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The Ottoman Empire, the Crimean Khanate, Poland-Lithuania, Persia, and Others: The Northern Black Sea Region (Fourteenth–Eighteenth Centuries)

1 The Persistence of the Golden Horde

The boundary between the southern and the northern Black Sea landscape is perhaps nowhere as visible as in Crimea, where after crossing the mountain range that occupies the southern tip of the peninsula, one enters a vast steppe that extends to the horizon. Whereas on the southern slopes of the mountains, the mild climate is reminiscent of the Mediterranean and allows horticulture and viticulture, northern grasslands have been the home of husbandry since ancient times.¹ In fact, it was part of the great Eurasian steppe that extended from Dobruja, in the west, towards present-day Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Manchuria, in the east. At the outset of the early modern era, this vast area still owed its political structure to the Genghisid empire that had been founded in the thirteenth century. Genghis Khan's male descendants reigned in Kazan and Astrakhan until 1552 and 1556, respectively, in Siberia and Bukhara until 1598, and in Crimea until 1783, while many other dynasties claimed Genghisid descent and adopted Genghisid titles, or at least inherited elements of Genghisid taxation and military organization.² This pattern applied not only to numerous Turkic and Mongol rulers in Central Asia, but also to the Great Mughals in Delhi and the Rurikids in Moscow.³

1 For an encounter between a settled culture and Scythian nomads on the northern shores of the Black Sea, which in the eyes of ancient Greek colonists represented the contact between “civilisation” and “barbarism,” see Neal Ascherson, *Black Sea: The Birthplace of Civilisation and Barbarism* (London: Vintage, 1996), 49.

2 On the khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan and Sibir, see Donald Ostrowski, “Ruling Class Structures of the Kazan Khanate,” in *The Turks*, vol. 2, *Middle Ages*, ed. Hasan Celâl Güzel, Cem Oğuz, and Osman Karatay (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2002), 841–47; Ilia Zaitsev, “The Khanate of Astrakhan,” in Güzel et al., *The Turks*, 848–53; Ilia Zaitsev, “The Khanate of Sibir,” in Güzel et al., *The Turks*, 860–66. On the Shaybanids in Bukhara and other Central Asian dynasties, see Mehmet Alpargu, “Khanates of Turkestan,” in Güzel et al., *The Turks*, 899–922.

3 On the role of Genghisid heritage in the making and legitimacy of the Muscovite state, cf. Omeljan Pritsak, “Moscow, the Golden Horde, and the Kazan Khanate from a Polycultural Point of View,” *Slavic Review* 26 (1967): 577–83; Edward Keenan, “Muscovy and Kazan: Some Introductory Remarks on the Patterns of Steppe Diplomacy,” *Slavic Review* 26 (1967): 548–58; Donald Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and the latter's discussion with Charles Halperin in *Kritika* 1 (2000), 237–57, 267–97, 830–32.

The early modern era also saw the birth of new steppe empires, most notably those founded by the Oirats. The Dzungar Khanate, extending between the Altai Mountains and Tibet, reached the apex of its power under Galdan (r. 1676–97), to be swallowed by Manchu China in the following century. Another group of the Oirats, known as Kalmyks to their Turkic neighbors, crossed through the Kazakh steppe and arrived on the lower Volga, reaching the Black Sea shores and pushing the local Nogay tribes into a westward migration.⁴ The most renowned Kalmyk ruler, Ayuki (r. 1669–1724), is described by Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejey as “the last of the great nomad sovereigns” (*le dernier des grands souverains nomades*),⁵ while yet another French scholar—René Grousset—referred to the Oirat empire as a “historical anachronism.”⁶ By far the most successful nomadic dynasty of the early modern era was the Manchu (Jurchen) Qing, who not only secured the throne in Beijing, but extended the traditional borders of China far into the north and the west, including their ancestral lands in Manchuria as well as Dzungaria, Mongolia, and Tibet.

Grousset’s dismissive judgment on the value of early modern steppe empires is not entirely just. In both Eastern European and Central Asian theaters of war, mounted horsemen continued to play an important role.⁷ The hostile environment made the steppe barely accessible for regular armies composed of infantrymen and equipped with heavy artillery, as the Russians were to bitterly experience during their invasions of the Crimean Khanate in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Yet, even if a single infantryman was no match for a nomad warrior, the sheer numbers of drilled peasants, massively recruited and provisioned with the help of modern state bureaucracy, proved decisive for the triumph of agricultural empires over their nomadic neighbors. The survival of the Qing dynastic empire into the twentieth century can be explained by the fact that they combined nomadic virility with the control of a huge bureaucratic machine of the Chinese state, tapping its almost unlimited human and material resources.⁸ Far to the west, the last Genghisid state ruled by the Giray dynasty also owed its impressive longevity to the fact that it combined an extensive

4 Michael Khodarkovsky, *Where Two Worlds Met: The Russian State and the Kalmyk Nomads, 1600–1771* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, “Tibet in the Crimea? Polish Embassy to the Kalmyks of 1653 and a Project of an Anti-Muslim Alliance,” *Acta Poloniae Historica* 114 (2016): 231–53. On the Nogays, see also below.

5 Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejey, “Les Kalmuks de la Volga entre l’Empire russe et l’Empire ottoman sous le règne de Pierre le Grand (d’après les documents des Archives Ottomanes),” *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 7, no. 1 (1966): 63–76, esp. 65.

6 René Grousset, *L’empire des steppes: Attila, Gengis-khan, Tamerlan* (Paris: Payot, 1948), 621.

7 Cf. Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, “Az oszmán ‘katonai lemaradás’ problémája és a kelet-európai hadszíntér / The problem of Ottoman ‘military backwardness’ and the East European theatre of war,” *AETAS*, no. 4 (1999): 142–48.

8 On the role of the Manchu element in Qing China, see Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001); Evelyn Rawski, *Early Modern China and Northeast Asia: Cross-Border Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

steppe foreground roamed by Tatar and Nogay warriors with a demographic hinterland and economic center situated in the Crimean Peninsula, and the Khanate could also rely on the protection of the mighty Ottoman Empire situated across the Black Sea.

