They were less skilled in attacking fortresses, and they preferred to lay siege to them until the people inside either died of starvation or surrendered. However, the nomads sometimes initiated daring attacks, such as the Cuman raid on Kiev in 1096, or that against Adrianople in 1050, when the Pechenegs filled the trenches of the fortress with stones and branches. The nomads failed before the walls of the famous city of Thrace, but they succeeded when attacking the timber forts of the Tivertians between the Răut and the Dniester rivers.

The nomads avoided battles in narrow places unsuitable for their light cavalry charges. Referring to the Tatars, who generally had the same manner of fighting as the Turkic populations, some late sources estimated that they “do not love narrow places and mountains and fire arms,” and that they were afraid of crossing forests. The most typical weapon for the nomads was the bow with arrows, and contemporary sources insist on the nomads being excellent archers. In fact, most narrative sources mention that the only weapons that Turkic horsemen employed were arrows. By contrast, spears, sabres and axes are rarely mentioned. However, burial assemblages


453 PVL, I, p. 151; Nik.let., I, p. 125.
455 N. Chiparissa, Cronicul, in Cronicarii greci care au scris despre români în epoca fanariotă, ed. C. Erbiceanu (Bucharest, 1888), p. 84.
457 Matthieu d’Edesse (see above, n. 132), p. 200; Matthew of Edessa (see above, n. 132), p. 155; Pethachia (see above, n. 271), p. 12; FHDR, III, pp. 340–341 (Choniates, Cuvântări și scrisori).
attributed to nomadic warriors have proved to contain helmets and coats of mail.459

The society of the Turkic nomads was highly militarized, with all able adults being animal breeders and warriors at the same time. The transhumance of a group of pastoralists meant the movement of a group of soldiers, always ready to protect their families, flocks and wealth, and at the same time to plunder anyone who could have happened to be in their way. Such an aggressive behavior was a real calamity for the neighboring sedentary communities. The dreaded and much hated military force of the Pechenegs, Uzes, and Cumans was nonetheless highly appreciated by European and Asian rulers, who often established alliances with the nomads, asking for their assistance in expeditions to Rus’, Byzantium, Hungary, Georgia and the Second Bulgarian Tsardom.

Religious Life

The Romanian population living in the lands east of the Carpathian Mountains was almost entirely Christian. Both archaeological discoveries and the ecclesiastical terminology of Latin origin reveal the antiquity of Christianity in the region north of the Danubian River.460 Various object of cult, as well as artefacts with Christian symbols, have been found on numerous sites in the Carpathian-Danube region.461 As neither


the Slavs nor other migratory tribes were converted to Christianity, it is natural to acknowledge that all those objects belonged to a Romanised population, the only Christians in the area.

Because of the informal character of Christianity in Dacia and the spread of vulgar Latin, some words in classical Latin were given a different meaning. Following the settlement of both Slavs and Bulgars in the northern Balkans, and the subsequent dismantling of the church organization in the area, most terms pertaining to that organization were forgotten. Only terms referring to the most important objects of cult have been preserved.462 By contrast, following the conversion of Bulgaria in the late ninth century and the adoption by Romanians of the Slavonic liturgy, numerous terms of South Slavic origin were adopted, such as amin (= amen), apostol (= apostle), arhanghel (= archangel), a se căi (= to repent), călugăr (= monk), chilie (= cell), clopot (= bell), colac (= ritual round bread), colindă (= Christmas carol), colivă (= koliva, boiled wheat with honey and nuts, which is distributed at funerals in memory of the deceased), cristelnită (= baptismal font), dascăl (= psalm reader), diacon (= deacon), diavol (= devil), duh (= soul, spirit), duhovnic (= father confessor), egumen (= father superior of a monastery), greșeală (= mistake, blemish, sin), heruwim (= cherub), iad (= hell), icoană (= icon), Iconostas (= iconostasis), ispită (= temptation), liturghie (= liturgy), milă (= pity), mir (= unction, chrism, holy oil), a se vocă (= to penance), pomană (= alms, charity, funeral feast), popă (= pope, parson), post (= fasting), praznic (= funeral repast, wake), mai (= paradise), Rusalii (= Whitsuntide), schit (= hermitage, small and secluded convent), serafim (= seraph), sfânt (= saint), a se smeri (= to humble oneself), smirnă (= myrrh), staref (= abbot, superior), taină (= mystery, sacraments), and troiţă (= roadside crucifix). Some of those words are undoubtedly of Greek origin, but they entered Romanian through South Slavic.463 Others, such as colindă (= Christmas carol), Rusalii (Whitsuntide), and troian (= snow drift) were borrowed by the Slavs from the Latin-speaking population of Dacia or


Moesia, and then re-adopted by speakers of Romanian, with a different meaning.\textsuperscript{464} Lexical borrowings from other areas took place at the same time as the ones mentioned above.

The Slavic liturgy and the Christian vocabulary borrowed by speakers of Romanian from the South Slavic language are dated by most specialists to the tenth century.\textsuperscript{465} However, there are reasons to believe that, far from being complete in the tenth century, the process was had just started at that time.\textsuperscript{466}

The understanding of the ways in which Christianity survived within local communities of the Carpathian-Danube region in the course of the early Middle Ages is not possible without the analysis of burial assemblages dated between the fifth and the thirteenth century. The traditional interpretation maintained that during the last half of the first millennium most local communities practiced cremation, and that the number of inhumations began to increased only at the end of that millennium.\textsuperscript{467} By that time, inhumation had been long adopted by Christian communities in the northern Mediterranean and in Western Europe. The problem, therefore, is to explain why was cremation adopted by the population living north of the Danube River. The change from cremation to inhumation took place in the ninth and tenth centuries, with both types of burial coexisting in some cemeteries. Then during the tenth and eleventh centuries, cremation or mixed cemeteries disappeared and only inhumation was practised. It is the task of future studies to refine this chronology and to explain the specific changes in burial style in comparison with similar developments in neighbouring

\textsuperscript{464} Ivănescu, Istoria, p. 384.


areas. The data so far available strongly suggests that such developments took place at the same time within a very large area of eastern and south-eastern Europe, after the last major successes of the Byzantine missions in those regions.

Although inhumation was generally adopted by all European and near-eastern Christian communities after the Church was granted freedom in the early fourth century, it is not altogether impossible that, in remote and isolated regions, Christianity incorporated a number of pre-Christian practices. In the Carpathian-Danube area, there are many cases of cremations, which could have belonged to a Christian population. Such is the cross-shaped grave pit found in the cemetery I in Bratei (Sibiu county), dated to the fourth or fifth centuries; the urn cremation with glass phylacterion placed in a little silver box, found in Sărata Monteoru (Buzău county) (Romania); the urn cremation with an urn with a cross-shaped potter mark on the bottom from the seventh- to eighth-century cemetery II in Bratei. Even more compelling is the case of a cremation urn found in Preslav, which contained a Byzantine reliquary cross. The burial was part of a small mixed cemetery on the northwestern side of the palace of the tenth-century rulers of Bulgaria. The cemetery included four inhumations and two cremations dated to the second half of the eleventh century. There can be no doubt that all those grave were of Christians.

Isolated cremations are known from practiced in Merovingian Gaul, but it is not altogether clear if cremation was practised there by the few remaining pagans or, occasionally by (newly converted) Christians. A prohibition against the cremation of the dead was imposed on the Saxons by Charlemagne at the Paderborn council in 785, an indication

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469 Zaharia, Populația (see above, n. 373), pp. 32, 98–99 and figs. 14/2a = 26/7.


that even after the forceful conversion to Christianity, cremation was still practised. The archaeological evidence also shows that cremation persisted for many decades after the conversion of the Rus’ to Christianity under Prince Vladimir (St Vladimir). Neither the Saxon, nor the Rus’ case can be relevant to the discussion of cremation in the Carpathian-Dniester region, because in both cases cremation may be interpreted as a lingering tradition of pre-Christian times.

The political troubles in the region brought a considerable delay to the organization of church structures among Romanians in the lands north of the Danube River. This explains why the Romanian clergy was for a long while under the jurisdiction of either Bulgarian or Galician bishops and metropolitans. Indeed, in Moldavia, Byzantine encolpia (Fig. 21/1) coexisted with specimens produced in Rus’ (Figs. 9/12; 21/2) between the eleventh and the thirteenth century. During the rule of the Asen dynasty over the Second Bulgarian Tsardom, close contacts were maintained with the centers of Orthodox Christianity in the Balkans, where most of the liturgical literature originated. Such contacts also existed with the Kievan and Galician churches, which provided books of Orthodox cult as well. There are signs that the Holy Scripture and various Slavonic and Greek religious writings did not only circulate, but were also transcribed or translated in the Carpathian-Danube region. Such works had a great contribution to enriching the Christian vocabulary and to the development of Christian morality. The oldest and most reliable proof that a church hierarchy existed among Romanians in the region of the Carpathian Bend is the papal letter of 1234 mentioning Romanian “pseudo-bishops”. As for the so-called metropolitan church of Keltzinia, which is said to have had canonical jurisdiction over the region outside the Carpathian Mountains, no evidence exists that that see may be located anywhere in the Romanian lands.

After the foundation of a Bulgarian Church in ca. 870, its head was elevated to the rank of archbishop, subsequently proclaimed patriarch in 918. The authority of the Bulgarian Church extended over the lands

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473 V. V. Sedov, Восточные славяне в VI–XIII вв. (Moscow, 1982), passim.
to the north of the Danube River. Following the Byzantine conquest of Bulgaria, the patriarchate was abolished and an archbishopric created under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople, with suffragan sees in which Greek was used as liturgical language along with Old Church Slavonic. During the second half of the eleventh century, an episcopal see was set up in Axiopolis in the immediate vicinity of the region to the east from the Carpathian Mountains. The success of the Vlach and Bulgarian rebellion leading to the rise of the Second Bulgarian Tsardom naturally led to the restoration of the Bulgarian archbishopric in Târnovo, which became patriarchate in 1235, following its temporary recognition of papal primacy. The influence of the Bulgarian church in the lands north of the Danube Delta collided with that of Kievan Rus’ church, which had been organized in the aftermath of the conversion to Christianity in 988. The expansion to the west of the Kievan church was enhanced by the creation of an episcopal see of Galych in the mid-twelfth century (first mentioned in 1157).

Faced with ideological pressure both from the pagan nomads and from Catholic proselytism, the church in the Carpathian-Dniester region backed the local political forces, thus contributing to the strong connection between ethnic identity and religious affiliation among Romanians.

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478 Let. Voskx, p. 66.
According to some early medieval sources, the nomads had no religion whatsoever. Such claims were of course based on the idea that only the world religions deserved to be regarded as such. Other authors preferred to call the Turkic nomads pagan. In fact, according to such accounts, the nomads worshiped natural elements of both uranic and chthonian nature: the heavenly bodies, the earth, the waters. The most important god was Tängri, the ruler of the cosmic and terrestrial order. His name meant “god” or “sky.” Shamanic practices involving a complex hierarchy of spirits was also widely spread. Such practices were based on the idea that in order to protect the community and its herds, the shaman engages in battle against evil spirits. The shaman was also expected to bring luck to hunters, and to guide the dead and the living persons’ souls. The shaman in fact combined the attributes of a theologian, a magician and a physician. Religious ceremonies involved worshipping holy places and the celestial bodies.

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481 Motahhar ben Tâhir el-Maqdiši (see above, n. 185), I, ed. Cl. Huart (Paris, 1901), p. 57.

482 Al-Bécri (see above, n. 162), p. 15; Orient.Ber., p. 222; Aboulféda (see above, n. 25), II, 1, p. 291. See also Pletneva, Pechenegi, pp. 205–207; B. E. Kumekov,
Psellus’s claim that the Pechenegs believed that “death is the end of any existence” is contradicted both by narrative sources and by the archaeological evidence, which show that Pecheneg burial customs implied a belief in the afterlife.

During the first centuries of the second millennium, the competition Christiany and Islam continued in the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian seas. Much like in the Near East and in the Iberian Peninsula at that same time, Christianity was on the offensive, and that not only because of the political crisis in the Caliphate, but also because of Rus’, Hungarian, and Byzantine missions. If one believes al-Bakri on such matters, then it would seem that all Pechenegs had converted to Islam. In fact, much like other nomads in the east-European steppe lands, the Pechenegs were not very receptive to outside religious influences, a fact confirmed by the continuation of their burial customs well after the rise of the Golden Horde. A stronger influence on the Turkic nomads could be exercised by outside religious systems only when they were hired as a military force of auxiliary troops, when taking refuge in other countries, or for specific political reasons. The thirty people or so, whom Bishop Bruno is said to have converted during five months of preaching the word of God among the Pechenegs bespeaks the indifference of the nomads towards Christianity. On the other hand, it appears that Cumans were much more willing to adopt the form of Christianity expanding from the kingdom of Hungary into the lands outside the Carpathian Mountains. A special bishopric was created for


483 Psellos, II, p. 126.
485 Epistola Brunonis, pp. 223–228.

Turkic religious beliefs included many various cosmological accounts of the creation of the world, the birth and division of tribes, or the directions of expansion. The myths about Oghuz Khan, the hero who gave his name to the Oghuz, were widely known. Oghuz Khan and his army were believed to have been guided in their expeditions by a miraculous wolf.\footnote{R. Nour, Oughouz-namé (Alexandria, 1928), pp. 52–53.} This story appears in the chronicle of Michael the Syrian, but Oghuz Khan is replace with the Seljuq Turks and the wolf with an animal resembling a dog.\footnote{Michel le Syrien, III (see above, n. 58), p. 153.} Both accounts appear to be variation of a widely spread myth about animals of divine origin guiding human groups to their own homelands or heroic exploits. Variations of that myth were known among Huns, Hungarians, Romanians, and Lithuanians.\footnote{M. Eliade, De Zalmoxis à Gengis-Khan (Paris, 1970), pp. 135–138; G. Györfy, “Erfundene Stammesgründer,” in Fälschungen im Mittelalter. Internationaler Kongress der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, München, 16.–19. September 1986, I (= MGH, Schriften, 33, 1) (Hannover, 1988), pp. 443–446.}

Little is known about the religious practices of the Turkic nomads, except what archaeology has revealed in terms of burial customs. The deceased were often buried in pre-existing barrows, sometimes on river promontories. Newly built barrows appear to have been a privilege of the tribal chiefs. Alberic (Aubry) de Trois Fontaines gives a description of the funeral of a Turkic leader, Ionas, a Cuman “king” who had been an ally of the Latin Empire and who died in 1241 in Constan-
tinople. The ceremony included the killing of eight Cuman warriors, who—the chronicler claimed—sacri
cificed themselves voluntarily, as well as the slaughter of 26 horses. A large barrow was then erected on top of the grave.\footnote{Chronica Albrici monachii Trium Fontium, ed. P. Scheffer-Boichorst, in MGH, SS, XXIII, ed. G. H. Pertz (1874), p. 950.} Another description of the funeral of a Cuman chief appears in Joinville’s chronicle. The Cuman leader is said to have been placed on a throne inside a large pit, and his best warrior and his favourite horse being buried alive next to him. The grave pit was then covered with planks, and then a “mountain” of stones and earth was raised on it.\footnote{Joinville, Histoire de Saint Louis, in Historiens (see above, n. 226), p. 312; idem, Vie de Saint Louis, trans. and ed. J. Monfrin (Paris, 1998), pp. 246–247.}

Human and horse sacrifices on the occasion of a leader’s were also known to the Mongols.\footnote{Guiragos (see above, n. 149), p. 250; Marco Polo, Il Milione (see above, n. 190), p. 61. See also D. DeWeese, Islamization and Native Religion on the Golden Horde. Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1994), pp. 262–266; G. Lane, Daily Life in Mongol Empire (Westport, Connecticut, 2006), pp. 185–187.} In fact, the practice is already attested by Herodotus for the Scythians, and his description matches much later accounts pertaining to the medieval nomads.\footnote{Herodotus, II (see above, n. 241), pp. 268–273. See also E. H. Minns, Scythians and Greeks (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 87–91 and 95; F Thordarson, “The Scythian funeral customs. Some notes on Herodotus IV, 71–75,” in Hommages et opera minora, XII, A Green Leaf. Papers in Honour of Professor Jes P. Asmussen (Acta Iranica 28) (Leiden, 1988), pp. 539–547; O. Gundogdyev, “On one peculiarity of funeral ceremony of Scythes and Turks,” Central Asia Cultural Values 1 (2002), pp. 29–31.} William of Rubruck also confirms that barrows were erected on top of Cuman graves. Kumys and meat were ritually deposited in the grave pit, while parts of the horse gear were hung on poles.\footnote{Rubruck, p. 186; Guillaume de Rubrouck, Voyage dans l’Empire mongol (1253–1255), trans. and eds. C. and R. Kappler (Paris, 1985), p. 104; The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck. His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–1255, trans. P. Jackson, eds. P. Jackson and D. Morgan (London, 1990), p. 95.} The custom of severing the head and the legs of a sacrificed horse and depositing them together with the harness in the grave pit was widely spread among nomads of central Asia up to the 1800s.\footnote{Pletneva, Pechenegi, p. 173; O. Belli, “The Turkish tradition of building kurgans in the prehistoric and Middle Ages,” in The Turks, 1, Early Ages (see above, n. 412), pp. 974–986.} The same Franciscan emissary also noted that the belonging of the dead were placed in the grave pit as well, and that huts for the guards were built next to the tombs of the rich. Despite the threat of harsh penalties, tombs were frequently robbed.
The destruction of many burial assemblages was mainly due to grave robbers, either Turkic nomads or their neighbours. The Flemish traveller also knew that on top of the barrow, Cumans placed anthropomorphic stone statues facing east and holding cups in their hands.497

Such accounts remind one of the description of Oghuz burial customs in Ibn Fadlan’s travelogue. When a man died, the survivors dug a pit as large as a house, in which they laid the deceased holding in his hand a wooden cup filled with a drink, as well as his belt, bow and money. The grave pit was then and, “a kind of clay cupola” (that is, a burial mound) was built on top. Following that, the dead man’s horses were killed, the number of horses sacrificed being an indication of his personal wealth. Thus, sometimes as many as 100 or 200 horses were slaughtered at funerals. Ibn Fadlan must have witnessed the funeral of a very wealthy man, for the poor received a very different treatment in death. Those dying in battle were treated as heroes. Wooden statues were erected on their tombs, in keeping with the number of the people they had killed.498 Chinese sources mention a different practice among Turkic populations of central Asia: next to a warrior’s tomb, several statues would be erected, representing the slaughtered enemies,499 probably because under the assumption that the victims would be the warrior’s servants in the other world. This account contradicts Nizami’s report, according to which the Qipchaq knelt before the statues,500 as a sign of respect due to brave ancestors, not to former enemies.

The archaeological evidence confirms in detail the the information from the narrative sources. Stone statues erected as as funerary steles are known for many Turkic populations of the Eurasian steppe lands.501

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497 Rubruck, p. 186.
The study of the Turkic sculptures in Siberia, along with observations of barrows of southern Ukraine, have established that stone statues were actually not placed on tombs, but next to them, occasionally on older barrows, which may have functioned as altars. Recent excavations have revealed four types of such earth and stone altars, which have been classified in accordance with their construction.\textsuperscript{502} Investigations undertaken in the basin of the Lower Don during the last few decades have identified several cases in which anthropomorphic representations placed in altars were carved not in stone, but in wood.\textsuperscript{503} The number of wooden statues may actually have been much greater than what is presently known, but, as they were made of perishable material, they did not survive.

**Burial Assemblages**

The burial assemblages so far discovered, which can be attributed to the Romanian population, consist of a few cemeteries and a number of isolated graves, a clear indication of insufficient research.

As already mentioned, cremation was favored throughout the early Middle Ages, up to the tenth century, when it was gradually replaced by inhumation. The transition from cremation to inhumation is best

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illustrated by the tenth- to eleventh-century, biritual cemetery excavated in Brănești (Orhei county) (Republic of Moldova). Of all 98 graves found there, there were 95 inhumations and only three cremations. The latter produced only small amounts of cremated remains placed in hand- (grave 80) or wheel-made (graves 79 and 81) urns buried at no more than 0.35 meters below the present-day ground surface. Only grave 81 produced grave goods, namely fragments of two glass bracelets and of spindle-whorls.

All inhumations in Brănești had a west-east grave orientation, with slight variations to the north or to the south perhaps depending upon the position of the sun in season of the year in which burial had taken place. The human remains were deposited at 0.15 to 1.10 m below the present-day ground surface, but most graves are no deeper than 0.60 to 0.90 m. In some graves skeletons were found in supine, in others in crouched position on either the left (grave 37) or the right side (grave 17). The vast majority (76) were in supine position with arms either stretched along the body (nine cases), or bent with hands placed on the abdomen (51 cases) or the chest (16 cases). In 17 cases, the graves had been previously destroyed, which prevented any observation of the exact position of the hands. Almost half of the total number of graves (44) had grave goods, which were found more with female (23) than with male burials (7). Grave goods included knives, arrowheads, belt buckles, hooks, flint steels, iron daggers, earrings, bracelets, rings, buttons, silver, bronze and copper pendants, stone spindle whorls and stone beads, multicoloured glass beads, horn or bone knives and rings, clay spindle whorls and pottery. While dress accessories appear mainly in female, knives and pottery were found only in male graves.

Different iron (knives, arrowheads, belt buckles) and glass artifacts (beads), as well as pottery very similar to that in burial assemblages, are known as stray finds from the site.\textsuperscript{504} The use of forensic analysis for identifying the population buried in the cemetery as Slavs must be regarded with extreme suspicion. If racial characteristics are to be given any weight at all in establishing the ethnic affiliation, it must be noted

that very similar anthropological features characterize the populations of many medieval Romanian cemeteries as well. Moreover, such cemeteries produced numerous analogies for the grave goods found in Brănești.

Most barrows with cremation burials found in Alcedar (Șoldănești county) and Rudi (Soroca county) (Republic of Moldova), which have been attributed to an east-Slavic population, coincided in time with the Brănești cemetery, for they have been dated to the ninth and tenth century. The Alcedar and Rudi barrows are the only monuments of their kind so far known from the region between the Răut and the Dniester rivers.

Two other large cemeteries have been excavated and studied in Hansca (Ialoveni county) (Republic of Moldova), on two different sites, at Căprarăia and at Lămbari. The Căprarăia cemetery produced 75 graves, 60 of them with a west-east grave orientation and skeletons in supine position. Only eight graves had crouched skeletons, while another seven had no skeletons at all. The position of the arms also varied, with 23 cases of arms stretched along the body; four of one arm along the body and the other on the pelvis; eight of both hands were placed on the pelvis; six of one hand on the chest and the other on the pelvis; and 14 cases of both hands on the chest. For five more graves, no exact position of the arms could be established. Burials with crouched skeletons had rectangular (6) or oval (2) grave pits. Rectangular pits had a west-east (5) or north-south (1) grave orientation, while oval pits had a west-east (1) or south-north orientation (1). Oval pits dug in a bell-shaped form, with a larger opening at the bottom than at the top, are also typical for burials without any skeletons. Three such burials produced instead fragments of animal bones (pig, small horned cattle), with an entire skeleton of a calf found in a fourth burial. With just one exception, burials with skeletons in supine position were no deeper than 0.90 m from the present-day ground level. Some grave pits with crouched skeletons reached a depth of 1.10 m. Only grave pits with no human remains were dug deeper, between 1.20 and 1.90 m from the ground level.

The anthropological analysis of the human remains shows a high rate of infant mortality; there were 22 children and teenagers buried in

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Căprăria for no more than 51 of adults, a child for every two adults. Men died at an average age of 45.6, females at 35. Only 22 graves, less than a third of all excavated burials, produced grave goods: buttons, appliqués, buckles, earrings, rings, knives, flintstones, pottery (Fig. 10/9–23), all of which have been dated between the tenth and the twelfth century.507

It is interesting to note that most burials with crouched skeletons clustered in the northern part of the Căprăria cemetery, while burials with oval pits and those without any human remains have been found primarily in the north-eastern area. This strongly suggests the existence of a minority, separated in death from the rest of the community, perhaps on ethnic grounds. However, the fact that members of that minority were still buried within one and the same cemetery that the community as a whole used for burying the dead is an indication that, if ethnically or religiously different, the “foreigners” were still regarded as members of the community.

The Limbari cemetery produced 108 burials, of which the vast majority (99) have a west-east grave orientation. Seven burials had a north-south, and only two a south-north orientation. Much like in Căprăria, there is a great variation in the position of arms and hands in graves with skeletons in supine position. In graves with a west-east orientation skeletons were found either with arms stretched along the body, or with hands placed on the abdomen and on the chest. In burials with a north-south or south-north grave orientation, skeletons had arms stretched along the body. Sometimes (grave 24), one arm was stretched along the body, while the hand of the other was placed on the abdomen; there are also cases in which one hand was on the chest, the other on the abdomen. Burials with a west-east orientation were dug no deeper than 1.20 m below the present-day ground level, while those with a north-south or south-north orientation were found at a depth of no more than 0.85 m. In four graves, placed at opposite points on the fringes of the cemetery, complete or fragmentary skeletons of domestic animals—one sheep, one pig, and two horses—were found. Graves with a north-south or south-north orientation were interspersed among those with a west-east orientation, without any visible segregation. The anthropological analysis has revealed Mongoloid features for several skeletons in graves with a north-south orientation. Moreover,

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some of the skulls found in such graves show clear signs of trepanation. Of all 108 burials in the Limbari cemetery, only 26 produced grave goods. Most graves with a north-south orientation (5 out of 7) had grave goods (an axe, three knives, one flint-steel, two stirrups, two iron links, four buckles—all of iron—and several perforated animal vertebrae), but no goods have been found in graves with a south-north orientation. In graves with a west-east orientation, the most common goods found were wheel-made pots, spindle whorls, copper earrings, bronze spherical buttons, iron knives, copper-alloy and iron buckles, and silver appliqués.

The study of the few artifacts found in Limbari indicates that the cemetery must have operated between the eleventh and the thirteenth century. However, burials with a north-south grave orientation appear to be later than the other burials, perhaps indicating a second phase of occupation on the site. At any rate, the differences in ritual and grave goods noted for the two cemeteries excavated in Hansca point to groups of foreigners living side by side with the native population.

Besides large cemeteries, small groups of several graves have been found in Calfa (Anenii Noi county) (6 graves), Lucâșeuyca (Orhei county) (3 graves), Molești (Ialoveni county) (8 graves), all in the Republic of Moldova, as well as in Arsura (Vaslui county) (11 graves), Pâhnești (Vaslui county) (3 graves) and Tomești (Iași county) in Romania. Graves with different orientation are known from Calfa and Lucâșeuyca, a detail which may signal either the presence of “foreigners” within those respective communities, or the lack of standardized inhumation practices in the aftermath of the abandonment of cremation. In Arsura and Pâhnești, only graves with a west-east orientation

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508 Idem, Лимбарь—средневековый могильник XII-XIV веков в Молдавии (Kishinev, 1970); Chebotarenko, Население (see above, n. 100), pp. 18–22.
509 Chebotarenko, Калфа (see above, n. 87), pp. 73–75.
513 Spinei, “Considerații” (see above, n. 110), p. 175.
514 Information Dr. Dorin Mihai.
have been found, which may be regarded as Christian burials. Burials in Arsura produced earrings, rings and buttons (Fig. 10/1–8), that in Tomeşti buttons. Some features of the medieval burial customs may have survived until recent times, as revealed by ethnographic studies.\footnote{515}

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Burial assemblages are almost the only archaeological remains pertaining to the presence of the nomads in the region to the east from the Carpathian Mountains. Some 2,000 burials are so far known for the entire steppe corridor between the Prut and the Volga rivers.\footnote{516} The archaeological study of Turkic burial customs plays a key role in the understanding of Turkic beliefs and spiritual life. On the other hand, burial assemblages provide key information about demography, fashions, and occupations.

Most of Turkic burial assemblages in the Carpathian-Dniester area were found in isolation, often no more than four or five graves dug into one and the same barrow. In some cases, those graves may not even be of the same date.

Up to now graves have been discovered in the following localities: Alexandrovca (8 graves) (Floreşti county) (MR = Republic of Moldova), Alexeevca-Svetlâi (8–?) (UTAG = the Gagauz Autonomous Territorial Unit) (MR), Balabanu (16) (Taraclia county) (MR), Banca (2) (Vaslui county) (R = Romania), Baştanovca (2) (Tatarbunar district) (O-U = Odessa region, Ukraine), Bădragii Vechi (9) (Edineț county) (MR), Bălăbânești (4–?) (Criuleni county) (MR), Belolesie (Tatarbunar district) (O-U), Bereşti (2) (Galați county) (R), Bârlad—“Dealu Țuguietă,” Bârlad—“Moara lui Chicoș,” Bârlad—“Parc” (Vaslui county) (R), Bolgrad (3)


\footnote{516} S. A. Pletneva, “Кочевники восточноевропейских степей в X–XIII вв.,” in Степи Евразии (see above, n. 501), p. 217. See also A. Atavine, “Les Pétchénègues et les Torks des steppes russes d’après les données de l’archéologie funéraire,” in De l’Âge du fer au haute Moyen Âge. Archéologie funéraire, princes et élites guerrières, eds. X. Delestre, M. Kazanski, P. Pépin (= Mémoires publiés par l’Association française d’Archéologie mérovingienne 15) (sine loco, 2006), p. 352 (where only 1100 “nomad” burials of nine-thirteenth centuries were recorded in European Russia).
(Bolgrad district) (O-U), Borisăuca (= Borisovka) Tatarbunar district (O-U), Braniște (?) (Rășcani county) (MR), Brăvicieni (17–?) (Orhei county) (MR), Budachi (= Primorskoe) (Bilhorod-Dnistrov's'kyi district) (O-U), Burlănești (3–?) (Edineț county) (MR), Calanciac (Ismail district) (O-U), Camenca (2) (Ismail district) (O-U), Camenca-“Ocnita” (8–?) (Ismail district) (O-U), Cazaclia (22) (UTAG) (MR), Căplani (Ștefan-Vodă county) (MR), Căușeni (9) (Căușeni county) (MR), Chircași (13) (Căușeni county) (MR), Chirileni (5) (Ungheni county) (MR), Chișlica (Ismail district) (O-U), Ciocaleni (4) (Căușeni county) (MR), Cocicovatoe (Tatarbunar district) (O-U), Codru Nou (2) (Telenesti county) (MR), Copanca (Căușeni county) (MR), Corpceac (2) (UTAG) (RM), Corjeu (2–?) (Briceni county) (MR), Corjova (2) (Căușeni county) (MR), Corpaci (3) (Edineț county) (MR), Costești (5) (Rășcani county) (MR), Cotujeni (3–?) (Șoldănești county) (MR), Cuconești Vechi (Edineț county) (MR), Divizia (5) (Tatarbunar district) (O-U), Doina (Cahul county) (MR), Dubăsarii Vechi (Căușeni county) (MR), Etiulia (4) (UTAG) (MR), Fălești (Fălești county) (MR), Feștelita (6–?) (Ștefan-Vodă county) (MR), Fridensfeld (= Mirnopole) (3–?) (Sărata district) (O-U), Frumușica (Florești county) (MR), Galați-“Seromgai” (2–?) (Galați county) (R), Găvânoasa (9–?) (Cahul county) (MR), Gorodnoe (Grădeneșca) (6) (Reni district) (O-U), Grădești (7–?) (Reni district) (O-U), Grădiște (Cimișlia county) (MR), Grivița (4) (Galați county) (R), Grivița (Vaslui county) (R), Grozești (Iași county) (R), Gura Băcului (11) (Anenii Noi county) (MR), Hagimus (7) (Căușeni county) (MR), Hajilar (10) (Ștefan-Vodă county) (MR), Hâncăulu (2) (Edineț county) (MR), Holboca (2) (Iași county) (R), Holmskoe (Arciz district) (O-U), Iablona (3) (Glodeni county) (MR), Ivanovca (3) (Florești county) (MR), Joltăi (Tatarbunar district) (O-U), Kalcheva (Kal’chevo) (4) (Bolgrad district) (O-U), Liești (Galați county) (R), Liman (7–?) (Tatarbunar district) (O-U), Limanskoee-“Fricătei” (4) (Reni district) (O-U), Manta (3) (Cahul county) (MR), Matca (Galați county) (R), Mârculești (Florești county) (MR), Medveja (Briceni county) (MR), Mereni (2–?) (Anenii Noi county) (MR), Măndrești (Telenesti county) (MR), Moscu (Galați county) (R), Nagornoe (Reni district) (O-U), Novokamenka (2) (Ismail district) (O-U), Ogorodnoe (3) (Bolgrad district) (O-U), Olănești (2) (Ștefan-Vodă county) (MR), Opac (4) (Căușeni county) (MR), Orlovca (2–?) (Reni district) (O-U), Palanca (8) (Drochia county) (MR), Pavlovca (4) (Arciz district) (O-U), Petrești (6) (Ungheni county) (MR), Pârtești de Jos (?) (Suceava
chapter three

county) (R), Plavni (9) (Reni district) (O-U), Pogonești (Vaslui county) (R), Pomeznani (2–?) (Chilia district) (O-U), Popeasca (2–?) (Ştefan-Vodă county) (MR), Primorskoe (Chilia district) (O-U), Proboța (Iași county) (R), Purcarii (5) (Ştefan-Vodă county) (MR), Răscăienii Noi (3–?) (Ştefan-Vodă county) (MR), Roma (4) (Botoșani county) (R), Roșcani (3) (Anenii Noi county) (MR), Rumeațev (7–?) (Cahul county) (MR), Sătii (3) (Căușeni county) (MR), Sărata (10–?) (Sărata district) (O-U), Sărăteni (2–?) (Hâncești county) (MR), Selîste (3) (Orhei county) (MR), Sevirova (4) (Florești county) (MR), Slobozia (2–?) (Ştefan-Vodă county) (MR), Specia (2–?) (Anenii Noi county) (MR), Ştefan-Vodă (3–?) (Ştefan-Vodă county) (MR), Strumoc (3) (Tatarbunar district) (O-U), Suvorovo (Ismail district) (O-U), Svetlâi (8–?) (UTAG) (MR), Şabalat (= Sadovoe) (Bilhorod-Dnistrovs'kyi district) (O-U), Shevchenkovo (Pomazani) (Chilia district) (O-U), Talmaza (7–?) (Ştefan-Vodă county) (MR), Taracia (30) (Taraclia county) (RM), Tețcani (2) (Briceni county) (MR), Tochile-Răducani (2–?) (Leova county) (MR), Todirenii (2) (Botoșani county) (R), Tomai (2) (UTAG) (MR), Trapovca (4) (Tatarbunar district) (O-U), Tudora (Ştefan-Vodă county) (MR), Tuzla (Tatarbunar district) (O-U), Umbrârești (Galați county) (R), Ursoaia (8) (Căușeni county) (MR), Vadul lui Isac (3) (Cahul county) (MR), Vasilevca (3) (Bolgrad district) (O-U), Vinogradovca-“Curci” (2) (Bolgrad district) (O-U), Vișnevoe (2) (Tatarbunar district) (O-U), Zărnești (3) (Cahul county) (MR) and Zânelor, Stația- (3) (Chilia district) (O-U). Up to 30 nomadic graves are known to have been found in the Tatarbunar district (O-U) alone, but nothin is known about the exact location of the finds.

Besides isolated graves, several barrows and mixed cemeteries in south-eastern Moldavia have been attributed to the Turkic populations: Cocicivatoe / Kochikovatoe (Vișnevoe) (44 graves) (Tatarbunar district) (O-U), Draculea (Mirnoe) (149) (Chilia district) (O-U), Hansca (9) (Ialoveni county) (MR), Mirnoe (40) (Chilia district) (O-U), Neruşai (11) (Tatarbunar district) (O-U) and Novoselița (8) (Tatarbunar district) (O-U).\(^{517}\)

isolated graves. It appears that at least some cemeteries include burial assemblages of different dates and, possibly, ethnic background. In certain cases, it is impossible to distinguish between Turkic and Bugeac Tatar burial assemblages.

The analysis of tenth- to fourteenth-century burial assemblages attributed to Turkic nomads allows for some general conclusions. Thus far 478 isolated graves have been identified in the Carpathian-Dniester area; they are scattered in 124 different localities (Fig. 4). The ethnic attributions proposed for more than half of them are acceptable, although there is no possibility of cross-examination. Most graves have been discovered by systematic excavations, and about 20 of them accidentally, without specialist supervision. Another 16 graves have been found prior to World War I, at a time when the methodology of archaeological investigation was not fully developed. The recorded data from those assemblages, as well as others is incomplete and often defective; the grave goods themselves, when not destroyed or lost, have hardly been published completely. In conclusion, despite a relative large number of burial assemblages from the region to the east from the Carpathian Mountains, their study is not without problems. The situation is even worse in the case of cemeteries, which makes it impossible to use the information so far available before the proper publication of what has already been excavated.

Most isolated burials in Moldavia are in barrows, with just ten known so far without burial mounds (less than 2 percent). The situation is somewhat different in the Romanian Plain, where a higher number of burials without mounds are known. Very few of the barrows in the region outside the Carpathian Mountains have actually been built by the medieval nomads (Balabanu, Ivanovca). The Turkic populations commonly used the prehistoric barrows built by bearers of the Usatovo, Yamnaia, Pit-Grave, and Sruby cultures, and by Scythians or Sarmatians. The great number of prehistoric barrows scattered in the Bugeac and along the main rivers saved the Pechenegs, Uzes and Cumans the effort to build burial mounds of their own.

Barrows in the Carpathian-Dniester region are often mentioned in medieval sources, in the works of the Moldavian chroniclers and in the accounts of foreign travellers to or through Moldavia. In 1636 a

above, n. 459), passim; Garustovich, Ivanov, Ogyzy (see above, n. 459), pp. 199–209; Postică, Civilizaţia (see above, n. 110), pp. 140–144 and 448–460.
Polish messenger noticed that, in Moldavia, “on the hills one can see lots of mounds, which are the signs of wars waged by many peoples.”

Noting the great number of burial mounds in the steppes between the Don and the Danube, a region across which he traveled in 1837, Anatole de Demidoff insisted upon the need to record them all. Unfortunately, his appeal remained unanswered so far, for both the Romanian Plain and the steppe lands in present-day Ukraine, despite the continued scholarly interest in, and occasional recording of barrows at a microregional level. Such efforts have been made for southern Bessarabia, the Tutova Hills, a portion of the Bârlad valley, as well as for the entire Vaslui and Galați counties. Along the Bârlad, between Vaslui and Ghidigeni (about 60 km), no less than 133 mounds have been discovered. The survey of the Galați county produced 430 mounds. Systematic excavations took place for only a few of those barrows. During World War and the last years of Russian occupation in Bessarabia, no less than 1,079 tumuli have been recorded. Their distribution is as follows: 96 in the former region (uezd) of Hotin, 119 in Soroca, 242 in Bălți, 56 in Orhei, 36 in Chișinău, 138 in Bender, 257 in Akkerman and 136 in Ismail. On the territory of the present-day Republic of Moldova, some 5,000 mounds have been so far recorded, many of them clustered in the steppe region.

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518 Călători, V, p. 116 (Solia lui Krasinski).
523 Coman, Statormicie, p. 391 and passim.
524 M. Brudiu, Lamea de sub tumulii din sudul Moldovei. De la indo-europeni la turancii târzii (Bucharest, 2003).
526 Brudiu, Lamea de sub tumulii din sudul Moldovei, pp. 11 and 93–137.
It is no accident that the largest concentration of barrows appears in the lowlands with only a few mounds known from the hilly, densely forested region. From the Greek geographer Daniel Philippide\textsuperscript{529} and the Romanian archaeologist Grigore Tocilescu,\textsuperscript{530} many scholars have addressed the question of why were burial mounds built in the first place. However, only recently have archaeological excavations (already recommended in 1853 by a French traveller)\textsuperscript{531} clarified the function, chronology and origin of the burial mounds in the steppe. Besides barrows of Dacian or medieval origin, the vast majority of the burial mounds turned out to be phenomena associated with nomadic populations from the Eurasian steppes, from the Neolithic to the end of the Migration period. Unlike single-grave barrows built before and during the Great Migration, medieval mounds erected on top of graves of warriors were in fact collective burials or had only a commemorative purpose.\textsuperscript{532}

Most grave attributed to Turkic populations are between 0.5 and 2.5 m deep. Sometimes the walls of the grave pit were completely covered in wooden planks, as if it were a burial chamber, but most of times, the grave was simply covered with wooden planks. The Turkic nomads in Lower Danube region did not practise cremation and all known graves attributed to them are in fact inhumations (Figs. 23; 26/19; 27/1; 35/1, 2, 7; 39/1; 40/1–3, 10; 41/1–3, 9, 10; 42/1–4, 12; 43; 44/1, 2, 11; 45/1, 2; 46/1, 13, 17, 21; 49/17–20). This is in direct contradiction to Abu'l-Fida’s claim that the Pechenegs cremated their dead.\textsuperscript{533} Cremation is mentioned in relation to central Asian Turkic populations by various


\textsuperscript{530} Gr. Tocilescu, Dacia înainte de romani (Bucharest, 1880), pp. 140–145.

