

# New Europe College Black Sea Link Program Yearbook 2012-2013



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ANNA ABAKUNOVA  
KATERYNA BUDZ  
VOLODYMYR KULIKOV  
ALEXANDR OSIPIAN  
HUSEYIN OYLUPINAR  
ARAM TERZIAN

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New Europe College  
Str. Plantelor 21  
023971 Bucharest  
Romania

[www.nec.ro](http://www.nec.ro); e-mail: [nec@nec.ro](mailto:nec@nec.ro)  
Tel. (+4) 021.307.99.10, Fax (+4) 021. 327.07.74



## **ALEXANDR OSIPIAN**

Born in 1971, in Ukraine

Ph.D. in History, Donetsk National University (1999)

Dissertation: *Economic Development of Armenian Colonies in Galicia, Podolia, and Bucovina in the 14<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*

Associate Professor of History and Cultural Anthropology, Department of History and Cultural Studies, Kramatorsk Institute of Economics and Humanities

Membre des Assotiation internationale des études arméniennes  
Member of the International Association for Religious Studies in Eastern Europe

Fellowships and grants:

Institute of Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, USA (2012)

Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, George Washington University, Washington, DC, USA (2012)

Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas e.V. an der Universität Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany (2008, 2010)

Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau, Warsaw, Poland (2008, 2011)  
Grant of the Center for Advanced Studies and Education (CASE) in cooperation  
with Carnegie Corporation of New York and ACTR/ACCELS (2009, 2010)  
Institute of History, Jagellonian University, Krakow, Poland) (2007)  
European University at St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg, Russia (2005, 2006, 2007)  
European University Institute, Florence, Italy (2004, 2005)  
American Council for Learned Societies, short-term grant in humanities  
(2003-2004)  
Central European University, Budapest, Hungary  
(2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008)

Several articles on economic, social, intellectual and cultural history,  
political and cultural anthropology

Participation in international conferences in Germany, Hungary, Italy,  
Lithuania, Moldavia, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Ukraine

**Book:**

*Experimental History: Research Approaches and Methods of the 'Annales'  
Historical School.* Kramatorsk: Tirage-51, 2007 (in Ukrainian)

# TRANS-CULTURAL TRADE IN THE BLACK SEA REGION, 1250-1700: INTEGRATION OF THE ARMENIAN TRADING DIASPORA IN THE MOLDAVIAN PRINCIPALITY<sup>1</sup>

When dealing with the multiethnic merchants of pre-modern Moldavia, modern Romanian scholarship has largely confined itself to Greeks. But Greeks were by no means the only “foreign” traders to engage in commercial and financial transactions. This article looks at Armenians along with the other merchant groups active in Moldavia’s foreign trade from three different angles. Part one, an overview of the types of activities Armenians were involved in, finds that, while Armenians who settled in Moldavia acted as members of the larger Armenian merchant network facilitating the long-distance oriental trade, they also were active in the export of Moldavian commodities. Part two discusses a topic that has received a great deal of attention in Jewish studies, but that remains neglected in the Moldavian-Armenian context: the position of merchants in the host society, in particular their relationship with the holders of power. Were merchants an integral part of the state, or did they operate as an autonomous class whose interests differed from those of the political elite? Part three probes this issue further by examining how the ruling elite perceived Armenian merchants and why affiliation with Armenian Church was so important, not only for making the group consciousness of merchants themselves, but also for the effectiveness of the trans-border merchant network, in general. The Moldavian elite were deeply involved in the export of domestic agriculture, which also had a political dimension, turning the principality into the apple of strife between neighbor powers – the Ottomans, Habsburgs, and Poland. Thus, there was a fundamental convergence of interests between politics and trade. Armenian merchants, who, in turn, achieved high levels of wealth, fulfilled diplomatic functions

and reached beyond it, and by doing this were involved in political intrigues with the holders of power. Though vulnerable to oppression by state officials, they often offered passive resistance, which mostly took the form of migration to more politically stable and/or economically attractive regions such as Poland, Transylvania and Ottoman domains.

Many specialized studies are devoted to Armenian trading diasporas in Poland, Ukraine, and Transylvania. Some research has been done on trade along the main routes, as, for instance, between the Ottoman domains and the Polish kingdom. However, less attention had been given to the logistics of Armenian caravans on the routs between Lemberg/Kamianiec and Constantinople/Adrianople. Until now, there has been no special study investigating the issue of the persecution of Armenians in the 1550s-1570s. Most authors writing on pre-modern Armenian diaspora excluded the involvement of Armenian merchants into the Moldavian politics from their research agenda, repeating instead stories about the alleged Armenian background of some Moldavian rulers.<sup>2</sup>

This paper will explore the following questions: How did the Armenian diaspora interact with its host society? How did diasporic experience contribute to the processes of political mediation and to the economic exchange between the Ottoman Empire and the Polish kingdom? How did Armenian merchant communities negotiate legal regimes and extra-territorial rights in various political and cultural contexts – that is, in the Moldavian Principality and the Ottoman domains? How did different local concepts of identity and belonging inform the trans-regional diasporic experience of Armenian communities in Moldavia and Poland?

Based on these questions, I have outlined four research areas:

1. Armenian migration to Moldavia and the establishment of a merchant network as a part of long-distance oriental trade in the late Middle Ages.
2. Caravan trade between Lemberg and Constantinople: routs, logistics, conditions.
3. Persecutions of Armenians in Moldavia in the 1550s-1570s: religious, economic, or political?
4. Integration of Armenians into the Moldavian politics and society in the late 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## **Black Sea trade in the Late Middle Ages: the emergence of Armenian merchant network**

In the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when the decline of the Crusaders' states in Levant became evident, Genoese and Venetian

merchants gradually shifted their attention to the northern shore of the Black Sea. There, they established their trade colonies in Caffa, Soldaia, Cembalo, Vosporo, Kilia, Moncastro, and Tana<sup>3</sup> to trade with the Golden Horde and even to travel as far as Karakorum and Khanbalik-Beijing.<sup>4</sup> This route through the Black Sea to Soldaia in the Crimea and then, by land, through the Golden Horde was used by Franciscan William of Rubruck and the Polo brothers as early as the 1250s.<sup>5</sup> The security provided by the Mongol control over the whole Inner Asia, combined with the remarkable *yam* system – post communication network<sup>6</sup> – meant that the trade routes from China to Europe were safer than they had ever been before. The sack in 1268 and 1291 of Antioch and Acre in the mainland led to the growing importance of Cilician Armenia and Cyprus in the oriental trade, in which Armenian merchants were also involved. The main trade routes from the Ilkhans' capital Tabriz to the ports of Trebizond and Laiazzo/Layas/Ayas lay through Armenia. In 1288, the Armenian king of Cilicia Levon II granted Genoese merchants the privilege to establish their *fondacco*<sup>7</sup> in Mamistria.<sup>8</sup> These were the main preconditions for the Armenian-Italian economic cooperation in the region. The establishment by the Genoese and Venetians of the trade ports network in the Black Sea stimulated the influx of Armenian merchants and artisans into this region.

I have highlighted three stages of the Armenian migration in the northern part of the Black Sea region. First, through Trebizond and Tiflis to the Crimea (Caffa, Soldaia, and Solchat/Surchat) in 1250s-1290s. Second, to the ports in the estuary of the main rivers, that is, the Danube, the Dniester and the Don (Kilia and Licostomo, Moncastro-Akkerman, and Azak-Tana respectively) in the first half of 14<sup>th</sup> century. Third, to the inland trade centres situated deeper (Lemberg, Lutsk, Kamianiets-Podilski, Suceava, and Iași) in the 1360s-1390s.

The migrations of the 1360s-1390s from Crimea were provoked mostly by the continuous period of political rivalry and internal wars in the Golden Horde,<sup>9</sup> as well as by the destructions caused by Tamerlane in 1395-1396 and the expansion of the Great Duke of Lithuania Vitovt (Witold) in 1397-1398. In the 1360s-1370s, the steppeland of the northern part of the Black Sea region – modern day Southern Ukraine – witnessed numerous clashes between Mamay – a powerful emir of the western part of the Golden Horde – and his rivals from the eastern part of the Horde. And the Crimean peninsula being the most profitable because of international trade and well-fortified with the sea and mountains was at the epicenter of the rivalry between the Tatar khans until the mid-fifteenth century. In

1395-1396, Tamerlane destroyed such centers of trade in the Golden Horde as Yeni Saray on the Volga and Solchat in Crimea. As a result, in the second half of 14<sup>th</sup> century, the centralized power of the Khans has declined and travel in the steppeland became unsafe. Since the road of caravanserais established there before mid-fourteenth century – so-called *via Tartarica*<sup>10</sup> – came into decline, the trade routes shifted from the steppeland to the lands between the Carpathians and the Dniester River, that is, to the emerging Moldavian Principality.

Colophons of Armenian manuscripts written in the 1360s in Crimea reflect this situation of instability and chaos, and, in the mind of local Armenians, a strong intent to migrate.<sup>11</sup>

In this time there was much confusion and agitation at the hands of temporal conquerors, because there was neither leader nor king who could restore the peace, for, as the Lord said, “a divided kingdom cannot stand” [Luke 11:17; Mark 3:24]. Because of this, the governor of this city is digging trenches; he is digging a pit around this city, and he is destroying numerous houses from their foundations. And there is much destruction, and everyone is stricken with fear (Surchat, 1363).<sup>12</sup>

There are also some pieces of evidence that in the 1360s there were migrations of Armenians from the Black Sea region, namely from Caffa,<sup>13</sup> to the Venetian Crete<sup>14</sup> and to the Hospitallers’ islands of Lesbos<sup>15</sup> and Kos<sup>16</sup> in the Archipelago. But the main migration flow was in the north-west direction.

The Armenian merchants themselves preferred to settle in more stable states, such as the Polish Kingdom and the Moldavian Principality. Armenian merchants knew these lands thanks to their previous commercial trips, because trade routes lead through the main cities of the region to Western Europe and to the Baltic Sea. At the early stage, Armenian merchants were granted the protection charter (*salvum conductum*) by the local rulers for the safe and secure entrance and trade in their dominions. A charter issued by Daniel, the Ruthenian prince of Galicia/Halychyna (1238-1264), mentioned in 1578, could serve as a good example in this regard.<sup>17</sup> Then Armenians established their settlements in accordance with the permission of the rulers. There were Armenian colonies in some cities – at least in Lviv/Lemberg and Lutsk – long before the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Armenian merchants could use good relations with the rulers and local authorities they established during their previous trips. Now



Armenian merchants preferred to reside in Lemberg, Kamianiec or Suceava and from there to travel to the Black Sea ports in case of peaceful circumstances.

