

SOME REMARKS ON THE MONGOL CONQUEST OF GREATER ARMENIA AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

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Introduction

It is widely accepted that in the history of the Armenian people, the period from the eleventh to the fourteenth century should be regarded as the Seljuq-Mongol period. For almost an entire century, a very serious debate has been going on about the exact date of the first appearance of the Armenians in the area of the Black Sea and in Galicia (Poland). During this period of debate, two contradictory theories have been in circulation; the one connected the Armenian immigration to this region to the Genoese rule over the southern coast of the Crimea in the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries, while the other dated this event to the eleventh century, as a result of an *en masse* emigration from the Armenian fatherland, triggered by the incursion of the Seljuq troops. The partisans of the latter view generally treat the period from the eleventh to the thirteenth century nearly as a coherent unity; in fact, they extend the conclusions drawn from the reports of thirteenth-century chronicles on the Mongol predations to earlier times.

Certainly, in principle, the results of the nomadic attacks, devastation, and decimation may have been similar; nevertheless, we should establish a more precise chronology of the mass migration that followed the two invasions which were separated by two centuries. In both cases we have lengthy narratives about the direct results of the depredations by nomadic troops, the devastation of the country, the genocide against the population, and the dragging away of thousands of inhabitants as captives. The contemporary chronicles about the Seljuq and Mongol invasions are full of jeremiads concerning these deplorable events.¹

However, there is no trace in the chronicles of emigrants leaving their fatherland for good. Obviously, the population did not want to leave its home and personal belongings. They bewail the dead and hide in cellars, caves, and mountains. In any case, there are a few thousands who flee at the first news of the enemy's

¹ *Patmut'wn Aristakisi Lastiverc'woy*, (Aristakes Lastivertsi's History) ed. and publ. by K. N. Yuzbašean, Erewan, 1963; *Kirakos Ganjakec'i, Patmut'wn Hayoc'*, (History of Armenia) publ. by Melik'-Ohanjanian, Erewan, 1961.; T. S. R. Boase, *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia* (Edinburgh-New York, 1978); D. Kouyumjian, "L'Arménie sous les dominations des Turcomans et des Ottomans (Xe–XVI siècles," in *Histoire des Arméniens*, ed. G. Dédéyan (Toulouse, 1982).

approach. In the case of both the Seljuq and the Mongol invasions the sedentary inhabitants had previous experience of earlier attacks. The Seljuq troops made incursions in 1048, 1054, 1062, preceding the final strike, the capturing of Ani, the capital of medieval Armenia, in 1064. The Mongols first came twenty years before their final attack on *Ciscaucasia*, that is in 1221.² Notwithstanding these experiences of the majority of the population, it still happened in districts that lay further away from the main military roads that the village population, in the illusion that probably 'the devil may not be as black as depicted', headed by their priests and *vardapets* who were holding high the holy cross, moved in procession to receive the Mongols cordially. However, they paid a heavy price: they were all killed.³

During the Mongol invasions, a large number of Armenians appeared in the Crimea, a fact that is testified by several manuscripts from the 1280s, connected to trade deals between Armenian and Genoese merchants.⁴ Certainly, the Armenians, because of their trading experience all around the Near East, were welcome partners in commercial companies that dealt with Eastern and Western countries mostly via Trapezunt to Persia and further on, or towards the South, to Egypt. However, such documents do not give us any exact information on the citizenship of these Armenians; they may have been individual settlers, or simple clients of Genoese factors.

***Minas Bžškeanc'*'s view on the appearance of the Armenians in East-Europe (Crimea and Galicia)**

Those who deal with the Armenian mass emigrations generally treat the results of the Seljuq and Mongol disasters indiscriminately, saying that after the Mongol invasions, during the eleventh and fourteenth centuries, the Armenians fled to the North and to the South. But where did this generally recurring comprehensive statement originate?