\textsuperscript{531} Boucher de Perthes, Voyage à Constantinople, trans. I. Conea, AD 4 (1923), no. 2, pp. 188–189.


\textsuperscript{533} Abu'l-Fida (see above, n. 25), II, p. 292.
other authors. Cremations appear in medieval China as well, and were particularly favoured in the world of the steppes.

Even if the vast majority of the human remains has so far not been properly analyzed, it appears that most of them are of adult individuals. That only few graves of children are known raises the question of who exactly was entitled to a burial under a mound. About three quarters of all known graves have a west-east orientation (with slight variations to the north or to the south), the remaining graves being divided between east-west (with slight variations to the north or to the south) or north-south (with variations to the west or to the east) grave orientations. Very few graves have a south-north orientation. The deceased were buried in supine position, with arms stretched along the body, sometimes slightly folded, with hands on the pelvis. Only one case is known (Zârnești) of a burial face down. Equally rare are double burials (Grădiște, Hagimus, and Seliște—Fig. 23/3). That a female and a male have been buried together—in the grave at Grădiște—is in itself no evidence of human sacrifice, but perhaps of a concomitant death of a couple.

In about fifty percent of isolated graves attributed to the Turkic populations the human skeleton was accompanied by the severed body parts of a horse: the skull and the lower extremities of all four legs (Figs. 23/1, 4; 41/1, 10; 42/12; 44/2; 46/13; 49/17, 19, 20). There seems to be no doubt that the body parts operated as pars pro toto, the meat of the sacrificed animal being most likely consumed by participants at the funeral. Only a few graves contained complete horse skeletons (Fig. 23/2). The Arab traveller Ibn Fadlan noted that the Oghuz tribes along the Volga River, after slaughtering horses, ate their meat, and hung on poles the head, the hooves, the skin, and the tail.

Most common among grave goods found in assemblages attributed to the Turkic nomads are dress accessories (earrings, lock-rings, buckles, bronze bell pendants, fragments of clothes, glass beads, appliqués,  

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537 Ibn Fadlan (see above, n. 162), p. 27.
bracelets and bladed pendants) and artifacts deposited ritually in the grave pit (weapons, horse gear, coins, arrowheads, knives and daggers, bone and antler bow reinforcement plates, sabres, remains of bags, spearheads, coat of mail fragments, bridle bits, stirrups, flint steels with or without flint stones, scissors, copper-alloy kettles, pottery, wooden bucket metal hoops) (Figs. 22–42, 44–56).

The image of the nomad Turkic populations at the Lower Danube becomes more detailed if burial assemblages attributed to them from the Romanian Plain (Wallachia) and from Dobrudja are also taken into consideration. Such assemblages have so far been found in Wallachia in Adâncata\(^{538}\) (Ialomița county), Bucharest—“Lacul Tei” (“Tei Lake”) \(^{539}\) (Bucharest municipality), Buzău \(^{540}\) (Buzău county), Cireșanu \(^{541}\) (Prahova county), Ciulnița (2 graves) \(^{542}\) (Ialomița county), Curcani \(^{543}\) (Câlărași county), Dridu—“Snagov” \(^{544}\) (Ialomița county), Șerbaniei \(^{545}\) (Brăila county), Jilava \(^{546}\) (Ialom ța county), Lișcoteanca (3 graves) \(^{547}\) (Brăila county).

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\(^{547}\) N. Harțuște, F. Anastasie, “Morminte de călăreți nomazi descoperite în județul Brăila,” Istor, Brăila, 1 (1980), pp. 266–274; N. Harțuște, “Raport asupra săpăturilor
county), Movilița\textsuperscript{548} (Ialomița county), Oltenița (2 graves)\textsuperscript{549} (Călărași county), Poiana\textsuperscript{550} (?) (Gorj county), Râmnicelu\textsuperscript{551} (Brăila county), Știubei\textsuperscript{552} (Buzău county), Tangâru\textsuperscript{553} (now in Stoenesti) (Giurgiu county), Ulmeni (2 graves)\textsuperscript{554} (Buzău county), Vitănești (2 graves)\textsuperscript{555} (Teleorman county), and Ziduri\textsuperscript{556} (Buzău county) in Wallachia. From Dobrudja, burial assemblages attributed to the Turkic nomads have been found in Dinogetia-Garvan\textsuperscript{557} (Tulcea county) and Histria\textsuperscript{558} (= Istria) (Constanța county). There are 25 graves so far known (four of them with uncertain provenance: Bucharest, Buzău, Șiriași and Poiana) from 19 different sites in Romanian Plain. This makes a total number of 503 graves from 143 sites in the region outside the Carpathian Mountains. To these, one can add several others discovered south of the Danube, in Dobrudja (Fig. 4).

With many of those graves still unpublished and others incompletely published, it is difficult to draw clear-cut chronological and ethnic distinctions within the entire corpus. To be sure, the date and ethnic attribution for a considerable number of finds attributed to the medieval nomads of the southern regions of eastern Europe remains controversial.

No solution will be found without a serious attempt to re-consider all the


\textsuperscript{550} Ionită, “Morminte de călăreți,” p. 474.

\textsuperscript{551} Harțuche, Anastasiu, “Morminte de călăreți nomazi,” pp. 263–266.


\textsuperscript{554} Constantinescu, “Mormînte de călăreți nomazi,” pp. 165–177; idem, \textit{Memoria pământului} (see above, n. 461), pp. 234, 236.


\textsuperscript{556} Constantinescu, “Mormînte de călăreți nomazi,” p. 168.


archaeological evidence known so far, which pertains to the Pechenegs, the Uzes, the Cumans, the Berendei, and the Brodniks.

The ethnic attribution of the burial assemblages from the Carpathian-Dniester area depends upon the possibility to date accurately both the ritual practices and the burial assemblage. On the basis of certain artifact categories, the dating of which will need to be re-evaluated at a more advance stage of research, it is possible to draw some distinctions between isolated graves so far known from the area. The earliest appears to be the Grozesti assemblage, with its stirrups and bridle bits\textsuperscript{559} (Fig. 30/7, 10) most typical for the 900s, which could then justifiy its interpretation as Pecheneg burial. The same is true for Bucharest—"Lacul Tci." The assemblages from Berești\textsuperscript{560} (Fig. 28/10), Palanca\textsuperscript{561} (Fig. 51/7) and Todireni\textsuperscript{562} (Fig. 28/11, 13) produced bladed pendants, which are common in the tenth and eleventh century, an indication that those burials may be either Pecheneg or Uzes.\textsuperscript{563} Such pendants were also discovered in a Turkic grave in Histria,\textsuperscript{564} in eleventh- to twelfth-century layers in Dinogetia-Garvă,\textsuperscript{565} Păcuiul lui Soare\textsuperscript{566} and Nufărul,\textsuperscript{567} as well as in settlements of Dridu culture excavated in Bucharest-Străulești\textsuperscript{568}.


\textsuperscript{562} V. Spinei, “Découvertes de l’étape tardive des migrations à Todireni (dép. de Botoșani),” Dacia, NS, 17 (1973), pp. 278–281 with figs. 1/3, 4; 2/3, 4; idem, “Antichitățile nomazilor turanici din Moldova,” pp. 400 and 402 with fig. 9/2, 4.


\textsuperscript{564} Suceveanu, “Un mormînt,” pp. 497–498 and fig. 3/1, 2.


and Brăhășești (Galați county). Similar bladed pendants were also found in north-eastern Bulgaria, at Silistra, Pliska, Dolishte, Varna, Skala, and Vălări. A larger group of horseman graves (Bârlad—“Dealul Țuguieta” and “Moara lui Chicoș”, Cârnățeni, Copanca, Fridensfeld, Grădiște, Grivița, Matca, Opaci, Pavlovca, Plavni, Sarata, Tuzla, Umbrărești and Stația Zănelor, as well as Curcani, Dridu—“Snagov,” Jilava, Lișcoteanca, Râmnicelu, Tangără and Vitănești) are characterized by bridle bits with rigid mouth-pieces (Figs. 32/9; 33/12; 36/12; 50/21; 54/15; 55/4; 56/7). Some have wrongly attributed to those bridle bits the value of ethnic badges and as a consequence interpreted the graves in question as either Pecheneg or Cuman. Because most snaffle-bits with rigid mouth-pieces are dated before the late eleventh century (only rarely can such bits be found in twelfth-century assemblages), there is of course a greater likelihood that the graves in question are indeed Pecheneg, although no certainty exists in this respect. The fact that most assemblages with rigid-bar snaffles were associated with skeletons with a west-east orientation accompanied by horse body parts does not contradict the idea of Pecheneg burials, for such elements of ritual seem to be specific to the Pechenegs. Finally, lyre-shaped buckles dated between the tenth and the thirteenth century, such as discovered in Ogorodnoe, Opaci, Pavlovca and Taraclia (Figs. 33/1; 44/6; 44/6; 45/7; 46/15; 50/18), confirm an early dating for the rigid-bar snaffles and, by implication, the assemblages in which they have been found.

Since graves with a east-west orientation do not appear west of the Dnieper at the time of the Pecheneg migration (such graves are known

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569 Spinei, “Découvertes,” p. 283 with figs. 1/2 and 2/2.
571 V. Iotov, “Листовидни ажури амулети от XI в.,” in Плиска-Преслав, 8 (Shumen, 2000), p. 242 and figs. 2/6, 11, 12; 3/4, 6, 11, 12; idem, “О материальной культуре” (see above, n. 563), p. 210 and figs. 1/2, 12, 13, 16; Spinei, Great Migrations, I, pp. 200, 207; fig. 42/4.
574 Fedorov-Davydov, Kochevniki, pp. 18–19, 105, and 115; Diaconu, Coumans, pp. 14–21.
in the steppe lands north of the Black Sea only after the arrival of the Cumans),\textsuperscript{575} such graves found in Căușeni, Cârnățeni, Copanca, Corjova, Hâncăuți, Holboca, Roma, Săiți, Sărata, Tudora and Ursoaia may be interpreted as Cuman. This may also be true for Todireni, where two whole horse skeletons have been discovered. The burial of entire horses together with the human remains is viewed by some as a typically Cuman custom.\textsuperscript{576} But no possibility exists to establish whether the horse skeletons found in Fridensfeld, Moscu and Sărata were complete. In my opinion, Moscu is a Cuman or at least Cuman-age burial. Among the grave goods from that assemblage is a helmet most typical for twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Suworovo, an assemblage which produced late twelfth-century Byzantine coins (Fig. 38/1, 2, 5–8) must also be interpreted as a Cuman burial. However, given the frequent mentions of Brodniks in the region to the east from the Carpathian Mountains, many late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century assemblages may also be attributed to them. There is currently no way to distinguish between Cuman and Brodnik burials.

Many written sources mention the presence of Cuman enclaves within the Mongol Empire, and that is confirmed by archaeology. A large number of nomadic Turkic burials cluster on the left bank of the Dniester, in the region of Tiraspol, and they are all dated after ca. 1250. Their dating is based on no less than 33 Mongol coins (12 complete and 21 fragments) struck for the khans Tölä Buga (1287–1291), Toqtai (1291–1312) and Özbäg (1312–1342).\textsuperscript{577} To the same period, after the Mongol invasion, have been dated a number of isolated graves discovered in Frumușica,\textsuperscript{578} Fridensfeld, Şabalat,\textsuperscript{579} Camenca, Chislița, Ciauş, Cocicovatoe, Corjova, Grădești, Holmskoe, Iablona,

\textsuperscript{575} Pletneva, Pechenegi, p. 173; eadem, Древности черных клобуков, pp. 20–23; Fedorov-Davydov, Kochevniki, pp. 143–147.

\textsuperscript{576} Pletneva, Pechenegi, p. 173; eadem, Древности черных клобуков, p. 22; Fedorov-Davydov, Kochevniki, pp. 142 and 145.


\textsuperscript{579} Fedorov-Davydov, Kochevniki, p. 263.
Limanskoe—“Fricăței,” Novokamenka, Plavni, Răscăiești Noi, Sărata, Trapovca and Tudora, as well as of the cemeteries excavated in Draculea (Mirnoe), Hansca and Nerușâi.\textsuperscript{580}

The burial assemblages in Novokamenka and Trapovca have analogies among assemblages attributed to the Black Caps on the River Ros',\textsuperscript{581} which suggests a movement of those tribes to the regions of the Danube and the mouth of the Dniester, perhaps as a result of the changes imposed by the Mongols in Desht-i Qipchaq. Fridensfeld and Plavni (where, among other things, single-bar bridle bits were found) are however not of the same date. Equally uncertain is the dating of the Cocicovatoe and Limanskoe—“Fricăței” assemblages, both of which contain elements otherwise typical for Pecheneg burials. Of a certain Mongol age are however the Pârtești de Jos assemblage with a Nogai coin, and possibly three burials found in Seliște, with oval stirrups, a round mirror, and small mounts inscribed with Arabic (Figs. 23/3, 5, 6; 37).

When plotting on a map the burial assemblages found in the region outside the Carpathian Mountains, a number of features become readily visible. First, such assemblages appear in the lowlands and along major rivers (Fig. 4). More than 75 percent of all known assemblages cluster in the Bugeac and the steppe lands on both sides of the Lower Dniester. Relatively large numbers of burials are also found in the Middle Prut, as well as the Middle and Lower Bârlad region, with more isolated graves along the Răut, Chineja, and Cogâlnic rivers. It appears therefore that most burials of Turkic nomads cluster in southern Moldavia.

Second, those burials are always next to sources of water, either rivers or lakes. Copanca, Corjova, Dubăsarii Vechi, Gura Bâcului, Olănești, Purcați, Răscăiești Noi, Speia and Tudora are all on the Dniester. Șabalat (= Sadovoe) on the Dniester liman; Căușeni, Chircăești, Cârnățeni, Opaci and Ursoaia are on the Botna; Roșcani on the Bâc; Brâviceni, Ciocâltani, Mârculești and Seliște on the Răut; Alexandrovca, Frumușica, Ivanovca and Sevirova on the Căină; Mândrești


on the Ciulucul Mijlociu, a tributary of the Răut; Belolesie, Fridensfeld (= Mirnopole), Săiți and Sărata are on the Sărata; Grădiște and Pavlovca on the Cogălnic; Baștanovca and Strumoc on the Nerușai; Novokamenka and Ogorodnoe on the Caltabugul Mare; Taracia on the Lunga; Tomai on the Lunguța, a tributary of the Lunga; Balabanu on the Ialpug; Alexeeva-Svetlăi on the Ialpugei; Kalcheva and Vasilevca on the Tașbunar creek; Etiulia on the Cahul, next to the point where it empties into Lake Cahul; Găvânoasa is also on the Cahul; Budachi (= Primorskoe) is on the shore of Lake Budachi, Tuzla on the shore of Lake Burnas; Borisăuca, Primorskoe and Trapovca are on the shores of the Sasicu Mare Lake; Chislița and Suvorovo are next to the Catlabug Lake; Stația Zânelor next to the Chitai Lake; Bolgrad, Cazaclia, Ciauș, Plavni and Vinogradovca—“Curci” are all on the shores of Lake Ialpug; Manta by Lake Manta; Limanskoie—“Fricăței” and Nagornoe are next to Lake Cahul; Bădragii Vechi, Braniște, Corpaci, Costești, Cuconești Vechi, Hâncăuții, Proboța, Vadul lui Isac, and Zârnești are on the Prut; Corjeuți on the Lopatnic, a tributary of the Prut; Grozești and Todireni are on the Jïja; Holboca on the Bahlui; Băneasa, Berești and Moscu on the Chineja; Banca, Bârlad—“Moara lui Chioș” and “Parc,” Grivița-Vaslui, Liești and Umbrărești on the Bârlad; Pogonești on the Tutova, next to its confluence with the Bârlad; and Pârteștii de Jos on the Soloneț, a tributary of the Suceava River.

All burials of Turkic nomads in the Romanian Plain are also located in close proximity to bodies of water: Buzău and Râmnicelu on the Buzău river, Lișcoteanca on the Câlmățui river, Dridu—“Snagov” on the Ialomița, Movilița between the springs of the Comana creek (a tributary of the Ialomița river) and the Colceag river (a tributary of the Mostița river), Curcani and Oltenița on the Argeș river, Bucharest on the shore of Lake Tei and next to the Coļentina river, Jila on the Sabar, Știubci on the Râmnicu Sărat river, Tangâru on the Câinește river, Ulmeni on the Sărata creek (a tributary of the Prahova river), and Vitânești on the Glavacioc.

The distribution of burial assemblages suggests that the main centres of the nomads were the in the Bugeac steppe and along the Lower Dniester river. From there the nomads moved close to the Danube and lakes to the north of the Black Sea to spend the winter. In summer, when the vegetation of the Bugeac was parched by the sun, they would move north with their herds, along the Dniester, the Prut and the Bârlad rivers, as well as along some of their tributaries. The Prut and the
Dniester connected the Bugeac to the Romanian Plain, on one hand, and to the Bălți Highlands and the plain of the Middle Prut, on the other hand. The eccentric position of the Pârteștii de Jos barrow (the only such barrow located to the west from the river Siret) raises further doubts about certain finds traditionally presented as representative for the Turkic nomads. However, Pârteștii de Jos does not change much the general picture made possible by the analysis of burial assemblages attributed to the Turkic nomads and discovered in the Carpathian-Dniester area. True, such assemblages appear in the highlands only along the middle courses of the rivers emptying into the Danube or the Black Sea. However, with the exception of the Pârteștii de Jos barrow, no such assemblages are known from the valley of the Siret river or from the region between the Siret and the Carpathian Mountains. Similarly, in Wallachia burial mounds of the Turkic nomads appear only in the lowlands, with no known assemblage in the sub-Carpathian hills. The conclusion seems to be that the Turkic nomads consistently avoided the densely forested highlands, even when getting very close to them by following the major rivers upstreams. Their favoring the lowlands has of course an economic explanation, given that the steppe lands rich in grass were better suited for the pastoral economy of the Turkic tribes.

The distribution of burial mounds attributed to the Turkic nomads overlaps that of the prehistoric barrows of the Yamnaia, Pit-Grave and Sruby cultures, as well as to that of Sarmatian graves. This is a natural consequence of the very similar mode of life and economic systems in use in all those societies. Bronze-Age and Sarmatian barrows are equally restricted to the southern lowlands and to river valleys crossing the highlands of central and northern Moldavia. Like the Turkic burial mounds, they rarely appear in the region to the west from the Siret and Olt rivers, except of course the finds from the Hungarian Plain.582 Judging by the large cemeteries discovered in the Bălți Highlands and the valley of the Middle Prut, the impact of the Sarmatians onto that region was far greater than that of the Pechenegs, Uzes and Cumans.

Another important feature of the distribution of burial assemblages attributed to the Turkic populations of the Carpathian-Dniester region is the small number of graves per site. This is also true for the Romanian Plain. The Turkic nomads in the region of the Lower Danube do not seem to have been too numerous and they apparently did not remain for too long in any particular place.

Art

The number of artifacts that may be considered works of art, which were produced in Romanian communities of southern Moldavia is limited, which is no measure of their spiritual achievements. The difficulties of daily life under the threat of nomadic attacks and the imposition of tribute payments, the delayed urbanization and state organization, the long interruption of contacts with Byzantium—the main cultural center in the south-eastern Europe—all that was a serious obstacle in the development of artistic life of a superior level. Wilhelm Dilthey once wrote in regards to the Middle Ages: “Man has not yet overcome his historical condition in his personal and historical self-interpretation; he clings to what has been given to him, and the geographic and historical horizon of that given condition limits him” (Der Mensch hat sich noch nicht in persönlicher und geschichtlicher Selbstbesinnung über seine historische Lage erhoben. Er haftet am Gegebenen, und dessen geographischer und historischer Horizont schränkt ihn ein). This remark could certainly apply to the Romanian territory between the tenth and the thirteenth centuries. The rural communities in the lands to the east of the Carpathian Mountains had no means to elevate impressive buildings of public use. Their churches were made of wood and were most likely single-roomed. They were not very different from more recent parish churches made of wood in which the few members of the local community could all fit.

The only glimpse into native aesthetic preoccupations that we can have is through the so-called “minor arts”: dress accessories and ornaments on objects of daily use. The first category includes glass beads, as well as mounts, pendants, earrings, rings, bracelets made of copper, bronze, or silver by pressing, casting, hammering, wire-work, inlaying and overlaying techniques (Figs. 9/1–4, 6; 10). The artifacts in question

are known from other areas of southern, central and eastern Europe, and they reflect the general taste of that period. The second category includes bone, horn, metal and clay artifacts, decorated especially with geometrical ornaments.

All the wheel-made pottery was decorated. Jars of a fine, grey-yellowish fabric were decorated with ornaments polished prior to firing, which consisted of horizontal parallel stripes, or net-like combinations. Pots of the brick-red fabric were decorated with horizontal or wavy combing, either isolated or in parallel bands, sometimes associated with dimples, notches and imprints (Figs. 11–13; 15–19; 20/3–10). On the bottom of pots and bowls, there were various geometrical signs imprinted in relief (usually crosses or concentric circles) (Figs. 12/11, 12; 14). Images of animals are sometimes found, such as on a handmade, ninth- to tenth-century pot from the settlement site in Gara Banca (Vaslui county)\textsuperscript{584} (Fig. 22/1), or on two eleventh- to twelfth-century clay kettles from Răducăneni (Iaşi county)\textsuperscript{585}.

It is very likely that both buildings and artifacts made of wood, which was in abundance in Moldavia, were also decorated. Romanian woodcarvers of more recent times were known for their skills and their incorporation of ancient traditions and motifs. They were employed for the decoration of the house, the gates, fences, as well as a vast array of household and personal objects, in which aesthetic value was harmoniously combined with practicality. No such works of art survive from ancient times, and the same is true about textiles. By contrast, some stone carvings are known from Deleşti (Fig. 22/3) and Gara Banca, both in the Vaslui county (Fig. 22/2). In both cases, an effort seems to have been made to represent schematically a human face in gritstone. While the human figure from Deleşti, which was found together with pottery dated between the sixth and the eleventh century, cannot therefore be dated with any degree of precision,\textsuperscript{586} the Gara Banca sculpture was found in a ninth- to tenth-century sunken-floored building.\textsuperscript{587}

Was writing used in the lands east of the Carpathian Mountains? While no firm evidence has so far been discovered, it is likely that

\textsuperscript{584} Maxim-Alaiba, “Consideraţii” (see above, n. 74), pp. 254 and 257 with fig. 3/3.

\textsuperscript{585} D. Gh. Teodor, “Câteva observaţii în legătură cu căldările de lut descoperite la Răducăneni (r. Huşi, reg. Iaşi),” \textit{SCIV} 14 (1963), no. 1, p. 201 and fig. 3.

\textsuperscript{586} Coman, \textit{Statornicie}, p. 108 and fig. 160.

\textsuperscript{587} Maxim-Alaiba, “Consideraţii,” p. 257 and fig. 5.
religious books were in use in the region, much like in neighboring
Bulgaria or in the Rus’ principalities. Some religious books may have
been rewritten, but we do not know if this was done by the Romanians,
Bulgarians, Greeks or Russians. Those able to read them must have
indeed been just a few, and all of them clergymen. Much of what has
been so far offered as alleged evidence for the use of writing in medi-
eval southern Moldavia is truly unconvincing. This is particularly the
case of the letter M written with red paint on a ninth- to tenth-century
amphora-shaped pot from Calfa (Anenii Noi county).588

Even less is known about folklore. Ethnographic studies have revealed
a number of archaic beliefs and rituals surviving into more recent
times. Some of them may well pre-date the adoption of Christianity,
or may be adaptation of essentially non-Christian traditions associated
ancient agrarian rituals or to mythological themes. Far from removing
them, Christianity incorporated that tradition, while giving it a new
meaning.589

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The repertoire of surviving works of art produced by the nomads is
quite limited, and consists of artifacts made of metal, bone, and antler
(Figs. 24–42, 44–56) retrieved from graves, and of stone statues (камен-
ные бабы) (Figs. 57–59). The latter are connected probably only to the
Cumans. Metal artifacts were made by casting, hammering, wirework,
and engraving. The bone and antler artifacts, especially those decorat-
ing sword hilts and quivers, were covered in engraved geometrical or
occasionally animal-like.

The stone statues, the purpose of which has been discussed above,
are realistic depictions of the anatomy and dress of the nomadic
population. They depict both men (Figs. 57; 58) and women (Fig. 59),
and include interesting details about hair-dress, garments, jewels and
other features. The origin of such carvings goes back to similar works

588 Chebotarenko, Калфа (see above, n. 87), p. 56 and fig. 23/5.
589 Eliade, De Zalmoxis (see above, n. 490); O. Buhociu, Die rumänische Volkskultur
und ihre Mythologie (Wiesbaden, 1974); M. Brătulescu, Colinda românească (Bucharest,
1981); E. Agrigoroaei, Țara neavăzută conștelații (Iași, 1981); R. Vulpănescu, Mitologie
română (Bucharest, 1985); Popescu, Tradiții (see above, n. 262); Pop, Obiceiuri (see above,
n. 262); N. Zugravu, Geneza creștinismului popular al românilor (Bucharest, 1997), pp.
479–525; I. Tentiu, A. Hâncu-Tentiu, “Unele opinii și controverse privind relația
dintre creștinismul popular și ritul și ritualurile funerare medievale timpurii în Europa
attributed to the Turkic populations of central Asia, who, in their turn, are said to have learned the trade from older Iranian peoples.

A stone statue was discovered before World War I at Nădușta (now Gribova) (Drochia county) (Republic of Moldova) (Fig. 56/19). It was 0.91 m high, 0.55 m wide at the bottom, with a maximum diameter of 1.47 m. The statue is a bust without arms of a male with a moustache, a little beard and Mongoloid eyes. That the statue was found next to a burial mound has led to the conclusion that it must have been initially placed on top of the barrow.590

The Nădușta (Gribova) statue has good analogies among similar monuments in central Asia dated between the sixth and the eighth century.591 By contrast, no analogies are known among statues in the region north of the Black Sea, which could be dated to the beginning of the second millennium. The latter are much taller, with subjects often represented in a seated position with medallions and bead necklaces around the neck and a vase in the hands placed on the abdomen. However, among later statues, there are a few example of much simpler execution reminding one of the Nădușta (Gribova) specimen.592

More than 1,000 statues so far known from the steppe lands north of the Black Sea (Figs. 57–59) have features exactly matching the descriptions of the medieval travelers. Such statues were called in the 700s balbal by the Turkic populations,593 and later kamennye baby (каменные бабы) (= stone old women) by the Russians, baba meaning father or ancestor in Turkic languages.594 The German traveller Martin Grüneweg, who passed through Dobrudja in 1582, knew the meaning of father in

591 Sher, Каменные изваяния (see above, n. 501), passim; Belli, Kirgizistana taș balbal (see above, n. 501), passim.
592 Fedorov-Davydov, Kocheviki, fig. 27/5 (type IIIb); Pletneva, Древности черных клобуков (see above, n. 573), fig. 33/VI (type VI); M. L. Shvetsov, “Половецкие святыни” (see above, n. 502), p. 205; fig. 6/2.
the place name Baba: “das deutet Vatter.” The greatest number of statues may be found in the region between the middle course of the Dnieper and the Northern Donets, as well as to the north-east from the Sea of Azov. Statues appear in much smaller numbers in other parts of the Donets basin, in the steppe lands to the north from the Caucasus Mountains, in Crimea, and between the rivers Don and Volga. Besides the stone statue from Nădușita (Gribova), only two other specimens are known from the region to the west from the Dniester River. Both of them have been found in Endzhe (now Tzarev Brod, Shumen county, Bulgaria), and have for a long time been wrongly attributed to the Bulgars.

As a matter of fact, numerous elements of the cultural traditions of the later Turkic populations were in fact borrowed from those of previous nomads ruling over the Eurasian steppe lands, without however reaching the level of artistry displayed on Scythtian, Sarmatian, Khazar, Avar, and Hungarian metalwork. From that point of view, one

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598 G. Fehér, A bolgár-török múveltség emlékei és magyar ösztöndíja zonatkozásai / Les monuments de la culture protobulgare et leurs relations hongroises (Budapest, 1931), pp. 86–102; N. Mavrodinov, Старобългарското изкуство. Изкустото на Първото българско царство (Sofia, 1959), pp. 67–68. See also S. Michailov, “Les figurations dites ‘Kamennye baby’ et leur survivance tardive dans le culte funéraire chez les Bulgares,” Bulgarian Historical Review 17 (1988), no. 4, pp. 55–68 (where a distinction between kamennye baby and balbal is proposed).
cannot speak of any new developments in the art of the steppe during the tenth to the thirteenth century, but, on the contrary, of some degenerescence. The military and political power did not always have a cultural counterpart.

Elements of writing, of limited use, may have also developed in the southern parts of eastern Europe. As it is known, there are examples of a paleo-Turkic language recorded as early as the eighth century in the Orkhonic inscriptions from the region south of the Baikal Lake. It is in those inscriptions that mention is made, among other things, of the Oghuz and the Toquz-Oghuz ("Nine-Tribe Grouping of Oghuz").

Judging by the literature preserved from Turkic groups related to the nomads of the steppes north of the Black and Caspian seas, most prominent of which is Oghuzname, epics must have also been created in Turkic communities between the Danube and the Ural, without any one of them being anything else but an example of oral literature. There is also evidence of the love Turkic populations had for music. An Arab author even claims that the Pechenegs used bugles instead of kettle-drums. At the court of Alp Arslan (1063–1072), a ruler of the Oghuz belonging to the Seljuq branch, there were skilled musicians who accompanied themselves with instruments for their performances. Even though their songs may not have been as mesmerizing as the "Polovtsian dances" from Borodin’s Prince Igor, the Cumans were certainly fond of music. Rus’ chroniclers mention Polovtsian / Cuman musicians, and the Codex Comanicus contains terms indicating that profession and some instruments. Finally, there is even a stone statue of a man holding a string instrument in his hands. Moreover, the grave goods found in a Cuman male burial from Kirovo (Kerson

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601 Al-Bécri (see above, n. 162), p. 15; Orient.Ber., p. 222. See also A. P. Martinez (trans.), Gardizi (see above, n. 43), p. 152; Orient.Ber., p. 165.


603 Pletneva, Pecheneg, p. 212.
region, Ukraine) included, besides a bow and arrows, a pear-shaped, komuz-like string instrument. 604

As a general consideration, it appears that neither the nomadic lifestyle, nor the can-oriented and patriarchal traditions of nomadic society encouraged remarkable artistic achievements.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTACTS AND INTERACTIONS BETWEEN ROMANIANS AND TURKIC NOMADS

The medieval ethnic and political structures in the Lower Danube area have attracted the attention of many specialists during the last few decades. Nonetheless, many aspects have remained unclarified or controversial. Unfortunately, certain conclusions have been coloured by nationalistic concerns and, although obviously biased, have spread widely. Consequently, replies to the point are necessary. Such things have been discussed elsewhere, but it is worth re-iterating the terms of the discussion, since, as Goethe put it, “it is necessary that truth be repeated again and again, because the error is advocated and propagated again and again, not only by one or another, but by very many people” (Und denn, man muss das Wahre immer wiederholen, weil auch der Irrtum um uns her immer wieder gepredigt wird, und zwar nicht von einzelnen, sondern von der Masse).¹

As a consequence of the fact that tribes of pastoralists from the Eurasian steppe lands took over the region north of the Danube Delta, the local population came into direct and lasting contact with the Turkic nomads. Such contacts lasted several centuries. The Turkic communities that came to control the east-Carpathian area were heterogeneous, and consisted mainly of Pecheneg and Cuman tribes, although the Uzes, the Brodniks, and perhaps the Berendei must also be taken into consideration.

The first Pecheneg incursion into the Lower Danube region, which is known from the sources, took place in 896, when the Pechenges drove away the Hungarians from Atelkuzu / Etelkuzu. Their occupation of the Bugeac and the Bărăgan appears to have been gradual, and they were followed by the Uzes, the Cumans and the Brodniks. The great Mongol invasion of 1236–1242 interrupted the independent development of the Turkic tribes in the region north of the Black and Caspian seas. Those who were not killed or did not flee to neighboring countries

had to accept the hegemony of the Golden Horde. As they were in close proximity to regions that could offer shelter, most Turkic nomads from the lowlands by the Danube departed. They were quickly replaced by others, a phenomenon clearly confirmed by archaeology.

Following the Mongol take-over in eastern Europe, there is an obvious increase in the number of burial assemblages attributed to the nomads between the Volga and the Dniester. Some have explained this increase in terms of populations movements along the river Ros, especially of the Black Caps (черные клобуки). Their migration must have taken place with the accord or even at the initiative of the Golden Horde rulers. A few burial assemblages in the Bugeac (Novokamenka and Trapovca), which have analogies on the Ros, may also be attributed to such movements of populations. The available archaeological evidence strongly suggests that the Turkic nomads who lived between the Danube and the Dniester in the aftermath of the Mongol invasion, were newcomers to the region.2 It is even possible that some of the Cumans who fled in 1282 from Hungary to the regions controlled by the Mongols3 chose to settle temporarily in the steppe lands north of the Danube.

There is therefore sufficient evidence to advance the idea that in the Bugeac, much like in the rest of Desht-i Qipchaq, a Turkic-Mongol symbiosis was on its way during the second half of the thirteenth century. In fact, artifacts of nomadic origin have been found in the fourteenth-century occupation layer at Orheiul Vechi (now Trebujeni, Orhei county, Republic of Moldova), a town founded by the rulers of the Golden Horde.4 The Mongols maintained their positions of power in south-eastern Moldavia until ca. 1370,5 and it is likely that the Turkic nomads under the rule of the Horde (i.e., without any independence of their own) remained in the Bugeac until that date. However, Robert

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5 Spinei, Moldova, pp. 326–327.
Roesler’s idea of Cumans, either still pagan or converted to Islam, remaining in Moldavia until 1410⁶ is not supported by any historical source, but has uncritically been adopted by other historians as well.⁷

The available evidence thus shows that the political status of the Turkic nomads in southern Moldavia changed at least between ca. 900 and ca. 1350. Regardless of such changes, the newcomers were always in direct contact to the Romanians, since they occupied the lowlands previously inhabited by them. The Turkic-Romanian contacts withered after 1241–1242, most likely because the Mongols eliminated any political independence of the Turkic nomads. An examination of the areas occupied by the two communities may illuminate the details of the problem. Most scholars dealing with the presence of the nomads in the east-Carpathian region have attempted to delineate their area of direct control along a west-east, invisible boundary. Many still believe that the nomads ruled everything all the way to the Trotuș,⁸ Oituz and Bârlad rivers,⁹ to Hârlău,¹⁰ or even Bucovina, and that they took their herds to the Carpathian Mountains during the summer.¹¹

However, the distribution of burial assemblages that can be associated with the presence of the Turkic populations shows a clear concentration of the nomadic population in the lowlands of southern Moldavia. When moving northwards into central and northern Moldavia, they did so only seasonally and along the major rivers in the region, the Dniester, the Prut, and their tributaries: the Răut, the Botna, the Jijia, etc. (Fig. 4). Given that among burial assemblages in northern and central Moldavia, which could be attributed to the Turkic nomads, the majority appear to be Cuman (Corjova, Hâncăuți, Holboca, Ivanovca,  

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Frumușica, Pârtești de Jos, and Seliște), it is likely that their expansion into the region took place especially before the Mongol invasion.

Unlike the nomads, who preferred the lowlands and the everglades rich in grass, the settlements of the Romanian population may be found everywhere in the landscape of Moldavia, with the only exception of the mountain tops (Figs. 2–3). The latter was visited only periodically by shepherds and hunters. The old idea that Romanians were a mountain population, when not motivated by nationalistic views, may have been based on the undeniable fact that the Balkan Vlachs are indeed a mountain population. Moreover, several ancient historians regarded the Dacians as mountaineers. L. Annaeus Florus even claimed that the Dacians clung to the mountains (Daci montibus inhaerent).\textsuperscript{12} In reality, as archaeology has meanwhile demonstrated, Florus’ claim is just as exclusive as the above-mentioned opinion concerning Romanians. The densely forested highlands, especially the mountains, with a landscape, climate, and flora considerably different from those of the lowlands, were ill-suited for animal husbandry, especially for raising horses. The landscape of the highlands of the eastern Carpathians is therefore unfriendly to nomadic horsemen, who instead preferred the lowlands and the everglades.

The zone of contact between natives and nomads did not remain the same over the 350 years of Turkic presence in the steppe lands north of the Danube Delta. The Pecheneg communities established between the late ninth and the late eleventh century in the Bugeac and the Bărăgan do not seem to have been too numerous, and, as a consequence, native settlements continued to exist in that region.\textsuperscript{13} Romanians began to withdraw from the low- into the forested highlands only when the number of nomads in the Lower Danube region began to increase. By the mid-eleventh century, most settlements of the Dridu culture in the lowlands had been abandoned. The majority of the population in the contact zone between low- and highlands, and even in some hilly regions of southern Moldavia, had moved out completely by the late twelfth century. Such radical changes in the demographic structure of

\textsuperscript{12} FHDR, I, pp. 524–525 (Florus).
the region were caused primarily by the incursions of the nomads, who in turn looked for an expansion of their pasture lands. The migration of the Pechenegs, the Cumans and the other Turkic groups created a climate of uncertainty for farmers and their families, who preferred to move away from the lands now controlled by the nomads.

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The peculiar aspects of the Romanian-Turkic contacts are best illustrated by medieval place names and onomastics, as well as by old Turkic loans in Romanian. For decades, studies dedicated to this problem were based only on a number of acceptable, yet imprecise observations, a situation which Nicolae Iorga aptly defined as “new plaster over old walls” (tencuială nouă peste ziduri vechi).14

Ever since the nineteenth century, scholars have associated various ethnic names of Turkic origin with personal or place names in Romania, Russia, Ukraine, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, and Poland. The east-Carpathian area figures prominently among the regions with a significant number of place names of Turkic origin. Most of them appear to be of Cuman: Coman, Comănel, Comănești,15 and the like. The Uz and the Oituz,16 both tributaries of the Trotuș river, as well as the Huzun,17 a tributary of the Prut, have been associated with Uzes. Similarly, the name of the village Berindești has been associated with the Berendei,18 that of the villae Borodniceni with the Brodniks,19 and


19 M. Costâchescu, Documente moldovenesti de la Ștefan cel Mare (Iași, 1933), p. 96.
the place name \textit{Picegani}, near Bârlad, with the Pechenegs.\footnote{Al. Papadopul Calimach, \textit{Notiţă istorică despre Bârlad} (Bârlad, 1889), p. 15; C. C. Giurescu, “O nouă sinteză a trecutului nostru,” \textit{RIR} 1 (1931), p. 378.} Primarily because of a general tendency among historians to exaggerate the role of the Pechenegs in the political and military developments of the Romanian lands outside the Carpathian Mountains, numerous place names have been associated with them, which actually are not of Pecheneg origin.\footnote{G. Lukó, “Havaselve és Moldva népei a X–XII. századbán,” \textit{Ethnographia népétől} 46 (1935), nos. 1–4, p. 92, also lists Bășeni and Beșeni, two place names in northern and central Moldavia, as deriving from the Hungarian word for Pecheneg, \textit{besenyő} (Bessi, Bisseni in Latin). However, both place names have a very different, if less illustrious, origin and nothing to do with the Pechenegs.} Some have meanwhile raised doubts about any possible relation between the names of the two rivers, Uz and Oituz, and the Uzes.\footnote{Al. Philippide, \textit{Originea românilor}, I (Iași, 1923), p. 728; Drăganu, \textit{Românii}, p. 510 with n. 1; I. Pătruț, \textit{Nume de persoane și nume de locuri românești} (Bucharest, 1984), pp. 27–28.} Equally doubtful are by now the associations between \textit{Borodniceni} and the Brodniks, \textit{Picegani} and the Pechenegs, as well as \textit{Huzun} and the Uzes.

Vaslui, near Miclești (Vaslui county), first mentioned in 1618;26 Berindești, an estate and subsequently (in the 1800s) a village, the territory of which is now incorporated into Gășteni (Răcăciuni commune, Bacău county);27 Coman (Comana), a place name in Bodești, near Tătăruș (Iași county), mentioned in 1398 and 1404;28 Coman (Sânduleni commune, Bacău county), a village on the Turului, on the left of the river Tazlău, which is mentioned in charters dated to 1409;29 Comanul, a hill in Tescani (Berești-Tazlău commune, Bacău county), in the Tazlău valley; Comanul, a mountain peak next to Schitu Frumoasa (Balcani commune, Bacău county), on the Coman creek;30 Comanul, a hamlet included in Arbore (Suceava county), first mentioned in the nineteenth century;31 Comăna (Comana, Comânești), an estate and hamlet, attested in 1676, situated on the Jeravăt creek, near the village of Lungești (Galați county);32 Comănaști, a deserted village on the Crasna, a left-bank tributary of the Siret, near Bătrânești (Icușești commune, Neamț county), mentioned in 1404;33 Comănești (Comăniul), a village on the Rebricea, a tributary of the Bârlad, recorded in 1497, deserted in the 1700s;34 Comănești (Cavadinești


27 Tژaurul, I, 1 (see above, n. 24), p. 76.

28 DRH.A, I, nos. 6, 19.


30 Gh. I. Lahovari, C. I. Brătianu, Gr. G. Tocilescu, Marele dictionar geografic al României, II (Bucharest, 1899), pp. 572–573; Tژaurul, I, 1, p. 266; Stoica, Dicționar istoric, p. 93; idem, Vălea Troțușului, p. 170.