According to the charter issued by Armenian catholicos/patriarch Mesrop I in 1364 to Grigoris, the Armenian bishop of Lemberg, his diocese consisted of parishes in the cities of Lemberg, Volodymyr, and Lutsk.<sup>19</sup> Later, this situation changed dramatically. According to the charter issued by the Armenian catholicos/patriarch Theodoros II on August 13, 1388 to Johannes, the Armenian bishop of Lemberg, his diocese included parishes in the cities of Lemberg, Siret, Suceava, Kamianiec, Lutsk, Volodymyr, Kiev, Moldavia, Botin (Hotin or Botoșăni),<sup>20</sup> and Yeni Saray.<sup>21</sup> There is an evident growth in the number of Armenian parishes in Galicia, Podolia, Volhynia, and Moldavia, and a decline in the Volga region, since the Armenian community in the Golden Horde capital Yeni Saray<sup>22</sup> was also included in the diocese of Lemberg. On 30 July 1401, the Moldavian prince Alexandru cel Bun (1400-1432) subordinated Armenian churches in the Principality to Ohannes, the Armenian bishop of Lemberg.<sup>23</sup>

The migration of Armenians caused an active building of new churches in the cities of the Moldavian Principality, in the south-east of the Polish Kingdom (former Galician Principality), and in Podolia Principality in the south-west of Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the second half of 14<sup>th</sup> century. On August 30, 1363, two Armenians – Jacob, son of Szakinsach, inhabitant of Caffa, and Panos/Panas, son of Abraham, inhabitant of Nahel/Gagel<sup>24</sup> – gave the church they built in Lemberg to the local Armenian community.<sup>25</sup> Sons of Panos – Asslan and Abraham – are mentioned in the Lemberg city records many times during the period of 1382-1389.<sup>26</sup> I suggest that Panos built an Armenian church in Lemberg, because he intended to settle in the city and his sons Asslan and Abraham also lived in Lemberg. The Armenian liturgical book *Chashots* was copied by the Armenian priest Stephan in the Crimean city of Solchat in 1349. The Armenian Sinan, son of Chutlubei, bought this book and donated it on August 14, 1394 to the Armenian church of St. Nicholas he started to build in Kamianiec-Podilski. The church was completed in 1398 and given by Sinan to the local Armenian community.<sup>27</sup> The financial capacity to build a church made of stone by one or two individuals points to the fact that the founders were rich Armenian merchants doing their business between the Black Sea ports and inland cities, where they built new churches.

Polish, Lithuanian, and Moldavian rulers were interested to invite Armenian merchants into their domains in order to increase their profits

from the commerce fees paid by merchants, to develop cities in the borderland with steppeland, and to use these merchants as middlemen to export agricultural produce – crops, wax, skins, and furs – from nobility's estates to the Black Sea ports. It is possible that Armenian merchants who settled in Kamianiec were granted with the special charter by the Lithuanian princes Koriatovich – rulers of Podolia – between 1374 and 1394.<sup>28</sup>

Along with the convenient transactions and credits, there were the following major forms of cooperation between Armenian, Italian and Greek merchants in the late medieval Black Sea trade:

- There were mixed partnerships of two to ten Armenian and Greek merchants who rented Genoese ships to transport crops, salt, and other merchandise from Caffa to Trebizond.<sup>29</sup>

- Armenian skippers of Caffa took credits from the Italian merchants with the obligation to supply the processed bull skins a year later.<sup>30</sup> This one year term may probably be explained by the fact that Italians needed one year for their trip to Italy and back.

- Armenian merchants from the northern shore ports of the Black Sea traveled deeper into the remote parts of modern Ukraine, Russia, Romania, and Moldavia. There, they sold oriental goods to the local merchants and bought crops, wax and furs. They used the rivers Dniester, Danube, and Don/Tanais for their trips. There were Armenian communities in the respective river ports of Moncastro-Akkerman,<sup>31</sup> Kilia,<sup>32</sup> and Licostomo,<sup>33</sup> and Azak-Tana,<sup>34</sup> mentioned in sources dated from the 1340s-1360s. There, Armenians sold these goods to Italian and Greek merchants, who transported them as far as Constantinople-Pera,<sup>35</sup> Cyprus,<sup>36</sup> Syria,<sup>37</sup> Egypt, and Italy. Thus, Armenian merchants took an active part in the process of shaping trade and commerce in the Great Circle around the northern shore of the Black Sea, the Archipelago, the southern shore of Asia Minor, and the land route through Laiazzo, Erzinjan, Erzerum, and Trebizond.

After the Ottoman sack of Constantinople in 1453, of Caffa and Soldaia in 1475, and of Kilia and Moncastro in 1484, many local merchants, including some Armenians among them, were resettled in Constantinople, because the Sultan Mehmed II Fatih intended to transform his new capital into the main centre of the oriental trade.<sup>38</sup> According to the earliest surviving *defter* survey, dated 1477, there were 372 Armenian households in Constantinople and the Frankish trading town of Galata.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, the land route through the lands of the Moldavian Principality to Adrianople and Constantinople became

the main road for the Armenian merchants of Poland. Charters issued by the princes Alexandru cel Bun in 1408 and Ștefan cel Mare in 1460 to regulate collection of tolls and dues, taken from merchants traveling through Moldavia, indicate “Armenian cart” as a stable unit of taxation.<sup>40</sup>

The discovery of the sea route to India in 1498-1499 also led to the change of merchandise exported by the Armenian merchants from the Ottoman Empire and Persia. Now, instead of silk and spices, Armenian merchants from Lemberg and Kamianiec mostly traded with exported westwards carpets, horses, jewelry and textiles, produced in Asia Minor and Persia.<sup>41</sup> Raw silk and cotton were exported by Armenian merchants residing in the cities of Armenia and, after 1605, mostly in New Julfa, near Persia’s capital Ispahan, to the Aleppo and Smyrna and then, via the Mediterranean Sea, to Livorno and Venice.<sup>42</sup>

According to F. Mauro, merchant communities and nations retained their own culture, and strong ties of solidarity existed within each nation. Powerful internal solidarity was most conspicuous among large ethnic formations of eastern origin. The Armenian merchant network’s redeployment on a vast scale occurred between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, and corresponded to a combination of new political and economic circumstances.<sup>43</sup>

### **Logistics of the caravan trade**

Merchants and their property were protected by treaties between the Ottoman sultans and the Polish kings. These treaties also emphasized a particular role and significance of Armenian merchants in the trade between the two states. The capitulations, sent in 1577 by sultan Murad III to the Polish king Stefan Bathory, read:

...when Armenians and other infidel merchants living under the royal hand [*i.e.*, the subjects of Polish king] want to come to Moldavia and my other well-protected dominions and practice trade, they should not travel through deserted and wild areas or use hidden roads, but they should come by the direct public road which has been customarily traveled by merchants.<sup>44</sup>

The Ottoman authorities openly required that the merchants use the public roads. Such restrictions ensured that the merchants would not

evade the payment of custom duties. Secondly, public roads were safer from robbers as they were frequently traveled and patrolled.<sup>45</sup>

The Sultans also granted Armenian merchant privileges for free/safe passage (*salvum conductum*). These charters were then kept in the Armenian courts in Kamianiec and Lemberg. Before the caravan trip to the Ottoman Empire, a senior of the caravan – *caravanbashi* (Turkish – *karban başı*, *kervan başı*, Latin – *caravanae ductor*) – elected by the merchants, went to the Armenian city hall – *ratusz* – and asked for these charters to conduct a safe travel. Then *wojt* – the mayor of the autonomous Armenian community in Kamianiec – gave him the so-called “Turkish privileges” on the eight sheets in one carrying case. *Caravanbashi* was obligated to use these privileges to defend his companions during the travel and to return them when this trip is has ended.<sup>46</sup> According to Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, the role of *karban başı* is first mentioned officially in the Ottoman *’ahdname* of 1598.<sup>47</sup> He also stated that in 1607, the Porte officially authorized *karban başı*s to solve criminal and civil cases among the Polish subjects participating in their caravans.<sup>48</sup> Quite possibly, it was only a reconfirmation of privileges, granted earlier. A story retold by the young Flemish humanist Georg van der Does, who traveled from Lemberg to Constantinople with Armenian merchants in 1597, reveals that Armenian *caravanbashi* disposed the sultan’s charters, describing his judicial competence, long before 1607 and even before 1598.<sup>49</sup> *Caravanbashi* – had in his competence cases concerned with trade, inheritance of dead merchants’ property, and some criminal issues. Polish and German merchants, who joined the caravan, as well as other travellers, were also under the jurisdiction of *caravanbashi*.<sup>50</sup>

Every caravan consisted of several dozens of merchants and servicemen in their disposition. Every merchant had his merchandise loaded on several carts. As a rule, merchants recruited coachers (*aurigae*) – mostly Poles, residents of suburbs in Lemberg and Kamianiec. All of the caravan members were armed with guns and sabers. In order to protect themselves from robbers’ attacks and fiscal abuses of custom office holders, the caravans also joined Polish embassies going to Constantinople and back. An ordinary embassy consisted of several dozens or even hundreds of people, up to 1,200 in the case of prince Zbarazski’s embassy in 1622. An embassy was always accompanied by an Ottoman official – *cavuş*. The Polish nobleman Erasm Otwinowski recorded an unofficial detailed diary of the embassy led by Andrzej Bzicki in 1557. There is a conventional belief in historiography of pre-modern trade that the merchants traveled

under the protection of an embassy. However, Otwinowski's vivid narrative gives a quite different picture, which enables us to establish that it was rather the Polish embassy traveling under the protection of Armenian caravan and not the other way around. According to Otwinowski, in the Ottoman domains, Polish nobles have provoked a conflict with a Turkish shepherd, which turned into a big fight. The shepherd was killed and then several Poles were arrested by the Ottoman judge – *kadi*. When crossing a river in the Balkans, the Poles were not careful enough and certain precious property of the ambassador was stolen by two Turkish villains. In both cases, Otwinowski describes active armful deeds of brave Armenian merchants,<sup>51</sup> who were accustomed to such conflicts during their regular shuttle between Lemberg and Constantinople. Moreover, the Armenian merchants were bearers of indispensable practical experience in how to deal with the Ottoman authorities and Muslim population, how to arrange travel in different segments of the route, how to travel in mountains, where to find pasture for horses, and many other issues. Polish ambassadors lacked this knowledge, because for them it was their first and last mission to the sultan's capital.

As a rule, ordinary travel by inland route took about 20 days from Lemberg to Danube and next 20 days from Danube to Constantinople. The Polish embassy of Andrzej Bzicki traveled with Armenian caravan to Constantinople in 1557. They made their trip on the route from Kamianiec to the lower Danube (the town of "Oblinczyce") in 14 days, then through the Balkan Mountains in 26 days.<sup>52</sup> Young German Martin Gruneweg, being on the service of the Armenian merchant Aswadur, in 1582, traveled with his master from Lemberg to Constantinople. This caravan spent 17 days for the trip from Lemberg to Obluczice (on the Danube), and then 18 days to Constantinople.<sup>53</sup> The Armenian traveler Simeon Lekhatsi of Zamość traveled to Constantinople in 1608 with the Armenian merchants from Lemberg and Iași. Lekhatsi's caravan made its trip on the route from the lower Danube (Galati) through the Balkan Mountains to Constantinople in 19 days, with the total of 47 days.<sup>54</sup>

There was also a combined inland-maritime route. Flemish humanist Georg van der Does traveled with Armenian merchants in 1597. This caravan spent 20 days for the trip from Lemberg to Izmail (on Danube) and 5 days for trip by sea to Constantinople.<sup>55</sup> The combined route was with 10 days shorter than the inland one. The preference for the land route can probably be explained by the fact that it was seen as more cheap – in a ship merchants should pay for themselves and for their cargo – and

more comfortable due to well-established *caravanserais* in the Ottoman domains. In the *caravanserais*, established in the Balkan provinces, travelers could find not only a well-protected place where to spend a night, but also food and water.<sup>56</sup> This could also explain why Armenian colonies to the south of Danube were not so numerous as in Moldavia. If the navigation from the Danube estuary by the Black Sea normally began in early May,<sup>57</sup> the inland route was used by merchants during most of the year, except in March.

