THE CRIMEAN TATARS

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HOOVER INSTITUTION STANFORD UNIVERSITY

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Alan Fisher

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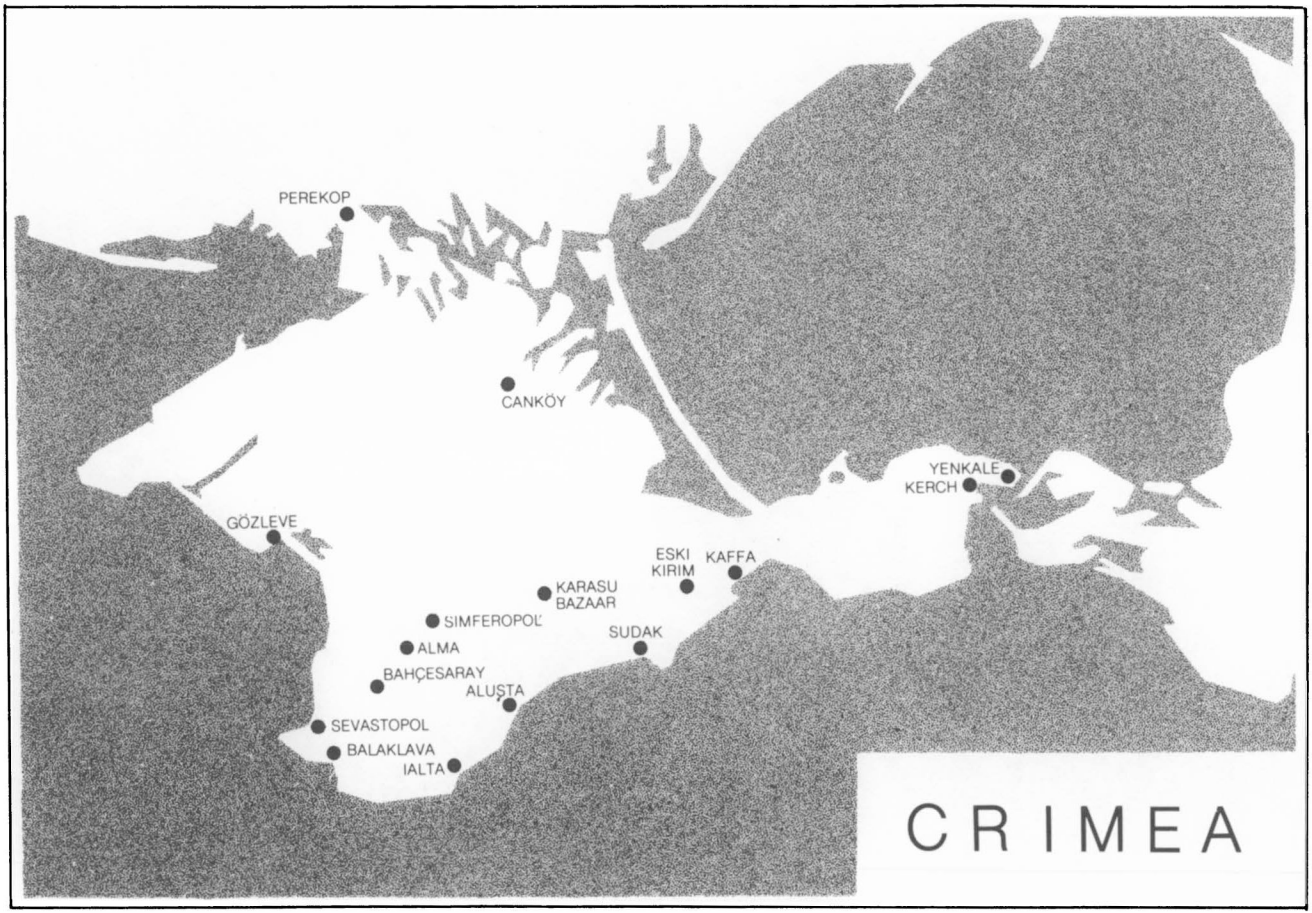
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Foreword

In most surveys of the history of Russia and the Soviet Union, the more than one hundred non-Russian peoples receive far less attention than their histories and cultures merit. Moreover, such general works tend to give only superficial attention to such important topics as the Russian conquest of foreign nationalities and lands, the development and administration of ethnic minorities under Tsarist and Soviet rule, Russia's role in transmitting both Russian and West-European ideas and institutions to their own Asian and non-Slavic groups, and Russia's character as a melting pot of different ethnic peoples and cultures.