31 Tژaurul, I, 1, p. 766.


33 DRH.A, I, no. 18.

Commune, Galați county), a village on the Horincea, first recorded in 1459;\textsuperscript{35} Comănești, a deserted village in the former county (pihina) of Vaslui, recorded for the first time in 1546;\textsuperscript{36} Comănești, a deserted village near Boltun (Ungheni county, Republic of Moldova), on the Lăpușna, at the mouth of Lăpușnița, mentioned in a document of 1598;\textsuperscript{37} Comănești (Botoșana commune, Suceava county), a village situated on the Hotari, a tributary of the river Soloneț, frequently mentioned beginning with 1601;\textsuperscript{38} Comănești, a village that merged with Suharău in 1968 (Botoșani county)—on the Bașeu—first mentioned in 1613;\textsuperscript{39} Comănești (Bacău...
county), a town that developed out of a a village in the Trotuș valley,\textsuperscript{40} Comăneștilor (Seliștea), at the mouth of the Cneaja (Chineja), near Viile (Fărțănești commune, Galați county), recorded in a document of 1448.\textsuperscript{41} The name of the village Comărești (now Komarivtsi, Storojineț district, Cernăuți / Chernivtsi region, Ukraine), which is located on the Upper Siret river and was first recorded in the charters in 1607\textsuperscript{42} is not the alteration by means rhotacism of the name Comănești, as initially believed, but a different name derived from the Ukrainian word for mosquito, komar.

Of Turkic origin are also such river names as Berendiș (a tributary of the Siret, near Tâmașeni); Coman (a right-bank, mountain tributary of the Tazlău, originating from the Goșman Mountains); Comanac (a tributary of the Miletin); Coman (a tributary of the Bistrița); and Uz (a right-hand tributary of the Trotuș).\textsuperscript{43}


\textsuperscript{41} DRHL.A, I, no. 280.


\textsuperscript{43} Lahovari, Brătianu, Tocilescu, Marea dictionar (see above, n. 30), I (1898), p. 376; II (1899), pp. 572 and 574.
A great number of fifteenth-seventeenth-century village and estate names in Wallachia (Țara Românească, Muntenia) derive from the ethnic names Berendei and Cumans: Berindei (Berindeni) (Olt county), Berindeasca (near Bucharest), Berindești (Berendești, Berindeasca, Berindești) (Argeș county), Berindești (Berendești, Berendeasa) (Buzău county), Comana (Giurgiu county), Comanca (the former România district, now within the Olt county), Comanca (Vâlcea county), Comani (Dolj county), Comani (Mehedinți county), Comani (Comanca) (Olt county), Comâneasca (Olt county), Comănești (Brâila county), Comănești (Gorj county), Comănești (the former Vlașca district), Comănești (Mehedinți county), and Comănița (Comanita) (Olt county). Some of those villages were deserted in the early modern period, when other names of the same category were recorded and survived as such.

There are place names in the Romanian Plain which recall the ethnic name of the Pechenegs, but such names appear significantly later in written documents: the Peceneaga forest (Brâila county), the Picineagul mountain (the former Muscel district), the Peceneaga village (Teleorman county), etc. In all probability, the name of the river Peceneaga (a tributary of the Slânic, which in turn flows into the Buzău river) is older. The first written record of the creek Peceneaga in north-eastern Wallachia appears to be from 1632. Place and river names such as these have matches across the Danube, in Dobrudja: Peceneaga (Tulcea county) and Pecineaga (Constanța county). A Russian map of 1835 indicates two creeks near Peceneaga in Tulcea county: P. стар. печеняга (Peceneaga Veche) and P. нов. печеняга (Peceneaga Nouă).

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47 DRH,B, XXIII, no. 314.

48 C. C. Giurescu, Știri despre populația românească a Dobrogei în hărți medievale și moderne [Constanța, sine anno], p. 19.
The name of the Cumans also appears in place names in the eastern and central Balkans, as well as in Dobrudja: Comana (Constanța county); Kumanić, Kumanite (Kumaniti), Kumanitzi, Kamaritza, Kumanowa Čuka, Kumanočki, etc. (all in Bulgaria); Koman / Kuman, Kumanić, Kumančev, Kumanček, Kumanović, Kumanovo (in Macedonia). In addition, in northern Albania, on the Drin, there is a village named Koman / Koman, and, as early as the first half of the fourteenth century, near the city of Priština (Kosovo), two villages with quasi-identical names, Komanovo and Kumanovo, were recorded in documents. Similar names may be found in east-Slavic territories: Koman, Komanov and Komanice in Galicia; Komanovo in the regions Vitebsk and Vologda; Komanitza and Komanov in the vicinity of Minsk; Komanova near Tiraspol; Kuman’ in the Chernihiv (Chernigov) region; Kumanshnaia in the Tver region; Kumanovka near Kiev; Kumanov, Kumanovskaya Iuridika (Kumanówka) and Kumanowtsy (Kumanowce) in Podolia. There is also a village called Kumoniū (Kumantzej, Kumancie) in the vicinity of Vilnius (Lithuania), and another one, Komanica (Komanizha), in the Mikhalovce region of Slovakia.

By contrast with Moldavia and Wallachia, only a few place names derived from the name of the Cumans are known from Transylvania. On the left bank of the Olt river, east of Făgăraș, two villages, Comana de Jos (Kwmana, Komanfalva, Kománya, Alsó Komana) and Comana de Sus (Kwman, Felső Komana), appear frequently in written sources of the fifteenth to seventeenth century. They still exist today. The village Comandău (Covasna county), which probably dates from the earlier modern period,

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49 St. Mladenov, “Печенези и узи-кумани въ българската история,” Българска историческа библиотека, 4 (1931), no. 1, p. 130; Diaconu, Cuman, pp. 26–27; V. Stoianov, Bulgaro-Turcica, 3–4, История на изучаването на Codex Cumanicus. Неславянска, кумано-печенежка антропонимика в българските земи през XV век (Sofia, 2000), pp. 188–189.

50 Stoianov, Bulgaro-Turcica, 3–4, История, p. 188.


is located farther to the east. The name of Comăneşti (Braşov county) is even newer, as it replaced in the twentieth the old name, Homorod-Chemenfalău. In Crişana, to the west from the Apuseni Mountains, the village Comăneşti (Arad county) appears in documents in the 1400s as Komanyfalva. A village with the name of Comanfalva were also mentioned in the fourteenth century as being in Banat, where there were also two creeks called Komanyfalva.

All those examples show that place names recalling the name of the Cumans appear within a vast area inhabited by Romanians, as well as by other neighboring nations. It is quite obvious that such place names are not restricted to the area previously inhabited by Cumans, nor do they appear exclusively within the regions they often raided, but instead appear in parts of the Europe to which they never went.

On the basis of names of rivers ending in -ui (meaning river or valley) which appear in great numbers in Siberia and central Asia, Gustav Weigand first put forward the idea that the names of the left-bank tributaries of the Danube ending in -ui (Bahlui, Covurlui, Derehlui / Derlui, Suhului, Teshlui, Turhui, Urlui, Vâsui) are of Turkic origin. The theory of the German philologist was embraced by almost everyone.


53 Suciu, Dicţionar, I, p. 163.

54 D. Csánki, Magyarország történelmi földrajza a Hunyadiak korában, I (Budapest, 1890), p. 736.


after an initial hesitancy. Ion Conea and Ion Donat have studied river names in the Romanian Plain with remarkable results. They identified 47 names of rivers ending in -ui and -lui, some of them repeated for different rivers: Câlmățui for eight different rivers, Testui for four, Bălățui and Urlui for three. Unlike the distribution of nomadic burial assemblages, which do not occur to the west from the Olt river, river names of Turkic origin appear in great numbers in southern Oltenia, where there is even a “Ford of the Cumans”—Vadul Cumanilor (Коумански Ыпо), recorded in documents in 1385 and in subsequent years. Judging from such evidence, as well as from historical sources pertaining to Turkic incursions to the west from the Romanian Plain, the possibility of nomadic burial assemblages being discovered on the right bank of the Olt River must not be excluded.

In the Carpathian-Dniester region, names ending -ui commonly apply to rivulets and creeks: the Bahlui, a tributary of the Jijia; three creeks called Câlmățui, all within the Câlmățui Plain, in the former Ismail county, and in the region to the east from the Middle Prut Plain, north of Leova; the Copcui, in the former Ismail county; the river and the lake Covurlui, in the Covurlui Plain; the lake Cuhurlui (also called Covurlui or Cugurlui), at the southern end of Lake Ialpug; the Der(eh)lui, a tributary of the Prut, at Ostrița; the Perlui, a tributary of the Ciuluc; the Suhu(r)lui, with two tributaries, Suhurluiul cu Apa and Suhurluiul Sec, in the Covurlui Plain; the Turlui, a tributary of the Tazlău; and the Vaslui, a tributary of the Bârlad, etc.

Some of those names also apply to villages established nearby: Bahluiu (Cotnari commune, Iași county); Câlmățui (Grivița commune, Galați county); Câlmățui (Hâncuși district); Câlmățui, or Copcui (a deserted village situated in the former Ismail county); Turlui (a deserted village in the former Bacău county); Vaslui (Vaslui county), and many others.
It is interesting to note that at Valea Zăbalei, a village in the Vrancea region, the term "balhui" was recorded with the meaning of "a deep place in the water". It is possible that the river name Bahlui was formed on the basis of metathesis. There are also other place names ending in -ui: Acui, a village in the Cahul county; Acui, a lost village near Căinari, in the former Tighina county; Bahlui, a hill near Belcăști (Iași county); Bului, a hill near Bășăști (Pârjol commune, Bacău county); Ciuhui, a hill near Măstăcani (Galați county); Capciui, a village in the former Lăpușna county, etc.

Besides the names mentioned above, several philologists and historians have assigned an old Turkic origin to other place names in the Carpathian-Dniester region: Tocsăbeni, Bârlad, Tecuci, Galați, Fâlciu, Berhei, Perekhiv, Corhand, Bugeac, Copciac, Tabac, Borceac, Tuzla, Atachi, Chișlia (Mare and Mică), Cunduc, Iagorlăc, Tighina, Hotin, Chișinău, Dere-neu, Sucmezeu, Urmezeu, Tazlău, Tarcău, Sinacău, Orhei, Ordășe, Vinderei, Ichel, Căinari, Ciucuc, Tuzora, Tonguz(eni), Călurești, Alcedar, Ciuluc, Teban, Țăpurdei, Sobari, Delea, Cula, Turla (= Dniestre), Caltabuga, Cahul, Sagala,


65 Philippide, Originea, II (see above, n. 59), pp. 362–376.

66 Boldur, Istoria Basarabiei, pp. 86–95.

Contacts and Interactions

According to Ion V. Dron, place names such as Alcedar, Tazlău, Tighina, Tonguz (eni), Tužora, and river names such as Caltabuga, Căinari, Ciuluc, Cogîlnic and Cula in Bessarabia, all of which appear in sources between the fifteenth and the seventh century, must have appeared only after the great Mongol invasion of 1241–1242. The same author believes that the names Ciuhuș, Hagidar, and Kînduk, which appear in Bessarabia, are also Old Turkic. But his arguments are not very convincing when attempting to derive from the language of the Geto-Dacians Turla, the Turkic name for the river Dniester (Rom. Nistru), which appears as early as the tenth century in the work of Constantine Porphyrogenitus and was then recorded in Ottoman sources throughout the Late Middle Ages and the early modern period.

It is worth mentioning that for many of the above-mentioned place (e.g., Alcedar, Atachi, Chișinău, Orhei, Hotin, Tighina, Țăpardei, or Vînderei) and river names (Bărlad, Țijia, Țărău, Tazlău) the connection with the Pechenegs, the Cumans, the Tatars, or the Ottoman Turks remains uncertain. For example, the name Tocsăbeni derives from a personal name, Tocsabă (Toxabă), just as the name of the village Talabă (in the former Fălciu county) is in fact a personal name. For all villages with names thought to be of Turkic origin, one needs to verify whether any settlement existed there at the time the Pechenegs and the Cumans ruled over the steppe lands. Judging from the available evidence, it appears that no traces of settlements dated to the beginning of the second millennium have been found in any of the localities with names of supposedly Turkic origin. It is therefore possible that such names are in fact no older than the Tatar occupation of the Bugeac.

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68 Eremia, *Name de localități* (see above, n. 59), pp. 43–44.
69 Idem, *Географические названия рассказывают*, 2nd ed. (Kishinev, 1990), pp. 120–121.
71 Chirtoagă, *Din istoria Moldovei* (see above, n. 64), pp. 44–45.
As the Turkic tribes were nomadic, their contribution to the place names of region in which they lived must have been limited. However, the same is not true about river names. In the steppe lands of both Eurasia steppes and the region outside the Carpathian Mountains there are many river names of Turkic origin. Such rivers may have well had Romanian names as well. In certain cases, no native names existed, perhaps because such bodies of water were not sufficiently important to the locals to employ more than a generic name, such as pârâu (creek), râu (river), vale (valley) and gârlă (brook), as it is still the case today. By contrast, river names, even of small creeks and rivulets, were very important for groups involved in a seasonal migration within a certain area, for they served for orientation within the steppe lands otherwise devoid of any permanent markers in the landscape. Sorting out place names clearly associated with Turkic nomads leads to some important conclusions. River and place names ending in -ui cluster in southern Moldavia, the region in which the nomads moved along river valleys from the grazing fields next to the sea to the rich pasture land in the north. This is also the region with the largest number of burial assemblages, which can be safely attributed to the Turkic nomads.75 The same situation may be noted in the Romanian Plain, where most river names ending in -ui (-lui) appear in the lowlands. Moreover, most place names derived from Turkic appellatives are to be found in southern Moldavia.

The name of the village Berindești, near Săbăoani (Neamț county), was first recorded in 1597. Archaeological excavations in the area unearthed houses dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth century.76 No earlier occupation phase has been identified, which could be dated to the centuries during which the Turkic nomads ruled the steppe lands. Similarly, field surveys in Comănești (Bacău county)77 and Comănești (Galați county)78 produced diagnostic material from several historical periods, but not dated between the tenth and the thirteenth century.

75 V. Spinei, “Relations of the local population of Moldavia with the nomad Turanian tribes in the 10th–13th centuries,” in Relations, pp. 274–275.
77 Zaharia etc., Așezări, p. 362; Stoica, Valea Trotușului (see above, n. 29), p. 170.
78 Zaharia etc., Așezări, p. 362; Stoica, Valea Trotușului, p. 170.
The conclusion seems inescapable: all those villages were in fact established at a much later time, without any participation of the Turkic tribes, which, at that particular time, must have long disappeared from the region.

At a close examination, place and river names derived from the names of the Cumans, the Berindei and the Uzes appear primarily in the highlands. Two thirds of them in fact appear in the region between the Carpathians and the Siret, where no traces of the presence of Turkic nomads have so far been found. Moreover, the number of such place names decreases as one moves from the west to the east. In Wallachia, such place names appear both in high- and lowlands. The distribution of river and place names obviously has no relationship to the territories once ruled by the nomads, from whose names they are supposedly derived. Similarly, place names derived from the name of the Pechenegs appear in parts of Ukraine and Russia, where no Turkic tribes have ever lived.\textsuperscript{79}

In reality, most place names such as Com\c{a}ne\c{s}ti or Berinde\c{e}sti do not derive directly from ethnic names, but from personal names such as Coman and Berindei, which were quite common in the Romanian lands both in the Middle Ages and later. A few examples can clarify the point. The village Coman on the Turul\u{u}, which is first attested under Alexander the Good (Alexandru cel Bun) (prince of Moldavia between 1400–1432) appears as Seli\c{s}tea lui Coman\textsuperscript{80} in the subsequent decades, a clear indication that at the origin of the village name is in fact the personal name of the founder. Com\c{a}ne\c{s}ti on the Ba\c{s}eu river also derives from a personal name, Coman, the son of Gali\c{s}, to whom prince Alexander the Good granted land on the Ba\c{s}eu in 1412 to set up a village.\textsuperscript{81} Com\c{a}ne\c{s}ti on the Rebricea derives from Com\c{a}nel (Com\c{a}nial), a personal name recorded in 1497\textsuperscript{82} and 1546,\textsuperscript{83} while the name of the estate and hamlet Comana, located on the Jerav\c{a}, recalls that of a certain Coman, who is mentioned in a document of 1495.\textsuperscript{84}


\textsuperscript{81} DRH,A, I, no. 33.

\textsuperscript{82} DRH,A, III, no. 221.

\textsuperscript{83} DIR,A, v. XVI, I, p. 414.

\textsuperscript{84} DRH,A, III, no. 165.
Taking into consideration the fact that most place names said to be of Turkic origin end in -eşti, the conclusion can be that the people who named all those villages (Namengeber) were Romanians. In at least a number of cases, the names appear to represent Transylvanian influences, whereas others may have come from personal names of Cuman origin designating members of native communities who were not ethnic Cumans. The influence of the Turkic nomads on the Romanian vocabulary thus appears as much more indirect than the initial analysis of place names would have predicted.

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Many medieval and modern Romanian names have been regarded by various historians as of Turkic origin: Aslan, Azgir, Balaban, Balyk, Bălțik, Bolsun, Borčul, Bučak, Buga / Buka, Buldor, Buzdugan, Čakan, Čomak, Čolpan, Čortan, Čura, Dorman, Karača, Kaltabuka, Kăzan, Korman, Kuman / Koman, Paianduș, Šușman, Tamrătaș, Tīvan, Toksoba, Ulan, Urdobaș, Utmeş (László Rásonyi-Nagy),

85 Băsărabă, Odobă, Talabă, Tâncabă, Toxabă (Nicolae Iorga),

86 Agă, Basarab, Berindei, Coman, Iarcăn, Talabă, Toxabă, Turcul (Petre P. Panaitescu),

87 Asan, Aslan, Baba, Balaban, Basarab, Baș, Buga, Bulat, Borcea, Borza, Buzdugan, Căzăn, Colgeag, Dărman, Dușman, Olăan, Posoba, Selte, Taban, Togan (N. A. Constantinescu),

88 Udobă, Vuiupa, Hardalupa, Scorpan, Şerban (Constantin Cihodaru),

89 Burciul / Borcea, Iul, Cioban, Carabaș, Cantemir (Maria Lăzărescu-Zobian),

90 Agăș, Borcea, Bucuc, Buțgan, Cerțan, Coteanu, Toacxem, Zehan (Petre Diaconu).

Unfortunately, it is not clear what specific criteria have been used for the selection of those, and no other personal names as of Turkic origin. With no
specialists in Turkology expressing any opinion about those lists, the origin of the names therein remains uncertain. Conversely, attempts to eliminate from the list of names of an undoubtedly Turkic origin such names as Berindei are simply wrong.92 Names ending in -aba, with the meaning of “ancestor, grandfather, grandmother, father, mother, paternal uncle, elder brother, elder sister, or midwife” in modern Turkic languages,93 have a good chance to be Pecheneg or Cuman, much like those derived from ethnic names.

This is certainly the case for Coman and Berindei, which appear with some consistency in Moldavian charters of the fourteenth and fifteenth century. A stolnic (seneschal) called Berindei (Berendei) appears several times as an important dignitary under Prince Iliaș, between 1435 and 1442.94 Among Stephen the Great’s rivals during the first years of his reign (1457–1504), there was a certain Berendey,95 whom some historians have wrongly identified as the previous voivode named Petru Aron.96 Others have rightly pointed out that Berendey and Petru Aron must have been two different persons.97 The name Berindei also appears in Wallachia, as early as 1389. The first to be recorded was the name

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92 Pătrut, Nume de persoane (see above, n. 22), pp. 16–18.
96 V. Pârvan, “Relațiile lui Ștefan cel Mare cu Ungaria,” in idem, Studii de istorie medievală și modernă, ed. L. Nastasă (Bucharest, 1990), pp. 132 with n. 18, 143 with n. 103, and 149; I. Minea, Informațiile românești ale cronicii lui Ian Dlugosz (Iași, 1926), pp. 46–47; M. Costăchescu, Aderea Tăgului Florei și a Ialomiței în 1470 (Iași, 1935), pp. 16–18 with n. 2.
of a Wallachian *stolnic*.\(^{98}\) In 1432, one Dragomir, the son of Berindei, who may have himself been a *stolnic*, is mentioned as a member of the princely council.\(^{99}\)

In Moldavia, the first *Coman* appears in a charter of 1398: he was a boyar from Bucovina.\(^{100}\) The name appears more frequently in fifteenth-century charters. In 1412 *Coman*, the son of Galiș, was granted land previously not inhabited in order to set up a village on the river Bașcu.\(^{101}\) In 1428, two Gypsy (Roma) slaves, both named *Coman*, together with their respective camps are mentioned among the assets of the Bistrița Monastery.\(^{102}\) Another Gypsy slave named *Comanna* and his camp (possibly the same as that of 1428) appears in the list of that same monastery’s properties.\(^{103}\) A third Gypsy slave named Coman and his camp appears in a grant of 1434 for the Moldovița Monastery, which was then confirmed in 1454 and, again, in 1458.\(^{104}\) A boyar named Coman appears in 1435 and 1438 as a member of the princely council,\(^{105}\) while in 1462 *Selșița lui Coman* ("Coman’s Camp") is mentioned in the Bacău county.\(^{106}\) More Gypsy camps, including that of Comancea, were granted in 1487 by Stephen the Great (Ștefan cel Mare) to the Bistrița Monastery.\(^{107}\) In the same year, the camp of one Gypsy slave named Danciul, son of *Coman*, is mentioned among the properties of the Neamț Monastery.\(^{108}\) Stephen the Great also granted a village on the Jeriș River in 1495 to the sons of *Coman*.\(^{109}\)

Half of all persons named Coman, who are mentioned in fourteenth-to fifteenth-century Moldavian charters, appear to have been boyars, while the other half includes only Gypsy slaves.

Given the chronology of the Gypsy migration to the Byzantine Empire,\(^{110}\) a Roma presence in the Romanian lands must have taken

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\(^{98}\) DRH, B, I, no. 11.  
\(^{99}\) DRH, B, I, no. 73.  
\(^{100}\) DRH, A, I, no. 6. See also no. 19.  
\(^{101}\) DRH, A, I, no. 33.  
\(^{102}\) DRH, A, I, no. 75.  
\(^{103}\) DRH, A, II, no. 107.  
\(^{104}\) DRH, A, I, no. 132; II, nos. 40, 74.  
\(^{105}\) DRH, A, I, nos. 138, 181.  
\(^{106}\) DRH, A, II, no. 104.  
\(^{107}\) DRH, A, III, no. 17.  
\(^{108}\) DRH, A, III, no. 18.  
\(^{109}\) DRH, A, III, no. 165.  
place long time after the Cumans had completely lost their hegemony in the steppe lands to the Mongols and had entered a long process of ethnic assimilation. In other words, there can be no doubt that the Roma did not get learn about the personal name Coman from the Cumans, but from the Romanians or, possibly, from other ethnic groups in the Balkans.

Coman and Berendei appear much more frequently in charters of the sixteenth and seventeenth century: Berendeae in 1569, Berendeai in 1584, Berindei in 1598, as well as between 1601 and 1628; Coman in 1507, 1570, 1577, 1588, 1617, 1628, 1638, 1648, 1673, 1677, between 1681 and 1693, in 1685, and 1686; Comana in 1548, Coman Basinschi in 1605; Coman Băcescu in 1617; Coman Berchez in 1619; Coman Margelat in 1598; Ionță Comănăci in 1695; Comănă in 1546; and Comănescu in 1699. Judging from the "Neues zu den Zigeunern im byzantinischen Reich um die Wende vom 13. zum 14. Jahrhundert," Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik 41 (1991), pp. 241–254.

DRHA, VI, no. 410.


DIRA, n. XVII, IV, p. 208.


DIRA, n. XVI, I, p. 67.

DIRA, n. XVI, II, p. 215; Ghibănescu, Surete, II (see above, n. 25), pp. 349–350; DRHA, VI, no. 433.


Catalog de documente din Arhivele Statului Iași, Moldova, I, no. 1347.

DIRA, n. XVI, IV, p. 102.

DIRA, n. XVII, IV, no. 340.

DRHA, XXIV, no. 393.

Catalogul documentelor moldovenesti, II (see above, n. 25), no. 203.

Suceava. File de istorie (see above, n. 29), I, no. 199.


Catalogul documentelor moldovenesti din Direcția Arhivelor Centrale, IV, eds. M. Regleanu, D. Duca Tinculescu, V. Vasilescu, C. Negulescu (Bucharest, 1970), nos. 575, 792, 934 and 1539.


Catalogul documentelor moldovenesti, IV, no. 969.

DRHA, VI, no. 34.

DIRA, n. XVI, I, p. 222.

DIRA, n. XV, IV, p. 111.


DIRA, n. XVI, IV, p. 205; Ghibănescu, Surete, VIII, pp. 233–239.

Catalogul documentelor moldovenesti, IV, no. 1758.

DIRA, n. XV, I, p. 414.

Ghibănescu, Surete, VIII, pp. 159–160.
data of the 1772–1773 and 1774 census in Moldavia, the name Coman was more popular in the region between the Carpathian Mountains and the Prut, but not in use between the Prut and the Dniester rivers. More often than not, it was employed as first, not family name. 136

In Wallachia, the name first appears in the early 1400s. An undated charter of Prince Mircea the Elder (Mircea cel Bătrân) between 1400 and 1403 mentions two brothers named Coman and Nanul, who were the sons of Batea. 137 That Coman is probably the same person as the one mentioned in a document of 1418. 138 Another Coman appears in 1441, during Vlad Dracul’s reign. 139 Two Comans, a boyar and a scribe, are mentioned in a charter of Vladislav II dated to 1456. 140 Another boyar named Coman Kure appears in a diploma of 1460. 141 A certain Coman Făgărășanul is mentioned as master of the village Sălătruc in 1488, 142 1501, 143 and 1539. 144 Only one Gypsy named Coman appears in Wallachia in 1492 in a charter of Vlad the Monk (Vlad Călugărul). 145 Much like in Moldavia, the name is much more frequently used in the 1500s and 1600s. 146 The feminine version, Comana, is also attested, in Wallachia in 1509, 147 and 1519, 148 and in Moldavia in 1548. 149

137 DRH,B, I, no. 21.
138 DRH,B, I, no. 41.
139 DRH,B, I, no. 93; DRH,D, I, no. 264.
140 DRH,B, I, no. 112.
141 I. Bogdan, Documentele privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești cu Brașovul și cu Țara Ungurească în sec. XV și XVI, I, 1413–1508 (Bucharest, 1905), p. 326; Urkundenbuch, VI (see above, n. 52), no. 3206.
142 DRH,B, I, no. 212.
143 DRH,B, II, no. 5.
144 DRH,B, IV, no. 71.
145 DRH,B, I, no. 230.
147 DRH,B, II, no. 63.
148 DRH,B, II, no. 182. For the subsequent period, see DRH,B, V; VII; XXI; XXII, XXXII, XXXIV–XXXVI, passim.
Today, the name Coman is particularly popular in the Vrancea region, both as a family and as a first name. Its most frequent use is in a group of villages, such as Budești, Cioraști, Făurei, Gologanu, Gugești, Jariștea, Lacul Baban, Martineniști, Mândrăști, Obișești, Odobasca, Pâtești, Răstoaca, Risipită, Slobozia, Suraia, Terchești, Urechești and Vânători, all of which are in eastern and south-eastern Vrancea. Several other Turkic-sounding names occur in that same region, but in more limited numbers: Bărgan, Berendel, Berindei, Bornaz, Carabă, Caracaș, Caraman, Gorgan, Hamza, Hasan, Hurmuz, etc. Such regional distribution is most likely not an accident.

The name Coman was also common in medieval Transylvania. It is not always possible to establish whether that name referred to Romanians or to other ethnic groups, for after the conquest of Transylvania, the Hungarian kings introduced measures to encourage the colonization of large numbers of people. However, there are a few cases in which the name Koman applied to Romanians, mentioned as such in the Hâțeg Land (Ţara Hâțegului) in 1404151 and 1418,152 in southern and south-eastern Transylvania in 1453,153 1482,154 between 1482 and 1496,155 as well as in 1586 (Koman Cherchel, a name derived from the Romanian word for earring, cercel),156 and in Maramureș in the sixteenth to eighteenth century.157 Persons having that name belonged to various social groups, from priests (1453, 1482–1496) and knezes (1424) to serfs (1586). In all those cases, Koman was used as a first name. The family name Koman appears in the 1500s: Ioan Koman de Tartaria, is mentioned in 1574,158 and Christof Koman in a report of 1598.159

By 1600, the name was very popular in the Făgăraș Land (Ţara Făgărașului), which, for many centuries, had been a fief of the Wallachian

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152 D. Csánki, Magyarország történeti földrajza a Hunyadiak korában, V (Budapest, 1913), p. 156.
154 Bogdan, Documentele privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești (see above, n. 141), no. CLIV, p. 187.
155 Ibidem, no. CLXXIII, p. 208.
156 Veress, Documente (see above, n. 40), III, no. 32, pp. 70 and 72.
157 I. Mihăi de Apășa, Diploma maramureșene din secolul XIV și XV (Sighet, 1900), pp. 370, 486 and 639.
158 Veress, Documente, II (1573–1584) (Bucharest, 1930), no. 22, p. 23.
159 Veress, Documente, V, no. 128, pp. 204–205.
princes, and was confirmed as such by kings of Hungary. Făgăraș is in southern Transylvania, a region in which the majority of the population was Romanian. Cadasters for that region (Urbarien) recorded hundreds of people named Koman, in almost every village of the region.\footnote{Urbariile (see above, n. 52), I, pp. 126, 128, 184, 196, 199, 202–204, 207–214, 216–230, 232–241, 244, 246–249, 271–278, 281–283, 300–304, 306–308, etc.; II, pp. 88, 193, 194, 196, 200, 201, 203–207, 286, 288, 289, etc.}

Most of them had that as first, only a few as family name. An identical situation was recorded around the city of Brașov.\footnote{Catalogul documentelor românești din Arhivele Statului de la Orașul Stalin, I, 1521–1799, eds. C. A. Stoide, M. Runciș, C. Mușlea, D. Limona, I. Danciu, V. Vinîțchi, E. Barna, and V. Stanciu (Bucharest, 1955), passim.} Along the valley of the river Olt (Ţara Oltului), both Coman and its derivatives were recorded between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries: Comănăș, Comănél, Comănescu, Comănici, Comănășă, etc.\footnote{Catalogul documentelor românești din Arhivele Statului Brașov, II (1800–1825), eds. C. A. Stoide, M. Runciș, D. Limona, C. Mușlea, I. Danciu, V. Stanciu, Șt. Suciu (Bucharest, 1975), passim; Urbariile, I, II (see above, n. 52), passim; Șt. Pașca, Nume de persoane și nume de animale în Țara Oltului (Bucharest, 1936), p. 213.} Situated in that region are also the villages Comana de Jos and Comana de Sus\footnote{A. Lukács, Țara Făgărașului în evul mediu (Secolele XIII–XVI) (Bucharest, 1999), pp. 60–62; D. N. Busuioc-von Hasselbach, Țara Făgărașului în secolul al XIII-lea. Mănăstirea cisterciană Cârța (Cluj–Napoca, 2000), I, pp. 200, 230, 277; II, p. 74. See also, footnote 52.} (Brașov county). During the modern age, Coman also appeared in the region of eastern Transylvania, which was inhabited primarily by Szeklers. As such, it is believed to be a name, which the Szeklers borrowed from assimilated Romanians.\footnote{I. I. Russu, Românii și secuții, ed. I. Opriș (Bucharest, 1990), pp. 60, 209, 223, and 231; idem, Les Roumains et les Sicules, ed. I. Opriș, trans. A. R. Tomoiagă (Cluj–Napoca, 1998), pp. 69, 71, 273, and 300.}

Unlike the Romanians, Hungarians in both Transylvania and Hungary employed the Hungarian word for Cuman (Kun) as a name. Beginning with the fourteenth century, that name appears frequently occurred in written sources.\footnote{Mihályi de Apșa, Diplome, p. 563.} Hungarians have also used that as a family name,
and especially as a nickname: Petrus dictus de Kően, in Oradea (1362);\textsuperscript{168} Johannes dictus Cwen / Kun, in Galoşpetreu, near Satu Mare (1364 and 1365);\textsuperscript{169} Franciscus dictus Kun de Kak, near Satu Mare (1382);\textsuperscript{170} Nicolaus dictus Kően de Bechke (Becska), in the former Nógrád county (1389);\textsuperscript{171} or Lucas dictus Kun de Rosal (Rozsály), in Maramureş (1391 and 1392).\textsuperscript{172} A rather bizarre example is also Kучchmannus [Cumanus?] dictus Thataar (or Thatar), which appears in 1330 and, again, in 1331 in Szepsi, Abaújvár county, in the northern region of the Hungarian Kingdom.\textsuperscript{173} After the defeat at Mohács (1526) and the occupation of a good part of Hungary by the Ottoman Turks, the family name Kően / Kun appears less frequently in certain regions,\textsuperscript{174} a phenomenon interpreted as signaling the last phase in the process of assimilation of the Cumans in the Pannonian Plain.

While the Cumans were present in Hungarian Kingdom as mercenaries, some of their leaders were called by determinative names, which were meant to indicate their ethnic origin. For instance, Menk Comans and Arbuz Cumans were mentioned in documents of 1279\textsuperscript{175} and 1289, respectively.\textsuperscript{176} Such names could eventually turn into patronyms.

No clear understanding of the significance of Romanian personal names derived from those of Turkic tribes is possible without taking into account the distribution of such names in the neighbouring countries. Most revealing in this respect is the distribution in the Balkans, especially in the western regions of the peninsula, for which there is better evidence. Within that region, which during the Middle Ages was divided between different polities with often unstable boundaries, the name Coman (and its many variants) was employed by different ethnic groups. Among them were also the Vlachs in Serbia. Among

\textsuperscript{168} DRH.C, XII, no. 89.
\textsuperscript{169} DRH.C, XII, no. 341; XIII, no. 373.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibidem, no. 327.
\textsuperscript{172} Mihályi de Apşa, Dîplome, p. 189; Documenta historiam Valachorum, nos. 375, 376, 377.
\textsuperscript{173} Gy. Gyööerfly, Az Árpád-kori Magyarország történeti földrajza, I (Budapest, 1966), p. 146.
\textsuperscript{175} Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen, I, eds. F. Zimmermann and C. Werner (Hermannstadt, 1892), no. 193.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibidem, no. 229.
the 200 Vlachs (Власи) mentioned in a donation of king Stephen the First-Crowned (Prvovenčani) (1217–1227/8) for the Žića Monastery, later confirmed by prince Radoslav; there were three persons named Kuman (Куман). A donation charter of the Serbian king Stephen Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321) for the Hilandar Monastery dated to ca. 1300 a certain Kumanicz (Куманичъ) appears, whose name appears to be a diminutive of Kuman.

Cuman was also popular in thirteenth- to fifteenth-century Dalmatia: Cumanus, a priest and notary of Spalato (Split), mentioned in 1232, 1234, 1235, 1237, 1238, and 1243; Dubroqualis Cumanus of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), mentioned in 1278, 1281, 1282, and 1301; Cumanus, a priest of Spalato, mentioned in 1308; and Chumanin of Novo Brdo mentioned in 1436 and at some point after 1440. Since no colonization and no migration of Cumans to Dalmatia is known to have taken place, such names bear no implications for the ethnic origin of the persons to whom they applied.

Near Cattaro (Kotor), a certain Scime de Comana appears in 1326 and another named Milloslaus de Comana in 1332. The village of Comana, near Cattaro, is mentioned in a document of 1330. Not far from the Croatian town Čazma (Chasma), to the east from Zagreb,

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178 Hurmuzaki, I, 2, p. 797.
179 Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae, ed. T. Smičiklas, III (Zagreb, 1905), nos. 317, 321, 341, 352, and 380; IV (Zagreb, 1906), nos. 19, 27, 43, 109, 175, 183, and 236.
181 Codex diplomaticus, VIII (Zagreb, 1910), no. 157.
182 M. Đinić, Из Дубровачког архива, I (Belgrade, 1957), pp. 53 and 70.
185 Kotorski spomenici. Prva knjiga, no. 549.
there was a so-called “road of the Cumans” (via dicta Kumanorum), which probably connected Hungary to Dalmatia.

South of Dalmatia, on the Albanian shore of the Adriatic Sea, which was in the centre of the economic and political interests of Venice, the anthroponym Cuman was also recorded in medieval documents. A contract of 1243 mentions the merchant Kur [kyr] Cumanus de Succotrino from Dyrachion (Durazzo / Durrës). This is most likely the same person as a certain Cumanus Scudrin, mentioned in 1248, and his name derives from that of Scutari (Shkodra). Several documents of 1417 mention Georgius (Giorgi, Zorzi) Cumanj (Comanji) of Belaj, Stefano Cuman of Egci and Giorgi [George] Cumanj of Buzëzezi. Personal names of supposedly Cuman region have been recorded in several parts of Albania.

In the Byzantium Kómanos was usually used as a first name, much like Vláchos, Búlgaros and Rosos (the last one being also known as family names). Between the twelfth and the fourteenth centuries the name Κόμανος was repeatedly recorded in documents of several monasteries at Mount Athos. Those names begin to appear shortly after the earliest Cuman incursions into the Balkans. The first attestation is inserted in a praktikon of January 6612 (= 1104) issued by John Comnenus, emperor Alexius I’s nephew, lists among the paroikoi of Saint Barbara belonging to the Iviron Monastery, a certain George Komanos (Γεώργιος ο Κόμανος), probably as a nickname. Similarly, John Komanos (Ιωάννης ο Κόμανος), is mentioned in 1304 as paroikos of the Lavra Monastery of Gomatu, while Michael Komanos and John Komanos were a paroikos

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186 Codex diplomaticus, VIII, no. 424.
187 Codex diplomaticus, IV, no. 169.
190 Ibidem, no. 2107/26.
and son-in-law of *paroikos*, respectively, working the land of the Lavra (1321).\(^\text{196}\)

After 1300, Komanos appeared as a Christian first name in the Chalcidice (Khalkidike) Peninsula and in the neighbouring regions to the north. The archives at Mount Athos contain many documents mentioning locals in the theme Thessalonike (1290–1310),\(^\text{197}\) in the *katepanikon* Hierissos (ca. 1300),\(^\text{198}\) in the village Laimin (two inhabitants) (ca. 1300),\(^\text{199}\) in Palaiokastron (1320),\(^\text{200}\) all called Κόμανος. A certain *Komanos Tzankáres*, also from Laimin, appears in documents of 1318\(^\text{201}\) and 1321.\(^\text{202}\) A diminutive form of the name, *John Komanitzes* was recorded in 1316 for a *paroikos* of the Iviron Monastery at Radolios.\(^\text{203}\) The name had also feminine variants, *Komana* and *Komanka*. The former—Κόμανα—is attested in 1318\(^\text{204}\) and 1320\(^\text{205}\) at Melintziane, an estate of the Iviron Monastery, and in 1338 at Stomion, an estate of the Xenophon Monastery.\(^\text{206}\) A woman named Κομάνκα lived in 1320 on the estate of the Iviron Monastery at Palaiokastron.\(^\text{207}\)

Most people with names derived from that of the Cumans, who are mentioned in documents preserved in the archives at Holy Mount, turned out out to be *paroikoi*, a very large social category made up of dependent peasants with hereditary properties.\(^\text{208}\) However, in Byzantium, the name *Komanos* applied to members of other social categories as well. That the name was sufficiently common by 1200 results from the

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\(^{196}\) Ibidem, no. 109, pp. 245 and 264.


\(^{198}\) *Actes de Lavra*, II, no. 91, p. 114.


\(^{201}\) *Actes d’Esphigménou*, no. 14, p. 106.

\(^{202}\) Ibidem, no. 15, p. 114; no. 16, p. 122.

\(^{203}\) *Actes d’Iviron*, III, no. 74, p. 195.

\(^{204}\) Ibidem, no. 75, p. 216.

\(^{205}\) Ibidem, no. 79, p. 262.


\(^{207}\) *Actes d’Iviron*, III, no. 77, p. 247.

fact that a Crusade French chronicler referred to Theodore Comnenus as *Todre le Commanos.* Under the Palaeologan emperors, compound names ending in *poulos* are attested, which referred to ethnicity (e.g., *Vlachopoulos* or *Armenopoulos*). No such compound names are known to have made use of *Komanos.* This is a further confirmation of the fact that that name and its variants was not in fact an indication of the ethnicity of the person to which it applied, but at the most, of one of that person’s distant ancestors.