In Adrianople and Constantinople, Armenian merchants bought silk textiles, jewelry, Persian carpets and Turkish horses.

Armenian craftsmen in Suceava and Botoșani mostly specialized on the leather goods – saddlers and horse harness, and shoes made of *morocco* (the French *maroquin* or German *Saffian*) – goat hide dyed in red, green and yellow.<sup>58</sup>

Armenian townspeople, as well as Saxon and Hungarian ones, were granted by Moldavian princes the right to establish autonomous communities in Moldavian cities with their own law and court consisting of 6 to 12 judges – *pârgari* (from German “Burger”), chaired by *șoltuz* (from German “Schultze”) or *voit* (from German “Vogt”).<sup>59</sup> In the 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries Armenian *șoltuzes* are mentioned in Siret, Suceava, and Roman.<sup>60</sup>

The growth of Armenian population in the region in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was so evident that in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the Moldavian diocese was separated from Lemberg’s diocese of the Armenian Church.<sup>61</sup> The scale of construction done by Armenians in Suceava in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century reflects their demographic growth and economic prosperity in this city, as well as in Moldavia, in general. In accordance with the existing tradition, not only founders, but also renovators and other donors installed memorial plaques into walls of churches, chapels, and bell-towers as a sign of their piety. Thus, the Armenian Church of the Holy Cross founded in 1428 by Edilbei, son of Soghomon, was rebuilt in stone in 1521 by Khacik Hancoian, and deacon Asvatur, son of Gailtsa. The Hagigadar Monastery – Dormition of the Holy Mother of God – was built in 1512, and the church of St. Simeon was built in 1513.<sup>62</sup> By the mid-sixteenth century, Armenian churches could also be found in Hotin, Siret, Botoșani, Iași, Vaslui, and Roman, that is, along the trade route from the Black Sea ports and the Lower Danube to the border with the Polish Kingdom, in the direction to Lemberg and Kamianiec.

## Persecutions of Armenians in Moldavia in 1550s-1570s

The first large-scale persecution of Armenians in Moldavia took place in 1551, during the rule of 19-year old prince Ștefan Rareș (1551-1552) and the regency of his mother – Elena (Ekaterina Brancovič). The main source on the persecution is *The Lamentation* of the Armenian clergyman Minas Tokatetsi (of Tokat – city in Asia Minor), who was an eyewitness of these tragic events.<sup>63</sup> The persecution started on 16 August 1551 at Suceava and continued on 19 August. It eventually spread to other six Moldavian cities with Armenian communities – Botoșani, Siret, Hotin, Iași, Roman, Vaslui. The persecution was led by the prince in cooperation with the Orthodox high clergy and carried out by agents of the state. Their main aim was forced conversion of the Armenians to Orthodoxy (“Greek faith”). Initially the prince promised benefits for those Armenians who would accept re-baptism, whereas later, the Armenians were threatened with death if they persisted in their beliefs. Ștefan Rareș himself rode his horse to the Armenian church in Suceava, entered it and, standing on the altar, instigated people to violence. The liturgical objects were taken away from the churches, while religious books were burned. Armenian churches were desecrated, locked, and then demolished (probably, only the wooden ones). Armenian priests and monks were imprisoned and tortured.<sup>64</sup>

The large scale persecution is also confirmed by contemporary non-Armenian sources. Macarie, the Orthodox bishop of Roman, who is seen by scholars as the main instigator of the persecution, wrote in his chronicle (around 1551) on the forceful re-baptism of Armenians as of triumph of Orthodoxy.<sup>65</sup> An Italian, Antonio Pandolfi, in his letter to Piero Machiavelli of 4 February 1564 mentioned the persecution of Armenians – forced re-baptism and destruction of the churches – by prince Ștefan Rareș among other turmoil events, which took place in Moldavia between 1547 and 1563.<sup>66</sup> Many Armenians leaved Moldavia for Poland and the Ottoman domains; others were baptized in accordance with the Orthodox ritual.<sup>67</sup> Later, according to a letter of 11 April 1552, sent by Giovanni Battista Castaldo to Ferdinand I Habsburg, Catholics and Protestants – mostly Hungarians and Saxons – living in the Principality, as well as the caravan of Ottoman merchants, were also persecuted by the prince and forcefully re-baptized into the Orthodox faith (*in Valachiam fidem baptisari vellet*).<sup>68</sup>

Ștefan Rareș was assassinated by his boyars on 1 September 1552.<sup>69</sup> His mother Elena was killed in 1553 by the order of new prince – Alexandru Lăpușneanu (1552-1561, 1564-1568) – who married her daughter Ruxandra. Alexandru Lăpușneanu was enthroned through direct Polish military intervention and with support of boyars being in exile in Poland.<sup>70</sup> On 22 June 1553 Alexandru Lăpușneanu, giving his oath of vassalage to Sigismund II August, the king of Poland, promised that he would allow all the Saxon (Protestant) and Armenian churches destroyed by his predecessor to be rebuilt.<sup>71</sup> Armenians living in Moldavia returned to their faith and began renovation of their churches.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, in a few time the Prince began the anti-heretical campaign which affected both Armenians<sup>73</sup> and Protestants. According to the report of the Habsburg agent, John Belsius, to the Emperor Ferdinand I, written in April 13, 1562, “Alexandru Moldoveanu (Lăpușneanu) forced all the nations, with no exceptions, to be baptized again and to follow the religion of the Moldavians, taking them away from their own religion”.<sup>74</sup> Probably Alexandru Lăpușneanu intended to get support of the influential Orthodox clergy. The persecution of Armenians took place between 1554 and 1558, while that of Protestants started in 1558.<sup>75</sup> Protestants also were seen as supporters of the boyar conspiracy lead by Moțoc vornicul and Ioan Iacob Heraclid who was a Protestant. In both cases, sources mention the forced conversion, destruction and pillage of churches.

A new wave of persecutions occurred as result of a boyar conspiracy and then a large-scale rebellion led by hetman Ștefan Tomșa against the Prince Ioan Iacob Heraclid Despot (1561-1563) (Despot Vodă or Iakobos Basilikos, who was a Protestant). The Prince retreated to the fortress in Suceava and withstood a three-month siege. At the end of it, Despot was captured and was struck to death with a mace by Tomșa himself. Then, many Protestants, Catholics, and Armenians were killed and their property pillaged.<sup>76</sup> The Armenian chronicle of Kamianiec recounts that in 1563, after the fall of Despot, the Orthodox population of Suceava hung an Armenian monk called Zur Cadag, Hacıus, the *voit* of the Armenians and several innocent people.<sup>77</sup> During the reign of Ștefan Tomșa (August 1563 – March 1564) Armenians along with the Saxons/Protestants were accused of having supported the deposed prince Despot. Persecutions stopped after Stephen’s execution in Lemberg in 1564. Alexandru Lăpușneanu repeated his promise to rebuild the non-Orthodox churches in his oath in 1563.<sup>78</sup>

The persecutions of Armenians, although of a lesser scale, took place in 1570 and 1573, during the rule of Bogdan Lăpușneanu (1568-1572)



and Ion cel Cumplit (1572-1574), respectively.<sup>79</sup> The persecutions of the non-Orthodox “nations” in Moldavia stopped only under the rule of Petru Șchiopul (Peter the Lame) (1574-1577, 1578-1579, 1583-1591).

On the surface, there is an evident reason for the religious persecution of Armenians in Moldavia. Since the schism at the Ecumenical Council in 451, provoked by the Christological controversies about the doctrine of two natures of Christ, relations between the Chalcedonic/Orthodox and Monophysite (Armenian, Abyssinian, Jacobit, mostly in Syria, and Coptic, in Egypt) Churches were characterized by a constant tension.<sup>80</sup> In the late Byzantine Empire “Armenian heresy” was condemned among the most dangerous heresies. This highly inimical attitude towards Armenians and Monophysites, in general, had spread in the countries of post-Byzantine circle – in Russia, Moldavia, and Wallachia.<sup>81</sup> There is a 16<sup>th</sup>-century Greek manuscript in the Library of the Romanian Academy. The manuscript contains, along with the Orthodox credo and some patristic works, a treatise directed against “Armenian heresy”, as well as another treatise criticizing errors of Armenians, Latins, and Jacobites.<sup>82</sup>

During his rule, the Moldavian Prince Petru Rareș (1527-1538, 1541-1546) founded several new monasteries and churches, assuming the role of protector of Orthodoxy after the fall of Byzantium. They are famous for their outer wall paintings.<sup>83</sup> Among other major themes of outer painting, “The Last Judgment” had for its contemporaries not only eschatological meaning, but also a political one. One can see the crowds of chosen righteous people on the right and “the damned nations” on the left. “The damned nations” procession led by Moses includes Jews, Turks, Tatars, Latins, Armenians, and Ethiopians.<sup>84</sup> The Armenian chronicle written in Kamianiec recorded that on 3 January 1534, prince Petru Rareș had forced the Armenian priests to eat meat during Christmas Fast, because of the difference between calendars used by Armenian and Orthodox Churches: “The Moldavian Prince Rareș forced the Armenian priests to eat meat in the Christmas Fast with beatings”.<sup>85</sup> There is an evidence that during the second reign of Petru Rareș, in 1541-1546, Jews were persecuted in his domains.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless, my point is that this religious persecution of Armenians, as well as other non-Orthodox groups in 16<sup>th</sup> century Moldavia, was politically motivated.

Romanian art historian Sorin Ulea interpreted the whole external painting program as expressing the idea of the Holy War against the Ottomans.<sup>87</sup> My point is that the enmity with Poland was not less important for Petru Rareș’ visual propaganda, than the Turkish threat, for two reasons

– Borderland territory of *Pokutie* was an apple of strife between Poland and Moldavia in the 1530s, and because the Polish model of the “Republic of nobles” was seen by Moldavian boyars as an alternative to the “tyranny” of their own rulers. Many boyars found their asylum in Poland, intriguing on behalf of new pretenders for the Moldavian throne.<sup>88</sup>

As further history of Moldavia demonstrates, the majority of the princes obtained power with the evident assistance of powerful Polish aristocrats and wealthy merchants – Greeks, Jews, and Armenians.