There is an ongoing scholarly dispute as to whether the Golden Horde had collapsed by 1502 and was replaced by new political bodies which, although claiming Genghisid heritage and reigned by Genghisid rulers, should be regarded as distinct and separate states, or whether we should rather treat them as legal successors and hence admit that the Golden Horde survived, albeit in a diminished form, until the Russian conquest of the Crimea in 1783. This discussion is remindful of similar disputes concerning the (dis)continuation between Kyivan Rus and Muscovy, the Roman and Byzantine Empires, or the *translatio imperii* between the Carolingian and the Ottonian dynasties. In fact, there are serious arguments that support the continuation thesis.⁹ Although Hacı Giray, the founder of the Giray dynasty who secured his power in Crimea in 1442,¹⁰ started from a humble position as a Lithuanian client, his Genghisid pedigree notwithstanding, his son, Mengli Giray, already proudly claimed his right to the rule over both the Volga and the Crimean hordes. Furthermore, his grandson, Mehmed Giray, assumed the title of the ruler of all the Mongols (*barça Mogul padişahı*) and, in the years 1521–23, substantiated his claim with the conquests of Kazan and Astrakhan.¹¹ As late as 1654, a century after the Russian tsars had established themselves on the Volga and over fifty years after they had conquered Siberia, Khan Mehmed IV Giray claimed his hereditary rights to Kazan, Astrakhan, and Siberia, the three khانات that, along with the Crimean Khanate, made up the territory of the Golden Horde.¹² In their documents, the Giray khans were invariably referred to as the rulers of the Great Horde (*Ulu Orda* or *Ulug Orda*), while Crimea, or more precisely the Crimean throne (*taht-i Kırım*), entered their *intitulatio* only in the seventeenth century, and was always preceded by the former, evidently more honorable designation.¹³ Whereas Crimea, which had once constituted a province (*ulus*) of the Golden Horde, was undisputedly the base of their rule, the Girays' aspirations reached far beyond the peninsula.

9 For a groundbreaking study that argued that the Golden Horde had not been destroyed but taken over by Mengli Giray Khan, see Leslie Collins, "On the Alleged 'Destruction' of the Great Horde in 1502," in *Manzikert to Lepanto: The Byzantine World and the Turks, 1071–1571. Papers given at the Nineteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1985*, ed. Anthony Bryer and Michael Ursinus (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1991), 361–99.

10 For the most recent chronology with references to earlier literature, see Vladislav Gulevich, *Ot ordynskogo ulusa k khanstvu Gireev: Krym v 1399–1502 gg.* (Kazan: Institut istorii im. Sh. Mardzhani AN RT, 2018), 188–96.

11 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania: International Diplomacy on the European Periphery (15th–18th Century). A Study of Peace Treaties Followed by Annotated Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 10–11, 60, 551–54.

12 Kołodziejczyk, 10, 167, 363.

13 Kołodziejczyk, 343–45, 350–61.

2 Lithuania's Phantom Body

The impressive territorial growth of Lithuania in the second half of the fourteenth century was enabled by an internal crisis in the Golden Horde, but also by the alliances between the Gediminids and the Horde's rulers. By 1362, Algirdas secured his hold over Kyiv and the territories of southern Rus thanks to his alliance with Emir Mamay, yet this alliance had to be paid for with the grand duke's formal acknowledgment of the Horde's suzerainty and his consent to send a yearly tribute.¹⁴ Under Jogaila and Vytautas, Lithuania obtained a further opportunity to extend its territory towards the Black Sea thanks to the struggle of Tokhtamysh with Tamerlane and Timur Qutlug—Tamerlane's nominee installed on the throne of the Golden Horde. After 1395, when Tokhtamysh sought refuge in Lithuania, he was actually the weaker partner, yet the two sides retained the appearance of tributary relations between Lithuania and the Golden Horde.¹⁵ When the Crimean Girays formally claimed their rights to the heritage of the Golden Horde, they began issuing *yarliqs* to Jagiellonian rulers that invoked the ancient alliance between Tokhtamysh and Vytautas. These *yarliqs*, which bestowed on the recipients vast territories situated in present-day Ukraine and western Russia, continued to be issued until 1560. They regularly listed the forts on the Black Sea coast that had been founded by Vytautas at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—Kachybei (today: Odesa) and Dashov (today: Ochakiv)—as well as those located in the steppe between the Dniester (Dnister) and the Boh (Southern Bug/Buh) rivers, such as Maiak (today: Maiaky), Iabu, and Balykly. Lithuanian and Polish merchants were authorized to extract salt from steppe deposits surrounding Kachybei and transport it to Kyiv and Lutsk without any hindrance.¹⁶ The *yarliqs* also included the towns that had been captured by Algirdas by 1362, including Kyiv, as well as—more interestingly—those that had never actually belonged to Lithuania, like Pskov and Novgorod the Great, or had long been lost to Muscovy, like Briansk, Chernigov (today: Chernihiv), and Kursk. There is little surprise that the khans endeavored to inflate their imaginary power by granting lands over which they had no real control, yet it is curious that Jagiellonian rulers not only accepted such documents, but regularly requested their renewal. Their rationale must have been the following: By including a given territory in his “donation *yarliq*” the khan implicitly engaged not to raid it, and if a given town actually remained in Muscovite hands, the khan's document added legitimacy to Lithuanian claims and could serve as a basis for anti-Muscovite cooperation.

¹⁴ Stefan Maria Kuczyński, *Sine Wody* (Warsaw: Libraria Nova, 1935), 55–57; Feliks Shabuldo, “Chy buv iarlyk Mamaia na ukrainski zemli?,” in *Zapysky Naukovoho tovarystva imeni Shevchenka*, vol. 243, *Pratsi Istorychno-filosofskoi sekti*, ed. Oleg Kupchynskii (Lviv: Naukove tovarystvo im. Shevchenka, 2002), 301–17.

¹⁵ Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, 5–8.

¹⁶ Kołodziejczyk, 266–78, 496, 502, 529–33, 539–44, 555–65, 594–602, 605–11, 642–51, 712–21, 732–68.

The tradition of issuing “donation *yarlıqs*” for Lithuanian rulers was discontinued after the expiry of the Jagiellonian dynasty. In 1569, three years before his death, Sigismund II Augustus resolved to break the opposition of Lithuanian magnates to his plan to unite his two realms into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, by transferring the Ukrainian territories from his hereditary Grand Duchy to the Polish Crown, and hence Poland replaced Lithuania as a Crimean neighbor. Moreover, the kings elected to the Polish throne after the death of Sigismund II Augustus did not value the ancient tradition, which they found detracted from their kingdom’s sovereignty. In 1598, King Sigismund III Vasa explicitly forbade his envoy sent to Khan Gazi II Giray to accept any instrument that would grant Kyiv and other lands to Lithuania, since “how could the Tatars donate a thing that had never belonged to them.”¹⁷ Although the Polish king no longer wished to be granted any lands by the khan, royal envoys dispatched to Bağçasaray in the years 1598–1622 were repeatedly instructed to demand Tatar recognition of Polish claims to territories that extended as far as the Black Sea coast. Somewhat surprisingly, these claims indeed found recognition in the khans’ instruments issued in 1598, 1599, 1607, and 1624, although both sides must have been aware that the territories in question were also claimed by the Ottoman sultan.¹⁸

3 Towards an “Ottoman Lake”

During the fifteenth century, the Black Sea underwent a gradual transition “from a turning plate [i.e., central hub—D.K.] of the medieval European and Asian trade into a trading area of local interest, even if this had no sizeable effects on the quantity or quality of trade.”¹⁹ There were both global and local factors that contributed towards this change. On the far end of the Silk Road, the new Chinese Ming dynasty turned its attention towards the south, loosening the political and commercial links that had connected China with the Eurasian steppe in the Mongol era. Tamerlane’s invasions of the Golden Horde, followed by the demolitions of Urgançh, Astrakhan, Sarai, and Tana, resulted in the gradual abandonment of the northern trade route that had connected China with Crimea and, further on, with Europe, and its replacement by a route that ran further to the south, through Samarkand, Asia Minor, and the Mediter-

¹⁷ Kołodziejczyk, 278.