The Crimean Tatars is the first in a series of volumes that discuss the history and development of the non-Russian nationalities in the Soviet Union. The subject of this book is especially appropriate for the opening volume of the series, because a study of this particular people vividly illustrates a number of the problems encountered by Soviet leaders in their attempt to create a multinational society. Except for the Volga Germans, the Crimean Tatars are the only one of the component nationalities of the USSR who, having once been granted an autonomous territory, appear to have had this privilege permanently revoked.

The problems discussed here have parallels which are examined in the remaining volumes of the series. Since the beginning of the rapid industrialization of the Soviet Union, the requirements of economic development and political control have transformed the ethnographic map of the Soviet Union and created in many national autonomous territories situations nearly as acute as that in the Crimea. Many of the nationality groups have found themselves outnumbered and politically displaced by immigrating Great Russians, Ukrainians, and others. This movement of peoples and its results has called into question the functioning of the Soviet federal solution and has created discontented local nationalisms to plague the rulers in the Kremlin.

A new pattern, however, is now emerging. The difference in birth rates between the dominant Slavs and the non-Russian nationalities is changing the ethnographic balance more and more in favor of the latter. It appears possible or even likely that in the relatively near future the Great Russians will be outnumbered by the other nationalities.

As a result of these dynamics of development the study of the past and present of the non-Russian nationalities is extremely important. It is also significant in what it portends for the future. Thus, studies such as the one

presented here, and those that follow, should provide the Western reader with a fuller understanding of the complexities of Soviet reality. Comparable volumes on several other major nationalities, a total of seventeen, are currently in preparation. Included are separate studies of the principal nations of Soviet Central Asia, the Caucausus, the Baltic region and the Ukraine, as well as special groups such as the Jews and the Crimean Tatars. Each volume examines the history of a particular national group in both the Tsarist and Soviet eras with an emphasis on determining its place in the Soviet federation as well as its impact on the evolution of Soviet society.

Hoover Institution WAYNE S. VUCINICH, editor

Preface

The Crimean Tatars are today a nationality living in a diaspora. Denied the right to return to their homeland in the Crimean peninsula, their communities are scattered throughout the USSR, the Turkish republic, and the West. Like other nationalities that have experienced the same disasters (the Jews come to mind), the Tatars' claim to national identity and a national home are based on historical, cultural, and linguistic foundations.

Appearing first in the Crimea in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Crimean Tatars soon displaced the existing political and cultural entities with their own; they established their first state there in the middle of the fifteenth century. From that time until the Russian annexation of the peninsula in 1783, the Crimean Tatars organized and lived in a state, called the Crimean Khanate, that was ruled by their own Giray dynasty. From 1783 until 1918, the Tatars lived within the Russian Empire as subjects of the tsars.

During the latter period, the Tatars were displaced gradually by immigrating Slavic settlers, officials, and landowners. Despite concerted efforts by their Russian rulers to eliminate Tatar culture and identity and to assimilate them into the fabric of Russian society, the Tatars were able to preserve their national awareness. With the fall of the tsarist system, the Tatars were temporarily successful in reestablishing their own state and independent society. But the advent of Bolshevik power soon put an end to their success, if not to their efforts.

Since 1920, the Crimean Tatars have experienced one calamity after another: collectivization and its related famines, the elimination of their political and cultural elites between 1928 and 1939, the ravages of war and occupation from 1941 to 1944, and finally, their wholesale deportation to remote areas of the USSR where they now reside. Yet there have been developments in the Tatar community that show accomplishment in the face of adversity—developments that show that the Tatars possess almost unequalled courage to struggle for what they consider to be a just solution to their problems. Applying pressure upon the Soviet authorities who were responsible for the denial of their national existence, they have succeeded in the years since 1944 in gaining partial restitution of what was taken from them by Stalin. In 1967, in a decree issued by the Soviet government, the charges made against the Tatars in 1944 were removed; they were "rehabilitated" as

a nationality. Yet their rehabilitation was virtually meaningless, for the punishments under which they suffered were not removed. They cannot return to their homeland. Their national and cultural rights remain denied to them, and their struggle for these rights continues today.