The documents at Mount Athos contain many references to place names deriving from the ethnic name of the Cumans, but none can apparently be located in the Chalcidice Peninsula. A village named *Komanovo* was among those granted by tsar Stephen Uroš III Dečanski (1321–1331) to the Hilandar Monastery in 1327. It may well be the same as the modern town of Kumanovo, to the north-east from Skopje. A place named *Κουμανόβεζ*, which appears in the agreement concluded between the Hilandar Monastery and Novo Selo in 1621. A charter of despot Jovan Dragaš and his brother Constantine, dated between 1372 and 1375, confirmed previous land grants to the Monastery of Saint Panteleemôn, which included a village named *Kumaničevo*. This is in fact the village by that same name still in existence on the right bank of the river Vardar, not far from Kavadarci. The Cumans, who were settled in the theme of Moglena may have well contributed to the proliferation of such personal and place names in Macedonia. Those Turks are in fact specifically mentioned in 1181 and 1184, in relation to disputes with the monks of the Lavra.

Similar names must have been in existence in other parts of the Balkans as well, but only little information exists about them. That the vast majority of such names appears in Chalcidice and on the Adriatic
coast, in Dalmatia and Albania, is simply an indication of source survival in the Venetian archives and in those at Mount Athos, and not a mirror of the demographic reality in the whole of the Balkan Peninsula.

From the Balkans, the name Coman spread to the islands in the Aegean Sea and even to the eastern Mediterranean, where it appears between the fourteenth and the fifteenth century. A document written in 1341 at Candia—the most important centre of Crete, occupied by the Venetians after the Fourth Crusade—, mentions a certain Ser Iohanes Caubo dictus Cumano. In this case Cumano appears to have been a nickname, much like in the case of Sanser Zorzi Chumano known to have been a Genoese merchant active in Constantinople in 1437 and 1438. A dependent peasant mentioned in 1415 in an inventory of church property on Lemnos was also called Komanos. That church belonged to the Great Lavra at Mount Athos. The Ottoman census of 1474 recorded many similar family and nicknames in several villages of Euboea (Negroponte), four years after they had conquered the island. Among the inhabitants listed in the registers (defter), the following names may be mentioned: Yani Komano of Ahladeri, Nikola Komano of Kambiya, Yorgi Cumano of Mazaros and Yani Komano of Yidez. The origin of those family names is not difficult to establish. By contrast, the association with the name of the Cumans of such names as Nikola Kamanic and Yani Kamanic from the village of Limni, and Kiriako Komeno from Yalotra remains uncertain. A document written on May 16, 1299, in Famagosta, in Cyprus, that is, in a place quite far from the continental part of south-eastern Europe, mentions a certain Michael Comanus, as a witness to an agreement between Catalan merchants and navigators.

The presence of the name Komanos in Lemnos should not surprise, given that in the third decade of the fourteenth century a detachment

\[\text{215 Duca di Candia. Quaternus consiliorum (1340–1350), ed. P. R. Vidulich (Venice, 1976), no. 8, p. 8.}\]
\[\text{219 Ibidem, pp. 287 and 306.}\]
\[\text{220 M. Balard, Notai genovesi in Oltremare. Atti rogati a Cipro da Lamberto di Sambuceto (11 ottobre 1296–23 giugno 1299) (Genoa, 1983), no. 149.}\]
of Cumans had been moved there, as well as on two other islands of the Aegean Sea at the order of emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus (1282–1328). The use of the nickname Cumano in Candia in 1341 may be explained in terms of the presence on the island of Crete of slaves of Cuman origin (de genere Cumm[an]orum / Cu[ma]nnurum / Cumano-rum), with such names as Bersaba, Beigoba, Cuise, Vida, Margarita. No significant group of Cumans is known to have moved either to Euboea (Negroponte), or to Crete, for after 1204 both islands were under Venetian control. However, there can be no doubt that the names in question derive from that of the Cumans, whose fame has no spread all over the eastern Mediterranean. But the place name Comana in Tuscany cannot derive from the name of the Cumans, given that that place name is first attested in the early ninth century. The same is true about the names attested on the eastern Adriatic coast. A migration of a large group of Cumans to Cyprus is also out of question, although it is not impossible that slaves of Cuman origin were brought on to the markets in Famagosta and other places on the island. In fact a black (?) slave of Cuman origin was sold in August 1301 in Famagosta. His name was Tarabuga.

While personal names derived from the ethnic name of the Pechenegs and the Uzes are rare in the Romanian lands outside the Carpathian Mountains, they were relatively more frequent in the Kingdom of Hungary (including Transylvania), as well as in the western

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225 For personal names associated with Pechenegs, see Hurmuzaki, I, 2, pp. 51, 54, 55, 57, 253, and 258; DRH,C, XI, nos. 201 and 283; XII, nos. 16, 17, 24, 25, 29, 66–68, 164, 220, 231; and 296; Documenta historiam Valachorum (see above, n. 170), nos. 100, 103, 126, and 140; Urkundenbuch (see above, n. 175), IV, ed. G. Gündisch (Hermannstadt, 1937), nos. 2166 and 2167. For names associated with the Uzes, see DIR,C, v. XI, XII e XIII, I, pp. 43, 91, and 117.
Neither their frequency, nor their distribution can match that of names derived from the ethnic name of the Cumans. There is some evidence to support the idea that in Hungary and in the Balkans, Cuman / Koman / Komanus was initially a nickname, which then turned into a family, and only later into a first name. The adoption of such names by the population north of the Lower Danube and from the Balkans is undoubtedly due to direct contact with the Cumans. Such names were still used long after the assimilation of the Cumans into the local population. While living side by side with the locals, individual Cumans were identified by nicknames pointing to their ethnic identity or background. Gradually, such names became patronyms for some of their descendants. However, it would be a gross mistake to assume that in all known cases, Cuman or its variants applied only to persons of Cuman origin, since it is clear that non-Cumans were also called by that name. Natives may have called persons of Cuman origin by a nickname referring to the ethnic background, but it is equally possible that the nomads themselves applied such names to their own fellow tribesmen. The name of a chieftain of a group of Pechenegs during the second half of the eleventh century was Kazar. Berendi of the Torki (Uzes) tribe is mentioned in 1097. Two Polovtsyan (Cuman) chieftains mentioned in 1096 and 1103 were called Kunui and Komana, respectively. Tatar was the commander of the Cuman detachment hired by the Hungarian king Stephen II (1116–1131). Uzas was a “Sarmatian”

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226 For place names associated with the Pechenegs, see Codex diplomaticus (see above, n. 178), III, no. 69; IV, nos. 189, 353, 399, 400, 472, 518, and 559; VII (Zagreb, 1909), no. 32; Monumenta historica Ragusina (see above, n. 180), I, nos. 1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 67, 69, 77, 137, 143, 165, 216, 234, 266, 272, 275, 346, 427, 466, 528, 529, 549, etc; Ibidem, II, Notae et acta notarii Thomasini de Sauere, 1262–1284. Diversa cancellariae I (1262–1284). Testamenta (1282–1284), ed. J. Lučić (Zagreb, 1984), nos. 28, 39, 144, 368, 401, 405, 427, 441, etc; Monumenta spectantia historiam Slavorum meridionalium, XXIX, Monumenta Ragusina, Libri reformationum, V, ed. J. Gelčić (Zagreb, 1897), pp. 34, 35, 61, 123, 128, 152, 153, and 178; Monumenta historica archivi Ragusini, 3rd Ser., I (see above, n. 180), nos. 2, 12, 115, 164, 290, 291, 309, 399, and 403. For names associated with the Uzes, see Monumenta historica Ragusina, I, nos. 44, 243, and 360.

227 Chronici Hungarici (see above, n. 3), p. 371; CPiet, pp. 58, 178; Chronicon Henrici de Mügeln germanice conscriptum, ed. E. Travnik, in SRH, II, p. 179.

228 PVL, I, p. 173.


230 Ibidem, p. 184; Let.Voskr., p. 20; Ioannis Dlugossii seu Longini Historiae Poloniae libri XII, I, in idem, Opera omnia (see above, n. 95), X (Cracow, 1873), p. 447.

Contacts and Interactions

mercenary in the late eleventh-century Byzantine army.\(^{232}\) \(\text{Uzuz (Vzur / Uzur)}\) was one of the chieftains of the Cumans settled in Hungary in the thirteenth century.\(^{233}\) A governor of Alep was called \(\text{Cuman}^{234}\) and the son of the early twelfth-century Turkoman Arslan-Tash was called \(\text{Captchac (Kaf'djak)}^{235}\). The name of a late twelfth-century Seljuq emir is ‘\(\text{Izz ed-Dîn Hasan ben Yâ'kub ben Kifdjak}\),\(^{236}\) while another in the service of the Mamluk sultan in 1298 was named \(\text{Mubâriz-eddin-Avlia-ben-Kuman}^{237}\). The name of another Egyptian emir, the governor of Shaubec, Hama, and Alep, and the viceroy of Damascus in ca. 1300 was \(\text{Saif ad-Dîn Kiptchak al Mansuri (Qipchaq al-Manşûr)}\).\(^{238}\) The governor of the Mamluk sultan in Syria in 1340–1341 was called \(\text{Qifqâq}^{239}\). \(\text{Qipchaq}\) was also the name of the son of the Mongol prince Kadan, himself a son of the great khan Ögödäi.\(^{240}\) \(\text{Qipchaq}\) was also the great emir of Melik-Temür

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\(^{232}\) Anne Comnène, \(\text{Alexiade, II, ed. B. Leib (Paris, 1943), pp. 31, 97, 120–121, 141, and 204.}\)

\(^{233}\) \(\text{Monumenta Ecclesiae Strigoniensis, ed. F. Knauz, II (Strigonii, 1882), p. 134; Hurmuzaki, I, pp. 426–429.}\)


\(^{239}\) \(\text{Samṣ ad-Dîn as-Su'âqi, Tarîh al-Malik an-Nâjur Muhammad b. Qalâwan as-Šâlihi wa-uladâhi, II, ed. B. Schâfer (Wiesbaden, 1985), p. 157.}\)

and the son of Kökechü. Finally the name of a mid-fourteenth-century Mamluk emir was Baibuga Tatar.

As mentioned above, the earliest Romanian attestations of the personal names Coman and Berindei applied to either boyars or Gypsy slaves. The adoption of those names by Romanians must have been made according to a fashion of the time. In documents of the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries Coman was used as a first name. In only one case (1438) did the name appear together with a family name, Şalov (from the Romanian word for pike perch, şalău), which was probably a nickname. The use of family names was still rare before 1600 for boyars and almost unknown for commoners. That Coman was used in Moldavia as a first, not family name is quite clear in such cases as Coman Margelat (a name mentioned in a diploma of 1598), Coman Basinschi (1605), Coman Băcescu (1617), or Coman Berchez (1619). The same is true for the instances of that name in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Wallachian charters: Coman Kure (1460), Coman Făgarășanul (1488, 1501, and 1539), or Coman Crețu (1505). A document dated between 1400 and 1403 gives the names of the two sons of a certain Batea, Coman and Namul. Another, dated to 1441, mentions the sons of one Stoica, Șerban, Coman and Michael (Mihai). In more recent times, Coman has been used among Romanians almost exclusively as a family name. That the name appears to have applied to Gypsies in the fifteenth century indicates that the name was so common as to have had no ethnic connotation whatsoever. Indeed, much like other Europeans, Romanians often adopted the ethnic names of their neighbors as personal names. For example, relatively common names in Moldavia were such names as Armeanu, Bulgaru, Frăncu, Grecu, Leahu, Lîpovanu, Neamțu, Rusnac, Rusu, Sas, Șârbu, Tătaru, Turcu, Tigan, and Ungureanu. All such names were undoubtedly used initially as nicknames, and later turned into family names. Unlike Coman, they were rarely used as first names. But Coman was not the only ethnic name of a nomadic group, which Romanians used as first name. Mid-fourteenth-century royal Hungarian diplomas mention Tatar as one of the many sons of Giulia of Giulești (Maramureș). His other brothers all had common Romanian names such as

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241 Rashid al-Din, Successors, p. 113.
242 Šams ad-Din aš-Šu’a’i, pp. 287 and 308.
Dragoș, Ștefan, Dragomir, Costea and Miroslav. Tatar was also used as a first name by the early fifteenth-century inhabitants of Giulești. In fourteenth-century Transylvania, the name never appears as a family, only as a nickname. This is clearly the case of Johannes Tatar, the envoy of king Sigismund I to Vlad I, prince of Wallachia, in 1396. It is clear from such examples that Tatar was in no way an indication of Mongol ethnic identity. In fact, like Coman, Tatar was not a name attached to any particular ethnic group. This is also true for John (Ioan) Tătar, the envoy of Stephen the Great to the court of the Polish king Casimir IV (1444–1492). At a time of increasing hostility between the Moldavia and the Ottomans, prince Stephen’s envoy to a Christian king could not obviously have been a Turk.

In conclusion, Coman was never used in the oldest charters and diplomas in Moldavia, Wallachia, and Transylvania in an ethnic sense. That the name was used by Romanians was not so much a result of the assimilation of Cumans, as it was an indirect indication of the Cuman influence in the Romanians lands outside the Carpathian Mountains. It is even possible that some of those individuals with such names as Berindei and Coman may have come to Moldavia from Maramureș and Transylvania, where the names were in use among Romanians. It is possible also that the Romanian names in Transylvania were influenced by the onomastic practice in Hungary, specifically by the use of ethnic names derived from those of the Turkic groups (Kabars, Pechenegs, Uzes, Berendei, Cumans) who had settled in Arpadian state over the first two centuries of that kingdom’s existence. In fact, more personal and place names are of Turkic origin in Hungary than in any of the neighboring regions.

244 Mihályi de Apșa, Diplome (see above, n. 157), pp. 27 and 33; DRH, C, X, no. 344; XI, no. 489.
245 Mihályi de Apșa, Diplome, pp. 264–265.
246 A. Theiner, Vetera monumenta Slavorum meridionalium historiam illustrantia, I (Rome, 1863), p. 145; DRH, C, X, nos. 150 and 335; XI, nos. 53, 58, 80, and 241; XIII, no. 485.
247 Urkundenbuch (see above, n. 175), III, eds. F. Zimmermann, C. Werner and G. Müller (Hermannstadt, 1902), no. 1379, pp. 163–166.
249 Mihályi de Apșa, Diplome, pp. 370, 486, 563, and 639; Drăganu, Românii (see above, n. 15), pp. 529–530.
250 Rassovsky, “Печенеги, торки и берендеи” (see above, n. 79), 1933, pp. 24–26; Gy. Györffy, “Besenyök és magyarok,” Körösi Csoma-Archivum, I. Ergänzungsband (1939),
An equally large number of personal names of Turkic origin were in existence in Bulgaria, as evidenced by fifteenth-century Ottoman tax rolls. Several hundreds of names of Turkic, Iranian, or Arabic origin have been found among the non-Slavic, non-Greek, and non-Christian names of thousands of tax-payers from the Bulgarian lands. Given that the earliest tax-rolls post-date by just a few decades the Ottoman conquest of the north-eastern area of the Balkan Peninsula, one cannot explain this phenomenon as a mere influence of Ottoman Turkish onomastics, although such an influence have been surmised for the later evidence. Most fifteenth-century personal names of Turkic origin must therefore be of Pecheneg and Cuman-Qipchaq origin, although for some of them a possible Proto-Bulgar origin cannot be excluded either.251

From among the numerous names of Bulgarian taxpayers, which are certainly of Turkic origin, the following are worth mentioning: Asen, Bajo, Bako, Bakhadyr, Bakl'o, Balaban, Balik, Balin, Balul, Balvan, Barak, Barso, Boilo, Buzak, Chakar, Derman (Durman), Dogan, Dushman, Gogul, Iarul, Kabal, Kara, Karabash, Karadzha, Karaman, Khati, Khamza, Kitan, Koian, Kosa, Kirgu, Kuman (with the variants Kumanin, Kumano), Kimbek (Kume, Kun, Kuno), Kuro (Kurt, Kurte), Malak, Nego, Sari, Shishman, Tarla, Tatul, Tugrul, Turkhan, Ugrin, etc.252 The most common of all is Kuman, which appears 69 times in the Ottoman rolls. In addition, the variants Kumanin and Kumano appear four and three times, respectively.253 Some of the names of Turkic origin derive from Turkic words for animals: Barak (dog), Karadzha (roe), Koch (ram), Kayan (hare), Kurt (wolf), Malak (buffalo), Balaban, Chakar, Dogan, and Kirgui (all meaning hawk or falcon).254

Theoretically, one should not exclude completely the possibility that the Ottoman Turks introduced ancient Turkic names to the Balkans. During the first fifty years of Ottoman occupation of Bulgaria, such names could have well been adopted by at least one or perhaps even two generations. However, it is more likely that the Turkic names mentioned above originated from the nomads in the steppe lands north of the Black and Caspian seas, especially from the Pechenegs, the Uzes,
and especially the Cumans. In this respect, it is important to mention that historians have not reached an agreement as to the origin of the name of the Vlach dynasty of the Second Bulgarian Tsardom, Asen / Asan. Some believe it to be of Romanian or Cuman, others of Proto-Bulgar origin.

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As a result of the lasting contacts between natives and nomad, many common words were adopted by speakers of Romanian from the Turkic idioms spoken by Pechenegs and Cumans. However, distinguishing those words from much later Tatar or Ottoman Turkish loans is very difficult, because little evidence exists of what the Romanian language looked like between the ninth and the thirteenth century. In addition, neither Pecheneg, nor Cuman are preserved, and the existence in Codex Comanicus of words matching others attested in Romanian is no proof that the latter are Cuman loans.

Attempts by Lazăr Şâineanu and Heinz F. Wendt to establish a chronology of Turkic loans into Romanian are not very convincing, and have been rejected even by most scholars, even those without any expertise in Turkology. Among lexemes of Cuman origin, Şâineanu

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listed beci (cellar), duşman (enemy), olat (land), and toi (climax).\textsuperscript{258} In spite of Alexandru Philippide’s critique of the criteria, which Lazăr Şăineanu had used to analyze those words,\textsuperscript{259} most scholars continued to take them as pre-Ottoman Turkic loans.\textsuperscript{260} Others have the following to the list of words of Pecheneg-Cuman origin: bărăgan (vast plain), curgan (hillock),\textsuperscript{261} odaie (room), cioban (shepherd),\textsuperscript{262} gorgan (hillock),\textsuperscript{263} buzdugan (mace), butuc (log), bălăban (falcon), medean (square), scrum (ashes), cinel (riddle-me-ree),\textsuperscript{264} zăgan (falcon), sorliţă (falcon), oiium / uium (tithe),\textsuperscript{265} bir (tribute),\textsuperscript{266} and others.

Heinz F. Wendt, on the other hand, went even farther when separating Pecheneg from Cumans, and both from Cuman-Tatar loans. In his opinion, the following Romanian words may be regarded as of Pecheneg origin: boier (boyard), bunduc / bondoc (chunk), buzdugan (mace), caia (horse shoe nail), cioltor / oltar (a blanket used under the saddle), colibă (hut), duium (host), duşman (enemy), fotă (kind of peasant’s skirt) and schingi (torture). He also listed the following words as of Cuman origin: agă (agha), bir (tribute), buzdugan (mace), caravană (caravan), casap

\textsuperscript{258} L. Şăineanu, \textit{Influenţa orientală asupra limbii și culturii române}, I (Bucharest, 1900), pp. XVI–XVII. See also pp. XVIII–XIX, with a list of other words, such as fanar, habar, maidan, taman, or saraţ.

\textsuperscript{259} Philippide, \textit{Originea}, II (see above, n. 59), p. 359.


\textsuperscript{264} Ivănescu, \textit{Istoria}, p. 437.

\textsuperscript{265} Diaconu, \textit{Cumanii}, pp. 23–24.

(butcher), ceaun (cast-iron kettle), chișteac (curds), cioban (shepherd), ciorbă (sour soup, borsch), cîslă (chatter), cărmăziu (crimson), cobuz (shepherd’s pipe), cobză (traditional string instrument), cucă (cap with ostrich feathers), culă / hulă (vault, fortified house), dovleac (pumpkin), dughiană (shop), duium (host), dulămă (homespun coat, cloth mantle), dulap (cupboard), durbac (wine press handle), ecpaia (stuff of a high official), fanar (lantern), harbuz (water melon), iliș (wheat tax), irmezea (pollard), ișlic (fur cap), lepă (wages), lefegiu (hireling), maharamă / maramă (very thin raw silk), maramă (headkerchief), maïdan (waste ground), mascără (bulloon), naht (cash), odaie (room), pașă / başa (pasha-basha), pazmangiu, pil (whip), saca (water cask), sacnasiu (small waiting room), saîd (tacked seam), siric (oar), sârmă (wire), sćuman (homespun peasant coat), suliman (rouge), surlă (fife), sabacă (embroidery), şandrama (shed), talan (anthrax), tarabă (counter, market stall), tâlmaci (interpreter), târâm (realm), teanc (heap), teas (tray), toi (climax), a se tolăni (to lie down), tolbă (quiver), topuz (bludgeon), torbă (purse), tulbent (bride veil), vâţaf, vâţâșel (bailliff), and zarzără (apricot).267

Recently, the problem of the ancient Turkic loans in Romanian as an indication of the language contact between Romanians and the Turkic nomads has been thoroughly studied by Alexander Coman.268 According to Coman, more than 250 words in Romanian have clear correspondents in the language of the Cumans: baçiș (tip), bairam (carousal), bâlăban (falcon), ballag (battle-axe), beci (cellar), boia (dye), bostan (pumpkin), butuc (log), cadră (woman), catifea (velvet), cadăr (mule), cazan (boiler, copper), călimără (ink-pot), cerșetor (beggar), chibrit (match), chihlimbar (amber), chirpici (adobe), ciob (potsherder), conac (manor), dugheană (booth), dușman (enemy), fileș (ivory), ghio (salt lake), guzgan (rat), hamal (porter), hambar (barn), han (khan), haraci (tribute), horă (round dance), iăz (pond), iurtă (yurt), lac (lake), lămâie (lemon), liman (liman), magiun (jam), mahala (suburb), maïdan (wasteland), mainuță (monkey), murdar (dirty), năut (chick peas), ovăz (oats), scrum (ashes), spanac (spinach), sufragerie (dining-room), sultan (sultan), tâlmaci (interpreter), târnăcî (pick-axe), toiaj (staff), tutun (tobacco), and others.269 However, it appears that many such words on Alexander Coman’s list are neither Turkic, nor Turkish.

267 Wendt, Die türkische Elemente (see above, n. 15), pp. 164–168. See also G. R. Solta, Einführung in die Balkanlinguistik mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Substrats und des Balkanlateinischen (Darmstadt, 1980), pp. 177–178, who regards the following words as of Pecheneg or Cuman origin: boier, dușman, colibă, tâlmaci, bis, dulap, tutlipan, cafă, olac.


For instance, *cireş* (cherry-tree), *cănepă* (hemp), and *purice* (flea) have all a demonstrable Latin origin, as they derive from *cerasius*, *cannabis*, and *pulicem*, respectively.\(^{270}\) Other words on Coman’s “Turkic” lists are also demonstrably Greek or Slavic loans.

Moreover, the idea of separating lexical elements of Pecheneg, Cuman, and Cuman-Tartar origin respectively, and of distinguishing all of them from Turkish-Ottoman loans must be treated with extreme suspicion. It is unlikely, for example, that language contact with the Turkic nomads may have been responsible for such loans as *buzdugan* (mace) and *caia* (horseshoe nail), as the archaeological evidence clearly shows that the nomads rarely used maces in battle and never shoed their horses. In fact, there is only one mace head in a late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century burial assemblage found in a barrow in Bălabăni (Cahul county, Republic of Moldova), a gold- and silver-plated artifact decorated with Arabic script elements (Fig. 25/9). This is a unique piece for the entire east and south-east European area, and most probably originated in the Near East.\(^{271}\) As for such words as *bostan* (pumpkin), *dovleac* (pumpkin), *lămâie* (lemon), *spanac* (spinach) and *zarzără* (apricot), whatever their origin, they were certainly not borrowed by speakers of Romanian from communities of nomads with little, if any experience in horticulture and arboriculture.

If one adopts the principles of the *Wörter und Sachen* (words-and-things) approach to language contact, it is unlikely that Romanians would have borrowed words referring to trade, administration, furniture, fabrics and spiritual life from the Pechenegs or the Cumans. The same thing can be said about such terms as *bir* (tribute), which appears in Romanian, but also in Bulgarian and Serbian,\(^{272}\) a word most likely derived from the Turkish verb *börükmek / vérmek* (to give).\(^{273}\) True, the Bulgarians, as well as the Romanians in the lands outside the Carpathian Mountains may have well paid tribute to the Turkic nomads for quite some time. But the same cannot be true for the Serbs, who were subject only to the Ottoman rule. It seems illogical to assume that Romanians north

\(^{270}\) Ibidem, pp. 537–538, 540.
\(^{271}\) E. Sava, “Necropola tumulară Bălabăni—II,” AM 19 (1996), pp. 192, 203, and 204; figs. 7/1 and 8.
\(^{273}\) Beldiceanu and Beldiceanu-Steinherr, “Notes sur le *bir*” (see above, n. 266), pp. 9–10.
of the Danube adopted the word *bir* (= tribute) from the Pechenegs and the Cumans, while Serbs, with whom the Romanians had many linguistic affinities, had it from the Ottomans. A number of other terms of Turkic origin, which appear in both Romanian and South Slavic languages may have equally been borrowed from Ottoman Turkish, and not from the Turkic languages spoken by the nomads north of the Black Sea. In reality, there are still many unsolved problems regarding the language contact between speakers of Romanian and of pre-Ottoman Turkic languages.

It is perhaps worth mentioning in this context that terms in Romanian said to be of Pecheneg or Cuman origin rarely have corresponding matches in Hungarian. According to Géza Bárczi, Hungarian words that appear to have been adopted from Pecheneg and Cuman mercenaries in the royal army include the following: *bicsak* (penknife, corresponding to Romanian *brișcă*, *briceag*, *buzogány* (mace), *csákány* (hack, pickaxe; corresponding Romanian *ciocan* ‘hammer’), *csőkényös* (restive), *csődör* (stallion), *cősz* (field-watchman), *kalauz* (conductor, guide; corresponding Romanian *câlauză* ‘guide’, Turkish *kylaŭuz* ‘guide’, Neo-Greek *kalouzis* ‘guide’), *kalöz* (helmsman), *kobak* (skull; corresponding Romanian *coboacă* ‘skull’ or *coboc* ‘goblet’, as well as Ukrainian *kobok* ‘goblet’), *koboz* (sound; Romanian *cobuz* ‘traditional string instrument’), *ködmön* (leather jacket), *komondor* (a breed of dogs), and possibly *balta* (axe; corresponding Romanian *baltag* ‘battle-axe’). Equally Turkic are the ethnic names *bese-nyő* (Pecheneg), *kun* (Cuman), and probably *örmény* (Armenian). Lajos Tamás even believes that the Romanian word *câlauză* was adopted as a consequence of contact not with Turkic idioms spoken by Pechenegs, Oghuz, or Cumans, but with Hungarian.

Language contact implies a two-way street model of transmission, in which Romanian words were also borrowed by speakers of Turkic idioms. Some proper names recorded in *Codex Comanicus* have therefore been given a Romanian origin. Although the possibility of some

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Romanian influence on Turkic idioms cannot of course be discounted, the evidence presented so far for that case is not very convincing.

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Contacts between Turkic nomads and Romanians during the long period of the former’s control of the Carpathian-Dniester region were not restricted to language. Most significant for cultural contacts seem to have been the typical features of the Turkic way of life, from horsemanship, to pastoralism and warlike nomadism. Given the emphasis the nomads placed on pastoralism, ensuring grazing grounds and water was a vital problem for them. This is in fact the explanation for the westward movement of the nomads of the Eurasian steppes, during which they occupied the lands of the sedentary agriculturists in the Bugeac and the Bărăgan. Removing the agricultural communities from that region was a long-drawn process. The famers’ life and activities must have been disturbed by the cyclic migrations of the nomads towards summer pasture lands. A substantial presence of the nomads in the area depended upon weather and vegetation. However, even without a massive occupation of the area, the frequent raids of the nomads against native settlements must have procured supplements for their subsistence economy and, at the same time, disturbed even more the life of the local population.

The traditional interpretation of the relations between natives and nomads maintained that the latter were a semi-parasitical society, unable to survive without food taken from sedentary communities, which they coerced into accepting all sorts of exactions. However, such an interpretation is contradicted by contemporary testimonies, which indicate that the nomads produced their own food. A semi-parasitical existence is actually inconceivable, since the Turkic nomads often lived at a considerable distance from farming communities. Raids on such communities were meant to procure a surplus, either of goods or of slaves. True, the nomads may have indeed imposed the payment of a tribute on the local population. Written sources often mention plundering expedition, as well as violence as means of extracting dues. By contrast, enslavement is rarely mentioned and seems to have been a much later in the development of nomad society. Romanians had to put up with plundering expeditions and enslavement. They must have therefore intermittently affected by the movements of various Turkic groups.
In order to understand the directions and consequences of the migration of the Turkic nomads, it is necessary to correlate the chronology of the settlements of the Dridu and Răducăneni cultures with that of burial assemblages attributed to the nomads. In many cases, both settlements and “nomadic” burial assemblages were found on one and the same site. For example, both Dridu settlements and burial assemblages attributed to the Turkic nomads have been found in Banca, Bârlad, Costești, Etulia, Gura Bâcului, Ogorodnoe, Olănești, Purcari, Strumoc, Suvorovo, Tudora and Umbrărești in southern Moldavia, as well as Bucharest-Lacul Tei,” Jilava, Curcani, Oltenița, Lișcoteanca and Râmnicelui in eastern Wallachia. In addition, Răducăneni settlements have been found in Banca, Bâneasa and Bârlad. Of all those cases, only in Curcani was a burial assemblage attributed to a nomadic horseman found in a pit dug through the occupation layer of a Dridu settlement, an observation which has led to the conclusion that the settlement was earlier than the grave. At Cârnățeni, fragments of clay kettles found in the burial mound suggest that the grave co-existed with a Răducăneni settlements. Almost all other burial assemblages have been assigned the same dates as those applying to Dridu and Răducăneni settlements, but no relative chronology could be established. Although the possibility cannot be excluded that in certain cases burial assemblages and settlements coincided in time, the evidence suggests that more than not burials post-dated settlements.


The most important aspect of the relations between Romanians and Turkic nomads appears to have political. The nomads had a considerably negative influence on local society, and were primarily responsible for the delayed formation of local political entities. The principality led by Gelou in central Transylvania was attacked by Pechenegs at the time Gelou had to deal also with the Hungarian incursions from Pannonia. As the Turkic nomads appear to have been quite a threat for the region to the east of the Carpathian Mountains, the destruction in that region must have been that much greater. There is no indication of any attempt to organize a resistance, for whatever military capacity the Romanians may have had, it was hopeless in the face of the much greater military prowess of the steppe horsemen, who had managed to keep all the neighbouring states at bay. The Hungarians, who had been defeated by the Pechenegs, were capable of spreading terror in Germany, Italy and even in France during the first half of the tenth century. In their turn, the Pechenegs, the Uzes and the Cumans wrought havoc in Russia, Byzantium, Hungary, and Bulgaria. Because of the incursions of the nomads, the southern frontiers of the Rus’ principalities shifted many miles to the north, while Byzantium lost for many years the control over the northern Balkan provinces.

Ninth- to eleventh-century settlements in the region outside the Carpathian Mountains cluster in the lowlands and in the hills (Fig. 2). By contrast, the villages in Moldavia attested in the earliest charters of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century (722 in total) have a very different distribution: there almost no such settlements in the Bugac, the Bălți Plain, south of the Cogălnic Plateau, and in the Covurlui Plain; in addition, fewer villages existed in Bessarabia than in the region between the Prut River and the Carpathian Mountains. Judging by

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the data from the census of 1772–1774 and from other sources, the settlement pattern did not change much between ca. 1400 and ca. 1800. By contrast, there is a distinct difference between the fourteenth- to fifteenth- and the ninth- to eleventh-century settlement patterns. Between ca. 1000 and ca. 1400, the lowlands of southern Moldavia witnessed a complete demographic collapse, which could be more precisely dated to the twelfth and thirteenth century. No surprise, therefore, that the blank spots on the map of fourteenth- to fifteenth-century villages in Moldavia are precisely those, which had no forest cover, i.e., no natural protection for the human habitat. Moreover, the lowlands and hilly areas of Moldavia, otherwise famous for their chernozem soils, have also the grazing fields richest in grass, which was of course sought after by nomadic pastoralists.

Contacts between Romanians and nomads were not restricted to the displacement of the former, but also involved exactions in the form of tribute payments. Besides the demographic losses, the local society was also seriously affected economically. The native population forced to move out from the lowlands had to put up with the limited resources of the hilly and mountain regions to which it fled and which, though offering protection in densely forested areas, were nevertheless not as good for agriculture. With the lowlands north of the Danube and the Black Sea now occupied by nomads, the transhumant practices of the local pastoralists were interrupted. Also interrupted were the traditional trade and cultural relations with the Byzantine Empire. The economic stagnation caused by nomads had profound effects on the development of the local society and seem to have contributed to a delay of the social stratification. Any attempts at building stable polities were most likely nipped in the bud by the neighboring nomads, who regarded them as potential threats.

The Turkic nomads had a strong impact first and foremost upon the lowlands of southern Moldavia, as well as on the valleys of the Dniester and Prut rivers and on those of their major tributaries (Fig. 4). Moving northwards along those valleys, the nomads brought under their control the hilly regions of the eastern half of the Carpathian-Dniester region. The only protection against them was offered in the


\[\text{P. G. Dmitriev, Народонаселение Молдавии (Kishinev, 1973), p. 39 ff.}\]
densely forested areas of the hilly and mountainous regions of northern and western Moldavia, which the nomads had no desire to control.

Much like other mountain ranges of Europe (Alps, Pyrenees, Balkans, Caucasus), the Carpathian Mountains may have offered protection during foreign invasions, thus preventing the extermination or assimilation of the local population. By contrast, the lowlands offered no protection and no possibility to organize a military resistance. Indeed, most peoples inhabiting the lowlands exclusively (from Scythians and Sarmatians, to Huns, Avars, Khazars, Pechenegs, Uzes, and Cumans) were vulnerable to attacks by stronger neighbors.

The contrast between the lowlands in southern Moldavia and the hilly or mountainous regions in northern-central Moldavia is underlined also by the linguistic difference between the sub-dialects of Romanian spoken in those two regions, especially from a phonetical and lexical point of view. While the northern-central sub-dialect shows strong similarities with that of Transylvania, the one in southern Moldavia is closer to the sub-dialect of Wallachia. This may be the indirect result of the late migrations of the Turkic nomads, which had led to drastic demographic changes within the region inhabited primarily by Romanians.

Nicolae Iorga believed that the relations between Romanians and nomads were of cooperation, a phenomenon which, according to him, strengthened the local elite and encouraged the creation of the political entities in the region between the Carpathian Mountains, the Black Sea, and the Danube River. Iorga’s interpretation was most likely influenced by developments in the Balkans, where the natives co-operated with the Pechenegs, thus effectively escaping the control of the Byzantine administration for a few decades at the end of the eleventh century. Similarly, the Cumans appear to have had a significant role in the creation of the Second Bulgarian Tsardom under the Asenid dynasty. By the same token, the during the second half of the thirteenth century, Bulgarian tsars were members of the Terter dynasty of Cuman origin. Local rulers in fourteenth-century Dobrudja—Balica

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286 Ivănescu, Istoria (see above, n. 59), pp. 460–462.
(Balyk-?) and Dobrotich—were also of Turkic origin. Iorga’s interpretation found support in the putative Turkic origin of Basarab(a), the name of the first voivode of independent Wallachia. Following Iorga, many historians therefore assumed that the leading dynasty of Wallachia was of Cuman origin. However, as in the case of the earliest recorded Hungarian chieftains (Arpad, Almos, Zoltan), whose names are clearly Turkic, the name Basarab is no indication that the voivode with that name was a Cuman. Basarab was a fairly common name among Romanians of medieval Transylvania and Wallachia. It also appears in place names often associated with high-altitude mountains, regions which the Turkic nomads rarely, if ever, visited. Even if the ancestors of Basarab “the Founder” were of Turkic origin, he certainly regarded himself as a member of the Romanian political elite of Wallachia. This is substantiated by the fact that after the great Mongol invasion of 1236–1242, Turkic groups north of the Lower Danube had completely lost their political independence. Without excluding the possibility that some Cumans may have been assimilated into the ruling class of the local society, it is important to note in this respect that, judging by the existing evidence, the number of boyars of undoubtedly Turkic origin is very small. It is therefore difficult to accept the idea that the Turkic nomads may have had a significant role in the rise of the medieval Romanian states and in their internal political development. Boyars serving at the Moldavian or Wallachian courts, who had names of Turkic origin, appear only occasionally in documents. Names of Turkic origin are also found in the lower strata of society. Among those named Coman during the

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289 Drăganu, *Românii* (see above, n. 15), pp. 520–527. It is quite possible that the name of Martinus Basababa, a merchant of Durazzo mentioned in a document of 1249, was also a distorted version of Basaraba. See Ducellier, *La façade maritime* (see above, n. 188), p. 193. The name Basarab appears in Slovakia. See Y. Blaškovič (Kumanoglu), “Čekoslovačka topraklarinda eski türklerin izleri,” in *Rəsid Rahmeti Arat için* (Ankara, 1966), p. 349.
fourteenth and fifteenth century, almost half were Gypsy slaves. This is of course no mirror of social reality, for many more boyars, especially those serving at the princely court, were mentioned in the documents than commoners or Gypsy slaves. If personal names were an indication of ethnic background—an otherwise questionable assumption—then it appears that most Cumans were slaves, not boyars. It is also very unlikely that the names of Tatar slaves appearing in fifteenth-century documents referred to persons who were not only of Tatar, but also of Cuman origin.

Comparisons between the co-existence of natives and nomads in the region outside the Carpathian Mountains with the situation in the neighboring areas have proved to be irrelevant. In Bulgaria, Hungary, Rus', and Georgia, the relations between natives and nomads were often strengthened by dynastic alliances, and seem to have been perceived by both sides as mutually profitable. Marrying into the Cuman aristocracy seems to have been a relatively common practice in Rus' and Bulgaria. That to the author of an apocryphal chronicle written in eastern Bulgaria during the second half of the twelfth century, Bulgarians and Cumans were alike simply reflects the significance of the Turkic involvement in the political developments in the Balkans, as well as the existence of close ties between the Cuman and the Bulgarian aristocracies.

In principle, it is of course possible that similar relations of cooperation existed between Romanians and Turkic nomads, but they certainly were not as extended as in the Bulgarian or Rus' case. In the early

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Contacts and Interactions

In the eleventh century, Romanians (Blökumenn) are known to have fought side by side with Pechenegs against Iaroslav the Wise, the prince of Kiev. No evidence exists of a similar military cooperation between Romanians and Cumans, if one leaves aside the possibility that Lazarus, the chieftain mentioned in the context of the Byzantine expedition against the Cumans north of the Danube was in fact a Romanian. However, there is plenty of evidence for the military assistance the Cumans offered to the Aserd rebels and, later, rulers of the Second Bulgarian Empire. It is also possible to imagine cooperation between Romanians and newly converted Cumans in the Cuman Bishopric.

Prior to the Mongol invasion, at a time when the Turkic nomads controlled the steppe corridor north of the Black and Caspian seas, and no Romanian polities are known to have been created in their vicinity, Romanians were forced into political submission. The nomadic aristocracy must therefore have not regarded any alliance with the local natives as particularly profitable. Conversely, when the Cumans and other Turkic groups submitted to the Golden Horde, the emerging Romanian elites could not have gained much from any form of political cooperation with them. Moreover, it is unlikely that the Mongols would have tolerated any special arrangements between subject populations, which were not controlled from Sarai.

True, contacts between Romanians and Turkic nomads were not limited to violence and exaction of tribute. They must have also involved mutual, advantageous and peaceful relations. Since both Romanians and nomads were engaged in trade with the neighboring polities, it was only natural for them to have also established exchange relations between them. That no artifacts of native, local origin have so far been found in burial assemblages attributed to the nomads is an indication not of the absence of such relations, but of the conservatism of burial customs. By contrast, artifacts produced by nomads have been found on local settlement site: an iron snaffle-bit with a rigid-bar mouth-piece and movable rings in Simila (Vaslui county) (Fig. 7/1); a bronze bladed pendant in Brăhășești (Galați county); and an oval antler pendant with open-work decoration in Murgeni (Vaslui county) (Romania), etc. The bridle bit was found during excavations, the other artifacts were found during field survey signaling the existence on those respective sites of tenth- to eleventh-century settlements. A bronze pendant, very similar to that from Brăhășești, was discovered on a Dridu settlement site excavated in Bucharest (suburb of Străulești). The iron snaffle-bit and the antler pendant may be regarded as local replicas of nomadic artifacts,
but the bronze bladed pendants were without any doubt produced by the nomads. By contrast, arrow heads and other artifacts, which have initially been regarded as evidence of contact with the nomads, are now interpreted as of local origin.