¹⁸ Kołodziejczyk, 113–31, 137, 509–10, 788–804, 835–39, 876–84; Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, “Inner Lake or Frontier? The Ottoman Black Sea in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in *Enjeux politiques, économiques et militaires en mer noire (XIV^e–XXI^e siècles): Études à la mémoire de Mihail Guboglu*, ed. Faruk Bilici, Ionel Cîrdea, and Anca Popescu (Brăila: Éditions Istros, 2007), 125–39, esp. 129–30.

¹⁹ Eugen Denize, “The Romanians and the Fall of the Black Sea Under Ottoman Rule,” *Historical Yearbook* 3 (2006): 17–28, esp. 17 (the term *plaque tournante du trafic international* was coined in reference to the late medieval Black Sea by Gheorghe Brătianu); see also Mihnea Berindei and Gilles Veinstein, “La Tana – Azaq de la présence italienne à l’emprise ottomane (fin XIII^e–milieu XVI^e siècle),” *Turcica: Revue d’études turques* 8, no. 2 (1976): 110–201.

anean.²⁰ The losses suffered by the Black Sea economy were partly compensated for by the dynamic growth of the new Ottoman capital in Constantinople/Istanbul, after the city was conquered by Sultan Mehmed II in 1453. Its demographic revival resulted in the impressive rise of the population from less than 50,000 in the mid-fifteenth century to almost 500,000 a century later. The giant city consumed rising amounts of food-stuffs imported from the northern Black Sea region, including grain (wheat, barley, and millet) and flour, fish and caviar, butter and cheese, dried beef, honey, and salt, as well as ironware, tinware, and linen imported from Central Europe.²¹

The Ottoman direct political control in the Black Sea area was extended in 1461 through the conquests of Sinop and Trebizond (Trabzon). In 1475, an Ottoman fleet commanded by Gedik Ahmed Pasha conquered Caffa (renamed as Kefe), Azak, and a number of smaller Genoese colonies on the northern coast of the Black Sea. Kefe became the center of a new Ottoman province that comprised the southern coast of Crimea as well as Azak (Russian: Azov). The latter, strategically located at the mouth of the River Don, became the chief Ottoman outpost overlooking political and commercial relations with Muscovy.

The richest Genoese merchant families from Caffa were forcibly resettled to Istanbul, where the sultan expected them to revive the economy of the imperial city.²² Others returned to Italy or migrated to Spain, which was soon to launch its overseas expansion, but many remained in the region. One of the Genoese who entered the service of the Crimean khan was Augustino de Garibaldis, who in the early sixteenth century headed numerous embassies to Poland and became a trusted advisor at the court of his Muslim patron.²³ A century later, one of the most active Crimean diplomats was another Genoese, Gianantonio Spinola, also known under his Tatar name Can Anton İspinola, who undertook numerous diplomatic missions to Poland, Sweden, and Vienna.²⁴ Due to frequent marriages with Circassian women, local Italians gradually lost their language, yet they retained their distinct identity and Catholic confession until the seventeenth century, leaving a visible trace of the medieval Italian presence in the Black Sea space.

Whereas the southern part of the Crimea was directly incorporated into the Ottoman Empire, the rest of the peninsula was left in the hands of the Giray khans, who also controlled steppe grasslands extending across the isthmus. After 1475, the Crimean

²⁰ Cf. Marian Małowist, *Tamerlan i jego czasy* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985), 112–14.

²¹ Halil İnalçık, "The Ottoman State: Economy and Society, 1300–1600," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1300–1914*, ed. Halil İnalçık and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 18, 179–82; Halil İnalçık, *Sources and Studies on the Ottoman Black Sea*, vol. 1, *The Customs Register of Caffa, 1487–1490* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).

²² Marian Małowist, *Kaffa – kolonia genueńska na Krymie i problem wschodni w latach 1453–1475* (Warsaw: Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii, 1947), 335–38.

²³ Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, 236, 623.

²⁴ Kołodziejczyk, 458, 852–53; Ștefan Andreescu, *Din istoria Mării Negre (genovezi, români și tătari în spațiul pontic în secolele XIV–XVII)* (Bucharest: Editura Enciclopedică, 2001), 163–73.

rulers had to reckon with Ottoman power and the sultans intervened more than once in the Khanate's internal affairs and deposed those khans who defied the Ottoman patronage too openly. Nevertheless, until the end of the seventeenth century, the khans preserved a large degree of sovereignty and often acted as fully independent rulers, especially in their relations with Muscovy and Poland-Lithuania.²⁵ Apart from serving as a buffer in the Porte's relations with Eastern European states, the Khanate performed an important role as the provider of slaves to Ottoman markets. Slaves had already been exported from the Black Sea region in the Middle Ages, yet this export rose tremendously in the subsequent era. In the years 1500–1700, the number of slaves, originating from Poland-Lithuania, Russia, and the northern Caucasus captured in Tatar raids and imported to the Ottoman Empire might have reached as many as 2,000,000, probably more than the number of slaves who were transported across the Atlantic Ocean in the same period.²⁶ Hence, the territory extending to the north of the Black Sea became one of the largest slaving zones of the early modern world.²⁷

In 1476, Mehmed II invaded Moldavia, whose ruler Stephen the Great (r. 1457–1504) had refused to deliver the tribute that the Moldavian rulers had already been paying for twenty years. Facing defeat, Stephen reentered tributary relations with the sultan and was granted an imperial charter that confirmed his status as an Ottoman vassal.²⁸ The death of Mehmed II in 1481 brought an effort to reverse the tide as Genoa sent envoys to Eastern Europe with the aim to form an anti-Ottoman alliance and restore the *status quo ante* in Crimea. Although the negotiations were entered into by King Casimir of Poland-Lithuania, Stephen the Great of Moldavia, and the Crimean khan Mengli Giray, no action was taken.²⁹ On the contrary, in 1484 Sultan Bayezid invaded Moldavia and annexed two ports, Kilia (today: Kiliia) and Moncastro (renamed as Akkerman), located on the lower Danube and on the Dniester estuary, respectively. This aggression

25 On the degree of the khan's sovereignty vis-à-vis the Ottoman sultan, see Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, xiii–xvi and *passim*; Natalia Królikowska, "Sovereignty and Subordination in Crimean-Ottoman Relations (Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries)," in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 43–65; Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "What is Inside and What is Outside? Tributary States in Ottoman Politics," in Kármán and Kunčević, *The European Tributary States*, 421–32.