I have two primary purposes in this volume, and the book's organization reflects both. First, there is no account in any language of the history of the Crimean Tatars from their first appearance in the Crimea until today. In this book, I have offered a short summary of the Crimean Tatars' history, including their political, economic, social, and cultural life. It is based on both primary and secondary sources in the important East European languages as well as in Tatar and Turkish.

Second, the main problem the Crimean Tatars face today is based on the facts that Soviet and most Western observers deny the existence of a separate Crimean Tatar entity in the Turkic world; Soviet historians ignore the khanate and its history; Soviet and Western writers accept the charges made against the Tatars in 1944 and are ignorant of or conveniently gloss over the removal of those same charges in 1967. In this volume I have tried to place in historical perspective the fallacies in these positions.

In the preparation of this book I have incurred a variety of personal and academic debts that I wish to acknowledge. Research for this project was made possible through a grant from the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. The historical methodology I have used owes whatever skill it manifests to my mentors at Columbia University a decade ago, Professors Marc Raeff and Tibor Halasi-Kun. I wish to thank my colleagues Robert Slusser and William O. McCagg, Jr. for the benefit of their knowledge of the workings of the Soviet political system and its police apparatus, and for reading portions of the manuscript and offering advice for revision. Bey Turgut Işiksal, staff member of the Başbakanlik Arşivi in Istanbul, has educated me for years on the Turkish archival matters so important to my studies on the Tatars. I want to thank Bey Mustecip Ülküsal of the Crimean Tatar National Center in Istanbul for much information and many difficult-to-acquire Tatar publications. Melissa Devereaux acted as courier for the manuscript across various national frontiers at a critical stage in its preparation. My thanks also go to Jessie Garrett for reading proofs. Finally, my wife Carol, who helped enormously in the preparation of the manuscript, and my children, Elizabeth, Christy, and Garrett, who had to put up with my schedule over the past year, deserved more thanks than I can offer.

East Lansing, Michigan ALAN W. FISHER

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PART ONE

THE CRIMEAN TATAR KHANATE

1. *The Origins of the Crimean Tatar Khanate*

Notwithstanding a certain self-assuredness that pervades most accounts of Crimean history, the origins of the Crimean Tatars are as obscure as the origins of most peoples. The task of finding these origins would be considerably easier, in fact, if there were general agreement among historians as to the definition of *Crimean Tatar.* The question of their origins predates the first Crimean Khanate, which appeared in the early 1440s under the leadership of Khan Haci Giray. This khanate's existence is attested to by historical sources from both Asia and Europe. Who were the peoples who made up the population of the new khanate? Where had they come from, and when? The paucity and unreliability of contemporary sources makes the answers to these questions difficult.

The Crimean peninsula is divided into two parts that are separated by the mountainous ridge north of the Black Sea's coastline. Along the coast, in Haci Giray's time, there were several large towns—Kaffa (Kefe), Evpatoria (Gözleve), and Tana (Azov, Azak)—that by eastern European standards were really cities. They were inhabited for the most part by Greek, Armenian, and Jewish populations, yet there was a sizeable Italian and Frankish minority in political and economic command. From contemporary accounts of visiting merchants and travelers, these cities were teeming urban areas, each with a full complement of public buildings, market places, harbor complexes, and crowded living quarters. Although the architectural style of the cities, which emphasized the utilitarian rather than the beautiful, was by no means comparable to that of the Italian and Frankish homelands, visitors from both east and west could not mistake the fact that these cities were European in influence.

To the north of the mountains, the land was inhabited by various nomadic tribes who were for the most part Islamic and who spoke various Turkic dialects. For centuries, these tribes had intermittently passed through the northern Black Sea area on their excursions into eastern Europe, and during this period, their main impact upon the area seems to have been a disruptive one. It consisted of breaking up or seriously damaging existing local political and economic organization.