If we try to verify the assertion above, which was disseminated by Armenian clerical authors of the last century, we necessarily arrive at the conclusion that, directly or indirectly, the very popular book by Minas Bžškeanc', entitled "*Travel in Poland*" (in Armenian: *Čanap'arhordut'iwn i Lehastan*) served as the major source of this theory. However, we should also remark that Bžškeanc' was not a pioneer who

² Mention must be made of the disastrous predations of the Shah of Xwarezm, Jalal ad-Din in 1225–1228 as well; Kirakos, *Patmut'iwn*, 224–225; *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 5, *The Seljuq and Mongol periods*, ed. J.A. Boyle (Cambridge, 1968), 330.

³ Kirakos, *Patmut'iwn*, 202.

⁴ V. Mik'aelean, *Erimu haykakan galut'i patmut'iwn* (History of the Armenian settlements in Crimea.), (Erewn, 1964), 113–120.; G. I Bratianu, *Actes des notaires génois de Péra et de Caffa de la fin du treizième siècle (1281–1290)*, (Bucarest, 1927), 144.

based this statement on his own research into the old documents and inscriptions of the Armenian settlements. Instead, he followed some other outstanding clergymen before him, and he was not the last in the line either.

Minas Bžškeanc', having been appointed vicar of *Tauria (Crimea)* in 1820, left for a long journey to visit all the centers that belonged to his diocese; on his way he visited all significant and important Armenian diasporas in Galicia and the Crimea. Before his travels, he made thorough studies concerning the past and present state of these colonies. He published the first results of his studies on the past of the Black Sea area in his *Patmut'iwn Pontosi* in 1819. He could make good use of the information given by H. Zohrabean and S. R'oškay whose research in the 1780–90s in the Lwów Archepiscopate and other archives had been incorporated into the encyclopedic digest of historical geography edited and published by the Mhit'arist Fathers in San Lazzaro, Venice.⁵

In his book, which contained accounts on his research in the different Armenian communities, Bžškeanc' tried to give a summarised history of their fatherland and the destruction of Ani; he also gave a survey of the recent state of each settlement in the first half of the nineteenth century. To the question when the first Armenian colonies in Galicia were established, he proposed different answers that contradicted each other.

We find an extensive summary in the first passage of his chapter on “*The dispersion of the inhabitants of Ani*” (*C'rumn Anec'woc'*), where he describes the subsequent waves of refugees as follows: “*In the year 1060 of the Lord, when Ani fell to the hands of the enemies, a large number of the inhabitants of Ani... together with their fellow-countrymen who lived in the surrounding area, took their leave from Armenia, and started on a way to Poland (T'agaworut'iwnn Le hac') and Bogdan (Moldva). And in the year 1062 of the Lord, when the Persians (Seljuqs) beleaguered and looted Ani, the majority of the inhabitants set forth on the tracks of their antecedents winding their way towards Moldavia and, from there, to Poland. But at the time of the sixth capture of Ani, in the year 1239 of the Lord, the leaders of the remainder of the population left for T'at'aristan and settled down in the suburb of Ažderxan (Astraxan) in Aq-Saray, and others dispersed to different places, such as to Sis (Cilicia), Van, Naxiĵewan.*”⁶

In this report we find a wrong date for the capture of Ani. Bžškeanc' considers the attack of Alp Arslan, the Great Seljuq Sultan, into Greater Armenia as the motif that brought about the exodus of the Armenians, but, in fact, the seizure of Ani

⁵ L. Inĵijian, *Ažxarhagrut'iwn čoric' masanc' ažxarhi*, (Armenian Geography) I–XI, (Venetik, 1802–1805)

⁶ M. Bžškeanc', *Čanap'arhordut'iwn i Lehastan*, (A Travel in Poland), (Venetik, 1830), p. 83, paragraph 130.

happened in 1064, instead of 1062. Here, Bžškeanc' repeated again the assertion that the Armenian settlers of Poland had stemmed from the emigrants of the Seljuq period.⁷