26 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "Slave Hunting and Slave Redemption as a Business Enterprise: The Northern Black Sea Region in the Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries," in "The Ottomans and Trade," ed. Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet, special issue, *Oriente Moderno* 25 (86), n.s., no. 1 (2006): 149–59; see also Mikhail Kizilov, "Slave Trade in the Early Modern Crimea from the Perspective of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources," *Journal of Early Modern History* 11 (2007): 1–31.

27 On the notion of a slaving zone, see Jeffrey Fynn-Paul, "Empire, Monotheism and Slavery in the Greater Mediterranean Region from Antiquity to the Early Modern Era," *Past and Present* 205 (November 2009): 3–40; see also Fynn-Paul, "Introduction: Slaving zones in global history: the evolution of the concept," in *Slaving Zones. Cultural Identities, Ideologies, and Institutions in the Evolution of Global Slavery*, ed. Jeff Fynn-Paul and Damian Pargas (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 1–19.

28 Viorel Panaite, *Ottoman Law of War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Its Tribute-Payers from the North of the Danube*, 2nd rev. ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 117–19.

29 Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, 235.

also affected Poland, since from the late fourteenth century Moldavia had remained its formal tributary, notwithstanding the tribute that its rulers were simultaneously sending to the Porte. The response came somewhat belatedly, yet in 1497 King John Albert of Poland entered Moldavia, ostensibly to help his vassal to reconquer the lost castles from the Ottomans. Sensing that there was more on the agenda, namely replacing him on the Moldavian throne with a Jagiellonian prince, Stephen changed sides and, assisted by Ottoman, Wallachian, and Tatar troops, defeated the royal army in a battle fought in the Cosmin Forest (Romanian: Codrii Cosminului).³⁰ This painful experience dissuaded the Polish court from challenging the Ottoman dominion in the Black Sea, and the self-imposed limitation allowed for peaceful relations between Istanbul and Cracow that were to last until the end of the sixteenth century.

The memory of the year 1497 also explains the soft reaction of the Jagiellonian court when in 1538 Sultan Suleyman annexed Tighina (renamed as Bender), a Moldavian castle situated on the Dniester upstream from Akkerman. As a matter of fact, the sultan's expedition against Petru Rareș, the son of Stephen the Great, was seconded by the Polish court, which was also in conflict with the Moldavian ruler, and when the Ottomans entered Tighina, Polish troops temporarily occupied Hotin (Ukrainian: Khotyn). What concerned the Jagiellonian court much more was the fact that during the same campaign, Suleyman forced Khan Sahib Giray to cede Ochakiv, a fort on the Dniro estuary known as Dashov in the times of Vytautas, rebuilt as Cankerman by Khan Mengli Giray and later known to the Ottomans as "the Dniro fortress" (*Özü kalesi*). Garrisoned by Ottoman troops, the fort was to become the main Ottoman stronghold on the northern Black Sea coast. In the 1590s, it would become the center of a new Ottoman province (*Özü eyaleti*) and in the eighteenth century it would play a crucial role in the Ottoman military confrontation with Russia.

The cession of Ochakiv to the sultan meant that, in his *yarlıq* sent in 1539 to King Sigismund, the khan no longer listed the Black Sea forts among the lands "granted" to Lithuania.³¹ The Jagiellonian court sent a formal protest to Istanbul and voiced its claim to control of the coast, yet when in 1542 both sides resolved to demarcate the common border, the royal commissioners adopted a more pragmatic attitude and were ready to start work on the Kodyma, a tributary of the Boh, almost two hundred kilometers (124 miles) from the shore to the north. The demarcation ended in a fiasco as the commissioners failed to meet due to mutual mistrust and then the task was abandoned, yet this failure did not prevent the two sides from maintaining peaceful, even friendly relations for the rest of Suleyman's life, or under his successors. The Ko-

³⁰ Gheorghe Duzinchevici, "Războiul moldo-polon din anul 1497: Critica izvoarelor," *Studii și materiale de istorie medie* 8 (1975): 9–61; Ilona Czamańska, *Moldavia i Wołoszczyzna wobec Polski, Węgier i Turcji w XIV i XV wieku* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 1996); Liviu Pilat and Ovidiu Cristea, *The Ottoman Threat and Crusading on the Eastern Border of Christendom During the 15th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 243–51.

³¹ Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, 81, 87–89.

dyma was to remain tacitly regarded as the border until it was formally recognized as such in the demarcation of 1633.³²

The sequence of Ottoman conquests on the shores of the Black Sea, with the capture of Sinop (1461), Trabzon (1461), Azak (1475), Caffa (1475), Akkerman (1484), Kilia (1484), and finally Ochakiv (1538), suggests a conscious policy aimed at strengthening political control over the region and tapping its economic resources. The Ottoman customs tariffs that privileged the sultans' subjects—both Muslim and non-Muslim—over foreigners also contributed towards the autarkization of the local economy. Yet the view once voiced by Halil İnalcık, who saw Ottoman policy in the Black Sea region as motivated by the wish “to put an end, in favor of the indigenous populations, to the economic and political dominance of [...] alien colonial powers,”³³ probably tells us more about the spirit of nationalist étatism that was typical of Kemalist Turkey than about the genuine policy of Ottoman rulers. Even though Mehmed II can be regarded as a precursor of state interventionism,³⁴ his successors were less so and Ottoman control over the Black Sea was far from total. Italian merchants did not entirely disappear from its economic space³⁵ and the Ottoman monopoly on power did not remain unchallenged, although the idea of the Black Sea as an “Ottoman lake” was never closer to reality than in the mid-sixteenth century.³⁶

4 New Actors: Cossacks and Nogays

In the years 1578–90, during a successful war against Safavid Iran, the Ottomans strengthened their hold on the eastern coast of the Black Sea. A new Ottoman fort was constructed in Faş (today: Poti) in 1579 to secure the coast section between Batum (today: Batumi) and Sohum (today: Sukhumi),³⁷ and the Georgian princes of

32 Gilles Veinstein, “L’occupation ottomane d’Oçakov et le problème de la frontière lituano-tatare 1538–1544,” in *Passé turco-tatar présent soviétique: Études offertes à Alexandre Bennigsen*, ed. Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, Gilles Veinstein, and S. Enders Wimbush (Louvain: Éditions Peeters, 1986), 123–55; Kołodziejczyk, “Inner Lake or Frontier?,” 126–29.