In the mid-thirteenth century, during the invasions by the armies of Batu Khan, founder of the Golden Horde, these Turkic nomads gained political ascendancy over the previously settled Slavic and Italian populations.[1] Slavic sources show that, just before Batu's invasion in the 1220s, the towns of Sudak and Korsun in the southern Crimea paid the Polovtsy a tribute in order to protect themselves against nomadic raids. Sudak itself was leveled by the Tatars just after the battle of the Kalka in 1223 and again soon after by an army sent by Ala ed Din, the Seljuk sultan of Rum (Konya). It was in the years following this last attack that Seljuk and Oğuz Turkish groups, most of which came from Anatolia, began their settlement of the northern Crimean plains.[2]

Turkish sources clearly indicate that during the second half of the thirteenth century, under the encouragement of Berke Khan, ruler of the Golden Horde, many Seljuk Turks settled in the Crimea. According to the Ottoman chronicler, Münicimbaşi, one of the four daughters of the Seljuk sultan married Berke Khan. According to Seid Lukman's Ottoman chronicle, Izz ed Din, a son of this Seljuk wife, received from Berke the lands and towns of Solhat and Sudak in the Crimea and brought Anatolian Turks to settle there. By the end of the thirteenth century, Arab travelers through the region reported that the population of Sudak was largely Turkish.[3]

At first this settlement of the Crimean interior and of Sudak on the coast proceeded without interfering with the Frankish and Slavic populations on the southern shore of the Crimean peninsula. But at the end of the thirteenth century, Emir Nogai, governor of the Crimean and steppe province of the Golden Horde, demanded payment of taxes and tribute from the Genoese city of Kaffa on the southeastern coast of the Crimea. On the latter's refusal, he attacked and pillaged the city. Clearly the relationship between the Turkic population in the north and the Christian population of the south was entering a new stage.[4]

One of the immediate results of this attack was the recognition by the Genoese of the Tatars' right to exact payment of taxes, and with this came partial acceptance of Tatar political authority over the whole region. Turkish settlement on the shore of the Black Sea itself followed. It is after this point that many Tatar names appear among the inhabitants of Kefe and Sudak.

Throughout the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the Tatar khans at

Saray on the Volga considered themselves the rulers of the Crimea. They made good this claim by appointing governors of the Crimean and steppe province, whose seat of power was Solhat, later to be called Eski Kirim ("Old Crimea"). This city remained the main Tatar center on the peninsula until the formation of the Giray dynasty in the mid-fifteenth century. It was a religious center with mosques, dervish monasteries, and schools (*medresses*) all with their *mullas*, *sheikhs*, and *kadis* (legal scholars and judges). Solhat served as a source of Muslim missionary activity in the north and in the Caucasus. In addition, Arab travelers reported a large number of *caravan-sarais* and a strong fortress of stone. Iakobson provides a picture of a school and mosque in Solhat, built by Khan Uzbek in 1314 and still extant.[5]

Solhat was never the official residence for the khans of the Golden Horde, but it became a place of refuge for unsuccessful aspirants to the throne. It also served as the locale for diplomatic relations between the Golden Horde and the Turkic Mamluk dynasty of Egypt. Sultan Baybars built a large mosque in Solhat and modestly named it for himself.[6]

It was not until the end of the fourteenth century that any of the Tatar governors in the Crimea began to attempt to establish an independent political power based on their control of the Crimea. The first appears to have been Taş Timur who had his name inscribed on coinage minted and intended for exclusive use in the peninsula. He called the Crimea his *yurt* ("patrimony"), and with the policy continued by his sons, granted the position there as a hereditary position: thus, Taş Timur rightly may be considered as the creator of the base for a future independent polity in the Crimea.

Haci Giray Khan

Historians of all persuasions are agreed that one of Taş Timur's successors, Haci Giray, was the first khan of an independent Crimean Khanate.[7] There is some controversy, however, about Haci Giray—his character, the origin of his name, his exact relationship to the khans of the Golden Horde, and his relationship to Taş Timur. The reasons behind this controversy (which centers primarily around Haci's genealogy) relate to the Crimeans' desire to show their legitimacy as heirs of some of the horde's political and territorial traditions. In the sixteenth century, the Muscovite grand princes (and later the tsars) made similar claims to the legitimate inheritance of these horde traditions. It was felt that the ruler who could make the best case for his own horde traditions had the best chance of becoming the ruler of the Golden Horde's territories—the steppe between southern Poland and central Asia.