If we read carefully the chapter on “*The Dispersion...*”, we can find the clue for this distortion of the date in the much disputed source of the *Archepiscopate Archive* in Lwów which says: “*Theodor, The Grand Dux (sic!), son of Demetre, to the Armenians of Našoxač. Whomever it pleased to come here should come to help and aid me, and I have the intention to grant and donate them freedom for three years. And when you should be with me, you might freely go wherever it pleases you. In the year 1062*”⁸ It seems that it was this date that encouraged Bžškeanc' to correct the right date of 1064 to 1062. The author in his colophon says that the text of the source was a translation from Old Slavonic into Armenian; however, the Old Slavonic text does not bear any date. Moreover, the Old Slavonic text, compiled and published by the Polish scholars and philologists F. X. Zacharyasiewicz and T. Gromnicki, is quite different from the Latin translation, being rather a somewhat amplified version of the latter.⁹

It is uncertain whether Bžškeanc' had ever seen the Old Slavonic version, because his Armenian version literally agrees with the Latin; it even contains the date 1062 that is missing in the Old Slavonic but is present in the Latin. Furthermore, the phrase “*dux*” in the Armenian text supposes a Latin and not an Old Slavonic original. Had the original contained the corresponding Slavonic title *Kniaz* or—as is sometimes the case—*Vojevod*, it would rather have been translated as *išxan* or *melik'* in the Armenian text.

Bžškeanc' used the document also with reference to the Armenian inhabitants of Kameneć-Podolski: “In the year 1062 Dux Theodor invited the people of Ani to come and find a new home in Podolia (Galicia), in the capital of Kamenic.”¹⁰ Although this sentence is not put within quotation marks in the original, the wording reflects the text of the abovementioned document, only the explicit mention of the city of Kamenic is absent from the latter. The fact that the Austrian historian Ferdinand Bischoff could not see the document when he was in Lwów in 1822 also makes it rather questionable that Bžškeanc' could have seen the original.¹¹

⁷ Bžškeanc', *Čanap'arhordut'iwn i Lehastan*, p. 54, paragraph 81.

⁸ Bžškeanc', *Čanap'arhordut'iwn i Lehastan*, p. 85, paragraph 134-136.

⁹ Zacharyasiewicz, “*Wiadomość o Ormianach w Polsce: Bibl. Nauk Zakładu im. Ossolinskich, vol. 2, (Lwów, 1842), 17–35; T. Gromnicki, Ormianie w Polsce. Ich prawa historia, (Warszawa, 1889), 32–45; Ya. Dachkévitč, “Les Arméniens à Kiev,” REArm (=Revue des études arméniennes) X, (Paris, 1976), 340–342.*

¹⁰ Bžškeanc', *Čanap'arhordut'iwn i Lehastan*, p. 135, paragraph 214.

¹¹ Ya. Dachkévitč, “*Les Arméniens...*,” 345–347.

A somewhat different version was published by A. M. Pidou, a theatinian priest and emissary of the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*, in his *Breves relationes* in 1669¹², and a similar text in the *Compendiosa relatio* by an anonymous author in 1676. The only essential difference between the two was the place of origin of the Armenians to whom the invitation was addressed: *Armenians of Tataristan* in the former, and *Armenians of Xersons* in the latter.¹³ Pidou's *Breves relationes* in Latin did not exert any influence on historical thought, because it has never been published in its original language, but only in a Polish translation in 1876 and later in Armenian, in 1884.