All in all, the number of artifacts of alleged Turkic origin found on local, Romanian settlement sites is thus small, and cannot be cited as evidence of either extensive or permanant contacts between natives and nomads. That nomads often preferred to raid local communities, when not exacting tribute from them, could not have encouraged peaceful exchange relations with the natives. The very existence within local communities of a surplus destined for exchange remains doubtful, given the subsistence character of the local economy.

One persistent stereotype among historians of eastern European countries is that the civilization of the sedentary populations was superior to that of the more primitive nomads. This may, to some extent, be true about Byzantium, Kievan Rus', and Bulgaria. However, it is difficult to find any similarity between the developments to those societies and that of the Romanian in the Carpathian-Danube area. Nor can it be assumed, on the other hand, that the society of the Turkic nomads in the steppe lands to the west from the Dnieper was identical to that of the nomads in central Asia or in the area between the Volga and the Dnieper rivers. Judging from the archaeological evidence of burial assemblages, tribal chieftains in the lands to the west from the Dnieper river were much poorer than their counterparts ruling to the east of that river: very few gold or silver artifacts, no Runic inscriptions, and only a very small number of stone statues. This contrast must have had a significant influence upon contacts between natives and nomads in the area north of the Danube Delta.

An important issue pertaining to the problem of the relations between nomads and natives is that of the sedentized Turkic groups which were later absorbed into the local population. There is no agreement among historians as to the nature and degree of that assimilation process.

As Friedrich Ratzel once noted, the abandonment of the nomadic way of life in favor of sedentarization was nowhere a spontaneous process or even one willingly initiated by nomads themselves (Der Übergang vom Nomadismus zur Ansässigkeit ist nirgends, von wir ihn beobachten können,

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296 Spinei, “Relations” (see above, n. 75), pp. 271–273.
This is also true for the Turkic nomads of the steppe lands to the north from the Black and Caspian seas. As long as a tribal union maintained its autonomy and control over pasture lands sufficiently large for the survival of its members, there no incentive to switch to a different lifestyle. Even when groups of nomads were forced to abandon their lands in the steppe by stronger neighbors, they stubbornly clung to nomadism and opposed any attempts at sedentization. This is true for the Pechenegs who migrated to Byzantium and for the Cumans who went to Hungary, Byzantium and the Latin Empire. Nomadic groups were forced to accept a semi-sedentary and, later, sedentary form of life at the same time as their conversion to Christianity, only when they detached themselves completely from the world of the steppes and when under pressure from the states to which they had fled in the first place. In the western steppe lands of Eurasia, a shift to agriculture and a semi-nomadic lifestyle is known to have taken place only in a few cases, where at stake was the survival of impoverished small communities. It is important to note that all known cases post-date the Mongol invasion and its dramatic consequences for the deterioration of the economic well-being of certain nomadic communities in the steppe.

When considering the possibility of sedentization of Turkic nomads in the lands north of the Lower Danube, one must therefore take into account the obstinate rejection of any other forms of life than traditional nomadism. Up to 1200, no political force existed in the area, which could have forced them to abandon nomadism and adopt a sedentary mode of life. Nor the internal developments of the nomadic society leading to any such development. This changed suddenly during the second quarter of the thirteenth century, together with the Hungarian encroachment into the region outside the Carpathian Mountains and the concurrent dissolution of the Cuman tribal confederacies, The Cumans in the Cuman Bishopric who had accepted to convert to Christianity must have also been expected to adopt, at least in part, a sedentary form of life. The papal letters of 1228 mention that they had expressed a wish to build “towns and villages,” in other words to abandon nomadism. Six years later, Pope Gregory IX reminded the


heir to the Hungarian throne of his promise to build a church for the Cumans, a promise which the prince would only later fulfill, given that the Cumans had not in fact completely abandon a nomadic mode of life. Even if all Cumans would have been willing to give up nomadism, the Mongol invasion, a few years later, must have effectively prevented the completion of the process.

After the Mongol conquest of Desht-i Qipchaq, those Cumans who did flee away from the Mongols fell under their rule. No emigration from the lands under the control of the Golden Horde was tolerated by the khans, and fearing Mongol reprisals, their neighbors refused to accept any significant number of refugees from the Mongol territories.

In Hungary, archaeological excavations of Cuman cemeteries have well documented the gradual transition from paganism and nomadism to Christianity and sedentary life. By contrast, there is no indication of such a shift in the region outside the Carpathian Mountains. The non-Christian features of burials excavated in Hansca, which have


been attributed to the nomads,\textsuperscript{301} are more likely an indication of populations of eastern origin, which lived in close proximity to native communities and were on their way to complete sedentization. Judging by the existing evidence, therefore, the number of nomads who became sedentary among the Romanian communities was small. The settlement of Turks among the natives did not involve large groups, but, perhaps, only isolated families, whose assimilation took place within a relatively short time.

Despite more than four hundred years of co-habitation within the Carpathian-Dniester region, there was no real symbiosis between Romanians and Turkic nomads. Those two ethnic communities, so different from each other from an ethnic, religious and cultural point of view, as well as in regards to their way of life, economic system and socio-political organization, may have lived in relatively close quarters, but in fact did not intermingle very much. Given the violence of contact, the nomads had a certain negative influence upon the development of the Romanian society, but not on its structure. The alterity of the nomadic form of life made it impossible for the natives to adopt any sustainable models of social organization from their Turkic neighbors. Perhaps the conservatism of the Romanian society may also be responsible for the relative lack of influence of the nomads on the natives. If the Turkic nomads exercised any influence on the natives worth considering, it was not as artisans or artists, but as shepherds and warriors. This in fact explains why one of the only direct influences upon Romanians was a form of warfare dominated by light cavalry, an influence to which the Mongols, however, must have contributed as well.

The nomads were content with plundering and exacting tribute, without any attempt to alter the traditional organization of the natives, their occupations and social structure. They also seem to have tolerated the lifestyle and the religion of their subject people. To some extent, the nomads were ready to offer military protection to the natives, provided that the latter continued to produce goods to pay their tribute.\textsuperscript{302}

The Romanian influence on the Turkic nomads was even less marked. This is also to be explained in terms of the conservatism of the nomadic society, as well as a consequence of the relative short period any one

\textsuperscript{301} Fedorov-Davydov, Kochevniki, p. 263; G. F. Chebotarenko, Население центральной части Днестровско-Прунского междуречья в \textit{X–XII вв.} (Kishinev, 1982), p. 56.

\textsuperscript{302} Stahl, 	extit{Studii de sociologie istorică} (see above, n. 285), pp. 45–48.
of the Turkic groups spent in the steppes north of the Lower Danube before moving farther. From a Romanian point of view, contact with all those groups must have been the same, given that they all shared in the same mode of life. Though for many centuries, various groups of nomadic horsemen came to control the lowlands north of the river Danube, no symbiosis with the sedentary agricultural populations took place. Paradoxically, such a symbiosis did occur in regions, which the nomads did not control politically. At the western end of the Eurasian steppe corridor, the lowlands of the Lower Danube were not particularly favorable to nomadic pastoralists, who, when pushed by other steppe nomads, often took refuge in the Balkans or in the Pannonian Plain. There they found more or less favourable conditions, and there they turned sedentary and were eventually assimilated by natives by virtue of a true symbiosis. The lowlands outside the Carpathian Mountains were abandoned by defeated hordes as soon as new stronger nomads approached. The local communities were thus forced into a precarious mode of life, marked by lack of political stability and impoverishment, as a result of repeated invasions. Such circumstances could not possibly stimulate the intruders to join the Romanians in any way.
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Fig. 2. Drawing by Victor Spinei and Romeo Ionescu.

Fig. 3. Ibidem.

Fig. 4. Ibidem.

Fig. 5. V. Mihăilescu, “O hartă a principalelor tipuri de așezări rurale din România,” BSRRG 46 (1927). Drawing by Emilia Drumea.

Fig. 6. Drawings by Emilia Drumea.

Fig. 7. Ibidem.

Fig. 8. Drawings by Waltraud Delibaș.


Fig. 10. 1–8—Teodor, Teritoriul, pp. 197, 201; figs. 38/5, 6; 42/1–6; 9–23—I. G. Hâncu, Кэпрэрия—памятник культуры Х–ХII вв. (Kishinev, 1973), pp. 11–13, 18, 24, 25, 39; figs. 5; 6; 8; 14; 22; 23/1; 35.

Fig. 11. Institute of Archaeology in Iași. Drawing by Aneta Corciova.

Fig. 12. 1–3, 9—G. F. Chebotarenko, Калфа-городище VII–X вв. на Днestrе (Kishinev, 1973), pp. 92, 93, 97; figs. 9; 10/1; 11/1; 17/4; 4–8, 10–12—I. G. Hâncu, Постеления XI–XIV веков в Орхеевских кодрах Молдавии (Kishinev, 1969), pp. 103–105; figs. 52; 53/3, 4; 54/1, 2. Drawings by Waltraud Delibaș.

Fig. 13. Postică, Românii, fig. 23.

Fig. 14. Ibidem, fig. 21.

Fig. 15. Institute of Archaeology in Iași. Drawings by Emilia Drumea.

Fig. 16. 1, 3—Institute of Archaeology in Iași; 2, 4—Moldavian Historical Museum in Iași. Drawings by Emilia Drumea.

Fig. 17. Institute of Archaeology in Iași. Drawings by Waltraud Delibaș.
Fig. 18. Ibidem.
Fig. 19. Institute of Archaeology in Iași. Drawings by Aneta Corciova.
Fig. 20. Ibidem.
Fig. 21. 1—Historical Museum in Vaslui; 2—Historical Museum in Suceava. Drawings by Waltraud Delibaș.
Fig. 22. R. Maxim-Alaiba, “Considerații preliminare cu privire la viața spirituală a locuitorilor aşezării de la Gara Banca-Vaslui din secolele IX–X,” AM 12 (1988), pp. 258, 260, figs. 3/1c; 5.
Fig. 24. E. Sava, “Necropola tumulară Bălăbani—II,” AM 19 (1996), pp. 206, 207, 213; figs. 10/1, 2, 4; 11/3; 17/3, 4, 12.
Fig. 25. Ibidem, pp. 199, 200, 204, 207, 213, 218; figs. 3/6; 4/5, 11; 8; 11/10; 17/5, 6; 22/7–10.
Fig. 27. A. Iu. Chirkov, “Новые данные о поздних кочевниках Среднего Попрутья,” in Археологические исследования молодых учёных Молдавии (Kishinev, 1990), p. 162; fig. 4.
Fig. 28. Drawings by Emilia Drumea.
Fig. 29. State Historical Museum of Russia, Moscow. Drawings by Victor Spinei and Emilia Drumea.
Fig. 30. Institute of Archaeology in Iași. Drawings by Waltraud Delibaş.
Fig. 31. 1–11—I. Nestor et al., “Șantierul Valea Jijiei,” SCIV 3 (1952), p. 110, fig. 15; 12—Historical Museum in Vaslui—Drawing by Emilia Drumea.
Fig. 32. 1–2—Institute of Archaeology in Chișinău; 3–4—Moldavian Historical Museum in Iași; 5–9—Historical Museum in Bârlad. Drawings by Waltraud Delibaș.
Fig. 33. State Historical Museum of Russia, Moscow. Drawings by Victor Spinei and Emilia Drumea.
Fig. 34. 1–4, 8—State Historical Museum of Russia, Moscow; 5–7—Institute of Archaeology in Chișinău. Drawings by Victor Spinei and Emilia Drumea.

Fig. 35. Chirko, “Новые данные”, pp. 159–161, 164; figs. 1–3; 5.

Fig. 36. Drawings by Waltraud Delibaş.

Fig. 37. Rafalovici, Lăpuşnian, “Работы Реутской археологической экспедиции,” pp. 144, 146; figs. 14, 15.


Fig. 39. E. Abâzov and E. Clocico, “Necropola tumulară de lîngă satul Chirileni,” Tyragetia 8 (1999), p. 38; fig. 7.

Fig. 40. G. F. Chebotarenko, E. V. Iarovoï, N. P. Tel’nov, Курганы Буджакской степи (Kishinev, 1989), p. 110; fig. 48.

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Fig. 42. 1–8—Ibidem, p. 135; figs. 59/2–9; 9–14—T. I. Demchenko, G. F. Chebotarenko, “Погребения кочевников в курганах нижнего Поднестровья,” in Средневековые памятники Днестровско-Прутского междуречья, eds. P. P. Bărnea (gen. ed.), G. F. Chebotarenko, A. A. Nudel’man, N. P. Tel’nov, E. N. Abyzova (Kishinev, 1988), p. 97; fig. 2.

Fig. 43. Gh. Postică, E. Sava, and S. Agulnikov, “Morminte ale nomazilor turanici medievali din tumuli de lîngă localitățile Taraclia și Cazaclia,” MA 20 (1995), p. 144; fig. 2.

Fig. 44. Ibidem, p. 148; fig. 4.

Fig. 45. Ibidem, p. 158; fig. 5.

Fig. 47. V. Haheu, V. Gukin, “Rezultatele investigaţiilor unor complexe tumulare din r-ul Floreşti, Republica Moldova,” in Vestigi arheologice din Moldova (Chişinău, 1997), p. 192, fig. 4.

Fig. 48. Ibidem, p. 191, 196, 202; figs. 3/5–8; 7/4, 11, 12; 10.

Fig. 49. A. O. Dobroliubskii, Кочевники Северо-Западного Причерноморья в эпоху средневековья (Kiev, 1986), pp. 116, 117; pls. X, 1, 7–9, 11–19; XI, 1, 3–8.

Fig. 50. Ibidem, pp. 114–115; pls. VIII, 2–9, 11–19; IX, 2, 3, 5–9.


Fig. 52. Sava, “Necropola tumulară Bălăbăni—II,” pp. 201, 206–208, 213; figs. 5/1; 10/3; 11/1, 2, 4; 12/9–11; 17/1, 2, 4, 7.

Fig. 53. C. Buzdugan and I. Alexoaie, “Săpături arheologice într-un tumul din comuna Roma (judeţul Botoşani),” Hierasus 7–8 (1988), p. 114; fig. 5.

Fig. 54. M. Brudiu, Lumea de sub tumulii din sudul Moldovei. De la indo-europeni la turanicii târzii (Bucharest, 2003), pp. 192–193; figs. 37; 38/1–7.

Fig. 55. Photo by Tudor Şamataru.

Fig. 56. 1–3—A. I. Meliukova, “Курган усатовского типа у села Тудорово,” КС 88 (1962), fig. 25/3; 4–18—T. G. Oboldueva, “Курган эпохи бронзы на р. Когильник,” Izv.‑Kishinev 5 (25) (1955), pp. 45, 47; figs. 9, 10; 19—E. A. Rikman, Художественные сокровища древней Молдавии (Kishinev, 1969), p. 104, fig. 38.

Fig. 57. Moldavian Historical Museum in Iaşi. Drawing by Romeo Ionescu.

Fig. 58. S. A. Pletneva, “Кочевники восточноевропейских степей в X–XIII вв.,” in Степи Евразии в эпоху средневековья, ed. S. A. Pletneva (Moscow, 1981), p. 265, fig. 88.

Fig. 59. Ibidem, p. 266, fig. 89.

Fig. 1. A. Map of forest spreading in Europe in 1910, drawn up by I. Riedel. The timbered surface more than 20% (1), of 10–20% (2) and under 10% (3); B. Map of the probable forests in ancient Dacia and in the Middle Ages, drawn up according to the maps of soils, of vegetation and of the aridity index. 1—Alpine pastures; 2—Forests; 3—Grassy-steppe zones.
Fig. 2. Map of discoveries of local population settlements in the central and southern Moldavia of the ninth–eleventh centuries (Dridu culture). 1—Settlements; 2—Areas which have been only little investigated.
Fig. 3. Map of discoveries of local population settlements in the central and southern Moldavia of the eleventh–twelfth centuries (Răducăneni culture). A—Certain discoveries; B—Discoveries that are going to be confirmed.
Fig. 4. Map of Turkic nomad-grave discoveries of the tenth–thirteenth centuries in the outer-Carpathian Romanian regions. A—Certain discoveries; B—Uncertain discoveries.

1, Adâncata; 2, Alexandrova; 3, Alexeevka-Svetlaja; 4, Balabanu; 5, Banca; 6, Baştanovca; 7, Bădragii Vechii; 8, Bălăbăneste; 9, Belolesie; 10, Bereştii; 11, Bărdă “Dealul Tuia”; 12, Bărdă “Moara lui Chicoş”; 13, Bărdă “Parc”; 14, Bolgrad; 15, Borisovka (Borisofova); 16, Brânişte; 17, Brâviceri; 18, Bucharest-“Lacul Tzii”; 19, Budachi (Primorsko); 20, Burlănesti; 21, Buzău; 22, Galcianc; 23, Camenca; 24, Camenca-“Ocniţa”; 25, Cazacia; 26, Căpăiani; 27, Căuşeni; 28, Chiricaie; 29, Chirileni; 30, Chişliţa; 31, Ciasă; 32, Cimăşeni; 33, Ciocălnic; 34, Cireşanu; 35, Ciulnică; 36, Cârnăşeni; 37, Cocicovatce; 38, Codru Nou; 39, Copanca; 40, Copceac; 41, Corjeul; 42, Corjova; 43, Corpaci; 44, Costeştei; 45, Cotiujeni; 46, Cuconeşti Vechi; 47, Curcani; 48, Divizia; 49, Dridu-“Snagov”; 50, Doina; 51, Dubăsarii Vechi; 52, Etiia; 53, Făleşti; 54, Feşteleanu; 55, Feştele; 56, Făleşti; 57, Galaţii-“Seromgad”; 58, Garvan-Dinogota; 59, Găvănoasă; 60, Gorodnee; 61, Grădăştei (Grădăşca); 62, Grădiştie; 63, Grădina-Galăşti c.; 64, Groziţa-Vashiv c.; 65, Grozeşti; 66, Gura Băcului; 67, Hagimș; 68, Hăişlar; 69, Hancăuşi; 70, Hristia (Istria); 71, Holboca; 72, Holmskoe; 73, Iablonca; 74, Ivanovca; 75, Înăurăcioaie; 76, Iaşoară; 77, Iolăi Iar; 78, Ieşie; 79, Liman; 80, Limanskeo-“Fricătie”; 81, Lişocotanca; 82, Manta; 83, Mata; 84, Mărculeşti; 85, Medvedja; 86, Mereni; 87, Mădorfes; 88, Moscu; 89, Movilă; 90, Nagornoe; 91, Novokamenka; 92, Ogorodnec; 93, Olăneşti; 94, Olteniţi; 95, Opacli; 96, Orlova; 97, Palanca; 98, Pavlova; 99, Petreştei; 100, Păreştei de Jos; 101, Plavni; 102, Pogoneşti; 103, Poiana; 104, Pomezei; 105, Popeasca; 106, Primorsko; 107, Probota; 108, Purcari; 109, Răscăieşti Noi; 110, Rămănicelu; 111, Roma; 112, Roşcani; 113, Rumeaţe; 114, Săiţii; 115, Sărata; 116, Săratenii; 117, Selişte; 118, Sevirova; 119, Shevchenkovo (Pomazani); 120, Slobozia; 121, Speci; 122, Strunju; 123, Susorovoy; 124, Svetlă; 125, Sabalat (Sadovoe); 126, Ştefan-Vodă; 127, Ştuibei; 128, Talmaza; 129, Tangâru (Stoeneşti); 130, Taracila; 131, Tejecl; 132, Tochile-Răducani; 133, Todireni; 134, Tomai; 135, Trapueva; 136, Tudora; 137, Tuză; 138, Ulmeni; 139, Umbrăreşti; 140, Urosoaia; 141, Vadul lui Isac; 142, Vasilevca; 143, Vinogradovca-“Curci”; 144, Vişnevoe; 145, Vităneşti; 146, Ziduri; 147, Zărneştii; 148, Zănelor, Ştaţia; 149, Kalcheva (Kalfchevo).
Fig. 5. Map of the main types of rural settlements of Romania. A—Pastoral dwellings; B—Scattered (or spread) villages; C—Dispersed villages; D—Villages with grouping tendency; E—Grouped type villages (associated with mansions, dwellings, farms); F—Compact villages (a variant of the grouped type); G—Groups of mountains (with or without sheepfolds).
Fig. 6. Iron axes (1, 2, 5, 6) and arrowheads (3, 4) of the tenth–eleventh centuries discovered at Fedeşti (1), Jariştea (2), Cîmpineanca (3), Hlincea-Iaşi (4), Siliştea Nouă (5) and Bârlăeşti (6).
Fig. 7. Iron (1–7, 9–15) and horn (8) objects from the settlements of the tenth–eleventh centuries discovered at Simila (1), Murgeni (2, 4, 9), Hlincea-Iaşi (3, 8), Gârbovăţ (5, 7, 11–15) and Bârlăești (6, 10).
Fig. 8. Bronze (1, 2, 8), iron (3, 6, 7, 9–11) and horn (4, 5) objects of the ninth–twelfth centuries discovered at Ciortoști (1), Dănești (2, 5), Băiceni (3, 4, 8), Umbrărești (6), Cămpineanca (7), Crucioara (9), Roșcani (10) and Grumezoaia (11).
Fig. 9. Silver (1, 6) and bronze (2–4) brackets, bronze reliquary cross (12), stone spindle-whorl (5), iron arrowheads (7, 8), knife (9), snaffle-bit (11) and sword (13) of the ninth–eleventh centuries discovered at Hansca (1–6, 12), Bogatoe (7–11) and Pașcani (13).
Fig. 10. Adornment objects and other metal pieces discovered in the tenth–twelfth centuries necropoleis at Arsura (1–8) and Hansca-"Câprăria" (9–23).
Fig. 11. Potsherds discovered in the ninth–tenth centuries settlement of Bârlad-“Prodana”.
Fig. 12. Pottery of the tenth–eleventh centuries discovered in the settlements of Calfa (1–3, 9) and Orhei-"Petruha" (4–8, 10–12).
Fig. 13. Pottery of the tenth–eleventh centuries discovered in the settlement of Hansca.
Fig. 14. Stamps on the bottom of the tenth–eleventh centuries pots discovered in the settlement of Hansca.
Fig. 15. Potsherds of the tenth–eleventh centuries discovered in the settlement of Bârlăleşti.
Fig. 16. Pottery of the tenth–eleventh centuries (1, 3) and eleventh–twelfth centuries (2, 4) discovered in the settlements of Bârlăleşti (1, 3) and Răducăneni (2, 4).
Fig. 17. Potsherds of the eleventh–twelfth centuries discovered in the settlements of Dănești (1, 2) and Răducăneni (3–8).
Fig. 18. Potsherds of the eleventh–twelfth centuries discovered in the settlements of Păhnești (1, 2) and Răducăneni (3–9).
Fig. 19. Potsherds of the twelfth–thirteenth centuries discovered in the settlement of Iași-"Nicolina".
Fig. 20. Iron arrowhead (1), glass bracelet (2) and potsherds (3–10) from the twelfth–thirteenth centuries settlement of Iaşi-"Nicolina".
Fig. 21. Byzantine (1) and Russian (2) bronze double reliquary crosses of the tenth–eleventh (1) and twelfth–thirteenth (2) centuries from Șuletea (1) and from an unidentified place in the Suceava area (2).
Fig. 22. Ceramic decorated with zoomorphic motifs (1) and human figures beings carved in gritstone (2, 3) of the ninth–tenth centuries discovered at Gara Banca (1, 2) and Deleşti (3).
Fig. 23. Plan of the Turkic nomads' graves at Probota (1), Trapovca (2), Seliște (3, 5, 6) and Zârnești (4)
Fig. 24. Iron objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Balabanu.
Fig. 25. Objects of horn (1), silver (2, 8) gold (3–6), bronze (7, 13), gilded and silvered iron (9) and iron (10–12) from the inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Balabanu.
Fig. 26. Plan of a destroyed grave (19) and the funerary inventory (1–18) of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Banca.
Fig. 27. Plan of a Turkic nomads’ grave at Bădragii Vechi (1) and silver (2–10), gold (11), bone (12, 15) and iron (13, 14, 16, 17) objects from its funerary inventory.
Fig. 28. Metal objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Bârlad-“Parc” (1–6), Pogonești (7, 8), Berești (9, 10) and Todireni (11–13).
Fig. 29. Metal (1–7, 10–13) and horn (9) objects and pieces of gold thread tissue (8) from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomad’s grave at Fridensfeld (= Mirnopole).
Fig. 30. Iron objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomad's grave of Grozești.
Fig. 31. Metal (1–3, 7, 12), horn and bone (4–6, 8–11) objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves of Holboca (1–11) and Pogonești (12).
Fig. 32. Iron objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Mândrești (1, 2), Probota (3, 4), Grivița-Vaslui (5, 6, 9), Pogonești (7) and Bârlad-“Moara lui Chicoș” (8).
Fig. 33. Objects of metal (1, 4–13), horn (2) and glass paste (3) from the funerary inventory of a Turkic nomad's grave at Pavlovca.
Fig. 34. Metal objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Pavlovca (1, 2), Şabalat (= Sadovoe) (3, 4, 8) and Gura Băcului (5–7).
Fig. 35. Plan of some Turkic nomads' graves (1, 2, 7) and their funerary inventory (3–6, 8–26) at Petrești (1, 7–11, 16–26) and Bădărați Vecii (2–6, 12–15).
Fig. 36. Metal objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Proboa (1, 2), Bârlad—“Moara lui Chicoș” (3, 4), Umbrărești (5–13) and Moscu (14).
Fig. 37. Objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads' graves at Seliște.
Fig. 38. Byzantine coins (1, 2, 5, 8), adornment objects (3, 4, 10–13) and clay pot (9) from the funerary inventory of Turkic nomads’ graves at Suvorovo (1, 2, 5–8) and Tuzla (3, 4, 9–13).
Fig. 39. Plan of a Turkic nomads’ grave at Chirileni (1), iron (2, 3, 6–8) and bone (4, 5) objects and clay pots (9) from its funerary inventory.
Fig. 40. Plan of some Turkic nomads' graves (1–3, 6) and their funerary inventory (4–9, 10) at Ursoaia.
Fig. 41. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves (1–3, 9, 10) and their funerary inventory (4–8) at Balabanu (1–9) and Chircăiești (10).
Fig. 42. Plan of some Turkic nomads' graves (1–4, 12) and their funerary inventory (5–11, 13, 14) at Chircăiești (1–8) and Cârnățeni (9–14).
Fig. 43. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves at Taraclia.
Fig. 44. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves (1, 2, 11) and their funerary inventory (3–10) at Taraclia.
Fig. 45. Plan of some Turkic nomads' graves (1, 2) and their funerary inventory (3–11) from Taraclia.
Fig. 46. Plan of some Turkic nomads’ graves (1, 13, 17, 21) and their funerary inventory (2–12, 14–16, 18–20, 22, 23) at Olănești (1–4), Chirileni (5–12), Divizia (13–14, 21–23), Opaci (15), Ursoaia (16–17, 20), Cazaclia (18–19).
Fig. 47. Iron (1–6, 9, 10) and bone (7, 8) objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Ivanovca.
Fig. 48. Iron (1–7, 10–13, 15, 16, 19–22) and horn (8, 9, 14, 17, 18) objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads' graves at Sevirova (1–9), Alexandrovca (10–18) and Ivanovca (19–22).
Fig. 49. Plan of some Turkic nomads' graves (17–20) and their funerary inventory (1–16) at Iablona (1–7, 9, 10, 15, 16, 18), Plavni (8, 11–14, 17), Calanciac (19) and Limanskoe-“Fricăței” (20).
Fig. 50. Clay pot (1), horn (2–4) and metal (5–24) objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Belolesie (1, 9, 21), Limanskoe-“Fricătei” (2–8, 10), Joltăi Iar (11, 12), Plavni (13), Ciauș (14–17, 19, 20, 22–24) and Ogorodnoe (18).
Fig. 51. Metal (1–5, 7), glass (6) and horn (8, 9) objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Bolgrad (1–5), Palanca (6, 7) and Balabanu (8–9).
Fig. 52. Iron (1–7, 11) and bone (8–10) objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads' graves at Balabanu.
Fig. 53. Iron (1–7) and copper (8) objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Roma.
Fig. 54. Iron (1–4, 8–16), iron and wood (6, 7) objects and a saddle reconstruction (5) from the funerary inventory of a Turkic nomads' grave at Matca.
Fig. 55. Gold (1, 2), silvered iron (3), iron (4, 5) and copper (6) objects from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Pogoneși (1, 2, 5, 6), Moscu (3) and Grivița-Vaslui (4).
Fig. 56. Metal objects (1–17) and fragment of a clay pot (18) from the funerary inventory of the Turkic nomads’ graves at Tudora (1–3) and Grădiște (4–18) and a stone statue at Nădușita (Gribova) (19).
Fig. 57. Stone statue (каменная баба), attributed to the Cumans, from an unidentified place in the north-Pontic steppes, preserved in the Moldavian Historical Museum of Iași.
Fig. 58. Stone statues (kamennye baby), representing Cuman men, from the north-Pontic steppes.
Fig. 59. Stone statues (*kamennye baby*), representing Cuman women, from the north-Pontic steppes.
Fig. 60. Types of trellis tent of nomads from the steppe zone of Eurasia: Southern Qirqiz (1, 4), Qunrad Özbek (2), Laqay Özbek (3) and Northern Qirqiz (5, 6).
Aaron, Bulgarian nobleman 101
Abaujvár, county 331
Abdallatif al-Bagdadi, author 152
Abkhaizans 164
Abraham Jakobsen (Ibrahim ibn Yakub), author 94
Abu Hamid al-Garnati (el Granadino), traveller and author 114, 134
Abu-‘Abbas Ahmed Yak‘ubi. See Yak‘ubi
Abu‘l-Fida, chronicler and geographer 182, 184, 289
Abu‘l Gházi Behadur-Khan, prince and chronicler 81, 121
Acheloos, river, battle of 91
Acui, place name 320
Adalbert, Saint, bishop of Prague 95
Adâncata 291
Adrianople 56–58, 116, 122, 144, 267
Adrianopolitans 56
Adriatic Sea 180, 333, 335, 337
Adud al-Dawla, emir 241
Aegean Sea 168, 336, 337
Aga 324
Agâş 324
Ahladeri, village 336
Ahmad ibn Ismail, emir 241
Aidar, Polovtsian ruler 153
Akkerman, Akkerman, city 29, 37, 53.
See also Cetatea Albă
Akkerman, region (uezd) 288
Akkubul, Cuman ruler 165
Alans 49, 82, 83, 92, 123, 161, 163, 184, 188, 251
Albania 317, 333, 336
Alberic (Aubry) de Trois Fontaines, chronicler 276
Alcedar 85, 241, 281, 320, 321
Alep, city 339
Alexandrova ix, 284, 296, 486
Alexander the Good (Alexandru cel Bun), Moldavian prince 323
Alexeeva-Svetlăi 277, 297
Alexius I Comnenus 103, 112, 119, 120, 124, 127, 197, 253, 333
Alexius III Angelus 143
Albiei, lake 34
Almos, Hungarian ruler 70, 72, 353
Alp Arslan, Seljuq prince 304
Alps 16, 352
Alsó Komana (Comana de Jos) 317
Alta, battle of 105
Altunopa, Polovtsian ruler 123, 264
Amurat, Polovtsian ruler 153
Ananias of Shirak (Sirakats‘i), author 80, 81
Anchialos, city 122
Andrew II, Hungarian king 142, 147, 152, 158
Andronicus I Comnenus 131–133
Andronicus II Paleologus 168, 337
Andžogly, tribe 260
Anenii Noi 67, 191, 196, 201, 228, 283, 285, 301
Angelus, dynasty 140
Anna Comnena. See Comnena, Anna
Anonymus, chronicler (Notary) of king Bela [III] 76–79
Anates, tribe 85
Arabs 42, 48, 62, 83, 114, 221, 243, 304
Aral, lake 113, 117
Arbore 313
Arbuz Cumans, Cuman ruler 331
Arciz 242, 285
Arge‘, county 316
Arge‘, river 297
Aristode 31
Armeanu 340
Armenians 80, 164
Arnulf of Carinthia, German king 59
Arpad 72, 353
Arpadian Kingdom. See Hungary
Arpadian state. See Hungary
Arradjan, city 241
Arslan-Tash, called Captchak (Kafdiak) 339
Arsura vii, 283, 284, 448
Ártim, Pecheneg tribe 257
Asan 324
Asen (Asan), Vlach ruler, brother of Peter 138, 139, 164
Asen, name 342
Asens, Asenids, dynasty 127, 167, 272
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>319</td>
<td>Băldului, river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>298</td>
<td>Bălți, Highlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204</td>
<td>Bălți, Plain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>288</td>
<td>Bălți, region (uezd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>397</td>
<td>Bâneasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>349</td>
<td>Băragan, 1, 39, 47, 50, 96, 107, 117, 198, 261, 308, 310, 329, 344, 348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>324</td>
<td>Băsărabă</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320</td>
<td>Băsăști</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313</td>
<td>Bățrânești</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231</td>
<td>Băc, river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>296</td>
<td>Bărlad, city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>321</td>
<td>Bărlad, region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>296</td>
<td>Bărlad, river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>Bărlad-“Prodana”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>331</td>
<td>Bărsa Land (‡Tara Bârsei)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>337</td>
<td>Bătca Doamnei (-Piatra Neamț)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>Beauplan. See Levasseur de Beauplan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>327</td>
<td>Becska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>Begovars, Cuman ruler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>337</td>
<td>Bela III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Bela IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Belaja Vezha. See Sarkel-Belaja Vezha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>333</td>
<td>Belaj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320</td>
<td>Belcești</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311</td>
<td>Belgorod, Belograd, Belgrad (Bilhorod-Dnistrovs’kyi, Cetatea Albă)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>331</td>
<td>Biharea, fortress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>156</td>
<td>Bihor, region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Bilea Vezha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>285</td>
<td>Bilhorod-Dnistrovs’kyi, district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>324</td>
<td>Bilk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>Birdzhandi, author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145</td>
<td>Bisseni (Pechenegs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315</td>
<td>Bistrița, river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>319</td>
<td>Bistrița, monastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>Black Cumania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>285</td>
<td>Black Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Blachs. See Vlachs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Blaghă (Wallachians?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Blakumen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Blökumenn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255</td>
<td>Blökumennaland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>313</td>
<td>Bodești</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Bodrog, river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Bodrokgöz, place name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>Boga, Pecheneg name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Bogas, John, general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>447</td>
<td>Bogatoe vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Berezan, Isle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>320</td>
<td>Berheci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>316</td>
<td>Berindeasca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322</td>
<td>Berindești</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>323</td>
<td>Berindei, Turkish tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>329</td>
<td>Berindeiasca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>307</td>
<td>Berindeni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>322</td>
<td>Berindiești</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>316</td>
<td>Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>189</td>
<td>Berladniks, tribe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>192</td>
<td>Bessarabia (Basarabia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>321</td>
<td>Bessi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Béthume, François Gaston de, French traveller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bicaz, river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Bicaz, village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>Biharea, fortress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Bilhorod-Dnistrovs’kyi, district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Black Cumania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Black Cumans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Black Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>317</td>
<td>Black Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>296</td>
<td>Black Sea</td>
</tr>
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<td>308</td>
<td>Black Sea</td>
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<td>Black Sea</td>
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<tr>
<td>352</td>
<td>Black Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Blachs. See Vlachs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Blaghă (Wallachians?)</td>
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<td>Blökumennaland</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Bodești</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Bodrog, river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Bodrokgöz, place name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184</td>
<td>Boga, Pecheneg name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Bogas, John, general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>447</td>
<td>Bogatoe vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Index Entry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>502</td>
<td>GENERAL INDEX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Bohemia | 35, 169, 221 |
| Boile | 342 |
| Boleslav the Brave, Polish king | 104 |
| Bolgrad | x, 284, 286, 297, 489 |
| Bolokhovens | 161, 162 |
| Bolsun | 324 |
| Bolțun | 314 |
| Boniak, Cuman khan | 121, 123, 263 |
| Borca | 324 |
| Borcă | 320 |
| Borcho | 342 |
| Borcul | 324 |
| Bordones (Brodniks), tribe | 141, 159 |
| Boril, Bulgarian tsar | 164 |
| Boris I (Michael), Bulgar ruler | 62 |
| Borisăuca (Borisovka) | 285 |
| Bornaz | 329 |
| Brođun | 314 |
| Brodinos (Brodniks), tribe | 141, 159 |
| Borodin, A. P., composer | 304 |
| Boro-Talmač, Pecheneg tribe | 257 |
| Borsukov | 157 |
| Borza | 324 |
| Bosporas | 31, 41, 42, 48, 88, 108 |
| Botna, river | 296 |
| Botoșana, village | 314 |
| Botoșani, city | 5 |
| Botoșani, county | 18, 89, 286 |
| Brașov, city | 154, 330 |
| Brașov, county | 318 |
| Brașov, road | 23 |
| Bratei | 271 |
| Brazda lui Novac | 61 |
| Brădicești | 192 |
| Brăila, county | 291, 292, 316 |
| Brăila, marches | 31 |
| Brăniște | 68, 280, 281 |
| Brașați | 285, 297 |
| Brășații | 190, 214, 215 |
| Brăviceni | 285, 296 |
| Brețcu | 23 |
| Brâncoveni | 285, 286 |
| Brodniks | 137, 141, 146, 150, 159–161, 188, 293, 295, 308, 311, 312 |
| Bronze Age | 12, 22, 210, 298 |
| Bruno of Querfurt, Saint, bishop of Augsburg | 95, 257, 275 |
| Brutos (Prut), river | 64, 94 |
| Buchak | 342 |
| Bucharest | 291–293, 316, 349, 355 |
| Bucovina | 196, 309, 326 |
| Bučuk | 324 |
| Budachi | 285, 297 |