Every new prince had to visit a sultan in Istanbul in order to get confirmation from him, which was actually bought with huge sums of money.<sup>89</sup> The princes needed loans and became more and more dependent from wealthy merchants – Greeks,<sup>90</sup> Jews,<sup>91</sup> and Armenians – residents of Constantinople and Lemberg. Thus, Armenians living in Moldavia and maintaining constant economic, religious and matrimonial relations with Armenians in Polish kingdom, were seen by the rulers of Moldavia as agents of Poland and as potential supporters of a new pretender for the throne. The political crisis of 1546-1563<sup>92</sup> replaced the autocratic model of state introduced by Petru Rareș and his predecessors with a new one, when almost every new prince was *de facto* appointed in Lemberg and then confirmed in Istanbul. Istanbul and Lemberg became the main scenes of Moldavian politics where the princes were made, and where many of them were executed.

That is why state-sponsored religious persecution was in particular aggressive in 1551-1563. Every new prince at the initial stage of his short rule made deliberate efforts to diminish the influence of too influential merchant networks in his principality, which, in the case of non-Orthodox diasporas – Armenian, Saxon/Lutheran, Hungarian/Catholic, and Jewish – took the form of forced baptism into “Wallachian faith” or expulsion. The main purpose of these persecutions was to break religious ties between the Prince’s non-Orthodox subjects and their co-believers abroad (in Poland, Transylvania, the Habsburg and Ottoman domains), which would inevitably lead to breaking other ties (matrimonial, business, etc.).

## **The Price revolution and Armenian export from Moldavia westwards**

Nevertheless, Armenians were never expelled from the principality, the majority of them did not migrate from Moldavia, and the persecutions ended in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

My explanation of this phenomenon is based on the global and regional trends in economics during the researched period. There was an evident growth of prices in the 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe known as the “Price revolution”: at the end of the century, prices were three to four times higher than at the beginning of the century. In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, silver mines were opened up in the New World, in the lands of north Mexico (1546-1562), and in Peru, the astonishing rich lodes of the mountain at Potosi were “discovered” in 1543.<sup>93</sup> The import of American silver to Europe reached its apex in the 1590s and it caused the evident growth of prices along with the decline of intrinsic value of currency. During the period of 1555-1575, the increase in prices constituted 265 percent, and in the 1590s – 627 percent.<sup>94</sup> The rise in prices was not uniform across the different regions of Europe. The prices of the same commodities in the countries of Eastern Europe were relatively lower. The consequent growing demand for foodstuffs could only be satisfied through imports, and Eastern Europe became a major supplier. Polish grain, Moldavian and Hungarian cattle found a ready, and highly profitable market.<sup>95</sup>

Large cargoes of wheat and rye were exported from Eastern Europe through the Baltic seaports, mostly through Polish Danzig/Gdansk, during the course of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and shipped to the Low Countries, to Portugal, and Spain.<sup>96</sup> Cattle-farming was more developed in the eastern parts of the Polish Kingdom – in Podolia and Ukraine, as well as in the Moldavian Principality, as corn was more difficult to transport from there to Baltic seaports. At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Polish kingdom exported about 60,000 oxen a year, mostly to the German principalities, Italy, and Bohemia. Most of these cattle were bred and bought in Moldavia.<sup>97</sup>

Armenian merchants bought cattle in fairs specialized in trade with Moldavian cattle – namely in Shypintsi, Botoșani, Hotin, and Chernivtsi – in the Polish-Moldavian borderland. For instance, only in the Chernivtsi fair, in the 1590s, the turnout was around 30,000 oxen.<sup>98</sup> The average number of cattle in one party shipped from Moldavia to Western Europe by wealthy Armenian merchants was anywhere from 500 to 700 oxen,

and sometimes exceeded 1,000 oxen.<sup>99</sup> The main business partners of Armenian merchants in Moldavia were great boyars, high officials and princes themselves (for instance, Petru Cazacul,<sup>100</sup> Aaron Tiranul,<sup>101</sup> and the Movilă family).

Armenian merchants traded in fish from the Lower Danube to Lemberg and Kamianiec. The earliest example known from the Lemberg city records is a large scale commerce of Kokcza (Kokscha), Armenian merchant from Suceava, who in the winter of 1472 imported to Lemberg 21 cartloads of sturgeon – property of Moldavian prince (Ștefan cel Mare). In Lemberg, local merchants – mostly Armenians – bought sturgeon from Kokcza in big lots, paying either in cash or in credit, with the average price of 45 Hungarian florins per cartload.<sup>102</sup> Next year, we see Kokcza again in Lemberg's market as a trade agent of the Moldavian prince. This time, Kokcza sold sturgeon for 40 to 46 Hungarian florins per cartload to seven local Armenian merchants.<sup>103</sup> Armenian merchants from Botoșani actively exported fish from Moldavia. Milko Iakubowicz, an Armenian from Lemberg, in 1574 purchased fish sold by Armenians from Botoșani.<sup>104</sup> Iwaszko Lukaszowicz, an Armenian from Kamianiec, in 1623 bought 3 *kufa* (Germ. *Kufe* – big barrel) of fish from Mikolaj Nigoli, an Armenian from Botoșani<sup>105</sup>. Iwan Teodorowicz, an Armenian from Botoșani, sold fish in the trade fairs in Lemberg and Sniatyn in 1633.<sup>106</sup> The Armenian merchant Iwaszkowicz from Lemberg purchased 200 “stones” of fish – around 2,600 kg – from Dragan, an Armenian from Botoșani in 1646.<sup>107</sup>

The constant growth of prices in western markets made the Armenian merchant network indispensable for the Moldavian ruling elite to export their agricultural produce westwards.

### **Polish military interventions, Movilă family, and economic expansion of Armenian merchants on Moldavian market**

The Ottoman Empire, long accustomed to putting a high price on silver, inevitably lost a great deal of ground with the changes in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century provoked by the rising deliveries of silver from the New World. In less than a century (1530-1614), the Ottoman currency – *asper* – lost 56% of its intrinsic value.<sup>108</sup> The devaluation of money led to the rise of prices on food and, thereby, to the progressive fall in the standards of living. In 1568, sultan Selim II (1566-1574) prohibited Moldavia and Wallachia from selling their principal products – mainly

comestibles, such as grain, livestock, butter, and wine – to any country other than Turkey.<sup>109</sup> The intention was to reserve the rich agricultural output of the nearby vassal states for Istanbul, which had grown into a metropolis of several hundred thousand people.

The effectiveness of the measure was undermined by the covert resistance of the Romanian principalities. Actually, sultan Selim II recognized, when giving the order to Prince Bogdan Lăpușneanu (1568-1572) in 1568, that the prince's father Alexandru Lăpușneanu ignored the same restrictions imposed by the previous sultan. The Polish diplomat Andrzej Taranowski wrote in his letter on 14 May 1595 that the new sultan Mehmed III (1595-1603), after entering Istanbul, ordered to cut off noses and ears of hostages – sons of princes of Moldavia and Wallachia. This atrocity was motivated by the fact that the rulers of these principalities came out of Ottoman suzerainty, and exported foodstuff to Poland in great quantities, what, in turn, provoked a great dearth in Istanbul.<sup>110</sup>

The conflict between the interests of the Ottomans, Poland, and the Habsburg Empire with regard to Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania sometimes went so far as to lead to armed intervention. On 27 August of 1595, the crown army of Poland led by the chancellor and hetman Jan Zamoyski entered Moldavia. Zamoyski was known as protector of Armenians. When in 1585 he founded in his domains the new city of Zamość, he invited Armenians from different countries to settle there along with the Catholics, Orthodox Ruthenians, and Sephardic Jews. On September 4, 1595, Zamoyski installed his protégé Ieremia Movilă (Jeremy Mohyla) as Prince of Moldavia and Polish vassal.<sup>111</sup>

For the last time an Armenian priest was portrayed among “the damned nations” on “The Last Judgment” frescos of Sucevița monastery built in 1595, that is, in the very beginning of Movilă's rule. It is worth to note that only a priest was portrayed there with no Armenian laymen. Armenians never appeared again in the Last Judgment scenes in Moldavian churches built after 1595, as well as in book miniatures illustrated after this date.<sup>112</sup>

There is an evidence that at the beginning of his rule (in 1597), Movilă made restitution of property for one of the richest Armenian merchants – Bogdan Danovakovich, whose father Dragan Danovak fled from Moldavia to Poland in the time of the persecutions, in 1563.<sup>113</sup> After the death of Prince Ieremia Movilă in 1606, Moldavia fell in political turbulence once again. Some members of Movilă's family fled to Lemberg, where they rented apartments in the house of Bogdan Danovakovich.<sup>114</sup> This case

could be seen as a good example, which can explain why the cooperation with Armenian merchants was so important for Moldavian rulers, not only in trade. Other Lemberg Armenian, Almas Jurkowicz, spent four years and 10,000 *zlotys* to pave the way for Gavril Movilă (1618-1620) to the Wallachian throne.<sup>115</sup>

Movilă's family ruled in Moldavia from 1595 to 1634 (in Wallachia, in 1600-1602 and 1618-1620). Ieremia Movilă's daughters were married with the most powerful Polish aristocrats – Stanisław Potocki, Stefan Potocki, Samuel Korecki and Michał Wiśniowiecki. Several times these Polish aristocrats made military interventions into Moldavia to support Movilă family: Jan Zamoyski, in 1595 and 1600; Stefan Potocki, in 1611 and 1612; Michał Wiśniowiecki and Samuel Korecki, in 1615; Stanisław Żółkiewski and Samuel Korecki, in 1620.

In 1615, Samuel Korecki was defeated by the Ottomans and imprisoned in the Yedikule castle in Istanbul. In 1617, he escaped from the castle thanks to the joint efforts of the French ambassador, an Orthodox priest, and Armenian merchants. In 1620, Korecki again took part in the Polish invasion into Moldavia. He was captured again after the defeat in the battle of Țețora, in 1620, imprisoned in the Yedikule castle, and finally executed in 1622.

During that era, many Armenian merchants – Polish subjects – were envoys on the service of European rulers. Among the most famous examples was "Petrus Armenus Gregorovicz", an Armenian merchant from Lemberg, who, in 1597-1612, was an official envoy of the Emperor Rudolf II Habsburg to Wallachian princes Mihai Viteazul and Radu Șerban, and to the Prince of Moldavia Constantin Movilă.<sup>116</sup> Sefer Muratowicz, an Armenian merchant from Warsaw, was a secret envoy of the Polish king Sigismund III to the Persian Shah Abbas, in 1601-1602.<sup>117</sup>

Different attitudes toward Armenian merchants could be illustrated with two examples from the time of Prince Alexandru Lăpușneanu and of Movilă dynasty. In 1557, Armenian merchants from Lemberg and Kamianiec traveled with Polish embassy to Constantinople. They have done it many times before in order to avoid taxation of their merchandise in custom houses thanks to the embassy's diplomatic immunity.<sup>118</sup> On their return from Constantinople, the embassy and caravan crossed the border of Moldavia on the Danube, where merchants did not pay any tolls or dues. When the embassy reached the town of Lăpușna, in Moldavia, on 4 October, the head of the custom service – the great *vameș* – who was the brother of the Prince – demanded tolls from Armenian merchants.