33 İnalcık, *Sources and Studies on the Ottoman Black Sea*, 110.

34 According to Şevket Pamuk, “the reign of Mehmed II was unique in the way the central government intervened to regulate not only specie and money but also trade and the urban economy;” see Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 45.

35 Cf. Mihnea Berindei, “Les vénitiens en mer Noire, XVI^e–XVII^e siècles,” *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 30 (1989): 207–23.

36 Cf. Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 133. Anca Popescu likewise dates the beginning of the “Ottoman lake” to the mid-sixteenth century, yet she observes that the harshest measures against foreign merchants operating on the Black Sea were undertaken in the late seventeenth century and should be rather regarded as a desperate sign of weakness as the Ottomans felt that they were losing control over the region; Anca Popescu, “La Mer Noire ottomane: *mare clausum? mare apertum?*,” in Bilici, Cîndea, and Popescu, *Enjeux politiques, économiques et militaires*, 141–70, esp. 163–65.

37 Mahir Aydın, “Faş kalesi,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 6 (1986): 67–138.

Guria and Mingrelia were forced to reassert their tributary status, although their loyalty towards the Ottoman sultan was to remain fragile in the following decades too.³⁸

Yet at the same time, new factors put in question Ottoman control of the Black Sea. In response to Tatar slaving raids, which prevented colonization of the southeastern provinces of Poland-Lithuania, its border commanders organized defense troops, mainly recruited from among local inhabitants, who were exempted from taxes and feudal obligations in return for military service. Both the commanders and their subordinates soon found out that instead of waiting for a Tatar raid, it was more profitable to raid enemy lands and capture herds and other property belonging to the Crimean and Ottoman subjects. In the mid-sixteenth century, the most notorious raiders of the Ottoman northern Black Sea coast were Bernard Pretwicz, the *starosta* of Bar, and Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi, the *starosta* of Cherkasy and Kaniv. In 1552, Ottoman diplomatic pressure forced King Sigismund II Augustus to recall Pretwicz from Bar, yet Vyshnevetskyi soon moved beyond royal control and, in 1556, built a fortified camp on a Dnipro island, known as the Cossack Sich.³⁹ In the following years, he entered the Muscovite service, intervened in a Moldavian civil war, and was finally captured and executed in Istanbul in 1564, yet the Cossacks⁴⁰ were to remain a permanent phenomenon in the lands situated to the north of the Black Sea. Recruited from among local Ruthenian (Ukrainian) inhabitants as well as runaway peasants and volunteers from Poland, Muscovy, the Caucasus, and Crimea, they turned into a semi-independent frontier society that made a lasting impact on the history of the region. Apart from the Dnipro Cossacks, a smaller Cossack group was formed on the River Don, vis-à-vis the Ottoman province of Azak.⁴¹

Almost at the same time, as a result of the Muscovite expansion in the Volga region, Nogay tribesmen arrived in large groups in the Black Sea region. While the so-called Little Nogay horde took the pastures extending between the northern Caucasus and the River Don, other Nogay groups roamed further to the west. This migration is reflected in the instrument of peace Devlet Giray sent to Sigismund II Augustus in 1560,

38 Ștefan Andreescu, "Principatul Mingreliei și Poarta otomană: raporturi politice și comerciale (prima jumătate a secolului al XVII-lea)," in Andreescu, *Izvoare noi cu privire la istoria Mării Negre* (Bucharest: Institutul Cultural Român, 2005), 154–66.

39 Andrzej Dziubiński, "Polsko-litewskie napady na tureckie pogranicze czarnomorskie w epoce dwu ostatnich Jagiellonów," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 103, no. 3 (1996): 53–87; Andrzej Dziubiński, *Stosunki dyplomatyczne polsko-tureckie w latach 1500–1572 w kontekście międzynarodowym* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2005), 168–92; Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejey, "Un condottiere lithuanien du XVI^e siècle, le prince Dimitrij Višneveckij et l'origine de la Seč zaporogue d'après les archives ottomanes," *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 10, no. 2 (1969): 258–79.

40 The term Cossack (*kazak/qazaq*) is of Turkic origin and originally meant a free vagabond, an independent warrior with no tribal or clan affiliation.

41 On the relations between the Dnipro and the Don Cossacks, see Viktor Brekhunenko, *Stosunki ukraïnskoho kozatstva z Donom u XVI–seredyni XVII st.* (Kyiv: RA "Tandem-U," 1998).

in which the khan for the first time engaged not to raid the royal domains, also on behalf of his Nogay subjects.⁴²

The growing insecurity on the lower Dnipro, caused by the Cossack and Nogay activity, brought as a consequence the abandonment of the medieval *Via Tartarica*, which led from Central Europe to the Crimean isthmus and was still used in the early sixteenth century. In the late sixteenth century, the Crimean khans themselves agreed that annual gifts from Poland-Lithuania that the Tatars regarded as tribute be transported through Moldavia and the Ottoman port of Akkerman, since this route was safer than the one passing through southern Ukraine that crossed the Dnipro near the Tatar fort of Islamkerman, which had been destroyed by the Cossacks in 1556. And even Akkerman was not safe from the Cossacks: When in 1601, a Polish envoy to the khan boarded an Ottoman galley that was to take him to the Crimean port of Közlev (today: Ievpatoriia), on the mere rumor of a Cossack raid the galley was hastily unpacked and it took several days before the envoy found another captain ready to take to the sea.⁴³ In the years 1574–1634, Akkerman was raided at least fourteen times, so a Cossack raid occurred every four years.⁴⁴

The “golden era” of Cossack raiding on the Black Sea fell in the early seventeenth century, when the Dnipro Cossacks, assisted by their brethren from the Don, sacked or burned Sinop (1614), Kefe (1616), Varna (1620), and Trabzon (1625), to name just a few targets.⁴⁵ On their long boats known as *chaikas*, suited to sailing on rivers but also capable of weathering the high sea, they crossed to the southern coast of the Black Sea more than once, triggering panic among local inhabitants, both Muslim and Christian, and provoking angry responses from the Ottoman authorities. In 1615, the Cossacks entered the Bosphorus for the first time and pillaged several settlements in the vicinity of the Ottoman capital, striking a heavy blow to the prestige of the Ottoman sultan.⁴⁶ Cossack raids shattered the “chimera of [the] Ottoman lake”—to use the wording of Victor Ostapchuk—and forced the Porte to frequently deploy its Mediterranean fleet in the Black Sea in order to defend its core provinces. An incisive comment by Venetian Bailo Giacomo Quirini, who in 1676 observed that “the defense and protection of the Mediterranean depends on the Black Sea” (*da questo mar Nero dipende la difesa e la conservazione del mar Bianco*) aptly describes the realities of the entire century.⁴⁷

42 Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, 94–95.