| Budești | 223, 329 |
| Bug, South, river | 26, 65, 82, 87, 88, 258, 261 |
| Buga | 324 |
| Buka | 324 |
| Bula-Čaban, Pecheneg tribe | 257 |
| Bulaq, tribe | 77–80 |
| Bulat | 324 |
| Bulduri | 324 |
| Bulgar, city | 241 |
| Bulgar Khaganate | 56 |
| Bulgaria minor | 163 |
| Bulgarian Tsardom, First | 32, 55 |
| Bulgarian Tsardom, Second | 78, 144, 268, 272, 273, 343, 352 |
| Bulgaru | 340 |
| Bului, hill | 320 |
| Burat (Prut), river | 94 |
| Burciul | 324 |
| Burdžoglu, Qipchaq tribe | 260 |
| Burghaz, tribe | 83 |
| Burğ–oglu, Qipchaq tribe | 260 |
| Burzileifr (Sviatopolk) | 105 |
| Burlănești | 285 |
| Burluc | 324 |
| Burlu, tribe | 260 |
| Burnas, lake | 34, 297 |
| Bursuceni | 157 |
| Buzangi, Qipchaq tribe | 260 |
| Buzău, city | 291, 292, 297 |
| Buzău, county | 223, 271, 291, 292 |
| Buzău, river | 297, 316 |
| Buzdugan | 324 |
| Buzăzeți, village | 333 |
| Buzgan | 324 |
Bykovskii, Ivan, Russian monk 136
Byzantium. See Byzantine Empire
Caffa, city 42
Cahul, county 19, 191, 285, 286, 320, 346
Cahul, lake 297
Čakan ix, 285, 297, 487
Calanciac ix, 285, 487
Calfa vii, 67, 97, 191, 196, 201, 214, 228, 231, 283, 301, 450
Caltabug, lake 297
Caltabuga 320, 321
Caltabugul Mare 297
Camenca 285, 295
Candia 336, 337
Cantemir, name 324
Cantemir, Constantin, Moldavian prince 254
Cantemir, Dimitrie 17, 28, 226, 254
Captchak (Kafdjak). See Arslan-Tash, called Captchak (Kafdjak)
Carabâş 324
Carabă 329
Caracaz 329
Caraman 329
Carolingian Empire 69
Carpathians 1, 14, 15, 21–24, 26, 35, 47, 54, 70–72, 100, 105, 107, 116, 124, 143, 156, 162, 174, 175, 200, 202, 216, 230, 250, 256, 310, 323, 330
Carpathian arch 21, 46, 146. See also Carpathians
Carpathian-Danubian area 1, 11, 13–16, 20, 46, 50, 61, 77, 80, 87
Carpathian-Dniestrian area 11, 17, 26, 29, 45, 46, 53, 67, 76, 175, 194, 199, 223, 240, 247, 272, 273, 284, 287, 293, 298, 299, 319, 320, 348, 351, 359. See also Moldavia
Carpathians, sub-. See sub-Carpathians
Casimir IV, Polish king 341
Caspian-Pontic region 21
Catalaunic Fields (Châlons-sur-Marne) 220
Cattaro (Kotor), city 332
Caucasus 47, 48, 143, 149, 201, 208, 303, 352
Cavadineşti 313
Cazaclia ix, 285, 297, 484
Cazan 324
Čazma 332
Căinăr, river 296
Căinari, village 320, 321
Călmăţui, rivers 319
Călăraşi, county 190, 291, 292
Căpălanii 258
Căpâra (Hansca) vi, 68, 281, 282, 448
Căușeni 285, 286, 295, 296
Călneştea, river 297
Câmpincanca 190, 444, 446
Câmpulung Moldovenesc 226, 254, 255
Cârja 35
Cârnaţeni 285, 294–296, 349, 480
Cetateul Ismail 30
Çelebi, Evlia, author 29, 198
Çelebi, Kiatip, author 32
Cernăuţi (Chernivtsi), region 315
Cetatea Alba, city 29, 37, 42, 53. See also Akkerman/Akerman, Asprokastro and Belgorod
Cetatea Alba, county 19
Chakâr 342
Chalcidice (Khalkidike) Peninsula 334, 335
Chalcolithic 22
Chalis. See Tatos
Charlemagne 271
Charles Martel 48
Charles Robert I of Anjou 169
Cherkezes 163
Chernigov, city 114
Chernigov, principality 157
Chernigov (Chernihiv), region 317
Chersones  244, 245
Chertan  324
Chilia, city  31
Chilia, Danube arm  30
Chilia, district  286
China  208, 212, 218, 290
Chineja, river  296, 297, 315
Chingul, river  245
Chircaiești  ix, 285, 479, 480
Chirilești  ix, 285, 477, 484
Chișinău (Kishinev), city  5, 192, 242, 320, 321, 436
Chișinău (Lăpușna), county/region (uezd)  19, 288
Chișlia  320
Chisliță  285, 295, 297
Chitai, lake  297
Choniates, Niketas, chronicler  126, 132, 141, 160
Chornye klobuki. See Black Caps
Christof Koman. See Koman, Christof
Chumanin  332
Chumano  336
Churila  320
Ciaux, 285, 294, 295, 296
Ciaș, x, 285, 295, 297
Cimieșani  285
Cimighea  285
Cioban  324
Ciocâlteni  285
Ciorăți  329, 446
Ciureanu  291
Ciuc  320
Ciulnița  291
Ciuluc  320, 321
Ciulucul Mijlociu  297
Claudius Aelianus, author  31
Clavijo. See Gonzales de Clavijo, Ruy
Cneaja  315
Cogălnic, river  29, 296, 297, 350
Colceag  297
Colentina, river  297
Colgeag  324
Coloman, Hungarian king  124
Coloman Băcescu  327, 340
Coman Basinschi  327, 340
Coman Berchez  327, 340
Coman Crețu  340
Coman Făgărașanul  328, 340
Coman Kure  328, 340
Coman Margelat  328, 340
Coman Șalov  340
Comana  297, 313, 316, 317, 323, 327, 328, 330, 332, 337
Comana de Jos  317
Comana de Sus  317
Comanac  315
Comanca  316
Comandău  317
Comanfalva  318
Coman  316
Comania  38, 152, 172. See also Cumania, Terra Cumanorum
Comans. See Cumans
Comanul  313
Comanus, Michael  336
Comâna  313
Comănași  327
Comănași  327
Comanăști  330
Comănăști  313
Comănești  327, 330
Comănița  327
Comănița  330
Comănești (Komarivtsi)  315
Comitopouloi Brothers  101, 102
Comnena, Anna  110, 120, 122, 125, 227
Commens, Theodore (Todre le Commanos)  335
Completo, Alessandro, author  44
Constanța, county  54, 316, 317
Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus  53, 60, 92–94, 96, 184, 207, 257, 258, 312
Constantine IX Monomachus  108, 111
Copanca  285, 294, 295, 296
Copceac  285
Copciac 320
Corcioa, A. 435–437
Copciu 319
Cordoba, city 41
Corhană 320
Corjava 285, 295–297, 309
Corona (Brășov), city 154
Corpaci 285, 297
Corțan 324
Cossacks 160, 221
Costâna 312
Costachi 285, 297
Costin, Miron, chronicler 27
Coteanu 324
Crucișoara 446
Cru operatives, the First 125, 130
Cru operatives, the Second 126
Cru operatives, the Third 127
Cru operatives, the Fourth 143, 217, 336
Csangos 71
Cuconești Vechi 285, 297
Cucuteni-Tripolye culture 11, 22
Cugurului 319
Cumușani 320
Cuise 337
Cula 320
Cuman (Cumanus) 331–333
Cuman Bishopric 154–156, 355, 357
Cuman of Alep 339
Cumana, Yorgi 336
Cumania 130, 145, 146, 153, 157, 159, 172, 260
Cumani, Georgius 333
Cumano, Johannes 336
Cumans' Ford (Vadul Cumanilor) 319
Cuman de Succotrino (Cumanus Scudrin) 323
Cundec 320
Cun. See Cumans
Cupei 320
Čur, Pecheneg tribe 257
Čura 324
Cursani 294, 297, 349
Curta, Florin, historian 6
Cusă, Anton 5
Cwn/Kun 331
Cyprus 336, 337
Dacia 23, 27, 81, 94, 269, 438
Dacians 23, 310, 321
Dacians (Hungarians) 197
Dacians (Pechenegs) 94, 95
Daco-Romans 23
ad-Dahabi, author 152
Dalmatia 120, 332, 333, 336
Damascus 339
Danastris (Dniester), river 49, 99
Danciul, son of Coman 326
Daniil (Danylo) Romanovich, Galician prince 156, 162
Danube Plain 46, 47, 50, 58, 66, 113.
See also Romanian Plain
Darius I the Great 32
David, Bulgar nobleman 101
David (Davit) II Ağmashenebeli, Georgian king 127, 208
David (Davit) IV, Georgian king 143
Dabâca 118
Dânești vii, viii, 5, 67, 192, 446, 455
Dârmân 324
Deahl, Julian, senior editor 6
Debalci 321
Delea 320
Delești viii, 300, 460
Delibaț, Waltraud 5, 435–437
Demidoff, Anatole de 288
Dentümogyer (Dentumoger), Hungarians’ ancestors 70
Derehlui, river 318
Dereneu 320
Derlui, river 318
Derman 342
Dersca 89
Desht-i Qipchaq (the Cumans’ Steppe) 38, 39, 126, 130, 149, 151, 164, 165–171, 173, 175, 205, 210, 226, 227, 234, 235, 263, 296, 308, 358
Dikie polia (Wild plain) 38
al-Dimashqi, Shams al-Din, author 182, 260
Dinogetia (Garvan) 115, 252, 292, 293
Dir, Kievan ruler 55, 89
Divizia ix, 285, 484
Djurdjaniya, city 245
Dnieper Plateau 14, 26
Dobrotich, local ruler in Dobrudja 353
Dobrovăț 192
Dobrudja 1, 23, 32, 33, 39, 54, 89, 101, 115, 125, 132
Dodești 190, 196
Dogan 342
Doina 285
Dolbești 242
Don 63, 64, 70, 94, 96, 117, 126, 244, 261, 279, 288, 303
Donets 211, 261, 303
Dorman 324
Dorostolon (Dristra, Silistra) 99, 109, 113
Draculea 286, 296
Dragaș, Jovan. See Jovan Dragaș
Dragosloveni 223
Drevlians, tribe 86, 88, 258
Dridu culture vii, 50, 61, 67, 87, 96, 97, 189, 190, 193, 213, 236, 293, 310, 349, 355, 440
Dridu-“Snagov”, village 291, 294, 297
Drin, river 317
Dristra 99, 100, 119, 120, 125.
See also Durostolon
Drochia 285, 302
Drumea, Emilia 5, 435–437
Dubăsarii Vechi 285, 296
Dubroquis Cumanus 332
Dubrovnik. See Ragusa
Durazzo 333, 353
Dürer, A. 8
Durești 192
Dürman 342
Durostorum. See Silistra
Durut, Qipchaq tribe 165, 260, 263
Dushman 342
Duşman 324
Dyrrachion. See Durazzo
Dăzunan, Qipchaq tribe 260
Echimăuți 85, 241
Edineț, county 256, 284
Egi 333
Egil 106
Endzhe (Tzarev Brod) 303
England 174
Epirus 336, 337
Epidaurus (Strigonium) 152
Etelkuzu, Etelköz 64, 93. See also Atelkuzu
Etelkız, Etelköz 64, 93. See also Atelkuzu
Euboea 336, 337
Eurasia, Eurasian steppe x, 37, 46, 47, 170, 183, 244, 357, 360
Evry 5
Euxine 353
Euxinus 353
Euxyns 353
Euxinus the Bosphorus 353
Evry 5
Famagosta 336, 337
Farkaș, Romanian knez 163
Făgăraș, city 317, 329, 330
Făgăraș Land (Țara Făgărașului) 329, 330
| Fălcăiu, county | 321 |
| Fălcăiu, hill and plain | 35 |
| Fălești | 285 |
| Făurei | 329 |
| Fărtăneși | 315 |
| Fedești | 444 |
| Felső Komana (Comana de Sus) | 317 |
| Făurei | 285 |
| Fiedler, Uwe, historian | 5 |
| Finland, Gulf | 53 |
| Florești | 68, 284–286 |
| Florus, L. Annaeus, author | 310 |
| Foșani, city | 5, 18 |
| France | 52, 163, 170, 350 |
| Frankfurt am Main | 5 |
| Frăncu | 340 |
| Frederick I Barbarossa | 130 |
| Frățești | ix, x, 256, 285, 296, 297 |
| Friedensfeld (Mirnopole) viii, 68, 256, 285, 294–297, 466 |
| Frumușica | 68, 285, 295, 296, 310 |
| Fulda, monastery | 69 |
| Fundu Herței | 89 |
| Gabriel, prelate | 93 |
| Găgauz Autonomous Territorial Unit (UTAG) | 191, 196, 284–286 |
| Galați, city | 18, 33, 135, 285 |
| Galați-Barboși | 23 |
| Galicia | 121, 131–133, 135, 137, 156–158, 162, 233, 251, 317 |
| Galician (Halych) Principality | 61, 71, 124, 131, 135 |
| Galician-Volhynia Principality | 141, 142, 161 |
| Galicians | 131, 157, 162 |
| Galoșpetreu | 331 |
| Gara Banca viii, 190, 196, 300, 460 |
| Gaul | 271 |
| Garvăn. See Dinogetia (Garvăn) |
| Găvă-noasa | 285, 297 |
| Gârbâvăț | 223 |
| Gășteni | 313 |
| Gebe. See Jebe |
| Gelalzade, Mustafa, chronicler | 32 |
| Gelou, Romanian prince | 60, 73, 90, 350 |
| Genghis Khan | 151, 165 |
| Georgia | 127, 143, 153, 168, 201, 268, 276, 354 |
| Georgians | 164, 276 |
| Germany | 186, 350 |
| Ghidigeni | 288 |
| Gîmeș Pass | 25 |
| Ghozz, Ghuz. See Oghuz and Uzes |
| Giazichopon (Jazi-Qapon), Pecheneg tribe | 257, 258 |
| Giovanni di Pian di Carpine. See Plano Carpini |
| Girmscheid, Ellen, editor | 6 |
| Giulești | 340 |
| Giurgiu | 190, 292, 316 |
| Giurgiulești | 191 |
| Glad, prince in Banat | 73, 90 |
| Glavacioc | 297 |
| Glodenii | 285 |
| Goethe, J.-W. | 8 |
| Gogul | 342 |
| Goian | 242 |
| Golden Horde | 27, 32, 38, 170, 171, 173, 174, 179, 209, 224, 230, 252, 255, 256, 260, 273, 308, 355, 358 |
| Golden Horn | 42 |
| Gologanu | 329 |
| Gonzales de Clavijo, Ruy, Spanish envoy | 42 |
| Goranduxt, the daughter of Atrak | 143 |
| Gorgan | 329 |
| Gorj | 292, 316 |
| Gorodnoe | 285 |
| Goryn, river | 88 |
| Goșman, mountains | 315 |
| Gotland | 54 |
| Gradeșca | 285 |
| Grand Comneni, dynasty | 168 |
| Grădești | 246, 285, 295 |
| Grădiște | x, 285, 290, 294, 297, 492 |
| Greaca, lake | 61 |
| Greco | 340 |
| Greece | 114, 130, 180 |
| Greek Empire (Byzantine Empire) | 117 |
| Greeks | 34, 53, 56, 57, 82, 89, 99, 255, 301 |
| Gregory IX, Pope | 154, 155, 357 |
| Gregory Pakourianos. See Pakourianos, Gregory |
| Gribova | 302, 303 |
| Grivița, Galați county | 285, 319 |
| Grivița, Vaslui county | ix, x, 5, 285, 294, 297, 470, 493 |
| Grozești viii, 68, 285, 293, 297, 468 |
| Grumazoaia | 446 |
Grüneweg, Martin, author 302
Gugeşi 329
Guillébert de Lannoy, French traveller and author 37
Gura Bâcului 285, 296, 349, 472
Gypsy 326–328, 340, 354
Guillaume, Transylvanian prince 104
Hagidar. See Hajilar
Hagimus 285, 290
Hajilar, Hagilar 285, 321
Hallstatt culture 12, 22
Hâncăufl 285, 297, 309
Hânceşti 286, 319
Hârlău, city 309
Hancu, Carmen 6
Hülagü, ilkhan 201
Hungaria Magna 78, 166
Hungarian Kingdom. See Hungary
Hungarians 50, 59, 62–79, 90–93, 95, 98, 99, 104, 112, 119, 120, 122, 127, 133, 134, 142, 156, 157, 162, 184, 188, 197, 244, 265, 266, 276, 308, 330, 350, 357
Huns 27, 220, 226, 262, 276, 352
Hust (Huszt), city 242
Hutucul 116
Huzun 311
Iabla, county ix, 285, 295, 487
Iacobeni 241
Iaorâci 320
Ialomiţa, county 68, 190, 291, 292, 297
Ialomiţa, marshes (Balta Ialomiţei) 31, 109
Ialoveni, county 67, 68, 191, 192, 196, 214, 228, 281, 283, 286
Ialpug, lake 231, 297, 319
Ialpug, river 297, 321
Ialpugul, river 297
Iarca 324
Jaroslav Osmomysli, Galician prince 131–133, 135, 136
Jaroslav the Wise, Kievan prince 105, 107, 355
Iarul 342
Iassians, tribe 166, 181
Iaşi, city vii, x, 5, 6, 192, 228, 435, 438, 495
Iaşi, county 18, 67, 68, 190, 191, 192, 196, 214, 228, 281, 283, 286
Ialpug, lake 231, 297, 319
Ialpug, river 297, 321
Ialpugul, river 297
Iarca 324
Jaroslav Osmomysli, Galician prince 131–133, 135, 136
Jaroslav the Wise, Kievan prince 105, 107, 355
Iarul 342
Iassians, tribe 166, 181
Iaşi, city vii, x, 5, 6, 192, 228, 435, 438, 495
Iaşi, county 18, 67, 68, 190, 191, 192, 196, 214, 228, 281, 284, 297, 321, 312, 313, 319, 320
Iaşi—“Nicolina” vii, 192, 228, 457, 458
Iazycoğlu Ali, chronicler 148, 149
Iberian Peninsula 275
Ibn Abî l-Hâdhîd al-Madâ’înî. See al-Madâ’înî
Ibn al-Nadim, author 82
Ibn Battuta, traveller and author 39, 184
Ibn Bibi, chronicler 148, 149
Ibn Fadlan, traveller and chronicler 111, 232, 278, 290
Ibn Hauqal, geographer and chronicler 51, 94, 183, 209
Ibn Khaldun, chronicler 182, 260
Ibn Khordâdhbeh, chronicler 182
Ibn Rusta, geographer and chronicler 184, 209
Ibn Taghibirdi, chronicler 167
Ibn Wasil, chronicler 165
Ibrahim ibn Yakub. See Abraham Jakobsen
Ichel 320
Iconium (Konya), city 148
Icu te 313
Idrisi, geographer 182, 212, 260
Igors, Kievan prince 86, 89, 92, 95
Il-äris, Qipchaq tribe 260
Ilfov, county 291
Ilia', Moldavian prince 325
Illyricum 117
Ilmen, lake 53
Innocent IV, Pope 170
Insula 'erpilor. See Snake’s Island
Însurăfliei 291
Ioannes Kegen. See Kegen
Ioannitsa (Kaloyannes) 141, 144, 145, 164, 179
Ionescu, Romeo 5, 435, 438
Iron Gates, Danubian (Porţile de Fier) 39, 71
Irtysk, river 113
Isaac I Comnenus 110, 112
Isaac II Angelus 139
Isaccea, city 32
Ismail, city 36, 242
Ismail, county 19, 191, 246, 285, 286, 319
Ismail, naia 33
Ismail, region (uezd) 288
Ismail ibn Ahmad, Samanid emir 241
Ispirekh. See Asparukh
al-Istakhri, author 183
Istro-Romanians 180
Istros (Danube) 34, 36, 56
Itapa, Qipchaq tribe 260
Italians 21, 74, 173
Italy 55, 95, 99, 118, 127, 132, 174, 350
Itil/Etil 63, 64. See also Volga
Itul 324
Iurii Konchakovich, Cuman prince 264
Ivan (Ivanko) Rostislavich 131, 135, 137
Ivanovca ix, 285, 287, 296, 309, 485, 486
Iviron Monastery 333, 334
Iziaslav Iaroslavich, Kievan prince 114, 117
Iziaslav Mstislavich, Kievan prince 153
Izvoru 190
Izz ed-Dîn Hasan ben Ya’kub ben Kifdjak 339
Jacques de Vitry, chronicler 183
Jalal-al-Din (Jalaluddin), Khwarazmshah 165
Jarizleifr (Iaroslav the Wise) 105
Jariștea vii, 329, 444
Javdi-Ertim, Pecheneg tribe 88, 257, 258
Jazi-Qapon, Pecheneg tribe 257, 258
Jebe (Gebe, Jäbä), Mongol general 149, 151
Jeravă, river 313, 323, 326
Jijia, river 297, 309, 319, 321
Jilava 294, 297, 349
Jimak, Qipchaq tribe 260
Joachim (Iwachin) of Sibiu 145
Joannes Komanitzes. See Komanitzes, Joannes
Jochi, Mongol khan 151, 152, 165, 234
John I Tzimiskes 98, 99, 100, 101, 242
John II Comnenus 126, 127, 221
John III Vatatzes 164, 167
John Asen II, Bulgarian tsar 149, 164, 167
John, Romanian knez 163
John of Plano Carpini. See Plano Carpini
Joltai Iar 285, 488
Josippon, Hebrew historical work 95
Jovan Dragaš, despot 335
Jula, Pecheneg tribe 257, 258
Julian, Dominican friar 166
Jyla. See Jula
Kabal 342
Kabars 50, 64, 69, 71, 75, 188, 341
K’abukšin-Jula, Pecheneg tribe 257
Kadan, Mongol ruler 157, 339
Kaepichi, tribe 160
Kalcheva 285, 297
Kalika, battle of 150, 153, 159, 162, 263
Kalmuks, tribe 219
Kaltabuka 324
Kamanic 336
Kambiya 336
Kami'ianets Podil's'kyi, city 187
Kang 258
Kangogly, Qipchaq tribe 260
Kara 342
Karabarogly, Qipchaq tribe 260
Karatash 342
Karak, Cuman ruler 145, 146
Kastamonu, bey of 151
Kato-Gyla, Pecheneg tribe 257
Kavadarci 335
Kazakhs 210
Kazan, person name 324
Kazar, Pecheneg ruler 338
Kegen, Pecheneg khan 108, 109, 113, 153, 197, 210, 259, 263
Kekaumenos, author 76, 178
Kerson, region 304
Khali 342
Khalkidike Peninsula. See Chalcidice Peninsula
Khamza 342
Khanjar, Pecheneg ruler 338
Kievan Principality 51, 55, 62, 86. See also Kiev
See also Kievan Rus'
Kievan Principality 51, 55, 62, 86. See also Kiev
Kizhi 304
Kitaian 342
Koian 342
Kökechü 340
Koman 317, 324, 329, 330, 338
Koman Cherchel 329
Koman, Christof 329
Koman, Polovtsyan ruler 338
Koman (Kuqouc) 334
Komanica 317
Komanovo 317
Komanova 317
Komanpathak 318
Köménya 317
Komanfalva 318
Komeno 336
Konchak, Cuman khan 264
Konovalova, Irina G., historian 5
Konstanz 5
Konya, town 148
Konya (Rum), Sultanate 149
Kolch, Cuman ruler 121
Korman 324
Kosha 342
Kosovo, region 317
Kotian, khan. See Kuthen
Kotian, Qipchaq tribe 260
Kotor. See Cattaro
Koui, tribe 160
Kragui 342
Krinichnoe 228, 231
Kronstadt (Brais), city 154
Krum, Bulgarian khan 56, 60, 100
Kubu, river (South Bug?) 64
Kuchelnin, city 131
Küchüg, Pecheneg name 184
Küirêçî-Çur, Pecheneg tribe 257, 258
Kulpej, Pecheneg tribe 257
Kuman 317, 324, 332, 342
Kuman' 317
Kumancie 317
Kumanić 317
Kumaničevo 317, 335
Kumanich 317
Kumaniec 332
Kumaniè 317
Kumanin 342
Kumanishmaia 317
Kumanite 317
Kumanitz 317
Kumano 342
Kumanov 317
Kumanova Čuka 317
Kumanovéi 317
Kumanovka 317
Kumanovo 317, 335
Kumanovskaia Iuridika (Kumanówka) 317
Kumanovtzy 317
Kumanowce 317
Kumanówka. See Kumanovskaia Iuridika
Kumantzi 317
Kumoniu 317
Kun 330, 331
Kunbek 342
Kurchmannus (Cumanus) 331
Kunduk 321
Kune 342
Kunfal 318
Kano 342
Kum, Polovtsyan ruler 338
Kurd 342
Kurszan, Hungarian ruler 72
Kurt 342
Kurte 342
Ladislas I the Saint, Hungarian king 118, 121
Ladislas IV the Cuman (Kún László), Hungarian king 169
Ladoga, lake 53
Laimin 334
Langeron, count 199
Laqay Özbek, region x, 498
Latène culture 12
Latin Empire 79, 140, 143–145, 149, 164, 276, 357
Lavra Monastery 333–336
Lazarus, “barbarian” chieftain 129, 335
Lăpușna, county 19, 320
Lăpușna, river 314
Lăpușnita 314
Leahu 340
Lebanion, battle of 120, 197

Lebanion, battle of 120, 197

Lemnos 168, 336
Lenzenians (Poles?), tribe 258
Leo IX, Pope 113
Leo V the Armenian 56
Leo VI the Wise 66
Leova 61, 286, 319
Lesbos 168
Lespezi 312
Levasseur de Beauplan, Guillaume, author 199
Lezghians, tribe 164
Liešti 285, 295
Liman 285
Limanskoé ix, x, 285, 296, 297, 487, 488
Limbaru (Hansa-) 251, 281–283
Limni 336
Linear Pottery culture 22
Lipovanu 340
Lișcoteanca 291, 294, 297, 349
Lithuania 27, 317
Lito, Romanian voivode 163
Liudprand of Cremona 95
Llan (Alans) 83
Lombards 95
Lombardy 35, 130
London 5
Lopatnic 297
Louis IX the Saint 77
Lovat 53
Lublau, treaty of 37
Lucășeaua 85, 214, 283
Lukomorskie Cumans 261
Lunga 297
Lungești 313
Lvow (L'viv) 187
Macedonia 76, 107, 114, 167, 180, 317, 335
Macedonian dynasty 97
Macpherson, J., author 136
al-Madâ'ini, Ibn Abî l-Hadîd, author 183
Magribians (Pechenegs) 134
al-Mahdi, caliph 241
Mahmud al-Kashghari, author 181, 182, 212, 295
Maiaiki 184
Mainz 5
Malak 342
Mamluk state 165
Manastras, Cuman chieftain 145
Mangush, Kotian’s son 165
al-Mansur, caliph 241
Manta 285, 297
Mantzikert (Malazgyrt), battle of 118
Manuel I Comnenus 128, 130, 131
al-Maqdisi, Mutahhar, author 82, 83
Maramureș 60, 242, 239–331, 340, 341
Mare Maggiore 42. See also Black Sea
Margarita 337
Markos, monk 91
Marmara, Sea 41
Martine 53
Marwan II, caliph 241
al-Mas'udi, chronicler 257, 264
Matca x, 285, 294, 492
Matthew of Edessa (Matt'ēos Urhajec'ī), chronicler 112
Matthia I Corvinus, Hungarian king 24
Mazaros 336
Mârculești 285, 296
Măstăcăni 35, 320
Mândrești ix, 285, 296, 329, 470
Mediterranean, Sea 10, 13, 41, 42, 270, 336, 337
Medveja 285
Melegno-Romanians 180
Melik-Temür 339
Meliztsiane 334
Menk Comans, Cuman ruler 331
Menenurut, ruler in Crișana 73
Mecotica Lake. See Azov Sea
Mereni 285
Merkits, Mongol tribe 151
Merverrudi, Muhammad Ibn Mansur, author 182
Mesembria (Nesebar) 40
Mesopotamia, Western 101
Mezeș Gates 118
Michael VIII Palaeologus 168
Michael the Brave (Mihai Viteazul), Romanian prince 24
Michael Cerularius, patriarch 113
Michael Psellos. See Psellos
Michael Rhetor, author 129
Michael the Syrian, patriarch and chronicler 117, 122, 126, 276
Miclești 313
Mihkalovce, region 317
Milcov, river 1
Miletin, river 315
Milloslaus de Comana 332
Mingür-oglu, Qipchaq tribe 260
Minski 317
Mircea the Elder (Mircea cel Bătrân), Romanian prince 328
Mirhoe 286, 296
Mirkopole viii, 68, 256, 285, 297
Missians. See Pechenegs
Moesia 107, 270
Moesia Inferior 23
Moesians 91
Moghuils 171
Moglena, region 180, 326, 335
Mohács, battle of 331
Molda. See Baia (Molda)
Moldavian, Plateau 14, 26
Moldova, river 157
Molești 192, 283
Mongol, Empire 170, 295
Mongolia 234
Monteuro culture 12
Moravia 59, 69
Moscow 5, 348–437
Moscow ix, x, 68, 256, 285, 295, 297, 493
Moses, Bulgarian nobleman 101
Moses Khorenats'ī, chronicler 80, 81
Mostiştea 297
Movila 68
Mstislav III, Kievan prince 149
Mubâriz-eddin-Avlia-ben-Kuman 339
Muhammad Kâtib (the Writer), author 184
Mulder, Marcella, editor 6
Munich 5
Muntenia (Wallachia) 316
Murfatlar. See Basarabí
Murgení 355, 445
Mutahhar al-Maqdisí. See al-Maqdisí
Nagornoe 285, 297
Nagysezentmiklós. See Sânnicolau Mare
Naimans, Mongol tribe 151
Nasr II ibn Ahmad, caliph 241
Nădușita (Gribova) x, 302, 303, 492
Neamț, county 18, 142, 312, 313, 322, 326
Neamțu 340
Negoș 342
Negroponte. See Euboea
Neolithic 11, 22, 45, 214, 216, 224, 289
Neruşai 286, 296, 297
Nesebar. See Mesembria
Nestor, chronicler 83
Neva, river 53
Nicaragd, city 144, 149, 158, 167
Nicaean Empire 149
Nicephorus I 56
Nicephorus II Phocas 94, 98, 99
Nicholas Mysticus, patriarch of Constantinople 91
Nikephoros, patriarch of Constantinople 41
Nistru. See Dniester
Nogai, Mongol emir and khan 32, 296
Nogay (Tatars), tribe 199
Nous, river 53
Odrul 293
an-Nuwaïrâ, chronicler 42, 166, 215, 255, 260
Nyr, province 118
Ochil, city 32
Oblucija (Isaccea), city 32
Ojcov, fortress 37
Ochrid, city 102, 103
Odessá, city 5
Odessá, Gulf 40
Odessá, region 68, 192, 228, 242, 246, 256, 284
Odorá 324
Odobasca 329
Oghuz-Khan, eponymous hero 81, 117, 208, 276
Ogödâi, Mongol khan 339
Ogorodnoe x, 285, 294, 297, 349, 488
Oituz Pass 23–25, 72, 255
Oituz, river 23, 309, 311, 312
Oituz, village 25, 191
Okorses, Bulgarian general 57
Olaha 163
Olan 324
Olâneşti ix, 285, 296, 349, 484
Oleg, Kiev prince 55, 86, 88, 89
Oleshîa, settlement in the Dnieper estuary 131, 150
Olt, county 316
Olt, river 22, 25, 61, 298, 317, 319, 330
Olteniia 192
Oltenia 133, 145, 163, 215, 319
Oltenița 292, 297, 349
Omonart, Bulgarian ruler 57, 58, 60
Onçeştî 191
Onegăvon, Bulgarian ruler 57
Onogur-Bulgar, tribe 77
Opaç 285, 294, 296, 484
Oradea, city 331
Orășaie 320
Orel 261
Orhei, city vii, 86, 87, 214, 228, 231, 232, 321, 450
Orhei, county 68, 85, 86, 214, 228, 256, 280, 283, 285, 286, 308
Orhei, region (uezd) 288
Orheiul Vechi 308
Orkon, river 304
Orlova 285
Ostrița 319
Ostrogóths 32
Osul, Pecheneg ruler 117
Otto von Freising, chronicler 130, 226
Ottoman Turks 321, 331, 342. See also Ottomans
Ottomans 32, 341, 347
Orzellowitz, Hora von, geographer 17
Ozbâg, Mongol khan 179, 209, 234, 295

Paderborn, city 271
Paiandur 324
Palaikastro 334
Palanca x, 285, 489
Pannonia 69–74, 76, 79, 156, 180, 350. See also Hungary and Pannonian Plain
Pannonian Plain 47, 68, 71, 75, 331, 360
Paristrion (Paradunavon), theme 101, 111, 113, 114, 119, 122, 240
Pascatur (Bashkâria) 78
Pașcani, city vii, 242, 447
Patzinakia 94, 109, 258
Patzinaks. See Pechenegs
Pârtești de Jos 246, 285, 296, 297, 298
Pecherskaia Monastery 73
Pechineaga 316
Pecherskaia Monastery 73
Pecineaga 316
Peca 32, 42
Pereiaslav, town 114, 116
Pereseliv 86
Peresecina, village 86
Perlui, river 319
Persia 36, 130, 208, 209
Petcu, Mariana 5
Peter, Vlach ruler, brother of Asen 138, 139
Peter, Bulgarian tsar 98
Pethachia, rabbi 226
Peterști 285, 473
Petru Aron, Moldavian prince 325
Petru Rareș, Moldavian prince 24
Petruha vii, 214, 228, 231
Philippopolis (Plovdiv) 112, 124
Picegani 312
Picineagul 316
Pit-Grave culture 210, 287, 298
Plano Carpini, John of, Papal envoy 163, 170, 219, 233
Platonești 190
Plavni ix, 256, 286, 294, 296, 297, 487, 488
Ploskynia, Brodnik ruler 150
Pogonești vii–x, 256, 286, 297, 466, 469, 470, 493
Poiana, Galați county 23
Poiana, Gorj county 292
Poland 27, 35, 37, 121, 128, 169, 253, 311
Poles 88, 157, 255, 258
Polotsk, principality 114
Polovtsy. See Cumans
Polybius, author 30
Pomazani 286
Ponto-Caspian region 21
Pontus Euxinus 30, 36, 40. See also Black Sea.
Popeasca 286
Porțile de Fier. See Iron Gates, Danubian
Praha, city 271
Preslav, city 271
Primorsko 285, 286, 297
Prișăcani 25
Priștina, city 317
Probota viii, ix, 68, 286, 297, 461, 470, 474
Prodana. See Bărlad–“Prodana”
Propontis. See Marmara, Sea
Prussians 96
Prut 16, 18, 26, 29, 33, 35, 39, 60, 61, 65, 88, 89, 94, 103, 157, 193, 200, 284, 296–298, 309, 311, 319, 328, 350, 351
Psellus, Michael, chronicler 110, 111, 266, 275
Pseudo-Scymnos, author 31
Purcari 29, 286, 296, 349
Pyrenees 48, 352
Qamangü, Qipchaq tribe 260
Qangli, tribe 151
Qara-Baj (Charaboi, Charawoj), Pecheneg tribe 257, 258
Qara böklü, tribe 260
Qarluqs 77, 80, 217, 226
al-Qazwini, author 39, 183
Qipchaq, eponymous hero 117
Qipchaq, son of Kadan 339
Qipchaqs. See Cumans
Qirqiz, region x, 498
Qirqiz, Turkish tribe 181, 210
Qumanayê (Cumans) 117
Qunrad Özbek, region x, 498
Rába (Raab), river 64
Rábaköz, place name 64
Radimichi, tribe 49, 86
Radolobis 334
Radoslav 332
Ragusa, city 332
Rashid al-Din (Räšid od-Din), chronicler 81, 166, 259, 441
Ratisbona. See Regensburg
Răciuni 313
Răducăneni, village vii, 192, 241, 300, 454–456
Răducăneni culture vii, 189, 192, 193, 213, 236, 349, 441
Răscăieți Noi 286, 296
Răstoaca 223, 329
Răut, river 81, 85, 87, 88, 97, 103, 267, 281, 296, 297, 309
Rămnicelu 292, 294, 297, 349
Rămnicu Sărat, river 297
Rășcani 285
Rebricea 313, 323
Regensburg (Ratisbona) 226
Reginald of Prüm, chronicler 70
Reicherstorffer, Georg, author 24, 28, 198
Reni, city 242
Reni, district 246, 285, 286
Republic of Moldova. See Moldova, Republic of
Rezina, county 85, 241
Riazan, city 153
Riazan, principality 166
Riedel, I., geographer 439
Risipiti 329
Robert de Clari, chronicler 226
Rodelf, Varangian 54
Rodlós, Varangian 54
Rodna, city 157
Rodvisl, Varangian 54
Rogersius (Roger of Torre Maggiore), author 168
Roma, village x, 100, 179, 286, 491
Roman, city 18
Roman Empire 42, 112
Roman Mstislavich, prince of Galich-Volhynia 141, 142
Romans 32, 79, 80, 130
Romanus II, Byzantine emperor 92
Romanus IV Diogenes, Byzantine emperor 118, 121
Ros, river 88, 115, 296, 308
Rostislav of Chernigov 157
Roșcani vii, 286, 296, 446
Rozsány (Rosal) 331
Rudi 85, 281
Rum. See Konya, Sultanate
Rumeanteu, village 286
Rurik 55
Rurik II Rostislavich, Kievian prince 142
Rusnac 340
Russia 5, 18, 27, 136, 199, 311, 323, 350
Russians 77, 82, 97, 163, 164, 302
Rusu 340
Ruthenians 163
Sabar 297
Sădoveo (Şabatal) ix, 68, 286, 296
Sagala 320
Saif ad-Din Kiptchak al Mansuri (Qipchaq al-Manşûri) 339