The ambassador Andrzej Bzicki sent his deputy Stanisław Żółkiewski, an interpreter (*tlómacz*) Mikołaj, and an Ottoman envoy (*cauş, czausz*) to Prince Alexandru Lăpuşneanu, in order to clarify the issue with the dues. After waiting four days, on 8 October, the ambassador made the decision to continue his travel with having no response from the Prince. Armenian merchants followed him with their merchandise. Then, the head of the custom service, with forty horsemen, pursued them and stopped the embassy.<sup>119</sup> He arrested some Armenian merchants on the accusation of avoiding the dues. Other Armenian merchants gave him 400 tallers in order to free their companions. On 10 October, the embassy and caravan resumed their travel. When they crossed the Polish-Moldavian border and arrived to Kamianiec, on 14 October, they met their envoys with the response from the Prince, which stated that Armenian merchants should not pay any tolls.<sup>120</sup> According to the letter of Antonio Pandolfi (1564), Prince Alexandru Lăpuşneanu made deliberate efforts to establish his personal control over the trade in Moldavia. He prohibited commerce in the Principality for many merchants, thus destroying their businesses, and in ten years he earned 2 million ducats on trade.<sup>121</sup> This mercantile politics of Alexandru Lăpuşneanu could also explain the persecution of the “infidel” merchants during his rule as well as incidents, such as the one mentioned above, which happened with foreign merchants, including even those traveling under protection of an embassy.

Around 1607, Armenian merchant Stecko Lewonowicz (Stecko Leouovowicz ormenio) from Lemberg appealed to the princely court of Constantine Movilă voivod. Stecko stated that noblemen brothers Dumitru (Dumitraşcu) and Vasilie stole his fabric. The merchant estimated his losses at 700 tallers. Since Dumitru and Vasilie fled from Moldavia, their brother Lucoc was imprisoned. Then Lucoc’s sister Nastasia bailed him out of prison. She borrowed money – 670 tallers – from the family relatives – princes Nastasia Că răimaneasă and her son, boyar *ceaşnic* Dumitru Buguş. On 18 January 1608, Stecko made an official statement in the court that he received 670 tallers – actually only 500 – from Nastasia Că răimaneasă and her son Dumitru Buguş and will not file a lawsuit against Dumitru and Vasilie.<sup>122</sup>

Thus, in the first case, because of the ambiguous situation of whether the cargo in question should be considered a merchandise or property of an embassy, the high official used his authority to force merchants to give him a bribe. In the second case, a statement of a single complainant was

enough for a prince to imprison a relative of the suspects – the noblemen – and thereby to compensate the merchant's losses.

As in many pre-modern countries, townspeople in Moldova could own only lands situated near a given town, that is under the jurisdiction of a magistrate. This area was called *hotar*. The townspeople could not buy manors since their owners – the noblemen – fulfilled services – mostly military – from which townspeople were freed. The fewer manors were in noblemen's disposal, the fewer services were fulfilled by the nobility before the ruler. That is why Armenians, as well as other townspeople, owned only hay meadows, gardens, ponds, and vegetable gardens in a *hotar* area around a city. Armenian townspeople could buy vineyards situated around the city of Cotnar (Germ.: Guttnar), mostly inhabited by the Catholic burghers of German and Magyar origins. There was no Armenian community in Cotnar, but sources available to us show that many Armenians from Suceava, Siret, and Roman were owners of vineyards in Cotnar in the 1570s-1640s.<sup>123</sup> The size of these vineyards was between 2 and 6 *fălci*,<sup>124</sup> that is, between 3 and 9 hectares.

There was one exception to this rule. Probably, Armenians could buy lands being property of the Orthodox Church. At least, in 1570 an Armenian became owner of some parts of the village Lipești. Marco, an Armenian of Lipești, bought from Soabur, son of Gadulbei, an Armenian of Suceava, 2.5 *fălci* of vineyard in Cotnar for 400 golden, and sold it to Mitropolit Teofan for two parts of Lipești village and 50 golden.<sup>125</sup> I have found a case of the same nature in Wallachia. Matei Basarab, Prince of Wallachia (1633-1654), on 20 December 1649, granted to Golgota monastery the land property (*ocina*) in Cârliğați village which he bought from the Armenian Sefer.<sup>126</sup>

The growth of economic and political influence of Armenian merchants is reflected in the growth of their building activity in Moldavia in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This growth is particularly evident in comparison with the total stagnation in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century – after the persecutions of 1551. The numbers are based on the calculation of churches, chapels, and bell-towers, their rebuilding and renovation, reflected by the plaques with inscription installed into the wall. There are at least 6 memorial plaques installed by clergymen and laic renovators and donors into the wall of Armenian churches, chapels and bell-towers in Suceava between 1609 and 1631.<sup>127</sup>



## **Demographic situation of Armenian diaspora in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Moldavia**

The Armenian diaspora in Moldavia recovered economically, religiously and demographically by the late 1580s. The Jesuit Missionary Johannes Kunig in his report to the General of Jesuits, Claudio Aquaviva, written in Roman on 30 September 1588, when describing religious diversity in Moldavia, put Armenians on the second place after Orthodox Romanians, but before the Catholics: "In this province of Moldavia people have different rites and religions. In the first place are the Rumanians, who have lot of churches and monasteries, patriarchs, metropolitans and bishops and priests. Armenians are the next, who have different churches from that of the Rumanian ones. In third place are the Hungarians and Saxons coming from Transylvania. There are also gypsies".<sup>128</sup> My point is that Armenians could not outnumber Roman Catholics in the principality. When putting Armenians on the second place after the dominant Orthodox population, Kunig wanted to emphasize a better position of Armenian community in the principality – well-established church hierarchy, regularity of church services and so on, in comparison with the declining Catholic community, which he situated further – just before the gypsies.

The exact number of Armenians living in Moldavian Principality could not be calculated even for the 17<sup>th</sup> century, because there are no sources with statistic data, such as tax censuses, where Armenians are mentioned. Normally, Catholic missionaries sent to Moldavia paid major attention in their reports to the Catholic communities there. In many instances, they also mentioned Armenian parishes in the Moldavian cities and towns, but not in a systematic way. The most comprehensive list of Armenian communities in Moldavia was composed in 1669 by Louis-Maria Pidou – Teatin missionary to Armenians of Lemberg. Pidou never visited Moldavia. It is likely that he collected his data from Armenian-Catholic missionary Iohannes Keiremowicz sent there, or from Moldavian Armenians visiting Lemberg for the commerce. Pidou mentioned Armenian parish churches in Suceava (3), Iași (2), Siret, Botoșani, Hotin (Hocim), Roman (Urman), Vaslui and Galați.<sup>129</sup> Marco Bandini in his report (1646-1648) also mentioned Armenian church in Bârlad.<sup>130</sup> Other missionaries sometimes gave a very rough estimates of Armenians living in a given city or town. My point is that the missionaries never counted Armenians by head, but instead calculated their numbers in the following way: they equated every

stone-wall church to 100 households (families) and every wooden church to 20 households.

The largest Armenian community existed in Suceava, Moldavian capital until 1564 and residence of Armenian bishop in the principality. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century there were 3 Armenian churches and 2 monasteries there. Minorite Observant monk Bartolomeo Basetti in his report (April 12, 1643) gave such figures for the population of Suceava: "Catholic houses are 12, [with] 50 souls, 26 [of them practicing]. Schismatics [Orthodox Moldavians] have 700 houses, which count over 3,000 souls and they have 16 churches. The Armenians have five churches, one for the bishop – because the Armenians have their own bishop in the town".<sup>131</sup> This data corresponds with the early account of Armenian traveler Simeon Lekhatsi from Polish city Zamość, who spent three months and two weeks in Suceava in 1608. He stated that, "There are 300 or 400 Armenian houses in the city. There are three stone-walled churches and two wonderful and superb monasteries outside the city – one near the city, and another one two miles away from the city".<sup>132</sup> Thus, the approximate number of Armenians living in Suceava in the 1600s-1660s could be estimated at around 1,500 to 2,000. For Iași (Iash-bazar) community, Lekhatsi offers the following description: "There are 200 houses of Armenians – newcomers and locals. There is a wonderful stone-walled church, wise priests and magnificent rich men".<sup>133</sup> Being Armenian clergyman (*dpir*), Lekhatsi deliberately omitted the existence of Armenian-Catholic church in Iași.

Marco Bandini, Archbishop of Marciapolis and Catholic missionary to Moldavia in 1646-1648, described population of Vaslui (Vaslo): "Vaslui had over 300 Hungarian Catholic houses, a church, a priest and a school. The church is in ruins now, 4 houses are here with 16 Catholic souls, Rumanians have 300 houses and the Armenians have 100 houses".<sup>134</sup> A different figure for Vaslui was given by Simeon Lekhatsi in 1608: "There is a wooden church, a priest and twenty Armenian families".<sup>135</sup> The difference could be explained by the suggestion that between 1608 and 1648, the wooden church in Vaslui was replaced with a stone-walled one, which reflects an increase in prosperity and population growth of Armenian community. Nevertheless, both figures – 20 and 100 houses – are rough approximations. Pavel of Haleb, who was in Vaslui on 22 January 1653, mentioned Armenian church in his itinerary: "In this town is a number of churches, besides the one we have mentioned; and there are Armenians, who have a church of their own".<sup>136</sup> This Armenian church was probably stone-walled and thus worthy of his attention.

Even in the case when missionaries visited the same place with the interval of only a year or two, there is an evident difference in the number of “souls” or parishioners, since different missionaries equated the same number of households to the different number of “souls”. For instance, Petru Bogdan (Petro Deodato) Baksic, Apostolic vicar of Sofia, in his description of Roman (1641) noted: “Armenians have 80 houses with 450 souls. They have a walled church and a priest from their nation, Armenian”.<sup>137</sup> According to B.Basetti (1643) in Roman: “Armenian houses are 80. 360 souls, with a church”.<sup>138</sup> The only exception could be Armenian-Catholic community in Iași since it was united with the Roman Church, and, probably, the exact number of its parishioners was presented in the report of Bartolomeo Basetti (1643): “There is an Armenian church [in Iași] too, the priest is under the auspice of the Roman Church. The Catholic Armenians’ houses are 60, the souls are 222”.<sup>139</sup>

Antonio Pignatelli, papal nuncio in Poland (1660-1668), in his report to the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide on November 23, 1662 gave the following numbers: 3,000 Armenians in Poland with 15 churches and all of them are united with the Roman Church, and 7,000 Armenians in Moldavia with 10 churches.<sup>140</sup> My own calculations, based on missionaries’ reports for Moldavia, analyzed above, and much more correct figures of real estate taxation censuses for Poland, analyzed above, bring quite different results – about 3,000-4,000 Armenians in Moldavia and about 6,000-7,000 Armenians in Poland. My calculations for Poland correspond to the note made by Francesco Martelli, papal nuncio in Poland (1675-1681), in his report of 3 August 1678. Martelli indicates that because of the Polish-Turkish war (1672-1676) – which affected regions of Podolia and Rus’/Ruthenia, where the majority of Polish Armenians lived before the war – their number declined tenfold, to 600 souls.<sup>141</sup>

Thus, my point is that the approximate number of Armenians living in Moldavia in the 1640s-1660s could not exceed 3,000-4,000.