43 Kołodziejczyk, 460–61.

44 Victor Ostapchuk and Svitlana Bilyayeva, “The Ottoman Northern Black Sea Frontier at Akkerman Fortress: The View from a Historical and Archaeological Project,” in *The Frontiers of the Ottoman World*, ed. Andrew Peacock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 137–70, esp. 150–51.

45 Victor Ostapchuk, “The Human Landscape of the Ottoman Black Sea in the Face of the Cossack Naval Raids,” in “The Ottomans and the Sea,” ed. Kate Fleet, special issue, *Oriente Moderno* 20 (81), n.s., no. 1 (2001): 23–95, esp. 44.

46 Vladimir Korolev, *Bosforskaia voina* (Rostov-on-Don: Izdatelstvo Rostovskogo universiteta, 2002), 175–79.

47 Ostapchuk, “The Human Landscape,” 89–93; Kołodziejczyk, “Inner Lake or Frontier?,” 135–36.

The activity of the Dnipro Cossacks, who at least formally were the subjects of the Polish king, led to rising tensions in Ottoman-Polish relations. These tensions were further exacerbated by the pro-Habsburg stand of King Sigismund III Vasa (r. 1587–1632) and the revival of Polish involvement in Moldavia, visible from the 1590s when the Ottomans were engaged in a war against the Habsburgs that lasted from 1593 to 1606. In 1595, Polish and Ottoman-Crimean troops met at Țuțora on the River Prut, but a military confrontation was avoided and both sides reached a compromise, agreeing on a candidate to the Moldavian throne that was acceptable to both the king and the sultan. The conflict was avoided once again in 1617, when Polish hetman Stanisław Żółkiewski negotiated a settlement with the Ottoman commander Iskender Pasha, and the Poles engaged to prevent Cossack raids on the Black Sea and stop military interventions in Moldavia, while the Ottomans promised to stop the Tatar raids into Poland-Lithuania. However, new Cossack raids on the Black Sea and the news of the participation of Polish mercenaries in the Thirty Years' War on the Habsburg side resulted in the outbreak of a full-scale war. In 1620, the Polish Crown's army was annihilated near Țuțora, and in 1621 Sultan Osman II set out against Poland and besieged Hotin—a castle in northern Moldavia where Polish-Lithuanian troops, assisted by the Cossacks, set up a fortified camp. The siege ended with a stalemate and the belligerents reached an agreement that reiterated the former conditions of peace.⁴⁸

In the following years, the Ottomans turned their attention to the east, especially after the capture of Baghdad by Shah 'Abbās in 1624. Yet the Ottoman-Safavid conflict also influenced the politics to the north of the Black Sea. In 1623, the Crimean throne was ascended by Mehmed III Giray, who appointed as his *qalga* (deputy) Şahin Giray, his younger brother who had spent nine years in Safavid Iran. When in 1624 the Porte withdrew its support for Mehmed III Giray and aimed to replace him with his relative, the two brothers rebelled and captured Ottoman Kefe, while Şahin Giray sent an envoy to Poland, proposing an anti-Ottoman coalition between the king, the khan, and the shah and offering Tatar assistance if the Poles wished to conquer Bender, Akkerman, and Kilia. When Sigismund III tactfully refused, Şahin turned to the Cossacks, yet the Tatar-Cossack alliance, concluded in 1625, did not materialize, since the sultan reconfirmed Mehmed III Giray on the Crimean throne the same year.⁴⁹

Apart from the Cossacks, Nogays became another factor to reckon with in local policy. They had been present in the region since the Middle Ages and the Nogay Manghut

⁴⁸ For a cursory narration of these events, followed by the edition of relevant documents and further references to secondary literature, see Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman-Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th Century): An Annotated Edition of 'Ahdnames and Other Documents* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 126–35, 298–426.

⁴⁹ Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, 131–38. On the relations between Shah 'Abbās and Şahin Giray, see Stanisław Jaśkowski, Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, and Piruz Mnatsakanyan, *The Relations of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with Safavid Iran and the Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin in the Light of Archival Documents* (Warsaw: Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, 2017), 80–81, 159–67.

clan had played an important role in the social hierarchy of the Crimean Khanate, yet their number dramatically increased as a result of three major waves of migration: 1) the abovementioned exodus from the Volga region caused by the Russian expansion in the 1550s; 2) the migration at the beginning of the seventeenth century, resulting from a Nogay civil war; 3) the migration in the 1630s, caused by the pressure of the Kalmyks, who had arrived in the Caspian steppe from Central Asia, pushing the Nogays to the west. In the 1620s, Kantemir, the powerful Manghit leader, built a semi-independent power base in Budjak and, having secured direct Ottoman protection, openly defied the khan's suzerainty more than once. His slaving raids into Poland-Lithuania, directed from Budjak, were even more detrimental than the raids by the Crimean Tatars, since they affected densely populated regions situated around the city of Lviv (Polish: Lwów) and even further to the west. Kantemir's career abruptly ended in 1637 when, after an open military conflict between the Nogay leader and the Crimean khan, the Porte resolved to rid itself of its unruly vassals and had them both executed. The Nogays then returned under the suzerainty of the new khan, although some of them chose to enter Polish service.⁵⁰

The outbreak of Ottoman-Venetian war over the island of Crete in 1645 triggered a geopolitical revolution in Eastern Europe. Encouraged by Venetian money and motivated by his own ambitions, the Polish king Vladislaus IV Vasa initiated secret talks with the Dnipro Cossacks regarding a possible diversion against the Porte. Forced by the diet to abandon these plans, the king cancelled the talks, yet the Cossacks, whose resentment towards the Commonwealth had been rising for several decades, started a large rebellion headed by Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, in 1648. A skilled politician, Khmelnytskyi secured the military assistance of the Crimean khan and entered into direct diplomatic negotiations with the Porte. These negotiations are reflected in the project of an Ottoman-Cossack trade convention, of which a Polish copy has been preserved. According to this project, the sultan was to allow the Cossacks to freely call on Ottoman ports on the Black Sea and in the Mediterranean and keep trading posts in major Ottoman harbors and a residence in Istanbul. Moreover, the property of castaway or deceased Cossack merchants was to remain immune from confiscation by the Ottoman treasury. In return, the Cossacks were to prevent any raids of Ottoman lands and, if such a raid were committed by the Don Cossacks, to assist the Ottoman galleys in punishing the culprits.⁵¹ Although the precise dating of this project remains uncertain and its author-

50 Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, 130–48, 184, 980–81; Mihnea Berindei, “La Porte Ottomane face aux Cosaques Zaporogues, 1600–1637,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 1 (1977): 273–307; Vadim Trepavlov, *Istoriia Nogaiskoi Ordʹy* (Moscow: Vostochnaia literatura, 2001), 178–83, 430–54, 656–57.