The most reasonable account of Haci Giray's appearance seems to be that provided by V. D. Smirnov, who bases his views on Lithuanian and Polish chronicles. Stryikovski's Polish chronicle explains it thus: "That year (1443)

the Tatars of Perekop, Barin, and Şirin, whose khan died without heir, sent to Casimir, grand prince of Lithuania, with the request that he give them Haci Giray as khan, who having fled from the Great Horde, was there in refuge."[8] According to this view, Haci Giray had been born in Lithuania, made an attempt for supremacy in the Golden Horde in 1428, and after his failure had returned to Lithuania. When he was invited by the Tatars in the Crimea to come and rule over them, he accepted and began to base his political authority solely on the fact that he was khan in the Crimea. At that time Crimean coins began to bear his name, and in place of the former Tatar *kipçak* seal, a new seal for the Crimean khans was initiated. It bore the image of an owl.[9]

There is little ground for debate, however, about the policy that Haci Giray pursued once he was khan in the Crimea. After his attempts to gain the throne of the Golden Horde for himself, Haci set about to establish an independent state in the Crimea. To accomplish this, he needed (1) to gain as many allies as possible from among his and the horde's neighbors, and (2) to attract as many Tatar clans and nobles to his side as he could. There was no question that the khans of the horde would oppose his policy. If he failed to build a strong base in the Crimea, it was likely that his attempts at independence would fail.

Haci Giray's first step was to seek as many allies as he could. He was not particular with regard to the religion or nationality of the neighboring rulers and states whose support he sought. Before 1453, when Sultan Mehmed II captured Constantinople and began to incorporate all of the shores of the Black Sea into his empire, Haci vacillated between friendship and alliance with Poland-Lithuania and the Muscovite Russia (Muscovy). So long as his major threat came from the Golden Horde, Muscovy was his natural ally—Muscovy's grand princes had been struggling against Tatar overlordship for some time. But there were occasions when close relations with the Kingdom of Poland seemed to offer more advantages to the Crimean ruler. In 1445 at a time when the khan of the Golden Horde was threatening both Crimean and Polish territory in the south, Haci Giray made his first Polish/Lithuanian alliance with Casimir IV. In 1452 Haci attacked the invading khan, Seyyid Ahmed, and together with Polish/Lithuanian forces was able to defeat him.[10]

Relations with the Ottoman Empire

The year 1453 brought a dramatic change to the geopolitical situation in the Black Sea region. The Ottoman sultan, Mehmed II, achieved the centuries-old Muslim and Turkic dream of seizing Constantinople, the capital of the East Roman Empire. This event showed that the relatively new Ottoman Empire was without doubt the greatest power in southeastern

Europe. It created a completely new situation for the Italian colonies along the Crimean shore whose trade had to pass through the straits now controlled by the Turks.

As a self-proclaimed heir of the political and some of the territorial traditions of the Golden Horde, Haci Giray had from the beginning considered the Italian colonies to be within his sovereign domains. According to Ankarali Hekim Yahya, a mid-fifteeth-century Ottoman chronicler, Haci Giray was sovereign of Kirkyer, Eski Kirim, Taman, Kerch, the Kuban, Kipçak, and—most important—Kefe.[11] With the Ottomans on the Bosphorus, Haci Giray and Mehmed II had complementary interests in the activities of the Genoese in the Crimea. In 1454, the Crimean khan made an agreement with Mehmed II to attack and capture Kefe from the Genoese. While an Ottoman fleet approached Kefe, the khan laid siege to the city by land with a force of 7000 Tatar cavalry. But on this occasion, the town was able to withstand the joint attack. Finally, after the Genoese agreed to pay to the Tatars an annual tribute of 1200 gold pieces, Haci Giray and the Ottomans withdrew. After this date, coinage from the khanate bears both Tatar and Genoese markings.[12]

Although this joint attack was the first sign of the future Crimean-Ottoman political and military relationship, the final connection was not to be made until the reign of Haci Giray's successor, Devlet Giray, twenty years later. Until then, in defense of his own independence and sovereignty, the khan's main attention was still directed toward the steppe and horde politics. Constant struggles against the Golden Horde khans marked the last ten years of Haci Giray's life.