Though majority of Armenians living in Moldavian Principality were faithful to Armenian Apostolic Church, there were also Armenian-Catholics united with the Roman Church. The Jesuit missionary Giulio Mancinelli in his report written between 1583 and 1588 mentioned his visit to Armenian-Catholic church in Iași. According to Mancinelli, these Armenian-Catholics parishioners were numerous and prosperous. He was amazed by this fact also because he found the Roman Catholic community in the Romanian principalities in a total decline after persecutions of the 1550s-1570s. On the contrary, Armenian-Catholics of Iași maintained

relations with the Apostolic see in Rome: “Iași, with Armenians, many and rich, who are living in that town, and they are Catholics. That almost every Catholic Christian, who were numerous some years ago, in the two principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, they all turned into Orthodox, because of not having a Catholic priest; a Roman Catholic church was found abused by Lutheran priests, who were coming often to that place to hold their masses for the craftsmen, who are mostly German, Hungarian or Lutheran. He went to the Armenians’ church, keeping their counsel there, and they told him that the church is at his disposal and they are, too. They showed him affection, due to the talks of an Armenian, who came from Rome and talked to them about the Pope’s love for that nation and about the good reputation of the Jesuit Society”.<sup>142</sup>

When in 1630 Nikol Torosowicz – bishop of the Armenian Church in the Polish Kingdom (1627-1681) – declared his unification with the Roman Church, he was supported by the Jesuits and by the Catholic hierarchy in Lemberg as well as in Rome, but rejected by the overwhelming majority of Armenians living in the kingdom. This confrontation provoked numerous conflicts and lawsuits, the appeals and complaints to the king and to the hierarchs of the Roman and Armenian Churches.<sup>143</sup> In 1654, a temporary compromise was found, and in the 1660s efforts were made to establish Armenian-Catholic bishopric in Moldavia as part of Armenian-Catholic archbishopric of Lemberg. Iohannes (Ohanes) Kieremowicz was appointed as bishop-suffrage and sent to Moldavia (Bogdania). His mission was not successful. In his letter sent to the Congregatio de Propaganda Fide on 3 October 1662, Kieremowicz described his conditions there as miserable, having no money to buy winter clothes and asking for financial support.<sup>144</sup> Antonio Pignatelli, papal nuncio in Poland (1660-1668), in his report on 23 November 1662, noted that among ten Armenian churches in Moldavia only one is Armenian-Catholic.<sup>145</sup>

### **Migration to Transylvania and some later developments**

There were several revolts against the hard fiscal policies of the Prince Gheorghe Duca (1665-1666, 1668-1672, 1678-1683). The prince accused Armenians of being supporters of the conspiracy and mutiny led by the boyar Mihalcea Hâncu and Durac against him in October 1671. In 1672<sup>146</sup>, many Armenians, mostly from Suceava and Siret, led by their bishop, Minas Ziliftar (Ziliftar-oghlu) Tokathetsi, migrated to Transylvania.

Initially, their stay there was to be temporary, and after Duca's final fall in 1683, many Armenians returned to Moldavia. Moldavian princes Ștefan Petriceicu (August 1672 – November 1673, December 1673 – February 1674, December 1683 – March 1684) and Antonie Ruset (1675-1678) made efforts to return Armenians, understanding their importance for the economy of the Principality. Ștefan Petriceicu granted to Armenian bishopric in Suceava three families of *scutelnici*<sup>147</sup> (19 January 1673).<sup>148</sup> Antonie Ruset (21 April 1677) granted Armenian bishop of Suceava and monastery there 5 families of *scutelnici*, that is five Armenian families were exempted from state taxation. In his charter, the Prince noted that he granted this privilege to Armenians in order to stimulate them to invite there more Armenians from Ottoman domains and Poland.<sup>149</sup> Nevertheless, many Armenians settled in Transylvania permanently. There, Prince Mihaly Apafi (1661-1690) allowed Armenians to settle in Bistrita, Gheorgheni, Miercurea-Ciuc, Petelea, Sumuleu, Alba-Iulia. A charter issued by Apafi in 1680 gave Armenians autonomy, the right to exercise freely their trade and crafts and to elect their own judges. In 1699 Transylvania became part of the Habsburg Empire. In 1700, the Transylvanian Armenians were awarded by the Austrian emperor Leopold (in exchange of 25,000 florins) the right to build their own town on the Somes River. The town was known as Armenopolis/Armenierstadt or Gherla/Szamosujvar since for a long time the town's population was mostly Armenian. The other main Armenian center in Transylvania was Elisabethopolis (Erzsebetvaros, Ebesfalva, Ibasfalau, Dumbraveni).<sup>150</sup> After Bishop Minas's death in 1686, the efforts were made by the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (Rome) and Vardan Hunanean (1644-1715), Armenian-Catholic archbishop of Lemberg, to bring about the Armenians' church union and organize the Armenian-Catholic Church in Transylvania. This task was fulfilled by Oxendio Virziresco (1654-1715), a Catholic Armenian missionary born in Moldavia and educated at the Armenian College in Lemberg and the Urbanian College in Rome.<sup>151</sup>

Armenian migration from Moldavia in 1672 was not a massive and single-stage exodus.<sup>152</sup> It was rather a gradual outflow of Armenians from declining cities of Moldavia to more stable and prosperous Transylvania. One also has to take into consideration the mass escape of other ethno-religious groups of Moldavia's population to Carpathian forest areas caused by constant Tatar incursions. Catholic missionaries who visited Moldavia in the 1680s-1690s pointed out that they could not count Catholics living in the Principality since the majority of its population found

their permanent asylum in the woods.<sup>153</sup> Nevertheless, only Armenians migrated from Moldavia forever, founding new colonies in Transylvania. Being merchants involved into the long-distance trade, these Armenians were more dependent from trade route changes, as well as from market conjuncture. Being merchants, they visited Transylvania and established their businesses there long before the migration of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The main reasons for Armenian migration from Moldavia in the 1670s-1680s could be formulated as the following:

Because of the decline of the inland routes of the oriental trade in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, Armenian merchant network in Moldavia lost its transit function;

The growing competition of Greek merchants, many of whom managed to integrate themselves into Moldavian ruling elite<sup>154</sup> through financial and matrimonial strategies;<sup>155</sup>

Polish-Ottoman wars in 1672-1684 in the northern Moldavia led to economic and demographic decline of the Principality;

Ottoman occupation of Kamianiec-Podilski and of Jazlowiec in 1672-1699 caused migration of the majority of local Armenians southwards to Filippopolis/Plovdiv and westwards, where they dispersed in many towns of modern day Western Ukraine. Some Armenians returned to Kamianiec in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the city as well as Armenian community could not restore its leading role in the oriental trade. Naturally, Ottoman occupation also affected Armenian communities in Moldavia, which constituted part of Armenian merchant network involved in the oriental trade;

Political decline of Poland, which gradually lost interest in Moldavian affairs in the 18<sup>th</sup> century;

The general decline of urban economics in Moldavia by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

In the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, one could also witness establishment of new Armenian colonies in Polish kingdom along the northern border of Moldavian Principality – in Kutry, Stanisław, Tysmenytsia, Horodenka, Lysiec and Mogyliv-Podilskyi. These new communities were founded thanks to the privileges from the Polish aristocrats – mostly of the powerful Potocki family – owners of these towns. Armenians living in these towns were merchants and artisans, mostly specializing in export of Moldavian cattle and horses westwards, and leather tanning, respectively. One could hypothesize that many of these new settlers were newcomers from the old Armenian colonies, situated in the northern part of Moldavia. Many

of them later migrated to Bucovina when it became Province of Habsburg Empire in 1775 and in the following decades turned themselves into prosperous landowners.<sup>156</sup> The new Armenian settlements were also founded in the south – in the Lower Danube region. Armenian churches were built in Focșani (St. George, in 1715, and Virgin Mary, in 1780), Brăila (Nativity of the Lord, in 1837), Constanța (Virgin Mary, in 1840), Galați (Virgin Mary, in 1858). This construction activity reflected growth of Armenian population in the region caused mostly by the opportunity to take part in prosperous trade in agricultural produce exported from Moldavia and Wallachia by Danube to the Black Sea and then to Western Europe.

## Conclusion

Armenian communities in Moldavia emerged in the 1360s-1380s as a result of the shift of trade routes in the oriental trade. They fulfilled transitive functions for more prosperous communities of Lemberg, Kamianiec, Caffa and Constantinople for more than three centuries. In Moldavian Principality, Armenian communities founded their own churches and established their autonomous courts in accordance with the princely privileges. Nevertheless, because of religious differences, the Armenians could not be integrated into Moldavian society as deeply as the Orthodox Greek, Aromanian and Arnaut merchants did.

Since Moldavian Principality was dependent from neighbour powers (Ottomans, Habsburgs, and Poland), Armenian merchants were deeply involved in the politics of the principality. Well-established merchant network could be also used for political purposes. Some richest Armenian merchants established close personal ties with the rulers. The fulfillment of the functions of a creditor, political promoter, mediator, or secret envoy by a merchant could provide him with certain privileges and promote his business, but this close connection with the powerful policy-makers also could lead to many troubles and even to the persecution of the whole community.