51 The text is published in *Sobranie gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogovorov, khраниashchikhsia v Gosudarstvennoi kollegii inostrannykh del* (Moscow: Tipografiia Selivanovskago, 1822), 3:444–47; republished in Omelian Pritsak, “Shche raz pro soiuz Bohdana Khmelnytskoho z Turechchynoiu,” *Ukrainskyi arkhеографічний shchorichnyk* 2, n.s. (1993): 177–92, esp. 191–92. For the discussion on its dating, see Vic-

ship is unknown, the text closely reflects Ottoman capitulations granted to Western European maritime powers. Its rationale was to reverse the Cossack military energy from raiding Ottoman lands and redirect it to the north. During the following twenty years, Khmelnytskyi and his successors navigated between Warsaw, Istanbul, and Moscow, also entering into convenient alliances with the rulers of Crimea, Moldavia, Transylvania, Brandenburg, and Sweden with the aim to carve out independent or semi-independent Ukrainian Cossack statehood. In 1654, the Cossack uprising transformed into a Russo-Polish war that lasted until 1667, when, as neither of the two powers was able to control all of Ukraine, they divided its territory along the Dnipro. This move, in turn, incited Petro Doroshenko, the new Cossack hetman, to acknowledge Ottoman suzerainty. The Ottoman-Cossack negotiations were formalized by an imperial patent (*berat*), issued by Sultan Mehmed IV in 1669, which transformed Ukraine into an Ottoman vassal state enjoying similar autonomy to that of Moldavia and Wallachia.⁵²

5 The Advent of Russia

Ottoman-Muscovite relations dated back to the fifteenth century, yet they were initially limited to commercial exchange. Envoys rarely traveled between the two capitals and everyday relations were maintained through the mediation of the Crimean khans and the Ottoman governors of Kefe and Azak.⁵³ Following the Russian conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan in 1552 and 1556, respectively, the Ottomans developed a visionary project to build a channel connecting the Don and the Volga rivers that would allow Ottoman galleys to enter not only the Volga but also the Caspian Sea. Yet the Ottoman-Crimean expedition of 1569 failed due to ecological constraints and, above all, the unwillingness of Khan Devlet Giray to submit to Ottoman control that would have diminished his own autonomy.⁵⁴ Paradoxically, Devlet Giray, who in 1569 sabotaged the joint expedition, managed to single-handedly attack and burn down Moscow in 1571, which earned him the nickname *Taht-Algan* (“Capturer of Capitals”) and deeply humili-

tor Ostapchuk, “Cossack Ukraine In and Out of Ottoman Orbit, 1648–1681,” in Kármán and Kunčević, *The European Tributary States*, 123–52, esp. 132.

52 Ostapchuk, “Cossack Ukraine In and Out of Ottoman Orbit,” 142–43; Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, “Tertium non datur? Turetska alternatyva v zovnishnii politytsi Kozatskoi derzhavy,” in *Hadiatska uniiia 1658 roku*, ed. Pavlo Sokhan, Viktor Brekhunenko et al. (Kyiv: Instytut ukrainskoi arkhoeohrafii ta dzhereloznavstva imeni M.S. Hrushevskoho NAN Ukrainy, 2008), 67–80.

53 Andrii Zhyvachivskyi, “The Governors of Kefe and Azak in Ottoman-Muscovite Relations in the Fifteenth–Seventeenth Centuries and the Issue of Titulature,” *Acta Poloniae Historica* 15 (2017): 211–34.

54 On the campaign of 1569, see Akdes Nimet Kurat, *Türkiye ve İdil boyu (1569 Astarhan seferi, Ten-İdil kanalı ve XVI–XVII. yüzyıl Osmanlı-Rus münasebetleri)* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1966).

ated Tsar Ivan IV.⁵⁵ The Ottomans also managed to build a galley fleet on the Caspian Sea, based in Derbent, following the conquest of western Safavid provinces in 1578.⁵⁶ Hence, even though their campaign of 1569 ended in a fiasco, they remained the stronger party in their relations with both Muscovy and Iran.

Russia's respect for Ottoman might was so strong that, when in 1637 the Don Cossacks captured Azak, held it for several years in spite of furious Ottoman-Crimean counterattacks, and offered the conquest to the tsar, Moscow kept assuring the Porte that it had nothing to do with the action, and in 1642 ordered the Cossacks to abandon the castle.⁵⁷

The situation began to reverse after the Russo-Polish war of 1654–67, which resulted in the Russian annexation of left-bank Ukraine. Following Doroshenko's submission to the Porte, the Ottomans invaded Poland-Lithuania and, in 1672, annexed the province of Podolia and forced the king to resign from right-bank Ukraine. While Doroshenko hoped to unite right-bank and left-bank Ukraine under the Ottoman umbrella, his enemies among the Cossacks invited Russia to intervene and the war between two Cossack factions turned into the First Russo-Ottoman War. Fought in the years 1677–81, it was concluded with the Treaty of Bağçasaray, which confirmed the Dnipro as the boundary between the two empires and their respective zones of influence in Ukraine.

In 1686, Russia joined the anti-Ottoman coalition that had been formed after the failed siege of Vienna in 1683. In the years 1687 and 1689, Vasilii Golitsyn led two unsuccessful campaigns whose aim was to cross the steppe and break through the isthmus of Perekop into Crimea. However, in 1696 Tsar Peter I captured Azak and his conquest was secured in 1700 by the Treaty of Constantinople, which gave Russia a southern window on the sea.⁵⁸ A year earlier, the Treaty of Karlowitz restored Podolia and right-bank Ukraine to Poland.

The Third Russo-Ottoman War (1710–13) broke out after King Charles XII of Sweden found shelter in Ottoman lands, following his defeat in the battle of Poltava (1709). In 1711, Peter I entered Moldavia, but his army was surrounded on the River Prut and the tsar was forced to promise to restore Azak to the Porte and withdraw Russian troops from Poland-Lithuania. The agreement reached on the Prut was formally confirmed by the Treaty of Edirne, in 1713.⁵⁹

55 Vasilii Smirnov, *Krymskoe khanstvo pod verkhovenstvom Otomanskoi Porty*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Rubezhi XXI, 2005), 1:321; Aleksandr Vinogradov, *Russko-krymskie otnosheniia: 50-e–vtoraia polovina 70-kh godov XVI veka* (Moscow: Institut rossiiskoi istorii RAN, 2007), 192–94.