The original document was used by the Armenian Archbishopric of Lwów to prove the ancient rights of the community, and was confirmed in 1641 by the Polish King Władysław IV (1632–1648). The disputes of the church authorities about the rights of the Armenian Church in Poland, though compiled in Latin, remained in ecclesiastic circles, preserved in Ukrainian, Polish, and the Vatican archives. The historical interpretations and disputes about the authenticity of the document in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were published in Polish and Russian and were therefore disregarded by Western historiography.¹⁴

The historical problems concerning the Armenian colonies in Galicia and the related documentation were first introduced into western historiography by Ferdinand Bischoff, professor of the History of Law for ten years at the University of Lwów (1855–1865), and then for thirty years in Graz (1865–1896).¹⁵ At any rate, the Armenian researchers had a wider influence on historical and public thought, although from Stepannos R'oškay's *Annals of the Armenian Church*, only a segment was published in the last century (1896) and the complete text only recently (1964)¹⁶, while H. Zohrabean's research never appeared separately, but only incorporated into Akontz's geographic encyclopedia.¹⁷ However, M. Bžškeanc' used both of these sources. From paragraphs 130 and 134 of his work it is evident that he had R'oškay's *Annals* in his hand. In his explanation, he simply mixed R'oškay's information with the current version: in 1060 Demetre's son, Theodor, invited the Armenians to serve

¹² *Br'ni Miut'iwn Hayoc' Lehastani* (The church union of the Armenians in Poland) (St. Petersburg, 1884), 11.

¹³ *Br'ni Miut'iwn*, 152.

¹⁴ Ya. Dachkévitch, "Les Arméniens," 341–349.

¹⁵ F. Bischoff, *Urkunden zur Geschichte der Armenier in Lemberg*. (Wien, 1864); *Das Alte Recht der Armenier in Polen*, (Wien, 1857), No. 28, 217–220

¹⁶ L. Ališan, *Kamenic', Taregirk' Hayoc' Lehastani ew R'umenioy* (Kamenic: Annals of Armenian communities in Poland and Romania) (Venetik, 1896), 131–151; St. R'oškay, *Žamanakagrut'iwn kam tarekank' ekelec'akank'*, (Annals of the Armenian Church) (Wien, 1964), 112–114.

¹⁷ Injijian, *Ašxarhagrut'iwn...*, I–XI.

as auxiliary troops in his army.¹⁸ However, Bžškeanc' failed to mention that the rebellious subjects, against whom Theodor needed help, were Poles. This, certainly, did not fit into the context of supporting the privileges of an Armenian community in a territory, the Lwów district, that later became incorporated into Poland (1341–46).

Thus, the date indicated by R'oškay was the third one that Bžškeanc' incorporated into his narrative. In his effort to bring these different variants into harmony, he mixed up the various components of information. Beside the three versions of the date, he proposes even more variants for the place of origin of the Armenian immigrants: T'at'aristan (Pidou), Xerson (Comp. relatio), the people of Ani, and two versions in the document of the Archiepiscopal Archive of Lwów: Nošoxač'ean or Kosoxackie. Already in 1853, A. Petruševič, the renowned Ukrainian scholar, tried to explain the *kosoxackie* attribute that indicates the place of origin with the help of an emendation in his thorough critical study, accepted by Yaroslav Daškevič, as *kosolxackimsvc*, meaning “*Solxacensibus Armenis*”, i.e. “*the Armenians of Solxat*”.¹⁹ In fact, this correction makes sense. Even if the authenticity of the document is doubtful, it may still reflect some reliable tradition: a considerable number of the Armenian community of Lwów and the neighbouring district, Kamenec-Podolski, may have come from the region of Solxat in Crimea.²⁰

The most essential point in the enumeration of the historical interpretations of the northern emigration of the Armenians in the eleventh century is that it must have been only this alleged document in Lwów that had induced earlier historians and, first of all, Minas Bžškeanc' and the Armenian authors in his wake, to proclaim that the earliest Armenian settlers of Lwów and Kamenec-Podolski were emigrants fleeing the Seljuq conquerors, who left their fatherland after the conquest of Ani in 1064.