Saint Panteleémôn Monastery 335

Saksin, city 212, 246

Solomon, Hungarian king 118, 120

Saltovo–Maiaki culture 49, 96, 184, 252

Saîm al-Dîn Dimashqî. See Dimashqî

Samuel, Bulgarian ruler 101

Sadqa. See Isaccea

Sâr, river 64

Sarah, city 163, 209, 355

Sarah (Siret), river 94

Sarî 342

Saribughâ Jalâîr, general 171

Sarkel 94. See also Sarkel-Belaia Vezha

Sarkel-Belaia Vezha 184, 212

Sărkoz, place name 64

Sarmatians 208, 210, 298

Sarît, Mongol khan 163

Sas 340

Sasic, lake 34

Sasicul Mare, lake 61, 297

Saskin, city 114

Satu Mare, city 331

Satza, chieftain in Paristrion 119

Sauromantians (Cumans) 197

Saxons 145, 147, 174, 271

Sâbăoani 312, 322

Sătâ 286, 295, 297

Sălătruc 328

Sânduleni 313

Sârata 68, 256, 285, 286, 294–297, 314

Sârata Monteoru 271

Sărăteni 286

Sânnicolaú Mare 184, 257

Sântana de Mureș-Cherniakhov culture 12

Sârbu 340

Scandinavia 89, 178, 240, 241

Scânteia 18

Schiu Frumoasa 313

Schöner, Johannes, author 77

Scime de Comana 332

Scorpan 324

Scutari (Shkodra) 333

Sculthia Minor 39, 56

Scythians 32, 91, 159, 204, 220, 233, 277, 287, 352

Scythians (Cumans) 141, 164, 207

Scythians (Pechenegs) 126, 197, 207

Scythians (Uzes) 207

Scythians (Tivertians) 84

Selîste viii, ix, 256, 266, 290, 296, 310, 461, 475

Selîstea lui Coman 323, 326

Seljuq Turks 111, 118, 127, 143, 148, 276, 339

Selte 324

Seneșlu, Romanian voivode 163

Serbia 76, 311, 331

Serbs 119, 346, 347

Seretos (Siret), river 64, 94

Sesthlav, chieftain in Paristrion 119

Severians, tribe 49, 86

Severin Banate 158

Sevirova 286, 296, 486

Shams al-Dîn al-Dîmashqî. See al-Dîmashqî

Sharaf al-Zaman Tahir Marvazi. See al-Marvazi

Sharukan, Cuman ruler 211, 212, 263, 264

Shaubece, city 339

Shevchenko, village 286

Shishman 342

Shûkrûllakh, chronicler 63, 182, 184

Shumen, county 303

Sibiu, county 271

Sigismund I of Luxembourg 341

Silistra 31, 94, 109, 294

Silïstea Nouă 444

Simila vii, 355, 445

Simon de Keza, chronicler 118

Sinaçâu 320

Siret, river 1, 16, 18, 23, 26, 30, 39, 65, 67, 71, 94, 154, 157, 194, 213, 258

Sjónhem 54, 105

Skleros, Niketas, general 62

Skyllitzes, John (Ioannes), chronicler 197, 210

Skopje 335

Slănic, river 316

Slavs 55, 79, 83, 173, 174, 224, 244, 269

Slobozia 286, 329

Slon, fortress 100

Slovakia 317, 353

Snakes’ Island (Insula Șerpilor) 41

Snorri Sturluson. See Sturluson, Snorri

Sobari 320

Sokal, Cuman ruler 116

Soldaiaians 163

Soloneț, river 297, 314
Someșul Mare, river 157
Somedur, Cuman ruler 142
Soroca, county 85, 281
Soroca, region (uezd) 288
South Bug. See Bug, South
Spalato (Split), city 332
Speta 286, 296
Spinosa 67, 213
Sruby culture 210, 287, 298
Stația Zânelor 286, 294, 297
Stephen I the Saint, Hungarian king 104, 107
Stephen II, Hungarian king 338
Stephen the Great (Ștefan cel Mare), Moldavian prince 194, 325, 326, 341
Stephen the First-Crowned (Prvovenčani), Serbian king 332
Stephen Uroș II Milutin, Serbian king 332
Stephen Uroș III Dečanski, Serbian king 335
Stockholm 5
Stoenești 292
Stomion 334
Storojineț, district 315
Strabo 28, 30, 34, 36, 92
Străulești 293, 355
Strigoniun. See Esztergom
Strumoc 286, 297, 349
Sturhuson, Snorri, chronicler 106
sub-Carpathians 26, 29, 45, 298
Săbăuți, Mongol general 149, 151
Suceava, city viii, 18, 285, 439
Suceava, county 157, 246, 283, 312, 314
Suceava, road 23
Suceava, road 23
Suceava, river 297
Sugr, Cuman ruler 211, 212, 264
Sugrov, Cuman “town” 211
Subarau 314
Suhului 318, 319
Suida, lexicon 94
Sulina, Danube branch 53
Sultana 190
Suraia 329
Suru-Kilbej, Pecheneg tribe 257
Șușman 324
Suvar, city 241
Suvars, tribe 181
Suvorovo ix, 191, 242, 246, 286, 295, 297, 349, 476
Suzdal, city 159
Svetlăi 286
Sviatopolk I, Kievan prince 105
Sviatopolk II, Kievan prince 124
Sviatoslav I, Kievan prince 54, 89, 98–100, 103, 125
Sviatoslav III Vsevolodovich 140
Sviatoslav, son of Vladimir I the Saint 105
Symeon the Great, Bulgarian tsar 62, 66, 91, 92, 98
Symeon Magister, author 56, 74
Syrcban, Cuman ruler 264
Syryan, city 113
Syria 98, 339
Syzigan, Cuman noble 168
Szekler 25, 75, 330
Szepsi 331
Șabalan (Sadovoe) 472
Șag, lake 34
Șcheia 241
Șendreni 190
Șerban 324, 340
Șoldănești 85, 241, 281, 285
Șorogari 190
Ștefan cel Mare. See Stephen the Great
Ștefan Lăcustă, Moldavian prince 35
Ștefan-Vodă, county 285
Știubei 292, 297
Șuilea 459
Tabac 320
Taban 324
Table Buții pass 100
Talăbâ 321, 342
Tâlmaza 286
Tămerlan. See Timur Lenk
Târâtaș 324
Tana, city 42
Tângâru 292, 294, 297
Tarabuga 337
Taraclia ix, 256, 284, 286, 294, 297, 481–483
Târcău 320
Târla 342
Tașbunar 297
Tatar, Cuman ruler 338
Tatar, son of Giulia 340, 341
Tatar, Johannes 341
Tatarbunari 284, 285, 286
Tatars 37, 118, 170, 171, 198, 199, 220, 234, 255, 267, 321
Tatos (Chalis), chieftain in Paristrion 119, 120
Tatul 242
Tazlău, river 313, 315, 319–321
Târnovo, city 144, 158, 273
Târnava, river 319
Tătăruș, river 313
Tărnăveni 315
Tărmășeni 315
Tătaruș 313
Tătărușia 313
Tâncabă 324
Teban 320
Tecuci, city 5, 135, 320
Tei, lake (Bucharest) 297, 349
Teledomin, county 190, 292, 316
Teleorman, region 128
Temir, Pecheneg name 184
Temuin 151. See also Genghis Khan
Ten (Don), river 117
Tenu Ormon, place name in Wallachia 128, 129
Tercești 329
Teter, dynasty 352
Tescani 313
Teslui, river 318
Teçcan 286
Teutonic Knights 146–148, 152, 155, 156, 255
Thasos, island 168
Thatar. See Tatars
Theodore Comnenus. See Comnenus, Theodore
Theodore Angelus, emperor of
Thessalonike 164
Theodore II Lascaris, emperor of
Nicaea 168
Theodoric, bishop of the
Cumans 154, 155
Theodorokanos, Byzantine general 102
Theophanes Confessor, chronicler 40
Thessalonike 131, 158, 164, 334
Tholomeus of Lucca, chronicler 143
Thrace 58, 107, 141, 167, 168, 267
Thrac-Dacian 12, 20
Tighina (Bender), city 27, 61, 321
Tighina, county 19, 320
Tiligul 321
Timiș, county 184, 257
Timiș, river 121
Timur Lenk (Tamerlane) 41, 171
Tiraspol, city 317
Tisza (Tisa) 57–60, 121
Tıvan 324
Tivertians 83–88, 97, 103, 267
Toacș 324
Tochile-Răducani 286
Toșa, See Toșabă
Toșabă 320, 321
Todireni viii, 286, 295, 297, 466
Togan 324
Tog-Jaşqut, Qipchaq tribe 260
Togorták 122. See also Tugorkan
Toksoba, Qipchaq tribe 165, 260, 263, 324
Tolâ Buga, Mongol khan 295
Tomai 286, 297
Tomesti 283
Tonguzu(e) 320, 321
Toqsapa, Qipchaq tribe 260
Toqtai, Mongol khan 32, 295
Toqsz-Oghuz, tribe 208, 212, 304
Torki. See Uzes
Toșabă (Toșabă) 321, 324
Tuscany 337
Trapova, county 286, 296, 297, 308, 461
Trullos (Dniester), river 64. See also
Turla
Trebizond, city 42, 158
Trebizond, empire 144, 168
Trebujeni 308
Trotuș, river/valley 23, 25, 309, 311, 315
Tudora x, 286, 295, 296, 349, 492
Tugorkan, Cuman ruler 121, 122, 263
Tugrul 342
Tükal Buga, son of Toqtai Khan 32
Tulcea, county 32, 115, 252, 292, 316
Turians 91, 98, 109, 111, 121, 124, 128, 148
Turgutlu 324
Turcu, Turcul 324, 340
Turchul, John (Ioan) 341
Turkish 217, 226
Turkestan 207, 226
Turkey 130
Turkey (Hungary) 258
Turkish 342
Turkmen 210
Turkomans 208
Turko-Tatars 80
Turks 45, 82, 83, 199
Turks (Cumans, Oghuz, Pechenegs) 182, 183
Tyrk (Pechenegs?) 105
Turla (Dniester), river 320, 321
Turlui, river 313, 318, 319, 323
Turun Roșu, pass 22
Turpei, tribe 160
Tutova, river 297
Tutova Hills 19, 288
Tuzla ix, 256, 286, 297, 320, 476
Tuzora 320
Tver, region 317
Tyrach, Pecheneg khan 108–110, 113, 153, 197, 259, 263
Tyras, city 23, 43
Tyras (Dniester), river 28, 34, 36, 81
Tyrkland 105
Tzarev Brod. See Endzhe
Tzelgu, Pecheneg ruler 197
‡ Tara Românească (Muntenia). See Wallachia
Tareuca 85
Tăpurdei 320
Țigan 340
Udobă 324
Ugrin 342
Ukraine 5, 27, 68, 192, 228, 242, 245, 246, 256, 279, 284, 288, 305, 311, 315, 323
Ulak (Vlachs, Romanians) 81, 82, 117
Ulan 324
Ulğay-Khan 207
Ulichians, tribe 83, 84, 86–88, 258
Ulmeni 292, 297
Ultinihs (Ulichians?), tribe 258
al-Umarî, chronicler 171, 233
Umbrărescu vii, ix, 286, 294, 297, 349
Ung, fortress 72
Ung, woodland 72
Ungheni, county 285, 314
Ungureanu 340
Unus Khan (John Asen II?) 167
Ural Mountains 37, 77, 185
Ural, river 261, 304
Urdobaș 324
Ureche, Grigore, chronicler 219
Urechești 329
Ursiu, river 318
Urmezeu 320
Ursoaia ix, 286, 295, 296, 478, 485
Usurob, Cuman khan 264
Usatovo culture 287
Usbaisa, city 131
Umeș 324
Uz, river 311
Uzas 338
Uzu ęrtan, Qipchaq tribe 260
Uzur, Uzuz 339
Vadul Cumaniilor. See Cumans’ Ford
Vadul lui Isac 61, 286, 297
Vadul Ӧii 31
Valea Zâbalei 320
Valens, emperor 32, 36
Valwen 106. See also Cumans
Varangians 51, 53–55, 89, 92, 99, 107, 174, 244
Varangians’ Sea (Baltic Sea) 53
Vardar 335
Vasileu (Vasilev) 157
Vasilevca 286, 297
Vasilko Rostislavich 125
Vaslui, city 5, 17, 18, 436
Vaslui, county 18, 67, 190, 192, 196, 214, 215, 228, 256, 283–286, 288, 300, 313, 314, 355
Vaslui, river 318, 319
Vatatzes, Leo, general 132
Văsui, river 318
Vănițori 190, 329
Velikopotemkinski Isle 131
Venice 153, 186, 333
Verancsics (Verantio), Antonio, author 24, 28, 36
Verecke Pass 47, 71, 72, 134, 157
Verești 157
Vicina, city 32, 119
Vida 337
Vidin, county 124
Vienna 5, 69
Viile 315
Villehardouin, Geoffroy de, chronicler 77, 78
Vilnius, city 317
Vinderei 320, 321
Vinogradovca 286, 297
Visigoths 32
Vișnevoe 286
Vitănești 292, 294, 297
Vitebsk, region 317
Vlachs  54, 56, 60, 73–81, 102, 103, 106, 107, 119, 122, 132, 139, 141, 148, 159, 163, 167, 178, 200, 225, 242, 310, 331, 332. See also Romanians, Ulak and Wallachians
Vlad I of Wallachia  341
Vlad Dracul, Romanian prince  328
Vlad the Monk (Călugărul), Romanian prince  328
Vladimir, city  166
Vladimir (Volodimer) I the Saint  88, 103, 104, 272
Vladimir II Monomakh  124–127 131, Vladislav II of Wallachia  328
Vladăeni  241
Voin, battle of  114
Volga  49, 52, 64, 65, 78, 80, 82, 83, 89, 90, 108, 111, 113, 114, 117, 151, 156, 163, 165, 166, 190, 205, 209, 212, 217, 241, 244, 245, 246, 261, 262, 265, 278, 284, 290, 303, 308, 356
Volhynia  124
Volhyno-Podolian Plateau  14, 26
Volhov, river  55
Volkhvy, tribe  80
Volodar, prince of Premysl  124
Vologda, region  317
Vornicu, Diana-Măriuca  6
Vrancea, county  18, 190, 223
Vrancea, region  25, 226, 254, 255, 320, 329
Vseslav Briachislavich, prince of Polotsk  114
Vsevolod, prince of Kiev  166
Viiuupa  324

Wagner, Richard  8
Waladj  82
Walandar, city  264
Walerand de Wavrin  31
Wallachia (Țara Românească)  23, 37, 60, 61, 68, 95, 133, 141, 157, 163, 169, 180, 190, 194, 195, 204, 251, 255, 291, 292, 298, 316, 317, 323, 325, 328, 341, 349, 352, 353
Wallachians  83, 105, 161, 255. See also Vlachs and Romanians
al-Wardi, author  183
Washington, D.C.  5
Weismantel, Erasmus Heinrich Schneider von, commander and author  239
Western Mesopotamia, strategia  101
White Croatia. See Croatia, White
White Cumania  260
White Cumans  106
William of Rubruck, envoy and author  38, 77, 78, 163, 219, 235, 277
William of Tyre, chronicler  208
Xenophon Monastery  334
Xiphias, Byzantine general  102
Yak’ubi, Abul-‘Abbas Ahmed, chronicler  226
Yakut al-Hamavi, author  183
Yamnaia culture  209, 280, 287, 291
Zagora, Zagura (Bulgaria)  80
Zagreb  332
Zamozhnoe  245
Zaporozhie, region  245
Zârnești  266, 290, 297, 461
Zehan  324
Žiča Monastery  332
Zoltan, Hungarian prince  353
Zonaras, John (Ioannes), chronicler  95
Zosima the Deacon  42
AUTHOR INDEX

Aalto, P. 207, 361

Abäzov, E. See Abyzova, E. N.

Abou Chamah 339, 361

Aboulfeda. See Abu'l Feda

Abou-Żeid Ahmed ben Sahl el-Balkhî. See al-Maqdisî

Abraham Jakobsen (Ibrahim ibn Yâkub) 94, 361

Abramowski, W. 166, 361

Abu Hamid al Garmati (el Granadino) 114, 134, 141, 361, 369, 378

Abu'l Faraq, Gregory (Bar Hebraeus) 102, 108, 151, 232, 361, 370

Abu'l Feda (Abou'l Feda, Aboulfeda) 149, 150, 182, 184, 188, 212, 274, 287, 289, 339, 361, 375

Abu'l-Ghazi Behadour Khan (About-Ghâzi Behdârou Khan) 117, 173, 186, 361

Abu-'Umar-i-'Usman 151, 370, 375

Abzyova, E. N. 191, 199, 308, 349, 383–385, 390, 437

Achim, V. 154, 158, 392

Adalbjarnarson, B. 217, 380

Adam, M. See Adam(-Chiper), M.

Adam(-Chiper), M. xiii, 367, 389

Adhemar de Chabannes 96, 362

Adler, A. 94, 380

Adler, M. N. 122, 363

Adrianova-Peretts, V. P. xvi, 15, 377

Adriányi, G. 147, 392

Afanas’ev, G. E. 49, 392

Agache, D. xiii, 250, 367

Agâdžanov (Agadžanov), S. G. 113, 392

Agrigoroaiei, E. 301

Agul’nikov, S. M. 295, 384, 437

Ahrweiler, H. 55, 129, 393, 416

al-Aini 149

Airinei, Ş. 16

Akhowzhanov, S. M. 148, 208, 212, 264, 393

Akropolites, Georgios 115, 140, 144, 145, 164, 167, 233, 362

Aksenov, S. V. 172, 373

Alheric des Trois Fontaines 144, 152–154, 167, 276, 277, 362

Albert of Aix 123

Aleksiev, N. A. 275, 393

Alemany, A. 4

Alexandre, P. 16, 393

Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, M. M. xii, 43, 365, 393

Alexianu, M. 220, 366

Alexoaie, I. 383, 438

Ali, Mustafa 33

Allsen, Th. T. 165, 235, 393

Almagià, R. 34, 173, 362

Altaner, B. 154, 155, 393

Alzati, C. 179, 393

Amiras, Al. 38, 366

Amlacher, A. 58, 419

Anamius Marcellinus 30, 32, 40, 220, 392

Analista Saxo 66

Ananias of Shirak (Shirakats’i) 27, 80, 81, 362

Anastasiu, F. 291, 292, 386

Andea, A. 213, 430

Andea, S. xiv, 179, 367

Ando, S. 171, 393

Andresescu, Şt. 43, 393

Andrews, P. A. 218, 219, 393, 438

Andronic, M. 12, 393

Angelov, D. 61, 98, 393

Angelov, P. 139

Anghelescu, A. 195

Angold, M. 144, 393

Anonyme Geographer 28, 76, 79, 362

Anonymus Leobiensis 35, 169, 170, 362

Anonymus, Notary of king Bela [III] (P Magister qui Anonymus dicitur) xi, 59, 60, 70–73, 77–79, 90, 115, 362, 369

Ansbert (Der sogenannte) 140, 362, 371

1 Italic type for ancient, medieval and early modern authors, and roman type for modern and present-day authors.
Antoniou, S.  195, 383
Antonopoulos, P. T.  264
Antonovici, I.  250, 313, 362
Antonovici, N. I.  20, 393
Apostolos-Cappadona, D.  275, 402
Arbman, H.  52, 393
Arbore, Al. P.  252
Arbore, Z.  320, 393
Arbusov, L.  150, 227, 370
Arends, M.  71, 393
Aristov, N.  154, 227, 370
Arkas, M.  135
Armbruster, A.  46, 79, 132, 147, 178, 179, 393
Arnăutu, T.  213, 420, 430
Arndt, W.  150, 227, 370
Arne, T. J.  52, 393
Artamonov, M. I.  48, 50, 212, 221, 383, 393
Artemenko, I. I.  295, 384
Arvinte, V.  77, 178, 393
Asimov, M. S.  113, 425
Asolik de Tarôn, Étienne  99, 368
Atanasov, G.  294, 383
Atwood, C. P.  218, 393
Aufhauser, J. B.  91, 375
Aufī  63
Aumer, C.  154, 393
Aurell, M.  23, 408
Axinte Uricariul  21, 24, 33, 46, 47, 325, 362, 381
Babcock, E. A.  209, 382
Babel, A.  27, 393
Babik, Iu.  134, 408, 409
Babitz, J.  11, 394
Bakalov, G.  183, 383
Baker, R.  71, 394
Bakó, G.  71, 87, 90, 252, 394
al-Bakrī (al-Becrī)  xvi, 94, 204, 205, 232, 237, 257, 274, 275, 304, 363, 358, 367
al-Bakwī, Abd ar-Rashīd  183, 226, 363
Balabanov, P.  139, 394
Bald, M.  32, 172, 245, 336, 363
Baldric of Dole  123
Balducci Pegolotti, F  172, 377
Balčić, S.  134, 309, 394
Bālint, C.  49, 67, 68, 185, 237, 240, 383, 387, 394, 398
Balivet, M.  153, 394
Balta, E.  336, 363
Bandini, Marco (Bandinus)  17, 37, 43, 363, 381
Bang, W.  2, 38, 82, 161, 182, 309, 363, 414
Baptista, J.  274
Bar Hebraeus. See Abu’l Faraj, Gregory
Baran, V. D.  162, 428
Barbaro, Josaphat  172, 363
Barbā, G.  136
Barbier de Meynard, C.  51, 183, 374
Barbu, V.  xii, 367
Bārčzi, G.  347, 394
Barna, E.  330, 364
Barnea, A.  32
Barnea, I.  xii, 54, 56, 57, 59, 104, 110, 111, 119, 125, 128, 252, 267, 292, 293, 383, 391, 394, 399, 411
Bartha, A.  50, 72, 160, 242, 394, 406
Barthold, V.V. (W.)  48, 113, 114, 148, 161, 259, 262, 278, 302, 394
Bartonick, E.  107, 373
Bartusis, M. C.  168, 394
Baskakov, N. A.  160, 186, 258, 394
Başkan, S.  4
Batariuc, P. V.  12
Bates, M.  11
Bauer, A.  95, 150, 227, 370, 374
Baum, E.  205, 417
Baum, W.  38, 370
Bădulescu, D.  xvii, 426
Băian, V.  17, 394
Bălan, C.  xii, 367
Bălan, M.  xii, 367
Bălan, T.  254, 312, 314, 315, 363, 394
Bălescu, N.  13
Bălteanu, A.-C.  291
Bălteanu, D.  15, 422
Bănărescu, P.  35
Bănescu, N.  56, 60, 110, 119, 138, 289, 394
Bărbulescu, C.  218, 375
Bârcă, V.  298, 383
Bărlea, O.  154, 395
Bărine, P. P.  191, 199, 308, 349, 350, 384, 385, 390, 396
Bârzu, L. 23, 395
Becquet, D. J. 219, 377
Beilekchi, V. S. 281
Beilis, V. M. 83, 209, 395
Bein, D. 71, 393
Bejenaru, L. 228, 383
Belaiev, N. T. 105, 395
Beldiceanu, N. 82, 344, 354, 395
Beldiceanu-Steinherr, I. 344, 346, 354, 395
Belke, K. 88, 366
Belli, O. 4, 277, 279, 302, 395
Belopol'skii (Bielopole), A. 135, 395
Bélou, S. xiii, xiv, 367
Benda, K. 71, 406
Bendefy, L. 156, 166, 363
Benedictus Polonus 172, 363
Benediktz, B. S. 52, 396
Benjamin of Tudela 122, 363
Benkö, L. 64
Bennett Durand, D. 173, 363
Ben-Shamrai, H. 49, 432
Bérechet, St. 320, 367
Berend, N. 358, 395
Berge, F. 87, 383
Berg, L. S. 38, 395
Berkov, P. N. 154, 418
Bernard Gui (Bernardus Guidonis) 274, 363
Bernstein-Kogan, S. V. 53, 395
Berry, L. E. 267
Berta, A. 161, 405
Bertelé, T. 336, 374
Berza, M. xiv, 409
Beskevič, V. 57, 58, 363, 395
Beskrovnyi, L. G. 2, 117, 262, 420, 429
Besslau, H. 69, 362
Beissonova, S. S. 246, 404
Bezviconi, Gh. G. 17, 18, 29, 33, 36, 161, 363, 419
Bibikov, M. V. 100, 126, 128, 129, 134, 139, 395
Bica, I. 100, 120, 395
Bichir, Gh. 12, 190, 298, 383, 384
Bidjan, I.-I. 25, 396
Bidzilia, V. I. 162, 428
Bielowski, A. 104, 128, 169, 257, 325, 364, 373, 379, 381
Bielski, Martin 21, 363
Biliarsky, I. A. 354, 396
Bilici, F. 325, 416
Binder, P. 24, 25, 46, 194, 396, 398
Binn, A. 52, 393
Birceanu, G. 315, 364
Birdzhanidi 183, 363
Biskup, M. 147, 396
Blake, R. P. 36, 111, 201, 278, 363, 370
Bląsković (Kumanoğlu), Y. 353
Bilchlet, E. 207, 339, 374, 376
Blöndal, S. 52, 396
Bobo, I. 49, 50, 70, 74, 396
Bocăneșu, A. 224, 396
Bochmann, K. 180, 396
Bociarov, E. 250, 314, 320, 368, 376
Bočan, N. 286
Bodoczy, N. 49, 423
Bodor, G. 77, 396
Boehmer, J. F. 267, 365, 370
Boga, L. T. 250, 364
Bogdan, A. 202, 415
Bogdan, D. P. 162, 396
Bogdan, H. 147, 396
Bogdan, I. 135, 251, 319, 328, 329, 364, 396
Bogdan, O. 15
Bogdy, Th. v. 71–73, 396, 406
Böhme, H. W. 200
Boiadzhiev, S. 139, 394
Boklur, A. V. 84, 85, 136, 160, 161, 320, 325, 344, 396
Bollig, J. 111, 204, 372
Bolshakov, O. G. 135, 369
Boljacov-Ghimpu, Al. A. 160, 396
Bompaire, J. 334, 362
Bona, I. 68, 72, 396
Bondar, R. D. 243, 383
Bonev, Č. 155, 396
Bonfante, G. 179, 396
Bongius, I. 123, 143, 371, 379, 382
Borsa, I. 330, 382
Borziac, I. A. 295, 384
Bose, R. G. 18, 33, 43, 195, 364
Bosi, F. 329, 303, 396
Bosselmann-Cyran, K. 187, 424
Bosworth, C. E. 48, 113, 304, 371, 394, 425
Botezatu, D. 195, 383
Boulier, J. 221
Chalandon, F. 120, 125, 129, 398
Chalkokondyles, Laonikos 219, 220, 365, 376
Chard, C. S. 239
Charikov, A. A. 278, 383
Charney, J.-C. 259, 380
Child, C. S. 239
Chirca, H. xiii, 367
Chirca, C. 18, 419
Chirca, O. Iu. 304, 436, 437
Chiriacescu, E. 315, 366
Chirilă, C. 18, 419
Chirko, L. 320, 321, 398
Chirtoagă, I. 2, 320, 321, 398
Chirtoaca, V. 19
Chișchiu, M. 40, 49
Chișcă, V. 225, 247, 399
Cioăranu, A. 79, 399
Ciorănescu, G. 180, 399
Cirițan, V. 270, 399
Cireșoiu, I. 317, 423
Cireșoiu, C. 311, 319, 325, 366
Ciorângiu, A. 224, 252, 292, 293, 384, 391
Cirmănescu, H. xiii, 367
Cirpă, A. 71, 399
Cioara, C. 180, 399
Cioara, D. xiii, 367
Cioara, D. 26
Clad, C. S. 239
Clandon, G. 183, 302, 325, 399
Cioce, C. 383, 437
Codrescu, Th. 314
C噢ogă, V. 213, 217, 221, 227, 245, 265, 267, 339, 366
Comșa, E. 224, 252, 292, 293, 384, 391
Comșa, M. 59, 100, 190, 252, 293, 384, 391, 399
Condurachi, E. 104, 399, 409
Conea, I. 13, 289, 311, 318, 319, 329, 364, 399
Conrad, S. 110, 424
Constab, G. 112, 364
Constantin, F. M. xiii, 367
Constantinescu, E.-M. 268, 292, 384, 399
Constantinescu, I. xiii, 367
Constantinescu, M. xii, 367
Constantinescu, N. A. 324, 399
Constantinescu-Iași, P. 288
Constantinescu-Mircești, C. 25, 399
Constantinescu-Miroș, M. 293, 391
Constantin, A. 71, 399
Constantin, G. 314
Costache, C. 311, 319, 325, 366
Castin, Miron 20, 21, 24, 27, 33, 35, 221, 289, 366
Castin, Nicolae 35, 366
Coș, A. 71, 399
Coteanu, A. 344, 399
Cotorcă, L. 136
Couchaux, D. 219, 399
Courteille, P. de 51, 183, 374
Cox, K. R. 8
Crasovschi, A. 136
Crăciun, G. 314
Čremošnik, G.  332, 376
Cristea, G.  26
Cromer, Martin  35, 366
Crookenden, J.  210, 410
Cross, S. H.  104
Crummey, R. O.  267
Csánki, D.  318, 329, 367
Csató, É. Á.  186, 423
Csbe, G.  259
Cucoș, Șt.  12
Curcă, R.  220, 366
Curta, F. xii, 56, 59, 100, 102, 120, 133, 139, 154, 166, 223, 260, 343, 383, 400, 403, 411, 413
Custurea, G.  243, 399
Czeglédy, K.  63, 72, 406
Czigány, L.  75, 413
Dabrowski, I.  96, 367
Dabrowski, K.  227, 429
Dachkevytch, Ya. R.  187, 400
Dafni, P.  219, 377
Dagron, G.  335, 362
Daicoviciu, C. xv, 58, 409
Daicoviciu, H.  22
Daim, F.  49, 184, 200, 394, 400
Dalby, S.  9, 429
Dalché, P. G.  179, 367
Dall’Aglio, F.  145, 400
Damian, O.  100, 384
Dan, I.  202, 224, 314, 344, 421
Dan, M.  221
Danciu, I.  330, 364
Dandulo (Dandolo), Andreas  71, 145, 261, 367
Dani, I. xiii, xiv, 367
Dankoff, R.  114, 182, 374
D’Ardenne de Tizac, H.  218, 371
Dashkevich, N. P.  162
Dashkevich, V. P.  244, 400
Daunou, [F]  145, 370
David, M.  17, 400, 435
David d’Ashby  218
Davidson, H. R. E.  53, 54, 105, 400
Davis, H. T.  36, 382
De Boe, G.  240, 428
Decei, A.  56, 58, 59, 63, 80, 83, 184, 259, 400
Defrébery, [Ch. F.]  39, 149, 170, 184, 204, 245, 265, 363, 371
Deibel, F.  307
Delarc, [O.]  271, 407
Delehaye, H.  56, 380
Deletant, D.  74, 400
Delorme, F. M.  173, 362
Demchenko, T. I.  349, 384, 437
Demetrescu, I. C.  19, 20, 424
Demidoff, A. de  26, 288, 400
Dennis, G. T.  95, 204, 252, 377, 381
Densuşianu, N.  347
Densuşianu, O.  180, 311, 316, 325, 400
Denwood, Ph.  438
Deny, J.  3, 187, 403, 421
Dergacev, V. A.  12, 194, 295, 384, 409
Despinescu, A.  250, 367
Deswarte, Th.  23, 408
DeWeese, D.  277, 400
D’Hauterive  18
Diaconescu, E.  37, 400
Diaconescu, O. xiii, 367
Diaconescu, T.  17, 363
Diadichenko, V. A.  135, 409
Diehl, E.  43
Dienes, I.  72, 401
Dieten, I. A. van  141
Dieter, K.  120, 401
Dietrich of Apolda  274
Dilthey, W.  299
Dima, N.  180
Dimitrov, B.  173, 401
Dimitrov, D.  100, 194, 401
Dimitrov, H.  65, 396
Dimitrov, S.  343, 354, 401
Dimnik, M.  117, 401
Dinić, M.  332
Djebli, M.  151, 83, 374
Djuvara, N.  253, 353, 401
Dlugosz, Jan (Joannes Dlugoss)  21, 96, 325, 338, 367
Dmitriev, P. G.  194, 195, 315, 320, 351, 375, 378, 401
Dobner, G.  169, 372
Docan, N.  17, 25
Dode, Z. V.  171, 392
Dodge, B.  83, 376
Doerfer, G.  212, 401
Doerfer, I.  317, 423
Dogiel, M.  37, 366
D’Ohssson, C.  260, 401
Dokuchaev, V. V.  38, 401
Dolanský, J.  154, 418
Dollen, B. v. d.  200
Domanovszky, A.  xvii, 59, 118, 365, 380
Domonkos, L. S.  74
Donat, I.  229, 311, 319, 368, 399, 401
Donzel, E. v.  48, 394
Dorini, U.  336, 374
Dörrie, H.  156, 166, 169, 265, 368
Dostourian, A. E.  112, 197, 375
Dosymbaeva, A. M.  279, 385
Dovzhenok, V. I.  162, 428
Dragnev, D. M.  247, 250, 312, 314, 320, 368, 375, 376, 401
Dragomir, R.  316, 365
Dragomir, S.  332, 401
Dragotâ, A.  59, 385, 389
Drăgan, J. C.  16
Drăganu, N.  162, 311, 312, 341, 353, 401
Drăgoi, I.-J.  26
Drexl, F.  112, 378
Driga, B.  26
Drimba, V.  186, 187, 366, 368, 410
Dron, I. V.  321, 401
Dröper, S.  38, 368
Drull, D.  186, 401
Dubler, C. E.  114, 134, 361
Duca-Tînculescu (Duca), D.  313, 315, 316, 327, 364, 365
Dubravskii, Ia.  169, 368
Dubrovskii, D. V.  171, 385
Ducellier, A.  333, 353, 401
Duczko, W.  52, 401
Duda, H. W.  148, 401
Dujčev, I.  103, 109, 111, 401
Dulaurier, Éd.  102, 197, 201, 218, 370, 375
Dulov, A. V.  8
Dumbravă, V.  180, 396
Dumitrașcu, M.  15, 422
Dumitrescu, V.  13
Dumitrescu, Vl.  23
Dumitriu, L.  293, 385
Dumitriu-Snagov, I.  173
Dumitroaia, Gh.  12
Dunăre, N.  228, 229, 401
Dunlap, Th. J.  27, 432
Dunlop, D. M.  48, 50, 401
Durand, F.  52
Durand, U.  143, 372
Dvoichenko-Markov, D.  74, 402
Dvornik, Fr.  63, 402
Dzhakson, T. N.  53, 105, 404
E., 10
Eberhardt, I.  288, 385
Ebenroth, Thomas  169, 368
Eberhardt, F.  290
Ecsedy, I.  205, 290, 402
Eddé, A.-M.  209, 374
Edroiu, N.  179, 222, 286, 402
Edwards, P.  105, 382
Effem  139, 140, 141, 144, 145
Étienne  24
Egger, C.  179, 378
Eggers, M.  64, 69, 402
Ehrenfeuchter, E.  267, 381
Einicke, R.  110, 424
Eisner, J.  215, 402
Ekrem, M. A.  81, 117, 311, 402
Eliade, M.  275, 276, 301, 402
Eliau, Al.  xiv, 369
Elteo, L. J.  74
Emanidi, E. I.  204, 387
Emery, R.  226, 377
Erbiceanu, C.  24, 267, 365
Erdélyi, I.  65, 75, 402, 431
Eremia, A.  319–321, 402
Eréminian, S. T.  81
Ermenenko, L. N.  279, 303, 385
Evel, C.  173, 364
Eudes de Deuil. See Odo of Deuil
Eustathius, the metropolitan of Thessalonike  125, 126, 140, 204, 368
Evans, A.  172, 377
Ev dokimov, G. L.  305, 402
Even, M.-D.  151, 370
Evglevskii, A. V.  279, 388
Evtiukhova, L. A.  278, 385
Faillier, A.  56, 377
Febvre, L.  10, 244, 402
Fedorchuk, A.  49, 185, 410, 423
Fedorov, G. B.  xiv, 12, 86, 87, 97, 103, 193, 228, 231, 280, 281, 350, 385, 402
Fedorov, G. S.  232, 261, 264, 403
Fedorov, Ia. A.  232, 261, 264, 403
Fehér, G. 57, 303, 403
Fejér, G. 142, 158, 366
Fekete Nagy, A. 331, 367
Ferdinandy, M. de 70, 431
Ferenț, E. 154
Ferenț, I. 1, 126, 128, 140, 146, 154, 416
Fetisov, A. 54, 385
Fiedler, U. 59, 61, 190, 270, 403
Filipescu, C. 19, 403
Filitti, G. 195, 365
Fine Jr., J. V. A. 62, 403
Finlay, G. 102
Flerova (Flörova), V. E. 185, 403
Fodor, I. 59, 64, 68, 70, 237, 403
Földes, L. 229
Fomin, A. V. 242, 385
Fonseca, J. M. 172, 382
Foote, P. 54, 409
Forbiger, A. 220
Forino, C. xiii, 367
Frành, C. M. 183, 204, 369
Frances, E. 134, 135, 403
Francovich, R. 202, 426
Frank, A. J. 166, 403
Freisinger, H. 200, 391
Friedrich, A. 347, 394
Frye, R. N. 36, 111, 201, 278, 363, 370
Furtwängler, A. E. 110, 424
Gabain, A. v. 187, 403
Gabor, A. 250, 428
Galántai, E. 118, 381
Galben, A. I. 250, 403
Gál, L. 331, 367
Galkova, I. 250, 403
Gallos, L. 13, 414
Gallotta, A. 258, 394
Galtian, A. G. 149, 362
Gamber, O. 185, 403
Gamillscheg, E. 224
Garam, E. 185, 423
Garðsí, xvi, 63, 184, 209, 217, 232, 237, 244, 257, 304, 369, 375
Garkavi, A. Ia. 95, 380
Garmashov, A. I. 171, 392
al-Garnati. See Abu Hamid al Garnati (el Granadino)
Garustovich, G. N. 268, 287, 293, 294, 403
Gautier, P. 122, 253, 403
Gazdaru, D. 79, 403
Gâncu, Gr. 314, 381
Gârcu, C.-I. 314, 381
Gâstescu, P. 13, 26, 403
Gelalzade, Mustafa 33
Gelich, J. 338, 376
Gelichi, S. 202, 426
Gerhardus de Fracheto 274, 369
Geras'kova, L. S. 246, 303, 385, 404
Gerevich, L. 16, 65
Gheorghian, I. 312, 364
Gherasimov, I. P. 13, 318, 415
Gherghel, I. 1, 311, 404
Ghețeie, I. 180
Ghibânescu, Gh. 312–314, 327, 369
Ghimpu, V. 84
Ghine, N. 316, 368
Ghiureco, I. 268, 406
Gibbon, H. A. R. 39, 371
Giese, Fr. 204, 362
Giesler, J. 69, 204, 404
Gingerick Berry, V. 127, 377
Giovanni di Marino Gondola 332, 369
Gitelman, Z. 136
Giurescu, C. C. 17, 20, 21, 29, 33, 161, 254, 268, 309, 312, 316, 318, 319, 344, 404
Giurescu, D. C. 268, 319, 404
Giurgea, E. N. 19, 403
Gjuzelev, V. 62, 273, 404, 416, 420
Glassl, H. 71, 147, 404, 406
Glazunov, I. 106, 368
Glazyrina, G. V. 53, 105, 404
Glycas, Michael 102, 108, 114, 197, 369, 375
Gmyria, L. 48
Göbl, R. 185, 404
Göckenjan, H. xvi, 75, 118, 134, 266, 342, 369, 377, 404
Godley, A. D. 31, 220, 370
Goeije, J. de 182, 371
Goetz, H.-W. 185, 400
Gogu, M. 12
Goia, I. A. 230, 404
Gökböl, A. 4
Golb, N. 41, 369
Golden, P. B. 3, 4, 48, 49, 51, 70, 82, 113, 128, 161, 181, 187, 208, 244, 258, 260, 262, 264, 276, 354, 394, 404, 432
Golovko, A. B. 105
Golubovich, G. 186, 369
Golubovskii, P. 2, 121, 405
Gombos, A. F. xiv, 66, 123, 145, 169, 369
Gonafla, Al. I. 125, 132, 239, 247, 340, 354, 368, 405
Gonzales de Clavijo, Ray 42, 209, 218, 366
Gorgoi, M. I. I. 215
Gorishnii, P. A. 162, 392
Gorovoi, Št. S. 43, 172, 325, 370
Gorski, A. A. 125, 405
Goshkevich, V. I. 295, 385
Gostar, N. 191, 385
Griffin, R. 339, 376
Grannes, A. 345, 405
Graur, Al. 319, 405
Grădă, N. 314, 315, 405
Grecu, A. [Panaitescu, P. P.] 58, 405, 418
Grecu, V. 219, 365
Grecul, F. A. 157, 380
Gregoras, Nicephorus 115, 144, 164, 167, 168, 197, 369
Gregory, D. 8
Grekov, B. D. 213, 244, 246, 405
Grigor of Akanc’ 36, 201, 370
Grigoraș, N. 250, 254, 405
Grigor’ev, A. P. 172, 370
Grigorovici, R. 45
Grigorovitza, Em. 315, 406
Grîtsik, P. 135, 406
Gronbech, K. 187, 366, 403
Groot, J. J. M. 206, 371
Grossel, M.-G. 183, 372
Gros, V. I. 191, 295, 298, 385, 390
Grosul, Ia. S. xx, 341, 372, 409
Grot, K. I. 58, 65, 406
Grouset, R. 181, 406
Grunin, T. I. 187, 368
Grushkevskii, M. 142, 406, 408.
See also Hrušešťkyj, M.
Guboglu, M. 32, 172, 173, 366, 370
Gudea, N. 268, 406
Gui, Bernard. See Bernard Gui
Guillaume de Nangis 145, 370
Guillaume de Lamnoy 37, 369
Guillou, A. 333, 335, 336, 361
Guiragos. See Kiracos (Guiragos) of Gantzac
Gukin, V. D. 293, 386, 438
Gumilev, L. N. 65, 406
Gunda, B. 71, 406
Gündisch, G. 317, 337, 381, 382
Gündisch, H. 317, 382
Gündisch, K. G. xiii, xiv, 147, 317, 367, 382, 432
Gündüz, T. 4
Güngör, H. 275, 406
Gurkin, S. V. 279, 354, 386, 406
Guslistyi, K. G. 135
Güçu, Gh. xi
Güzel, H. 4, 258, 343, 395, 406, 410, 427, 431
Guzgani. See Juzjani
Gyárás, I. 154, 406
Gyóni, M. 74, 119, 227, 406
Györffy, Gy. 50, 70, 73, 75, 102, 118, 134, 187, 257, 258, 276, 331, 341, 353, 358, 370, 406
Haarmann, H. 183, 371, 378
Haas, N. 292, 388
Hagenmeyer, H. 123, 362
Haheu, V. 386, 438
Haimovici, S. 227, 386
Hajda, L. 136
Halaçoğlu, Y. 4, 258, 343, 395, 406, 410, 427, 431
Halasi-Kun, T. 331, 406
Haldon, J. 337
Halīfa, Hağī 63
Halldórsson, B. 106, 380
Halperin, Ch. J. 137, 171, 266, 407
Hambis, L. 172, 219, 377
Hambloch, H. 10
Hand-Allah Mustaфи of Qazwin.
See al-Qazwini
Hammer, J. de 63, 183, 184, 232, 237, 244, 370
Hanak, W. K. 99, 125, 407, 419
Hänzel, B. 239
Hansson, P. 52, 409
Haralambr, At. 19, 20, 424
Harboiu, R. 293, 385
HärteI, H.-J. 61, 407
Hartmann, U. 206, 427
Harțuche, N. 291, 292, 349, 386
Hasdeu (Hăjdeu), B. P(etriceicu) 38, 354, 407
Hase, C. B. 99, 217, 374
Haslund, H. 219, 407
Hatházi, G. 134, 386
Hauge, K. R. 346, 405
Hausler, A. 49, 420
Havliuk, P. I. 87, 386
Hazlitt, W. 218, 371
Hălcescu, G. 291
Hău, F. 12
Hâncu, R. xiv, 369
Hâncu-Tentiuc, A. 301, 428
Hedman, A. 52, 431
Heers, J. 144, 407
Héfélé, Ch.-J. 271, 407
Hegel, G. W. Fr. 9, 407
Hegel, K. 9, 407
Hegeneder, O. 179, 378
Heideman, T. 19
Heiduk, M. 4
Heinrich of Liéovia 150, 227, 274, 370
Heinrich von Mügeln 64, 70, 107, 118, 169, 338, 361, 365, 370
Heissig, W. 151, 219, 369, 407
Heitmann, K. 222, 407
Helgason, J. 106, 221, 379
Heller, K. 52, 407
Hellmann, M. xiv, 407
Hemendi, Solakzade Mehmed 33
Hennig, U. 255, 376
Henning, J. 223, 407
Hensel, W. 200, 407
Hepites, Št. C. 46
Hermann of Altach 274, 370
Herodotus 31, 32, 220, 233, 277, 370
Herrmann, J. 52, 100, 384, 407
Herseni, T. 9, 229, 407
Hethum (Hayton, Hetoum) of Korykos 38, 152, 172, 234, 365, 368, 370
Hewsen, R. H. 27, 80, 81, 362
Heyde, J. 147, 396
Heyden, G. 9
Hilckman, A. 343, 407
Hill, J. H. 123, 377, 378
Hill, L. L. 123, 377, 378
Hill, R. 123, 369
Hillerdal, Ch. 52, 407
Hiltebeitel, A. 275, 402
Himka, J.-P. 136
Hincmar of Reims 69, 370
Hodges, R. 202, 426
Hoepner, M. 241, 397
Höfler, C. R. v. 138, 343, 407
Holman, M. xii, 43, 146, 158, 365, 407
Holman, Th. 161, 162, 196, 253, 407
Holder-Egger, O. 144, 379
Holt, P. M. 113, 339, 361, 398
Holtzmann, W. 143, 377
Hóman, B. 58, 62, 72, 73, 407
Hopf, Ch. 144, 267, 371
Horbatsch, O. 163, 408
Hordilă, D. 322, 386
Horedt, K. 73, 106, 408
Hrodyškyj, M. 135, 408
Hotnog, T. 318, 408
Houtsma, M. Th. 114, 259, 408
Howard-Johnston, J. 62, 408
Hrushevskij, M. 408. See also
Grusheski, M.
Huart, Cl. 82, 209, 274, 374
Huc, É.-R. 218, 371
Hudūd al-Ālam xvi, 51, 63, 184, 208, 212, 217, 219, 232, 237, 244, 245, 369, 371
Humphrey, C. 206, 408
Hunyadi, Z. 147, 412
Hurdubețiu, I. 76, 408
Huxley, G. 64
Hyer, P. 234, 409
Iacob, M. 243, 417
Iacobescu, M. 45
Iacobus de Guisia 145
Iakubovskii, A. Iu. 148, 213, 244, 246, 371, 405
Iakubovskii, V. I. 162, 392
Iakut al-Khamavi 183, 212, 371
Iambor, P. 200, 408, 414
Iancu, A. xiii, 367
Ianin, V. L. 194, 409
Ianushchevich, Z. V. 223, 224, 386
Iarovoiv, E. V. 295, 302, 384, 386, 437
Iastrebov, F. A. 135, 409
Iațu, C. 203
Ibn Abd az-Zahir 170
Ibn Abi l-Hadîd al-Madâ‘înî. See
al-Madâ‘înî
Ibn Battuta (Ibn Batoutah) 39, 170, 184, 212, 218, 227, 234, 235, 276, 371
Ibn al-Furat 182, 371
Ibn Hauqal 51, 94, 113, 183, 209, 245, 371
Ibn Khaldun 165, 182, 187, 260, 263, 371
Ibn Khordâdhbeh 182, 371
Ibn-Rusta (Ibn-Dasta) xvi, 184, 209, 244, 369, 371
Ibn al-Wardy 371
Ibrahim Pecevi. See Pecevi, Ibrahim
Ichim, O. 180, 424
Ibrani (Édrisi) 182, 212, 260, 368, 371, 373
Ignat, G. xiii, 367
Ignat, M. 289, 408
Ilie, A. 20, 378
Iliescu, O. 94, 139, 241, 243, 246, 273, 386, 400, 426
Iliescu, P.-M. 54, 408
Iliescu, Vl. xiv, 369
Imreh, St. 249
Inalcik, H. 4, 258, 343, 395, 406, 410, 427, 431
Ingigian, H. 23, 26, 34, 35, 372
Ioannisian, O. 134, 408
Iohannes de Vitino 274, 372
Ionaçu, I. 291, 383
Ionescu, B. 292, 349, 388
Ionescu-Bregoveanu, I. 25
Ionescu-Sachelarie, D. 224, 408
Ioniţă, A. 291, 292, 386, 408
Ioniţă, I. 12, 23, 408
Iordache, Gh. 225, 230, 408
Iordan, I. 311, 318, 344, 399, 408
Iorga, N. xv, 2, 18, 26, 28, 33, 43, 44, 60, 73, 129, 195, 252, 311, 314, 318, 320, 324, 325, 344, 347, 352, 372, 373, 408
Iorgulescu, V. 154, 273, 408
Iosipescu, S. 147, 179, 408
Iotov, V. 294, 393
Irimescu, G. 45, 312, 313, 380, 381
Irimescu, S. 312, 381
Isac, V. 313, 364
Ishkhakov, D. M. 171, 385
al-Istakhri 183, 372
Istrate, G. 313, 428
Istrate, C. 196, 315, 366
Iurchenko, A. G. 172, 373
Ivanov, V. A. 171, 268, 287, 293, 294, 387, 403
Ivanov’kii, V. 134, 408, 409
Ivănescu, G. 77, 178, 180, 224, 269, 270, 319, 344, 352, 409
Iverites, I. 145, 372
Jackson, P. 38, 245, 277, 382, 409
Jacobsen, P. C. 123, 375
Jacques de Vitry (Jacques de Vitry) 183, 274, 371, 372
Jagchid, S. 234, 409
Jahn, K. 82, 207, 208, 259, 372, 409
Jakubovich, A. xi
Janson, H. 52, 54, 409
Janson, I. 52, 409, 431
Janson, S. B. F. 54, 387, 409
Jarnut, J. 185, 400
Jaubert, A. 182, 260, 368
Jawor, G. 163, 409
Jaworski, J. 290, 409
Jean-Baptiste de Pitra 274, 372
Jean d’Ypres 143, 144, 145, 372
Jenkins, R. J. H. xii, 91, 93, 366, 376
Jireček, C. 344, 409
Jsl, L. 290, 409
Joannes de Marignoli. See Marignoli, John of
Johannes de Thurocz. See Thurocz, John of (Johannes de)
Johanson, L. 186, 423
Johnson, O. A. 106, 221, 379
Joinville 167, 277, 372
Jončev, L. 103, 139, 372, 380
Jones, G. 52, 409
Jones, H. L. 28, 208, 380
Jonov, M. 303, 370, 373
Jónsson, E. 106, 380
Jordanes 221, 372
Jordanov, I. 101, 109, 366, 409
Joseph ben Gorion (Josephus Gorionides) 95, 373
Jurewicz, O. 134, 410
Jurkowski, M. 163, 410
Jwaini 151, 165, 166, 204, 373
Juzjani (Guţgani) 151, 152, 370, 373, 375
Kadlec, K. 251, 410
Kaeppeli, Th. 274, 380
Kafesoglu, I. 151, 410
Kalýd-Nagy, Gy. 70, 187, 358, 390, 424
Kalužniacki, E. xiv
Kandel, M. 316, 368
Kropotkin, V. V.  240, 241, 387
Kruker, V. M.  8
Krumova, T.  109, 411
Kryzickij, S. See Krizhits’kii, S. D.
Kshibekov, D.  205, 411
Kubarev, V. D.  278, 279, 387
Kubijovyč, V.  135, 430
Kuchera, M. P.  162, 428
Kuchkin, V. A.  2, 117, 149, 262, 370, 420, 429
Kudriashov, K. V.  211, 261, 411
Kunstmann, H.  116, 412
Kulik, A.  49, 185, 410, 423
Kumekov, B. E.  208, 274, 278, 412
Kuun, G.  65, 106, 161, 186, 309, 373, 412
Kuz’mina, E. E.  219, 412
Kyzlasov, I. L.  185, 387, 412
Kyzlasov, L. R.  278, 387
Kuz’mina, E. E.  219, 412
Kyzlasov, I. L.  185, 387, 412
Kyzlasov, L. R.  278, 387
Laborde, E. D.  25, 419
Labuda, G.  147, 396
Ladd, R.  194, 418
Laehr, G.  89, 412
Lagarde, P. de  111, 204, 372
Lagervolm, H.  106, 368
Lahovari, Gh.  313, 315, 320, 412
Laiou-Thomadakis, A. E.  334, 335, 412
Lamb, H. H.  16, 412
Lambrier, A.  284, 412
Lane, G.  277, 412
Langlois, V.  153, 375
Lappenberg, V. Cl. Ioh. M.  104, 381
La Roncière, M. de  173, 373
Larsson, M. G.  54, 105, 412
László, A.  12
Laszlovsky, J.  147, 412
Lattimore, O.  238
Lazarov, I.  145, 362, 373
Lăpușnian, V. L.  12, 389, 436, 437
Lăzăr, Gh.  xii, 367
Lăzărescu, D. A.  195, 412
Lăzărescu, E. C.  146, 412
Lăzărescu, I.  20, 366
Lăzărescu, R.  xiv, 369
Lăzărescu, R. C.  102
Lăzărescu-Zobian, M.  324, 412
Leahu, V.  292, 387
Lebedev, G. S.  53, 412
Lebedynsky, I.  206, 412
Lebon, J. H. G.  9, 10
Lech, K.  171, 205, 381
Lefort, J.  109, 333, 334, 361, 412
Le Goff, J.  223, 412
Leib, B.  110, 119, 122, 182, 339, 366
Leiser, G.  151, 410
Lelewej, J.  260, 412
Lemerle, P.  333, 335, 336, 361
Lengyel, Z. K.  71, 406
Leo Grammaticus  56, 58, 62, 66, 72, 91, 374, 379
Leo the Diacre  99, 217, 221, 374
Leonardi, C.  219, 377
Lépissier, J.  84
Lepši, I.  34, 412
Le Roy Ladurie, E.  16, 412
Le Strange, G.  39, 42, 365, 378
Letts, M.  152, 374
Leundavius, Josannes  145, 374
Levchenko, M. V.  89, 99, 134, 135, 141, 413
Levin, M. G.  219, 402
Lewicki, T.  63
Levi, B.  48, 113, 394, 398
Lhotsky, A.  169, 368
Li Chih-ch’ang  218, 381
Li Guo  339, 382
Lichardus, J.  239
Lichardus-Itten, M.  239
Likhachev, D. S.  xvi, 136, 377
Lilie, R.-J.  144, 413
Liljegren, J. G.  54, 387
Limona, D.  330, 364
Lindner, R. P.  205, 413
Linehan, P.  358, 395
Lišev, Str.  103
Litavrin, G. G.  76, 88, 93, 125, 133, 139, 178, 366, 373, 413, 419
Liudprand of Cremona  95, 374
Livshits, V. A.  219, 412
Lock, P.  123, 413
Logan, F. Donald  52, 413
Löhr, H.  110, 424
Longnon, J.  144, 365
Loparev, Kh. M.  38, 373
Los’, F. E.  135, 409
Lowry, H.  337
Lozbă, M.  321
Lozovan, E. 54, 119, 413
Luard, H. R. 170, 375
Luca, C. 270, 387
Lucić, J. 338, 376
Luciw, J. 99, 413
Ludanyi, A. 74
Ludwig, D. 48, 209, 221, 413
Lukasik, S. 228, 413
Lukinich, E. 338, 376
Lučić, J. 338, 376
Luciw, J. 99, 413
Lükö, G. 71, 312, 413
Lungarotti, M. C. 219, 377
Lungarova, P. 145, 362, 373
Lungu, V. 291, 387
Lurier, H. E. 172, 267, 367
Luther, A. 206, 304, 371, 427
Lyons, M. C. 235, 371
Macarie 23
Macartney, C. A. 62, 69, 75, 108, 134, 227, 413
Macler, Fr. 99, 368
Macouci. See Mas'udi
Macrea, D. 77, 224, 228, 413
al-Madâ'înî, Ibn Abî l-Hadîd 151, 374
Madgearu, A. 50, 74, 101, 104, 119, 270, 413
Madzsar, E. 118, 362
Maenchen-Helfen, O. J. 27, 413
Magocsi, P. R. 49, 61, 135, 413
Magomedov, M. G. 48, 413
Makrizi 207, 218, 235, 339, 374
Malakzai, N. 191, 387
Malamut, E. 111, 120, 413
Maleczek, W. 179, 378
Maleon, B.-P. 253, 413
Malingoudis, Ph. 139, 140, 141, 160, 333, 343, 413
Maier, R. O. 216
Maior, L. 286
Majeska, G. P. 38, 42, 374
al-Makîn ibn al-Amîd 209, 374
Makk, F. 133, 413
Makki, L. 68, 72, 74, 331, 367, 396, 413
Malakzai, N. 191, 387
Malm, S. E. 304, 374
Malychev, A. B. 358, 414
Malyuzus, E. 330, 382
Manasses, Constantin 99
Mandeville, John 152, 172, 374
Mango, A. 30, 129, 376, 410
Mansi, J. D. 155, 189, 378
Mantu, C.-M. 12
Manz, B. F. 171, 414
al-Maqdisî, Motahhar ben Tâhir 82, 83, 93, 209, 274, 374, 400
Marazzi, U. 258, 394
Marcato, C. 337
Marchevici, V. I. xii, 400
Marcotte, D. 28, 369
Mar, I. 12
Marian, S. F. 284, 414
Marignoli, John of (Joannes de) 169, 372, 374
Marinescu, B. 195, 365
Marinescu-Bilcu, S. 291, 387
Markevici, V. I. 12
Marks, D. 3, 262, 405
Marquart, J. 2, 38, 48, 63, 65, 92, 161, 182, 212, 217, 258, 260, 309, 405
Marsina, R. 60, 427
Martene, E. 143, 372
Martin, J. 246, 414
Martin, R. 8
Martin, R. E. 136, 432
Martinez, P. 63, 184, 209, 217, 232, 237, 244, 257, 304, 375
Martini, F. 147, 414
Martonne, Emm. de 10, 13, 39, 44, 414, 431
al-Marwazi (Sharaf al-Zaman Tahir Marwazi) xvi, 63, 80, 111, 182–184, 205, 206, 209, 217, 232, 233, 237, 244, 257, 260, 269, 370, 375
Masson, V. M. 194, 409
Mas'udi (Al-Mas'ûdî, Maçoudi) 51, 92, 183, 184, 204, 205, 208, 217, 264, 374, 375
Matchak, Z. 134, 408, 409
Matei, Gh. 190, 291, 387
Matei, M. D. xv, 202, 204, 387, 409, 414
Matei, Şt. 200, 414
Mathieu, M. 125, 414
Mathieu Paris 170, 375
Matreki, Násuh 33
Matschke, K.-P. 326, 422
Matthew of Edessa 112, 114, 120, 197, 217, 221, 267, 362, 375
Matveev, S. 191, 223, 389, 421
Maulana. See Juzjani
Mauricius 220, 221, 375
Mavrodin, V. V. 86, 135, 414
Mavrodin, R. M. 3, 414
Mavrodi, N. 303, 414
Maxim-Alaiba, R. 190, 300, 388, 436
Maximilian, C. 292, 388
Mayer, A. 332, 373
Mayer, H. E. 127, 372
Mălinăș, I. M. 179, 375
Mănescu, D. 270, 387
Mănuca, D. 180, 424
Mănucu-Adameteanu, Gh. 101, 107, 122, 253, 243, 388, 414
Mărculeț, V. 100, 119, 414
McGrath, S. 99, 414
Meckseper, C. 200
Megei, V. P. 162, 392
Mehedință, S. 10, 13, 21, 22, 36, 44, 201, 367, 414
Mehmed, Sa’adeddin 33
Mehmet, M. (A.) xii, 32, 173, 361, 363, 366
Mehren, A. F. 41, 182, 379
Meinecke, A. 111, 364
Mel’nikova, E. A. 53, 105, 395, 404
Meliukova, A. I. 86, 388, 402, 438
Menestrò, E. 219, 377
Menges, K. H. 186, 258, 414
Mercovrudı 182, 375
Mesterházy, K. 75, 388
Metellus von Tegernsee 123, 375
Métrevéli, H. 333, 334, 361
Michael the Rhetor 129, 375
Michael the Syrian (Michel le Grand, Michel le Syrien) 112, 119, 126, 186, 221, 274, 276, 375
Michailov, S. 303, 415
Micheau, F. 209, 374
Miciu, I. 40
Mierow, C. C. 226, 377
Migne, J.-P. xvi, 123, 377
Mihail, M. 202, 415
Mihailă, P. 315, 320, 375, 376
Măială,Biribba, V. 12, 58, 181, 432
Mihăilă de Apsa, I. 329–331, 341, 375
Mihăescu, H. xiv, 221, 228, 269, 369, 375, 415
Mihăilă, G. 228, 251, 344, 396, 415
Mihăiescu, V. 10, 13, 15, 42, 45, 203, 414, 415, 435
Mikes, L. 71, 415
Mikhaiлов, E. 57, 61
Mikhaiлова, I. B. 127, 415
Miklosich, F. 346, 415
Milescu Spătarul, Nicolae 218, 375
Müller, T. S. 99, 407, 414
Müller, W. 57, 415
Mălțeșcu, A. 273, 420
Mincă, I. 325
Minhaj-ud-Din. See Juzjani
Minorsky, V. 51, 63, 182, 184, 204, 217, 371, 375, 415
Mioc, D. xii, xiv, 367
Mirea, M. 291
Miron, V. Gh. 312, 313, 380, 381
Mironescu, C. S. 309, 415
Mitrea, B. 133, 190, 388
Mitrea, I. 12, 43, 191, 388, 392, 415
Mittelhaus, K. 55
Miu, G. 195, 383, 388
Mladenov, St. 317, 415
Mladjov, I. 60, 415
Mocșy, A. 68, 396, 413
Moga, I. 76, 415
Mogilianskii, N. K. 19, 41, 415
Moïse de Corène. See Mouses Khorenats’i
Moise, D. 291, 375
Moisescu, Gh. I. 154, 415
Mokhov, N. A. 195, 247, 401
Moldovanu, D. 312, 316, 321, 415, 428
Mollat du Jourdin, M. 173, 373
Molova, M. 187, 415
Monah, D. 12, 190, 215, 391
Monfrin, J. 167, 277, 372
Mongait, A. L. 135, 369
Monteil, V. 182, 371
Montesquieu 9
Morariu, T. 13, 22, 202, 210, 415, 430
Moravcsik, G. xii, 56, 91, 94, 366, 376, 415
Morgan, D. 38, 277, 382
Morintz, S. 22, 291, 292, 298, 349, 388
Morozzo della Rocca, R. 337, 363
Morrison, C. 240, 417
Moșin, V. 335
Moskovich, W. 49, 185, 410, 423
Motahhar ben Tahir el-Maqdisi. See al-Maqdisi
Motto, L. A. 339, 376
Moses Khorenats’i (Moïse de Corène) 27, 375
Müller, G. 341, 381
Müller, L. 117, 376
Müller-Wille, M. 305, 402
Mumfert, L. 11
Muntean, V. V. 132, 272, 415
Munteanu, C. 241, 416
Munteanu, O. 213, 420, 430
Muratorius, L. A. 145, 169, 364, 367, 382
Murav'eva, L. L. 149, 370
Murgulia, (N.-)M. P. 134, 358, 416
Murzin, V. Ju. 305, 402
Muste, Nicolae 20, 24, 33, 35, 376
Musteafâ, S. 12, 213, 241, 270, 416, 420, 430
Muşlea, C. 330, 364, 365
Mutafchiev, P. 62, 416
Mys'kov, E. P. 166, 416