Tatar Migrations

Haci Giray's second major step in setting the basis for Crimean independence from the Golden Horde was the attraction of many Tatar clans and aristocrats. The fact that the horde khans proved unable to end his claims to a separate sovereignty led many of the most important Tatar clans to move to lands under Haci Giray's authority. Between 1453 and 1466 at least three such clans (the Şirins, the Barins, and the Konghurats) made the westward move. The rulers of the Golden Horde had relied on support of these clans in the past. Ironically, this immigration created both the basis for khanate strength vis à vis the Golden Horde and the basis for internal khanate weakness. The fact that so many of the horde's leading clans and leaders transferred their loyalty to the fledgling Crimean Khanate greatly strengthened the position of the Crimean khans in their struggles against the horde. Their migration added numerically to the Tatar population on the peninsula and gave to the khan both a larger military force and increased economic power. It also brought to

Battle between Ottoman Turks and Crimean Tatars before the Fortress of Kefe between 1453 and 1475.
(From the *Şuca'at-name* of Aşafi Paşa, made in 1586. In the library of Istanbul University, Yildiz 2385/105, fol. 207.)

the khanate the causes of internal weakness that had plagued the horde in past decades—competing claims for power and sovereignty on the part of the clan leaders against their khan.

It was not only large numbers of Tatars who moved west, but also clans that had a long tradition of political power, clans that for centuries had played important roles in the politics of the horde. The leaders of these clans were not willing to abandon their own power completely, whether the khan be a khan of the Golden Horde or a khan of the Crimean Khanate. Internecine struggle was to be the major characteristic of Crimean political life until its last days. According to Inalcik, in 1456 the Genoese in Kefe were able to persuade leaders of some of the new clans to turn against Haci Giray and depose him in favor of his son Haydar Khan. Although this interlude lasted only a few months and Haci regained his throne by the end of the year, this was an omen for the future.[13]

The last recorded event in Haci Giray's life was his preparation in 1460 for a major struggle with Khan Küçük Mehmed of the Golden Horde. Haci was involved in these plans when he suddenly died, probably of poison administered by some of the clan leaders who resented his growing claims to internal power. Haci's death opened a period of intense internal fighting that was only resolved with the conquest of the shores of the Crimean peninsula by the Ottomans in 1475 and with the political supremacy over the khans achieved by the Ottomans a couple of years later.[14]

2. *Ottoman Hegemony in the Crimea*

One of the major historiographical issues in Crimean history concerns the way in which and the extent to which the Crimea became dependent upon the Ottoman Empire. The most important questions about which historians disagree are: (1) When the Ottoman Turks captured Kefe and the southern shore of the Crimean peninsula in 1475, did they also conquer the fledgling Crimean Khanate, or did the Crimea merely enter under the protection of the Ottoman sultan? (2) Was the Crimean khan, after 1475, a sovereign and heir to the political traditions of the steppe, or was he a vassal of the Ottoman sultan? If the khan was a vassal of the sultan, how does one explain the facts that the khans often did not act in concert with the Ottomans, that they continued to maintain their own separate diplomatic relations with both Poland and Muscovy, and that they acted within the Crimea as officials with historic prerogatives of independence and sovereignty?

In order to make some sense of the issue of Crimean-Ottoman relations, events of the years 1466–1478 (the year of Haci Giray's death–the year in which Mengli Giray offered himself as an obedient servant of his sovereign, the *padishah* of the Ottoman Empire) must first be examined. Then the development of political and economic relations between the Ottomans and the Crimean Tatars must be analyzed.

The death of Haci Giray in 1466 produced a struggle for succession that raises serious questions about the existence of a dynasty at all. The political traditions of the Golden Horde made it clear that Haci's eldest son, Nurdevlet, should have inherited the throne, yet the succession was not so easily solved. The clan leaders who had migrated to the Crimea during Haci Giray's reign refused to accept a khan over whom they had no authority. For the next twelve years there ensued a struggle between proponents of three theories of politics that were embodied in three power centers: the horde itself; the clan leaders, led by the *bey* of the Şirin clan; and the Ottoman sultan. There were only two contenders for the throne: Nurdevlet and his brother Mengli Giray. The Genoese intervened first on behalf of one, then of the other. The problem was only solved in 1478 with the installation of Mengli Giray as khan and as a vassal of the Ottoman sultan. One may conclude that the khanate as a stable political entity dates from this period rather than from the "founding of the khanate" by Haci Giray thirty years earlier. Mengli Giray ruled in the Crimea from 1478 until his death in 1514.