The Mongolian period in Greater Armenia and its relation to the development of the Armenian colonies in Eastern Europe

Bžškeanc' and his followers have completely left out of sight an important historical fact: the accumulation of a dense Armenian population in Cilicia after the Byzantines had conquered the Bagratid Kingdom, and the Seljuqs the principality of Vaspurakan (the feudal state of the Arcruni' dynasty).²¹ That Bžškeanc' was completely aware of his neglect is shown by the sentence he added to his narrative about the dispersion of

¹⁸ Bžškeanc', *Čanap'arhordut'ivn i Lehastan*, 83–85.

¹⁹ Dachkévitch, “Les Arméniens,” 342–343, 354.

²⁰ Dachkévitch, “Les Arméniens,” 355.

²¹ *Patmut'ivn Matt'ewosi Ur'hayec'woy* (History of Matthew of Edessa) (Yerusalēm, 1869), 261–265.

the Armenians after the Mongol conquest in 1236 or 1239: “The leader of the remnants of the population went to Aq-Saray, and the others dispersed to different countries and places, like Sis, Džula, and Van.”²² He took over the last clause from the so-called *Chronicle Nesvita* word by word, only the sequence of the communities was altered into a chronological order, so that Sis, the capital of Cilician Armenia, was put first.²³

Earlier research has already proved that the Lwów document, upon which the theory of the northern and north-western direction of mass emigration was mostly based, was not authentic. Above, we have tried to demonstrate that the major propagator of this version was Minas Bžškeanc' whose popular work has greatly contributed to the dissemination of the idea of a northern route of Armenian emigration after the capture of Ani.

But at the same time, the book by Bžškeanc' contained the most essential narrative source, the colophon in a Crimean *Haymsawurk'* (*Book of Menologion*), the so-called *Chronicle Nesvita*, the relation of *History of Caffa*.²⁴ The *Chronicle* was presumably compiled in Caffa by Deacon Dawit', around 1690, but the story was not invented by the deacon; it was partially taken over from an earlier source about the northern route of flight after the Mongol invasion to Aq-Saray and, later, to Caffa.

The essentials of the connection were included in the *History of Ani* written by Kat'olikos Abraham (1734–37)²⁵, whose story was also represented in the cherished literary manual of Łazar Džahkeci' (1737–1751), *The Wished Paradise*.²⁶ But the two venerable ecclesiarchs linked the mass flight of the inhabitants of Ani with an earthquake (1319) that destroyed the city because of the sinful life of the people. Nor was the story an invention of these clerics, since we possess an even earlier versified version of the narrative by Martiros Xrimeci', according to whom the mass emigration of the Armenians was a result of the Mongol occupation.²⁷ A variant of this later explanation can also be found in the *Chronicle Nesvita*, and the preceding paragraph repeats word by word some chapters of Kirakos Ganjakeci's narrative on *The Capture of Ani*.²⁸

²² Bžškeanc', *Čanap'arhordut'iwñ i Lehastan*, 83, paragraph. 130.

²³ Bžškeanc', *Čanap'arhordut'iwñ i Lehastan*, 337.

²⁴ Matenadaran MS. No 7442-7443; Bžškeanc', 335–345.

²⁵ In the Appendix of his “*Patmut'iwñ*”, (Valaršapat, 1870), 101–109.

²⁶ *Girk' astuacabanakan or koč'i Draxt c'ankali*, (A Theological Book called “Wished Paradise”) (Polis (Constantinople), 1735), 629.

²⁷ Martirosean, *Martiros Xrimeci'*, (Erewan, 1956), 142–155.

²⁸ Kirakos, *Patmut'iwñ*, 258–259.