Periods of cooperation between merchant network and ruling elite in economics and politics alternated with periods of oppression and persecution. Having well-established business ties with Polish aristocracy, Armenian as well as Jewish merchants exported Moldavian cattle through Polish kingdom westwards. That is why Armenians were seen as agents

of Polish influence in Moldavia in particular in periods of political crisis in the principality. Political dependence of Moldavia from Poland in the late sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries – ruling of Movilă dynasty and Vasile Lupu – was the era when economic prosperity of Armenian diaspora reached its peak in the Principality. Periods when Poland's efforts to establish its influence in Moldavia met with resistance of the princes like Petru Rareș, Ștefan Rareș or Alexandru Lăpușneanu – in the 1530s-1570s – or even led to military conflicts between Poland and the Ottomans – as in 1672-1676 and in 1683-1699 – were also troubling times for the Armenian diaspora in the principality, leading to its persecution or forced migration. On the other hand, Greek merchants – subjects of a sultan or of Venice – mostly limited their trade with Poland to the import of wine, because of the lack of influential Greek diaspora in the kingdom. Greek merchants dominated southern direction of Moldavian export to Constantinople. Greeks were much more influential at the sultan's court, and in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries many representatives of these Greek elites became rulers of Moldavia – so-called Phanariotes.<sup>157</sup>



## NOTES

- 1 I would like to express my gratitude to Constantin Ardeleanu and Alexandru Tofan who turned my attention to many important Romanian works and translated some of them.
- 2 Ureche Grigorie și Simion Dascălul. *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei până la Aron Vodă (1359-1595)*, ediție comentată de Constantin C. Giurescu. Craiova: Editura Scrisul Romanesc S.A., 2001. p.151; Grigore Ureche, *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei* (ediția a II-a îngrijită de P.P. Panaitescu). București, 1958, p. 195, 206; Căuș, Bogdan. *Figuri de armeni din România. Dicționar*, ediția a II-a, București, 1998, p.311; Ciobanu, Tiberiu. *Ioan Nicoară Potcoavă, domn al Moldovei (1537-1558)* [[http://www.istoria.md/articol/574/loan\\_nicoar%C4%83\\_potcoav%C4%83\\_domn\\_al\\_moldovei](http://www.istoria.md/articol/574/loan_nicoar%C4%83_potcoav%C4%83_domn_al_moldovei)]; Dan Dimitrie. *Armenii ortodocși din Bucovina*. București: Zamca, 2010, p.38; Iorga, Nicolae. "Byzance après Byzance", *Considérations générales pour le Congrès d'Etudes Byzantines de Sofia*. Bucarest: [L' Institut d' Études Byzantines], 1934. p.140; Iorga, Nicolae. "Armenii și românii: o paralelă istorică", extras din *Analele Academiei Române. Memoriile Secției Istorice*, seria II, tom XXXV, 1913-1914. București, 1913, p.27; Siruni, H. Dj. "Legenda Serpegăi", *Arhiva Națională din Iași*, II, vol. III. Iași, 1936, p.81-82; Schmidt, Wilhelm. *Suczawa's Historische Denkwürdigkeiten Von Der Ersten Historischen Kenntnis, Bis Zur Verbindung Der Bukowina Mit Oesterreich: Ein Stück Städtechronik Und Moldauscher Geschichte*. Czernowitz: druck von R. Eckhardt, 1876. s.139.
- 3 Michel Balard, *La mer Noire et la Romanie génoise, XIIIe – XVe siècles*. London: Variorum reprints, 1989; Michel Balard, "Gênes et la mer Noire (XIIIe-XVe siècles)", *Revue Historique* 270 (1983): 31-54; L. Petech, "Les marchands italiens dans l'empire mongol", *Journal Asiatique* 250, no. 4 (1962): 549-574.
- 4 For a detailed analysis of the trade routes see: Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: the World System A.D. 1250-1350*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- 5 Thomas T. Allsen, "The Cultural Worlds of Marco Polo", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 31, no. 3 (2001): 375-83; Anna-Dorothee von den Brincken, *Fines Terrae. Die Enden der Erde und der vierte Kontinent auf mittelalterlichen Weltkarten*. Hannover, 1992; Christopher H. Dawson, *The Mongol Mission. Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries*, reprinted 1980. New York, 1955; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*. Harlow, 2005; John Larner. *Marco Polo and the Discovery of the World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999; Igor de Rachewiltz, "Priester John and Europe's Discovery of East Asia", *East Asian History* 11 (1996): 59-74; Jean Richard, *Croisés, missionnaires et voyageurs: Les*

- perspectives orientales du monde latin medieval*. London: Variorum Reprints, 1983; Denis Sinor, "The Mongols in the West", *Journal of Asian History* 33, no. 1 (1999): 1-44.
- 6 "The Yam system was designed to facilitate the travels of envoys going to and from the Mongol courts; it was used for the transportation of the goods; it ensured the speedy transmission of royal orders from one part of the empire to another; and it provided the framework whereby the Mongols could receive intelligence as quickly as possible. By abuse it was also used by merchants and by traveling Mongol notables who had with them a sufficient following to enable them to enforce the compliance of the Yam officials." David Morgan, *The Mongols*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p. 90-91.
- 7 For more details on *fondacco* or *funduq* see: Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Strange in the Mediterranean World. Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- 8 V. Langlois, *Mémoire sur les relations de la République de Gênes avec le royaume Chrétien de la Petite-Arménie pendant les XIII et XIV siècles*. Paris, 1860, p.298-300; *Actes passés en 1271, 1274 et 1279 a l'Aias (Petite Arménie) et à Beyrouth par-devant des notaries génois*, par le Ch. Cornelio Desimoni. Gênes, 1881.
- 9 On the relations between Italian overseas colonies and the Golden Horde see: Nicola Di Cosmo, "Mongols and Merchants on the Black Sea Frontier (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> c.): Convergences and Conflicts", in *Turco-Mongol Nomads and Sedentary Societies*, eds. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran. Leiden: Brill, 2005, p.391-424; Nicola Di Cosmo, "Venice, Genoa, the Golden Horde, and the Limits of European Expansion in Asia", in *Il Codice Cumanico e il Suo Mondo*, eds. Peter Schreiner and Felicitas Schmieder. Roma: Storia e Letteratura, 2005, p.279-296; Enrico Basso, *Il 'Bellum de Sorcati' ad i trattati del 1380-1387 tra Genova e l'Orda d'Oro*. Genova, 1991, p.14-15.
- 10 This route was mentioned in correspondence between the Senate of Venice and Venetian authorities in Tana in March 14, 1344. *Régestes des délibérations du sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie*, par F. Thiriet. Paris, La Haye: Mouton, 1958, t.1: 1329-1399, p.54. On the Dulcert *portulan* of 1339 Lemberg is depicted as significant point in oriental trade between Flanders and the Black Sea. Balard, "Gênes et la mer Noire", p.52-53. The rout from Lemberg (city of Leo – Leopolis) to Tana mentioned in November 3, 1343 in the treatise between Venice officials and two citizens (*providi viri*) of Venice, travelling to the domains of the Golden Horde Khan Zanibech: "... per viam de lo Leo usque Tanam, ...". *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum sive acta et diplomatares venetas graecas atque levantis illustrantia*, a. 1300-1350. Venetiis, 1880, p.266-267. The inscription on the Catalan Atlas of 1375 reads "To the city of Leon (*ciutat de Leo*) arrive various merchants

- from Levant who continue later across the German Sea to Flanders" [<http://www.henry-davis.com/MAPS/LMwebpages/235B.html>]
- 11 A.K. Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts, 1301-1480*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969, p.90-98.
- 12 Ibid, p.93.
- 13 There was mentioned Armenian Vanes of Caffa (*Vanes de Cafā Armenus*) – representative of Armenians from Mitilena. Anthony T. Lutrell, "The Hospitallers' interventions in Cilician Armenia: 1291-1375", in *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia*, ed. by T.S.R.Boase. New York: St.Martin's Press, 1978, p.118-144, here 131f.
- 14 *Régestes des délibérations du sénat de Venise concernant la Romanie*, par F. Thiriet (Paris, La Haye: Mouton, 1958), t.1 (1329-1399), p.105-107.
- 15 Lutrell, *The Hospitallers' interventions*, p.131f.
- 16 *Frater Raymondus Berengarii* of Rhodes wrote to the Armenians residing on Mitilena (*Armenis omnibus et singulis residentibus in insula Metellini*) about his treatises with their representative Vanes of Caffa (*Discretus et sapiens vir Vanes de Cafā Armenus*) (8 February 1366). Malta, cod. 319, f. 270v. I am indebted to Professor Anthony T. Lutrell for bringing this item to my attention.
- 17 Quoted in: Myron Kapral, *Natsionalni hromady Lvova XVI-XVIII st.: Sotsialno-pravovi vzayemyny* [The national communities of the city of Lviv in 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: Social and juridical relations], Lviv: Piramida, 2003, p.368-369.
- 18 Polish king Kazimierz/Casimir III by his decree of 1356 confirmed to Armenian community in Lemberg its right for self-government. *Pryvilei mista Lvova XIV-XVIII st.* [Royal Charters Granted to the City of Lviv in 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries], ed. Myron Kapral (Lviv: Piramida, 1998), p.27-28.
- 19 Dashkevych, Yaroslav, "Davniy Lviv u virmenskykh ta virmeno-kypchatskykh dzherelakh" [The Old Lviv in Armenian and Armeno-Kipchak Sources], in *Ukraina v mynulomu*. Vol.1. Kiev-Lviv, 1992, p.9.
- 20 Some scholars also identified Botin with Vidin in Bulgaria. Năsturel, Petre Ș. "L'attitude du Patriarcat oecuménique envers les Arméniens des pays Roumains (fin XIVe siècle – début XVIe siècle)," *L'Arménie et Byzance. Histoire et culture*. Paris, 1996, p.147.
- 21 Dashkevych, Yaroslav, *Davniy Lviv*, p. 10.
- 22 Armenian bishops in Caffa, Solchat and Saray (*episcopus Armenorum in imperio Tartarorum Iusbeck*) were mentioned in sources in 1320s. Jean Richard, *La papauté et les missions d'Orient au Moyen Âge (XIIIe-XVe siècles)*. Rome, 1998, p. 92, 159-160.
- 23 *Documenta Romaniae Historica* (București: Editura Academiei R S România, 1975), t.1, p. 21. Panaitescu P.P. "Hrisovul lui Alexandru cel Bun pentru episcopia armeană din Suceava (30 iulie 1401)", *Revista Istorică Română* vol.4, fasc.1-4 (1934): 44-56.

- 24 The original charter was written in Armenian and in 1641 translated into Latin. That is why there are different readings and interpretations of the city's name which could be read as Nahel or Gagel. The city could be identified with the Gabal/Jebel in Syria – in thirteenth-fourteenth century important sea port with Genoese emporia. Fourteen Merchants from Jebel are mentioned in Caffa city records in 1381. A. L. Ponomarev, "Naselenie i territoria Kaffy po dannym massarii – bukhgalterskoi knigi kaznacheistva za 1381-1382 gody", [Population and Territory of Caffa According to the Data from the Massaria – an Account Book of Treasury, 1381-1382] *Prichernomorie v srednie veka* 4 (2000), p. 359.
- 25 Latin translation was published in: Sdislaus Obertyński, "Die Florentiner Union der Polnischer Armenier und ihr Bischoffskatalog", *Orientalia Christiana* 36, no.1 (1934): p.41-42.
- 26 "Asslany Armeni filio Panosso" and "Abraham Panossowicz". *Pomniki dziejowe Lwowa z archiwum miasta* [The Records on the History of Lemberg from the City Archive], ed. by Aleksander Czołowski. Lwów, 1892, t.1: 1382-1389, p.1, 8, 16, 17, 47, 64, 108.
- 27 Aleksander Przewdziecki, *Podole, Wołyń, Ukraina. Obrazy miejsc i czasów* [Podolia, Volynia, Ukraine. The Images of Places and Times]. Wilno, 1841, t.1, p.144-145.
- 28 This earlier privilege without exact date was mentioned in charter issued in August 13, 1443 by Jan of Czyżów, the Polish governor of Podolia. Przewdziecki, *Podole*, t.1, p.147-148.
- 29 Balard, *Gênes*, t.1, p.68, 109, 233-234. G.I. Brătianu, *Actes des notaires génois de Péra et de Caffa de la fin du treizième siècle (1281-1290)*. Bucarest, 1927: p.173-174, 228.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p.160, 301, 309, 337.
- 31 There is an inscription on *khachkar* – stone-cross memorial – in the Armenian church in Akkerman dated 1351. Khristofor Kuchuk-loannesov, *Starinnye armianskie nadpisi i starinnye rukopisi v predelakh Yugo-Zapadnoi Rusi i v Krymu* [The Ancient Armenian Inscriptions and Manuscripts in the South-Western Rus' and in the Crimea], *Drevnosti vostochnye. Trudy Vostochnoi Komissii Imperatorskogo Moskovskogo Arkheologicheskogo obshchestva* [Oriental Antiquities. The Transactions of the Oriental Commission of Imperial Moscow Archaeological Society]. Moscow, 1903, t.2, no.3, p. 66.
- 32 Armenian Grigo, son of Arabec, burgher of Kilia (*Grigo Erminius, quondam Arabec, habitator et burgensis Chili*), was mentioned in records 14 September 1360. Michel Balard, *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer*, t.2: *Actes de Kilia du notaire Antonio di Ponzo. 1360*. Paris, La Haye, 1980, p.107-108. *Sarchis Erminio de Caffa, filio Constantini* (30 October 1360). In this transaction among witnesses was also mentioned *Sabadim Erminio, habitatore Chili*. Balard, *Gênes*, t.2, p.193, 194. Sarchis of Caffa was again mentioned as witness in