The sources from the period 1466–1478 (Ottoman and Tatar chronicles; diplomatic correspondence between the Crimeans, Ottomans, Poles, Muscovites, and the horde; and Genoese documentation) are contradictory and incomplete. The construction of a clear account of the struggle for succession is almost impossible. Yet Professor Inalcik has been able to surmount these difficulties in his famous article in which he offers the best possible account of the events available.[1] In summary, his findings are that, according to historical tradition, the eldest son, Nurdevlet, should have inherited the throne easily. Throughout the struggle between himself and Mengli Giray, Nurdevlet consistently received support from the khans of the Golden Horde. However, the clan leaders, particularly the Şirins, usually chose to oppose the horde's leadership and support Mengli Giray. In the face of the political traditions, Mengli Giray could win the struggle only with the support of the clans. Thus, the clan leaders believed, he would be dependent upon their support to keep his power. The balance between these factions within the Crimea seems to have been fairly even, so that no solution could have been found without outside intervention. This intervention was sought both from the Genoese in Kefe and from the Ottomans. The Genoese, since the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, were themselves in a position of confrontation with the Ottomans; therefore, these two powers usually supported rival claimants within the Crimea.

Nurdevlet in Power

First Nurdevlet succeeded in achieving the throne. He received a *yarlik* ("charter of authority") from the Golden Horde recognizing his authority in the Crimea. Mengli Giray was forced to take refuge in Kefe where he remained until 1468. It is possible that Mengli did not receive official support from the Genoese since Kefe had many Tatar inhabitants at the time. In the early 1470s, the Genoese may have only seemed to be switching from one side to the other with increasing rapidity; it may have been the Tatars in the city who, without official sanction, often provided refuge for the Crimean rivals. This would help explain the fact that both Nurdevlet and Mengli Giray received help of one sort or another from Kefe.

In 1468, Mengli Giray gained control of part of the peninsula and established himself on the throne in Kirkyer with the help of the Şirin *bey*, Mamak, and the Genoese. Mengli's main opposition, the Golden Horde, helped thrust him into a policy of friendship with Muscovy and hostility toward Poland—a fact that, according to Russian historiography, has made Mengli Giray one of the most outstanding of Crimean khans. In 1469, Mengli Giray also sent a letter to Sultan Mehmed II addressing him as a friend.

But Nurdevlet and his horde allies (in the Crimea these were primarily

nomadic Nogay Tatars) had not come under the political or economic control of the Tatar aristocracy. He was able to remain in power in the steppe regions between the Ozu river and the mouth of the Don. In late 1469, Nurdevlet, with an army of Nogay Tatars and a contingent from the Golden Horde, succeeded in driving Mengli Giray from Kirkyer to Kefe, thus temporarily ending the period of dual rule in the Crimea. However, in 1471, Mamak and almost all of the Crimean clan aristocracy retook the central region of the peninsula and paved the way for Mengli Giray's return. Nothing is known of Mengli Giray's activities until 1474, when a rebellion against his rule was led by the new Şirin *bey*, Eminek Mirza. This rebellion, supported by most of the aristocracy and the Genoese leadership in Kefe, forced Mengli Giray from power and brought back Nurdevlet.

On the basis of what is known of Mengli Giray's activities after 1478, it seems probable that the cause of this rebellion was his attempt to strengthen his position at the expense of the clan leaders; the Genoese could have been expected to support the weakest part in the Crimea. Russian sources show that in 1472 Mengli Giray entertained Nikita Beklemishev, an envoy from Muscovy, and an agreement was made by which Ivan III was to act in concert with the Crimeans against the horde while Mengli Giray would aid Muscovy against Poland.

Invitations to the Ottomans

In early 1475 the Şirin *bey* again found reason to quarrel with the khan. This time it was Nurdevlet, who had been acting in close agreement with the Genoese. The Şirin *bey* formally requested that Sultan Mehmed II attack Kefe and bring it under his sovereignty. It is clear from the letter published by Professor Kurat, that this was not the first communication from a clan leader to the sultan and that there had been contact between the Crimean aristocracy and the Ottomans for some time. This request coincided with the policy that Mehmed II had been pursuing since his conquest of Constantinople: completion of Ottoman expansion around the shores of the Black Sea. There was to be no room in such a scheme for an area controlled by Christian Europeans. Although Nurdevlet supported the Genoese against the attack of Grand Vezir Gedik Ahmed Paşa and a large Ottoman fleet, the Turks captured Kefe, and in a few months they completed their conquest of all Genoese-held areas along the shore.