The mass emigration that followed the Mongol conquest is also generally connected to a fixed date: 1236. However, we would like to emphasize that these emigrations should not be imagined as a single event at a single date, but as a gradual sequence of waves of emigrants, a continuous reduction of the population, beginning with the panic of the sudden attack, and continuing for a whole century as a consecutive dying-out of the productive groups in Armenian society. For the entire history of the Mongol invasion of Ciscaucasia, we have narrative sources, the heart-rending depiction of the great decimation, the devastation of the country. Most of the people sought shelter in fortified places, as remarked by Kirakos: “neither did the earth hide the squatters, nor did the rocks, cliffs and caves cover the people who took shelter there, nor the tough walls of fortresses, nor the deep valley of coombs.”²⁹

In the *Chronicle* of Kirakos', who was a personal eyewitness to these sad events, we have an accurate picture of this process of how the people of the villages, the serfs, and the peasants from the fields fled to the surrounding mountains. When Vanakan *vardapet* (*vardapet* means Doctor Theologiae), the great magister, after the destruction of his monastery (Getik) led his pupils to a cave next to the fortress Tawuš, a group of country people joined them. However, before long, the Mongol troops came in large numbers and the chronicler himself was also taken captive.³⁰ Despite all these heart-breaking accounts, we have not found in any of the contemporary Armenian sources any relation on, or even a direct allusion to, a mass flight of the Armenians to foreign countries.³¹

According to the so-called *Chronicle Nesvita*, the first time when the Armenians fled to Aq-Saray, Crimea, the residence of the Mongol qan of Joči Ulus, was in 1299. Albeit this date does not agree with the date of the Mongol attack on Ciscaucasia, we can take into consideration the possibility that the memory of the different events might have become entangled during the following years. We would like to suggest a theory about the intrusion of this date into this confused information. The year 1299 was marked by a pivotal event, the death of Qan Noıay, the Qan-maker of the Golden Horde (*Altın Orda*), who was by his office a supreme authority, a co-ruler. This event must have been deeply imprinted into the memory of the

²⁹ Kirakos, *Patmut'iwın*, 238.

³⁰ Kirakos, *Patmut'iwın*, 243.

³¹ Vanakan *vardapet* and Kirakos were eyewitnesses of these events, another author named Vardan Arewel'ci gave us just a succinct summary on the Mongol invasion in Greater Armenia. His book is likely taken from the disappeared of *Vanakan's Chronicle*. See H. Oskean, *Hovhannēs vanakan vardapet ew iwı dproc'e*, (Vardapet Vanakan Hovhannes and his Academy in Getik) (Vienna, 1922). Grigor Akanc'i: *Vasn Azgin Net'olac'* (On the people of the archers), concentrates on the history of the Cilician Armenian Kingdom in the later Ilkhanid period.

people of Caffa when Noyay took revenge on the town for the assassination of his grandson, who had been murdered in Caffa on his tax-collecting route.³²

There is no reason for us to doubt the reliability of the account in the *Chronicle Nesvita*, according to which the first station on the route of the fleeing Armenians may have been Aq-Saray (“White Camp”), the residence of Qan Batu. Although the Ciscaucasia was governed by military leaders: Čormayan, Baiyu, the overlord was the head of Džoči Ulus, at this time Qan Batu (1241–1256). Thus, the subjected peoples took refuge with him. Surely many people turned to him after the invasion, but this group must have consisted mainly of the noble classes: “*Kings, princes, feudal landlords, traders had applied to him (Qan Batu), all who had endured injustice and had been deprived of their family estate. And he made justice...*”³³

The supremacy of the *Golden Horde* over *Ciscausia* was maintained even after the death of Qan Batu in 1256, but after the Hülegids’ (Ilkhanids) rule over Persia was established in 1258, their right was challenged by the Ilkhanids and Ciscaucasia became a battlefield between the two Mongol States. The mass emigration of the Armenian population was not a single event brought about by the incursions of the Mongol troops, but a continuous outflow of fugitives was prompted by a serious decline in their economic situation. Of course, the first deadly strike to the medieval Armenian economy was dealt at the very onset of the Mongol conquest, given the fact that the Mongol troops had no sense for protecting agriculture. In 1236 “*they [the Mongols] arrived—as depicted by magister Kirakos Ganjakec’i—just at the time of the harvest season, when the crop had not yet been reaped and gathered into the barn. They let their horses and camels graze up all the grain, green barley, and tread down the rest.*”³⁴ Furthermore, they rooted out the vineyards,³⁵ using the fruit-trees, just as the vines, for fuel.³⁶ When the Mongols withdrew to their winter camps in the Mughan steppe area “*the surviving husbandmen had nothing to eat, nor any grain for sowing, nor any cattle to till the land.*”³⁷