56 Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, "Daghestan During the Long Ottoman-Safavid War (1578–1639): The *Shamkhal's* Relations with Ottoman Pashas," in *Tributaries and Peripheries of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Gábor Kármán (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 117–33, esp. 132.

57 Viktoriia Burlaka, *Azov – gorod s tysiacheletnei istoriei* (Azov: Azovskii muzei-zapovednik, 2005), 98–125.

58 Brian Davies, *Warfare, State and Society on the Black Sea Steppe, 1500–1700* (London: Routledge, 2007), 178–87.

59 On the Russo-Ottoman war of 1710–1713, see Vladimir Artamonov, *Turetsko-russkaia voina 1710–1713* (Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2019).

After that war, the Ottomans converted Hotin into the center of a new administrative unit that was carved out from Moldavia. With strengthened and modernized defenses, it was to serve as a major bulwark against possible aggression from the north.⁶⁰ Along with Hotin, Bender, Akkerman, and the fortress complex on the Dniπρο estuary consisting of Őzi (Ochakiv) and Kilburun underwent gradual “Vaubanisation” during the eighteenth century.⁶¹

In the 1720s, the last great wave of Nogay nomads arrived in the northern Black Sea steppe when the Yedisian, Yedidjek, and Djemboyluq hordes deserted the Kalmyk suzerainty and left their pastures between the Emba and the Volga rivers, seeking the patronage of the Crimean khan. On the one hand, the khan thus gained seasoned warriors valuable in the event of external conflicts, yet on the other hand, the newcomers were less integrated within the Khanate’s political structure and hence more prone to domestic riots.⁶²

The Fourth Russo-Ottoman War (1735–39) broke out shortly after Russian troops intervened in Poland-Lithuania and placed Augustus III Wettin on its throne, provoking the European-wide conflict known as the War of the Polish Succession. Although this move was in violation of the Treaty of Edirne, the Porte did not respond, since it was engaged in a war against Persia, so it was Russia that took the initiative. In 1736, the Russian troops conquered Azak while another Russian army forced through the Crimean isthmus and took the khan’s capital in Bağçasaray. In the following two years, the Ottoman-Crimean allies fared slightly better as the Russian troops suffered supply shortages and widespread disease, yet the capture of Hotin in 1739 by Marshal Burkhard Christoph von Münnich signified a major Ottoman loss. Fortunately for the Porte, the Austrians, who entered the war on Russia’s side, suffered several defeats, while France offered welcome mediation, and hence, in accordance with the Treaty of Belgrade, Russia only obtained Azak but was forbidden to restore its fortifications and agreed to return all other conquests.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the rising military pressure from Russia caused the Crimean khans to abandon their former claims to independence and become the sultan’s loyal vassals, while in return they were often granted command

60 Mariusz Kaczka and Dariusz Kołodziejczyk, “Introduction,” in *Turecki pasza i szlachta: korespondencja osmańskiego gubernatora Chocimia Iliasza Kołczaka paszy ze szlachtą Rzeczypospolitej z lat 1730–1739*, ed. Kaczka and Kołodziejczyk (Warsaw: Narodowy Instytut Polskiego Dziedzictwa Kulturowego za Granicą Polonika, 2020), 83–96.

61 Ostapchuk and Bilyayeva, “The Ottoman Northern Black Sea Frontier,” 153–60. The term “Vaubanisation,” which is employed by the authors, invokes the influence of the famous French marshal and engineer Sébastien de Vauban (1633–1707) on the military art across the globe.

62 Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, “St. Petersburg and the Steppe Peoples: Diplomatic Correspondences of the 18th Century from the *Arkhiiv Vnešnej Politiki Rossijskoj Imperii* in Moscow,” in *Proceedings of the 38th Permanent International Altaistic Conference (PIAC), Kawasaki, Japan: August 7–12, 1995*, ed. Giovanni Stary (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996), 219–36; Vladislav Gribovskii, “Upravlenie nogaitsami Severnogo Prichernomia v Krymskom khaŋstve (40–60-e gody XVIII v.),” in *Tiurkologičeskii sbornik, 2007–2008* (Moscow: Vostočnaia literatura, 2009), 67–97.

over Ottoman-Crimean troops operating between the Danube and the Kuban. In the times of conflict, the khans were typically stationed at Qavşan (Romanian: Căuşeni), a military camp in Budjak that was well suited to overseeing military operations against Russia.⁶³

In 1768, the Ottomans declared war on Russia, which had again sent troops to Poland in order to crush an anti-Russian movement. This move did not prevent the first partition of Poland, declared by Russia, Prussia, and Austria in 1772, and also proved ominous to the Porte. The war ended with the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), which granted Russia a strip of the Black Sea coast between the mouths of the Boh and the Dnipro, and allowed her to build a port in Kherson on the lower Dnipro. The Crimean Khanate was declared independent, yet this clause only helped St. Petersburg weaken the ties between Istanbul and Bağçasaray and extend its own patronage over the khan. In 1779, the Convention of Aynalı Kavak granted Russian merchants free passage from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean on their ships under the Russian banner, and in 1783 Russia annexed Crimea.⁶⁴

The Russian conquest of the Crimean Khanate had a powerful symbolism, yet the final closure of Russia's southern frontier was only attained after another war, that of 1787–92. Özü (Ochakiv; Russian: Ochakov) fell to the Russians in 1788, and with the Treaty of Jassy (1792), which moved the boundary between the two empires to the River Dniester, the entire steppe extending to the north of the Black Sea was opened to Russian colonization. The former Lithuanian and Tatar fort of Kachybei, known to the Ottomans as Hocabey, became the Russian Odessa, and the conquerors also Hellenized many geographical names in Crimea; for instance, Aqmescit became Simferopol, Aqyar Sevastopol, Közlev Ievpatoriia, and Kefe Feodosiia. The rise of the Russian bureaucratic empire, which successfully “tamed” the steppe through agricultural colonization and urbanization,⁶⁵ was achieved at the expense of its former inhabitants, Nogay and Tatar nomads, who were decimated through forced resettlements and whose memory only rarely resurfaces today in local topography. Along with the second and third partitions of Poland that followed in 1793 and 1795, the annexation of the Black Sea steppe crowned the rise of Russia to the status of a major European power and symbolically coincided with the end of the early modern era.

63 Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, 198–203.

64 Brian Davies, *The Russo-Turkish War, 1768–1774: Catherine II and the Ottoman Empire* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Virginia Aksan, *Ottoman Wars 1700–1870: An Empire Besieged* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), 129–59; Alan Fisher, *The Russian Annexation of the Crimea 1772–1783* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Kołodziejczyk, *The Crimean Khanate and Poland-Lithuania*, 206–13.

65 Cf. William McNeill, *Europe's Steppe Frontier, 1500–1800* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964).