Nadezhdin, N. 86, 87, 416
al-Nadim 82, 83, 376
Nägler, Th. 73, 148, 409, 416
Nagrodzka-Majchrzyk, T. 114, 160, 212, 227, 416, 429
Nahon, G. 123
Narlozhnyi, E. I. 279, 388
Naslov, D. M. 358, 414
Nasonov, A. A. xv, 376
Nastasă, L. 154, 325, 426
Nau, F. 339, 376
Naudet, [J.] 145, 370
Naum, T. A. 40, 220, 381
Naumenko, S. A. 171, 392
Navrotskii, N. I. 303, 388
Nazmi, A. 240, 416
Năstase, A. 17, 376
Năstase, Gh. I. 34, 416
Năsturel, P. Ş. 32, 120, 129, 268, 325, 416
Neagu, M. 90, 129, 291, 318, 386, 416, 418
Neamțu, V. 29, 216, 222, 416
Necșulescu, C. 114, 119, 311, 416
Necule, Ion 20, 24, 33, 288, 315, 376
Neculescu, C. 327, 364
Nelson, J. L. 358, 395
Németh, J. 73, 75, 185, 257, 258, 416
Nercessian, A. 53, 419, 433
Nebitt, J. 99, 407, 414
Nestor, I. xvi, 310, 388, 409, 417, 436
Nica, A. 273, 421
Nichitiță, A. N. 312, 320, 375, 376
Nicholas I, Patriarch of Constantinople 91, 92, 376
Nicol, D. M. 168, 417
Nicolae, E. 122, 241, 242, 388, 414
Nicoloudis, N. 220, 365, 376
Nicu, V. 320, 417
Niculescu, E. 15
Niculescu, Gh. 15, 422
Niculiță, B. P. 12
Niculiță, I. T. 12
Niederle, L. 80, 84, 86, 417

Nikēphoros, Patriarch of Constantinople, 36, 41, 376
Nikiforov, M. A. 100, 417
Nistor, I. I. 58, 116, 417
Nistor, V. 317
Nijülescu, V. Șt. 291, 390
Nizami 287, 376
Nodilo, S. 332, 369
Nooan, T. S. 48, 233, 240, 246, 417
Nordenskjöld, A. E. 34, 173, 376
Norwich, J. J. 105, 374
Nour, R 82, 276, 376
Novák, Gy. 62
Novoselski, A. A. 341, 372
Novosel‘sev, A. P. 48, 51, 88, 366, 417
Nudelman, A. A. 199, 241, 242, 349, 384, 385, 388, 417, 437
Nussbächer, G. 317, 382
O. al-Nawairi 32, 165, 263
Oancea, D. I. 329, 399
Oberhammer, E. 189, 422
Oberländer-Târnoveanu, E. 32, 139, 140, 243, 417
Oboldueva, T. G. 388, 438
Obohensky, D. 49
Obreja, Al. 320, 417
Obreja, C. 195, 383
Odo of Deuil (Eudes de Deuil) 127, 368, 377
Odobescu, A. I. xiv
Odo of Pordenone 209, 377
Odoric Vital (Vidal) 123, 377
Oguz, C. C. 4, 258, 395, 406, 410, 427
Ohnssorge, W. 130, 417
Öhri, B. 302, 417
Oikonomidiès, N. A. 101, 333, 334, 361, 418
Olariu, E-T. 180, 424
Olbricht, P. 209, 375
Olivier, D. 172, 209, 377
Olmez, M. 185, 428
Olofson, G. 288, 388
Olteanu, St. 222, 236, 350, 413
Oniciu, D. 58, 141, 160, 270, 418
Önnerfors, A. 172, 364
Opris, I. 330, 423
Orlov, R. S. 246, 404
Ortiz, R. 178, 418
Otrvay, T. 318, 377
Ostrogorsky (Ostrogorskij), G. 98, 144, 334, 418
Ostrowski, D. 136, 266, 418, 432
Otroshchenko, V. V. 246, 404
Otto, K.-H. 100, 384
Otto von Freising 130, 226, 377
Otja, S. 90, 318, 418
Ojetéa, A. (C.) xv, 310, 341, 372, 409, 417
Ovidius Naso, Publius 40

Pachyanteres, Georgios 56, 369
Pai, D. xi
Paksóy, H. B. 187, 405
Paládi-Kovács, A. 16, 431
Pallson, H. 105, 382
Pálóczi-Horváth, A. 3, 261, 358, 388, 418
Paltramus seu Vatzon 35, 377
Pamlényi, E. 72, 404
Panait, P. I. 203, 293, 384
Panayotov, L. 103
Paragină, A. 25, 223, 243, 389, 418
Parry, V. J. 266, 399
Parzinger, H. 239, 418
Paschalis de Victoria 172, 378
Pascu, St. xii–xvi, 73, 90, 101, 118, 148, 149, 195, 200, 236, 247, 344, 367, 389, 409, 418, 422
Pashuto, V. T. 2, 89, 117, 137, 154, 262, 320, 375, 418, 420, 429
Pastorello, E. 71, 261, 367
Paszkiewicz, H. 85, 87, 419
Pașca, St. 330, 419
Patáki, I. 249
Patlagean, É. 144
Paul of Venice (Paulinus von Venedig) 143, 377
Pauhilet, A. 144, 217, 372, 379, 382
Pavlov, P. 140, 167, 419
Pavoni, R. 337, 377
Päcurariu, M. 268, 419
Pătruț, I. 312, 325, 419
Păunescu, Al. 12, 389
Pârvan, V. 23, 36, 325
Peacock, A. C. S. 148, 419
Pecevi, Ibrahim 33
Pegolotti. See Balducci Pegolotti, F.
Pekkanen, T. 207, 361
Pellat, Ch. 48, 113, 394, 398
Pellegrini, G. B. 337
Pelliot, P. 78, 82, 166, 419
Perkhavko, V. B. 125, 137, 138, 411, 419
Perlbach, M. 146, 419
Perpillou, A. V. 10, 11, 419
Pethus, Boucher de 289, 364
Pertz, G. H. 59, 95, 96, 130, 152, 267, 277, 362, 364, 366, 368, 370, 375
Pertz, K. 130, 362
Pervain, V. xii, xvi, 367
Pesty, F. 318, 377
Petech, L. 21, 377
Petter, L. 75, 413
Pethachias of Ratibonae (Regensburg) 115, 218, 226, 227, 263, 267, 377, 381
Petolescu, C. G. 230, 428
Petrarcco Sicardi, G. 337
Petrescu, N. N. 161, 419
Petrescu-Dimboviţa, M. xvii, 13, 23, 67, 89, 190, 192, 389, 392, 409
Petrov, P. 139, 419
Petrovici, E. 25, 311, 399, 408, 419
Petrukhin, V. Ia. 49, 53, 95, 185, 410, 419, 420, 423
Petrus de Reva 172, 378
Petrushевич, A. S. 161, 419
Pez, H. 35, 169, 362, 365, 377
Pfeiffer, N. 154, 419
Philippide, Al. 80, 289, 312, 318, 320, 344, 419
Phillips, E. D. 205, 419
Phillips, J. 144, 419
Pian di Carpine, Giovanni di (John of). See Plano Carpini
Pīč, J. L. 58, 419
Pilat, L. 313
Pillinger, R. 273, 404
Pillon, M. 74, 180, 419
Piltz, E. 54, 408
Pins, E. 209, 235, 375
Pinna, M. 16, 419
Pinter, Z. K. 59, 389, 422
Pîntescu, F. 54, 420
Pîrvatiîrî, S. 273, 420
Pistorius, I. 152, 374
Pivovarov, S. 240, 420
Plámádealá, A. 154, 425
Plátáreaun, M. 32
Pleșca, V. 213, 420
Poboran, G. 311, 420
Podhradczky, I. 118, 365
Poghirc, P. 19, 288, 420
Polak, G. I. 95, 373
Prawer, J. 123
Prede, C. 242, 421
Prikhodniuk, O. M. 162, 428
Primov, B. 138, 421
Prinz, J. 317, 423
Prinzinger, G. 139, 144, 145, 421
Priselkov, M. D. 70, 381
Prodan, D. 249, 286, 317, 381
Przedziecki, A. 21, 325, 367
Pseudo-Kodinos. See Kodinos (Pseudo-)
Puiu, V. 320, 467
Pungă, Gh. 201
Pușcariu, S. 202, 224, 344, 421
Quakhchishvili, S. 128, 276, 369
al-Qazwini (Hamd-Allah Mustaṣfū qf Qazwin) 39, 183, 378
Quatremère, [É. M.] 218, 339, 374
Quérza, G. 337
Rabinovich, R. A. 61, 67, 80, 84, 135, 241, 390, 421, 423
Racheli, D. A. 42, 172, 382
Rachewiltz, I. de 151, 379
Rachmati, G. R. 82, 363
Radloff, W. 81, 378
Radulf 144
Raeviski, N. 320
Rafałowicz, I. A. 389, 436, 437
Rafn, C. C. 105, 369
Rahewin 130, 226, 377
Rancu, D. 224
Ranov, V. A. 219, 412
Rappoport, P. A. 162, 389
Raschellà, F. D. 52, 422
Raschellà, F. D. 52, 422
Rashev, R. 61, 303, 390
Rashid al-Din (Rashid-Eddin, Rašid-ad-Din, Rashiduddin) Fazlullah 81, 82, 149, 150, 166–167, 169, 170, 201, 204, 207, 259, 339, 340, 372, 378, 490
Rásonyi (Rásonyi-Nagy), L. 77, 181, 311, 324, 343, 353, 422
Rásonyi-Nagy, L. See Rásonyi
Rasovskii. See Rassovsky (Rasovskii), D.
Rassamakin, Iu. Ia. 246, 388
Rassovsky (Rasovskii), D. 2, 111, 117, 128, 140, 142, 160, 261, 309, 323, 341, 422
Ratkoš, P. 63, 377
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ratzel, F.</td>
<td>10, 189, 357, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rau, R.</td>
<td>95, 374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rauch, A.</td>
<td>169, 365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rauh, J.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raverty, H. G.</td>
<td>123, 378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond d’Aguiers</td>
<td>123, 378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raynald, O.</td>
<td>155, 189, 378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rădulescu, N. A.</td>
<td>25, 230, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rădulescu, Th.</td>
<td>316, 368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rădulescu-Zoner, Ş.</td>
<td>195, 365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Răduţiu, A.</td>
<td>xii, xiv, 286, 367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Râmneanu, P.</td>
<td>71, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Răduel, V.</td>
<td>178, 397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regel, W.</td>
<td>125, 129, 375, 378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regleau, M.</td>
<td>312, 315, 327, 364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reichert, B. M.</td>
<td>274, 369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reichert, F.</td>
<td>209, 377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reichester, Georg</td>
<td>24, 28, 43, 198, 378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reinhard, T. J.</td>
<td>182, 361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reîa, S.</td>
<td>270, 272, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renţa, E.</td>
<td>291, 387, 390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renzi, L.</td>
<td>179, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reuter, T.</td>
<td>70, 102, 362, 425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rezačević, C.</td>
<td>325, 366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rjabtseva, S.</td>
<td>67, 293, 390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riber, L.</td>
<td>122, 363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricardus de Gerboredo</td>
<td>145, 378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard, J.</td>
<td>154, 170, 380, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richter, H.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rîkman, E. A.</td>
<td>12, 86, 302, 390, 422, 432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riley-Smith, J.</td>
<td>111, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rîzescu, O.</td>
<td>xii, 367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert d’Auxerre</td>
<td>144, 379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert de Clari</td>
<td>144, 217, 226, 267, 379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robertus Monachus</td>
<td>123, 376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochow, I.</td>
<td>326, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodrigues, D. M. U.</td>
<td>206, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roemer, H. R.</td>
<td>181, 343, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roedsahl, E.</td>
<td>52, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roesler, R.</td>
<td>74, 135, 309, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogerius (Roger de Torre Maggiore)</td>
<td>153, 154, 157, 167–170, 197, 205, 218, 233, 379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolle, R.</td>
<td>305, 402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman, L.</td>
<td>199, 422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman, P.</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanovskaia, M. A.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romashov, S. A.</td>
<td>48, 90, 94, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romaskevich, A. A.</td>
<td>xvi, 379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Róna-Tas, A.</td>
<td>49, 50, 68, 70, 72, 185, 404, 406, 423, 432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenblum, J.</td>
<td>179, 373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenthal, F.</td>
<td>182, 371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosetti, Al.</td>
<td>269, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosetti, D. V.</td>
<td>291, 349, 390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosetti, R.</td>
<td>71, 251, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rossebastiano, A.</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roșu, Al.</td>
<td>11, 13, 15, 41, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roth, C.</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotter, G.</td>
<td>183, 375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roux, J.-P.</td>
<td>3, 275, 290, 302, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubruck, William of</td>
<td>xvi, 38, 78, 89, 163, 170, 211, 219, 227, 235, 237, 265–278, 370, 375, 379, 382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubruck, Guillaume de</td>
<td>See Rubruck, William of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudolf, K.</td>
<td>179, 378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruffini, M.</td>
<td>270, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runcenau, M.</td>
<td>330, 364, 365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruotsala, A.</td>
<td>235, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusanova, I. P.</td>
<td>89, 137, 194, 390, 409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russev, E. M.</td>
<td>320, 375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russev, N. D.</td>
<td>61, 135, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russu, I. I.</td>
<td>20, 220, 330, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusten-Pușa</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusu, A.</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusu, A. (A.)</td>
<td>xiv, 29, 100, 158, 200, 367, 423, 425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusu, D. N.</td>
<td>21, 404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusu, M.</td>
<td>59, 73, 90, 200, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rusu, V.</td>
<td>180, 311, 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruttkay, A.</td>
<td>60, 427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruzé, A.</td>
<td>178, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rybakov, B. A.</td>
<td>87, 105, 127, 161, 213, 261, 389, 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rydzewskia, E. A.</td>
<td>52, 105, 379, 424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sablukov, G.</td>
<td>117, 361</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacerdețeanu, A.</td>
<td>58, 76, 78, 270, 309, 418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salimbene de Adam</td>
<td>144, 379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Marc, Ph.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakharov, A. N.</td>
<td>55, 99, 424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sala, M.</td>
<td>228, 311, 344, 399, 408, 424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salinbène de Adam</td>
<td>144, 379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samokvasov, D.</td>
<td>288, 390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šams ad-Din aš-Šu’ā’i</td>
<td>339, 340, 379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandoli, S. de</td>
<td>123, 379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanguinetti, B. R.</td>
<td>39, 170, 184, 371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanié, S.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santarem</td>
<td>34, 173, 379</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Simionescu, I. 13, 30, 425
Simmons, I. G. 9
Simões de Paula, E. 53, 425
Simon de Keza xvii, 59, 64, 70, 71, 74–76, 104, 115, 118, 261, 265, 266, 380
Simon de Saint-Quentin 170, 380
Sinor, D. 3, 64, 70, 113, 115, 181, 185, 264, 398, 399, 405, 425
Sîrulî (Sîrouni), H. Dj. 23, 34, 48, 372
Sirbu, V. 90, 129, 291, 318, 386, 416, 418
Sîrcu, I. 15, 30, 41, 425
Skazkin, S. D. 129, 409
Skrzhinska, E. Ch. 172, 363
Slastîkhin, V.V. 26, 27, 34, 425
Slavici, I. xiv, 371
Slawisch, A. 110, 424
Smičiklas, T. 146, 332, 366
Smilenko, A. T. 160, 191, 193, 350, 390
Smirnov, G. D. xii, 400
Smirnov, S. V. 246, 404
Smith, G. 8
Smith Jr., J. Masson 235, 425
Snædal, T. 54
Sneadal, D. 206, 408
Sobolevskii, A. I. 106, 135, 425
Sokulskii, A. L. 131, 425
Solakzade Mehmed Hemdemi. See Hemdemi
Solchanyk, R. 136
Solomon, C. 327, 380
Solomon, F. 154, 426
Solta, G. R. 228, 345, 426
Someșan, L. 229, 426
Sommerlechner, A. 179, 378
Somogyi, J. v. 152, 380
Soós, Z. 147, 412
Sorlin, I. 89, 426
Sorre, M. 10, 11, 426
Soukry, A. 27, 375
Soulis, G. C. 326, 426
Stoia, M. 195, 365
Stoianov (Stojanow, Stoyanov), V. 4, 380
Stoianov (Stojanow, Stoyanov), V. 4, 187, 317, 342, 343, 427
Stoica, C. Gh. 313, 315, 322, 427
Stoicescu, N. xi, 76, 315, 329, 364, 399, 427
Stoide, C. A. 20, 315, 327, 364–366
Stojanović, L. 335, 354, 380
Stokes, A. D. 99, 427
Stökl, G. 161, 427
Stoliarik, E. S. 138, 243, 246, 384, 391, 437
Strobo 28, 30, 34, 36, 92, 208, 369, 380
Strnad, A. A. 179, 378
Stroia, M. 195, 365
Stugren, P. 11
Stupu, M. 195, 388
Sturtison, Sturri 106, 217, 221, 380
Subbotin, A. V. 399, 437
Subbotin (Subbotin), L. V. 191, 199, 246, 293, 385, 387, 391, 436–438
Suceveanu, Al. 32, 292, 293, 391
Suchodolski, B. 154, 418
Suciu, C. 318, 427
Suciu, Șt. 330, 365
Sutus, lexicon 94
Sukharev, Iu. V. 161, 427
Šükrallā. See Shükrullāh
Suleymanoğlu, H. 346, 405
Sulimirski, T. 163
Sultanov, T. I. 181, 185, 410
Suny, R. G. 128, 405
Svetlichnaia, L. I. See Svetlicinâi, L.
Svetlicinâi, L. (Svetlichnaia, L. I.) 250, 312, 314, 320, 368, 375, 376
Świłowski, W. 268, 427
Symeon Magister 56, 66, 91, 264, 369, 380, 381
Szalontai, C. 59, 427
Szántai, L. 38, 380
Szczepański, J. 10
Székely, Gy. 358, 406
Székely, M. M. 325
Székely, M. 358, 406
Szekfü, Gy. 62
Szentpétery, E. xvii, 169, 365
Szujski, J. 325, 366
Szőlősi-Zalay, Antal 110, 365
Takács, B. Z. 4
Takács, M. 237, 391
Tamás, L. 347, 428
Tanasevičius, M. 12, 193, 384
Tanason, N.-Ş. xiv, 119, 128, 139, 369, 400, 428
Tappe, E. D. 17
Tardy, L. 245, 428
Tavkul, U. 4
Tāpkova-Zaimova, V. 57, 58, 60, 101, 103, 122, 139, 372, 380, 428
Tātu, A. L. 152, 173, 189, 357, 361
Tekin, T. 185, 302, 304, 381, 428
Tel'nov, N. P. 61, 135, 191, 192, 199, 349, 384, 385, 390, 391, 423, 437
Tentůc, I. 191, 192, 213, 240, 270, 283, 301, 389, 391, 428, 435
Teodor, P. 286
Teodorescu, Gh. 195, 428
Teoteoi, T. xiv, 94, 107, 110, 139, 250, 273, 369, 395, 400, 414, 415, 426, 428
Tereshchuk, K. I. 162, 428
Terpilovskii, V. 268, 427
Tike, V. 180, 428
Tikmák, L. xiii, 367
Teofan, Gh. xiv, xv, 252, 292, 293, 369, 391, 409
Teofanescu, Gh. 195, 383
Teofanescu, Șt. xii, xiii, xv, 129, 141, 195, 196, 250, 316, 352, 367, 394, 425, 427
Ștrempel, G. 20, 21, 289, 315, 325, 362, 376
Tácitus, P. Cornelius 220, 381
Tafel, T. L. F. 125, 144, 204, 368, 381
Tagliavini, C. 180, 428
Takács, B. Z. 4
Takács, M. 237, 391
Tamás, L. 347, 428
The little grammarian of Constantinople, see Ioannes Cipriani
Velcea, V. 13, 403
Velte, A.-M. 243, 430
Velikanova, M. S. 195, 252, 280, 385, 392
Verancsics, Anton (Verantium, Ant[onius]) 17, 21, 24, 28, 36, 382
Veres, P. 16, 65, 430
Veress, A. 229, 315, 317, 329, 353, 382, 431
Vergatti, R. “t. 199, 422
Verhaeghe, F. 240, 428
Verlinden, Ch. 245, 431
Vernadsky (Vernandskij), G. 55, 70, 133, 188, 266, 431
Veselovskii, N. 303
Veszprémy, L. 60, 362
Vidal de la Blanche, P. 10, 11, 13, 414, 431
Vidrașcu, I. T. 30
Vidulich, M. R. 336, 368
Viktorova, L. L. 218, 431
Villani, Giovanni 42, 169, 172, 382
Villehardouin, Godefroy de 77, 78, 144, 382
Vincent de Beauvais (Vincentius Bellovacensis) 172, 382
Vinčić, V. 330, 364
Vinokur, I. S. 162, 392
Vințilă-Ghiuleșcu, C. xiii, 367
Vitencu, Al. 312
Vivian, K. 128, 276, 369
Wace, A. 95, 374
Wacquett, H. 127, 368
Waddingus Hibernus, L. 172, 382
Wachtel, P. 62
Walaschofsky, A. 228, 431
Vul奉escu, R. 301, 431
Vulpe, Al. 13, 23, 409
Vulpe, R. xii, 23, 32
Wace, A. J. B. 343, 431
Wallis Budge, E. A. 102, 108, 232, 370
Wagner, E. 71, 431
Waelkens, B. 52
Wairitz, G. 130, 365
Walaschefsky, A. 228, 431
Waley, A. 218, 381
Williams, K. 52, 422
Windsch, R. 74, 432
Wink, A. 128, 358, 395
Winfriðr, T. J. 139, 343, 432
Wirth, P. 62
Wittich, Z. 269, 432
Wolf, M. xiv, 70, 367
Wolf, R. L. 138, 140, 432
Wolfram, H. M. 27, 36, 432
Wozniak, F. E. 397, 432
Wright, F. A. 95, 374
Wyngaert, A. van den xvi
Wyrostek, L. 162, 432
Xenopol, A. D. 58, 181, 254, 270, 311, 432
Yahya-ibn-Sa`ïd of Antioch 99, 102, 382
Yâkubi 183, 217, 226, 238, 274, 382
Yao Ts`ung-wu 209, 375
Yapp, M. E. 267, 399
Yazici, N. 4
Yücel, M. U. 4
al-Yūnīnī 339, 382
Zach, K. 270, 432
Zachariadou, E. A. 168, 432
Zaharia, D. 313, 315, 318, 366
Zaharia, E. 248, 271, 392
Zaharia, Em. xvii, 67, 192, 389, 392, 436
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zaharia, N.</td>
<td>xvii, 12, 190, 192, 193, 241, 322, 392, 436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zahariuc, P.</td>
<td>xiii, 250, 313, 367, 368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaharov, S.</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žahir al-Dīn Nishāpūrī</td>
<td>304, 371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zajaczkowski, A.</td>
<td>49, 432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakhoder, B. N.</td>
<td>63, 244, 257, 432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakythinós, D. A.</td>
<td>98, 102, 111, 432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zanoci, A.</td>
<td>191, 233, 389, 421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zarnitz, M. L.</td>
<td>109, 379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Závoianu, I.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zbuchea, Gh.</td>
<td>101, 180, 379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zelenciuc, V. S.</td>
<td>86, 402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zelenskii, Y. V.</td>
<td>143, 392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zenkovsky, S. A.</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zernack, K.</td>
<td>xiv, 407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeune, J.</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhurko, O. I.</td>
<td>162, 392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimin, A. A.</td>
<td>136, 432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimmermann, F.</td>
<td>163, 331, 341, 381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimmermann, H.</td>
<td>146–148, 152, 159, 160, 382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimonyi, I.</td>
<td>xvi, 4, 49, 63, 64, 90, 184, 369, 377, 432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zlatarski, V. N.</td>
<td>56, 62, 432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zmeu, I.</td>
<td>20, 378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zmudzki, P.</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zosima the Deacon</td>
<td>38, 42, 373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zosimus</td>
<td>36, 382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuckerman, C.</td>
<td>4, 50, 53, 55, 64, 419, 433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zugravu, N.</td>
<td>301, 433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žukovs’kij, A.</td>
<td>135, 397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zundel-Bernard, A.</td>
<td>205, 419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Žygulska Jr., Z.</td>
<td>221, 433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>