The Mongols had destroyed the means and instruments of production, so that the situation could hardly turn to the better. The subsequent period of peace saw the establishment of the customary nomad administration system of the Mongols. As

³² B. Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde, Die Mongolen in Russland, 1222–1502* (Leipzig, 1943), 75–76.

³³ Kirakos, *Patmut’iwn*, 358.

³⁴ Kirakos, *Patmut’iwn*, 261.

³⁵ Kirakos, *Patmut’iwn*, 236–238.

³⁶ It should be noted that it was regarded as a sinful act in Ciscaucasia if someone tried to cut down fruit-trees even at times of war. Mxit’ar Gawš, *Girk’ Datastani*, (Law’s Book), ed. X. T’orossean, (Erewan, 1975), 302.

³⁷ “*Still by the omnipotent Lord’ s mercy and their work they were able to carry on.*” Kirakos, *Patmut’iwn*, 262–263.

Kirakos said in his book: “*One of the head administrators, called Buḡa, had sent out tax-collectors; the Muslims, Nestorians, Persians were the most wicked in exaction and extortion.*”³⁸ This state of affairs did not alter under the succeeding rulers. During the reign of the great Qan Möngke (1251–1259) a general recensement was held in the subdued provinces: “*Registers of the taxable population were drawn up, including even the boys from 10 years on. The serfs were deprived of the remaining resources. The ones, who tried to escape and hid, were whipped or even murdered; of the miserables, who had nothing to give, the children were seized and taken away to be sold as slaves.*”³⁹

The economic situation was equally deplorable throughout the entire Ilkhanid rule, the tax-pressure became no lighter with the distance of the government centre. Instead, it even got steadily worse as local tax-collectors exacted from the people with impunity ever higher taxes for their own benefit. The permanent exactions were largely instrumental in provoking even the labouring masses to abandon their homeland. Devastated lands were left behind, no labour was available. The state of affairs is shown in the votive inscription of a rich merchant dated to 1283, who “*bought the village called Hovk' for 4000 gold thalers during hard times, when land was very cheap, and gold so precious, and donated it as a gift to the monastery of Nor-Getik in Gawšavank'.*”⁴⁰ This inscription, found in Gawšavank', is an eloquent instance of the serious result of the devastation and domination of the nomads.

The situation remained the same during the entire Ilkhanid period, as was clearly announced by the *jarliq* (order) of Qan Ğazan: “*As a consequence of the insults and pillages the most part of the inhabitants in the country has left their homeland and found a new home in foreign countries; the towns and villages were left empty.*” Qan Ğazan (1295–1306) and his chancellor, the Persian chronicler Rašid ad-Din, were entirely aware of the sorrowful consequences of the exploitation and tried to stop the local authorities from making further extortions.⁴¹

The turning point of this process of depopulation of Greater Armenia becomes evident in a *jarliq* of Abu Said (1316–1335), at the time of the last Ilkhanid qan. The order can be dated to the decade between 1320 and 1330, since it was preserved in a bilingual, Armenian and Persian, inscription, dated to 1330, on the wall of the mosque Manuč'ê in the town Ani: “*Beside the t'amlas signed and the justified*

³⁸ Kirakos, *Patmut'iwñ*, 213–214.

³⁹ Kirakos, *Patmut'iwñ*, 363; Grigor Akanc'i, transl. A. Boyle, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 12 (1949): 324–325.

⁴⁰ H. A. Manandian, *The Trade and Cities of Armenia in Relation to Ancient World Trade*, transl. N. Garsoian, (Lisbon, 1965), 186.