- Kilia records 25 August and 14 September 1360. Balard, *Gênes*, t.2, p.58, 111.
- 33 The Armenians from Caffa are mentioned in Licostomo records 13 September 1373 (*Machitar maiorem esse annis XVII, cum consilio Abram Erminii de Caffa et Georgii Erminii de Caffa*). Balbi, Raiteri, *Notai genovesi*, p.197.
- 34 The Armenian church of St. Gregory Illuminator in Tana was mentioned in 1339 and 1341. *Pamyatnye zapisi armianskikh rukopisei XIV v.* [Colophons of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century Armenian Manuscripts], ed. by Levon S. Khachikian. Yerevan, 1950, p.329-330. Among 443 free figurants of transactions written in Tana records in 1359-1360 there were 7 Armenians. Sergei P. Karpov, "Tana – Une grand zone réceptrice de l'émigration au Moyen Âge", *Migrations et diasporas méditerranéennes: Xe – XVIe siècles: actes du colloque de Conques, octobre 1999*, réunis par Michel Balard et Alain Ducellier (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2002), p.77-89, here p.79.
- 35 Balard, *Gênes*, t.2, p.107-108, 193-194.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p.128-129, 135-136.
- 37 Armenian Kilakos (Kirakos ?) of Kazaret (*Chilacos erminio de Cazarese*) 18 July 1289 credited Italian Raphael Ebriac with 2,000 aspros. The latter is obliged to return credit in 15 days when his vessel arrived from Arsuf in Syria (*in Siria loco ubi dicitur Sur*). Balard, *Gênes*, t.1, p.120. Armenian Christophano, inhabitant of Caffa (*Christofano erminius, habitator de Caffa, sive de Sorchati de Laizo*), 24 June 1290 credited John of Syria (*Johannes Sorianus*) with 1,800 aspros. The latter is obliged to return credit in 1.5 year. Balard, *Gênes*, t.1, p.220.
- 38 Lowry, H. "From Lesser Wars to the Mightiest War': The Ottoman Conquest and Transformation of the Early Byzantine Urban Centres in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century", in *Continuity and Change in Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Society*, ed. by Bryer Anthony and Heath Lowry. Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1986, p.325.
- 39 Bryer, Anthony. "The Roman Orthodox World (1393-1492)", in *The Cambridge History of the Byzantine Empire c. 500-1492*, ed. Jonathan Shepard. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. p.871.
- 40 Slavonic originals published in: *Ukrainski hramoty XV st.* [Ukrainian Charters of 15<sup>th</sup> Century], ed., V.M. Rusanivskiyi. Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1965. p.69-72, 110-113. See also: Panaitescu P. P. "La route commerciale de Pologne à la Mer Noire au Moyen Age", *Revista Istorică Română* 3 (1933): 172-193.
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- 118 "acz przedtem nigdy przy posle jadąc myta nie placili". Otwinowski, Erasm. Op. cit., s.38.
- 119 Ibid., s.37.
- 120 "Tego dnia też pan Żółkiewski od hospodara przyjechał z tą odpowiedzią, iż było nie potrzeba Ormianom myta płacić". Ibid., s.38.
- 121 "Et mercantilmente quante incette erano da farsi nel suo paese, le faceva fare per suo conto proprio proibendo alli altri Mercanti, talché al suo tempo si sono rovinati quanti Mercanti usavano negoziare in suo Paese, e così signoreggiando vicino al X<sup>mo</sup> anno si crede, che avessi congregato meglio, che dua milioni d'oro compreso le gioie che ne aveva assai". Masi G. *La lettera*. P.382. See also: Pippidi, Andrei. *Les Roumains vs de Pologne*. P.118.
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- 142 "Vita de padre Giulio Mancinelli", in *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor* / culese de Eudoxiu Hurmuzaki. București, 1897. Vol.9. p.116.

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- 144 APF SOCG. Vol.225: Armeni di Polonia Valachia. fol.72-72v.
- 145 APF SOCG. Vol.225: Armeni di Polonia Valachia. fol.74.
- 146 Other historians named either 1669 or 1668 as the year when some Armenians and their bishop fled to Transylvania.
- 147 *Scutelnic* (also *scutnic*, from Romanian verb *scuti*, "to exempt", "to absolve"; plural: *scitelnici*, *scutnici*) were peasant servants in Wallachia and Moldavia who were exempt from state taxes. They were charged with various duties and were attached to *boiers* and to monasteries.
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Vardapet Minas Tokhatetsi, Bishop of the Armenians in Transylvania, Make a Confession of Faith in the Roman Catholic Church in 1686?" *Haigazian Armenological Review* 31 (2011): 427-442; Nagy, Kornel. "Archbishop Vardan Hunanean's Two Unpublished Letters of 1687 to the Holy See on the Armenians in Transylvania", *Haigazian Armenological Review* 32 (2012): 309-320.

- 152 Conventional model of Armenian migration to Transylvania caused by religious persecutions was elaborated by Christophor Lucacs, Armenian Catholic priest in Armenopolis/Gherla: Lucacsi, Christophorum. *Historia Armenorum Transilvaniae a primordis gentis usque nostrum*. Viennae, 1859. p.16, 66. This model was criticized in: Chelcu, Marius. "Cause ale părăsirii Moldovei de către armeni la sfârșitul secolului XVII", *Istorie și societate în spațial est-carpatic (secolele XIII-XX)*. *Omagiu profesorul Alexandru Zub*, ed. Dumitru Ivănescu, Marius Chelcu. Iași: Junimea, 2005. P.73-81.
- 153 From the letter of Franciscan monastic missionary Francisco Antonio Renzi from Stipide to the Propaganda Fide, written in Lemberg on October 23, 1692: "I went to Baia. The town is completely abandoned, and the churches, both Catholic and schismatic are burned down (...) In Suceava, the Tatars had burned the churches and all the Catholics from Baia and Suceava fled into the mountains, to live in Câmpulung". Archivio storico Congregazione per l'evangelizzazione dei popoli ("De Propaganda Fide"). Scritture riferite nei Congressi (SC). Fondo Moldavia, vol. 2, fol.345-346. Published in: *Moldvai Csango-Magyar Okmanytar*. vol.2. p.716-718. See also report of the Apostolic vicar from Moldavia, Vito Piluzzi da Vignanello, Archbishop of Marcianopolis, to the Propaganda Fide, written in Bacău on July 10, 1682. Archivio storico Congregazione per l'evangelizzazione dei popoli ("De Propaganda Fide"). Scritture riferite nei Congressi (SC). Fondo Moldavia, vol. 2, fol.116-119. Published in: Bianu I. "Vito Pilutio. Documente inedite din arhivulu Propagandei", *Columna lui Traian*, s.n., IV, 1883, p.260-263.
- 154 "Marc' Antonio Borisi, the great dragoman of the Venetian ambassador in Constantinople, credited Gaspare Graziani with the amount 5,500 thalers in 1619, when the sultan Osman II appointed Graziani prince of Moldavia. This sum was repaid in part to the merchant Pellegrino Testa, the creditor's son-in-law. Bernardo Borisi, Marc'Antonio's brother was appointed to the high office of grand hetman by Gaspare Graziani, who had debts to both the Borisi brothers". Luca Cristian. "Venetian Merchants in the Lower Danube Area and their Role in the Development of the International Trade Exchanges in the Seventeenth Century", *The Czech Historical Review/Český časopis historický*, 109/2 (2011), p.305.
- 155 "The mainly Greek Venetian merchants, citizens or subjects of the Serenissima, through a keen spirit of enterprise and the clever management of the privileged relations with the local political-administrative authorities, were able to consolidate their social status and to acquire the financial

- resources necessary for buying administrative offices". Luca C. Op.cit. p.311. "The most prominent Greek merchants in Istanbul became *capigi-agas* or entrusted at the Porte with the matters of the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia." (For *kapi kethüdasi* or *kapi kâhyasi*, stewards of the Princes of Moldavia and Wallachia, representing the interests of their masters at the imperial divan)". Eldem, Edhem. "Istanbul: from imperial to peripheralized capital," *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, and Bruce Masters (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. P.159. See also: Falangas, Andronikos, "Post-Byzantine Greek Merchants of the Fifteenth–Seventeenth Centuries", *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, 33, no.1–2 (2007), p.8-10; Ștefănescu Melchisedek (Episcopul Dunării de Jos). *Chronica Romanului și a Episcopiei de Roman*. Partea 1. București, 1864. p.33.
- 156 Osipian A. "Orenda virmenamy zemel'nykh volodin' na Bukovyni u 1775-1850 rokakh" [The Armenian Leasing of the Land Possessions in Bukovina, 1775-1850], *Pytannia istorii Ukrainy* [Issues of the History of Ukraine] 4 (2000): 256-261.
- 157 Phanariotes were members of those prominent Greek (including Hellenized Vlach and Albanian) families residing in Phanar, the chief Greek quarter of Constantinople, where the Ecumenical Patriarchate is situated. Phanariotes emerged as a class of moneyed Greek merchants (they commonly claimed noble Byzantine descent) in the latter half of the 16th century and went on to exercise great influence in the administration in the Ottoman Empire's Balkan domains in the 18th century. They tended to build their houses in the Phanar quarter in order to be close to the court of the Patriarch, who under the Ottoman millet system was recognized as both the spiritual and secular head (*millet-bashi*) of all the Orthodox subjects (the Rum Millet, or the "Roman nation") of the Empire, often acting as archontes of the Ecumenical See; thus they came to dominate the administration of the Patriarchate frequently intervening in the selection of hierarchs, including the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Many members of the Phanariot families (which had acquired great wealth and influence during the 17th century) occupied high posts of secretaries and interpreters to Ottoman officials and officers. Many had entered the ranks of Wallachian and Moldavian boyar nobility by marriage.