⁴¹ Rašid ad-Din, *Sbornik letopisej* (Historical Accounts), transl. A. Arends vol. III. 251–252.; V. Barthold, “*Persidskaja nadpis' na stene anijskoj mečeti Manuč'e*” *Sočinenija*, vol. IV. 318.

tributes, no other tax must be raised from anyone under the auspice of *kalan*, *nemeri*, *tarx*, and other kinds of taxes as formerly it has been in use in the town of Ani and other parts of Georgia...Unlawful levies had been collected and violence applied. The places became desolate, the common people dispersed, the mayors of the towns and provinces left their movable and immovable estates and have gone away."⁴² All these historical sources attest to the fact that mass emigration, leading to the depopulation of Armenia, was a gradual process, as a consequence of the marauding, of the merciless extortions, briefly, of the nomadic predatory lifestyle of the conquerors.

Let us now return to the end of the route, Crimea and Galicia, which were the end-stations of these emigrants. The so-called *Chronicle Nesvita* succinctly remarks: "The Armenians in Aq-Saray, having been permanently terrorised and insulted by the Mongols (Tartars), sent an envoy to the Genoese authorities to Caffa and ... [the Genoese] concluded an agreement with them to settle down there in 779 (1330)."⁴³

The above date for the foundation of the Armenian colony in Caffa (1330) coincides with the date of the above-mentioned inscription in Ani. Even though we should not take this coincidence too seriously, this clip of information in the so-called *Chronicle Nesvita* may have preserved the memory of the arrival of the immigrants. This remains true even if we suppose, as we reasonably can, that this agreement did not mark the very foundation of the Armenian colony in the city of Caffa, but rather a certain state of repletion of the colony.

Conclusion

The most difficult problem disputed over a century has been the exact time of the arrival of the first Armenian settlers in the Crimea and Galicia. The strained formula, which in this respect treated the period from the eleventh to the fourteenth century as a compact entity and closely connected the Seljuq and Mongol warfares, left out of account the historical fact that in the Seljuqid period Cilicia and North-Syria were freshly supplied with a dense Armenian population, and that none of the sources on this period mentions the Northern route.

The theory of a mass emigration of the Armenians towards the North in the Seljuqid period has been based on a single source of the Archives in the Lwów Archepiscopate, dated to 1062. The authenticity of this document must be regarded as doubtful, because the city of Lwów was established by Duke Danil, the Prince of

⁴² Manandian, *Trade and Cities*, 178.

⁴³ Bžškeanc', *Čanap'arhordut'ivni i Lehastan*, pp. 338–339, paragraph 504.

Holič, in 1267. Armenian historiography, because of the proximity of the dates of this doubtful source (1062), and of the capture of Ani (1064), connected the document to the latter event and on this basis established the theory of the northern route in the eleventh century. This theory owed its wide dissemination to *A Travel in Poland* by Bžškeanc', the popularity of which was greatly enhanced by the attraction that a direct Ani lineage of the Lwów colony exerted on the minds of the Armenians residing in Poland. This is also reflected in an apocryphal subtitle of the work, under which it has been popularised ever since: *The History of Ani or Journey to Poland*.⁴⁴

Minas Bžškeanc' and his followers (including Kristóf Szongott, a Hungarian Armenologist in Szamosújvár, Transylvania) mostly investigated the first appearance of the Armenian colonies in Poland and Moldavia. The most important sources had been found in the Crimea, but, in order to underpin their theories, they also utilized a number of sources that have since been proved to be inauthentic, or at least doubtful. In this way, they have misled the experts for more than a century. Against their early dating of the Armenian colonies in Galicia (Holicz, Lwów), we have found the earliest mentions of these colonies in documents from the middle of the thirteenth century. The birth of these large colonies might not have occurred without the Mongol invasions in Greater Armenia.

⁴⁴ *Catalogo delle pubblicazioni*, Casa editrice armena dei patri mechtaristi, San Lazzaro (Venezia, 1960), 32.