Mengli Giray, who was in Kefe at that moment, immediately arranged with the Ottoman commander that he, as khan, would accept the suzerainty of the Ottomans in the Crimea. Six months later he confirmed this agreement with a letter to the sultan in which he promised to be "the enemy of your enemy, the friend of your friend." It quickly became clear that the foundations of

Crimean vassalage to the Ottomans had been laid. This acknowledgment persuaded the khan of the Golden Horde, Seyyid Ahmed, to make one last major attempt to regain the area he had never ceased to claim. In 1476, he made a full-scale invasion of the Crimea, successfully driving Mengli Giray from the throne and replacing him once more with Nurdevlet. However, this time Seyyid Ahmed left behind another representative, Janibek, as *vali* ("governor") to oversee Nurdevlet's activities. Thus for a short time Nurdevlet and the horde were able to sever the new ties between the Crimea and the Ottomans. For the moment it appeared that the Ottomans were willing to accept this division of power in the Crimea. They of course retained the southern shore and the cities along it, including Kefe. Mengli Giray fled to Istanbul where he was detained by the Ottomans in their new prison of the Seven Towers. Mehmed II seemed satisfied to deal with Nurdevlet as khan, partly because Nurdevlet sent a letter to Istanbul in which he promised to be the sultan's servant.

The last episode in this complicated series of events took place in late 1477. The Şirin *bey*, Eminek Mirza, representing all of the Crimean *beys* and clan leaders, sent a secret request to Mehmed II in which he asked that the sultan return Mengli Giray as khan to the Crimea. In early 1478, accompanied by an Ottoman army, Mengli Giray invaded the Crimea, driving Nurdevlet and Janibek from their respective seats of power. It is clear that Mengli Giray returned as the protégé of the sultan. He depended upon Ottoman support in gaining his throne, and his former pledges of obedience were repeated, this time with greater force. In this his third khanate, which lasted until his death in 1514, Mengli Giray was able to establish the Crimean Khanate on a sound basis.[2] The presence of Ottoman authority in the Crimea became unquestioned, and attempts of the Golden Horde khans to regain their sovereignty in the Black Sea region ended.

Ottoman-Crimean "Treaty"

For some time, Russian and Western historians have believed that in 1478 Mengli Giray and Mehmed II signed a treaty that laid out in some detail the forms of Ottoman authority in the Crimea. These historians took at face value an account of such a treaty in the multivolume travelogue of a seventeenth-century Ottoman traveler, Evliya Çelebi. According to this tradition—which has been accepted by such historians as Khartakhai and Howorth, and believed by the eighteenth-century French observer, Peysonnel—the treaty included the following five points: (1) Internal authority within the khanate would remain within the hands of the khan, and appointment of political and military officials would be solely his concern; (2) the Crimean aristocracy would select their choice for khan from among eligible members of the Giray

family; (3) the Ottoman sultan, as sovereign in the Crimea, could require that the khan support him in military campaigns, and external relations of the khanate would be in the hands of officials appointed by the sultan; (4) since the sultan was caliph, he would have authority to appoint all religious and judicial officials in the Crimea; and (5) the khan was to be allowed to have his name mentioned in the Friday noon prayers and engraved on coinage issued in the khanate.[3]

Professor Inalcik has proven that such a treaty could not have existed in the fifteenth century and that it probably never existed at all.[4] By the late seventeenth century, when Evliya Çelebi was writing his epic descriptions of Ottoman territories and institutions, the points believed to have been included in the treaty may have represented the realities of the relationships between the khans and sultans, and in the eighteenth century, they may have been believed by all parties involved, but there is no possibility that such a treaty would have been drawn up by Mengli Giray and Mehmed II. Mehmed made no claims to be caliph. Sultan Selim I in the next century only claimed to be the "Servant of the Two Holy Cities [Mecca and Medina]" after his conquest of Egypt. Also, according to an important Tatar chronicle, the name in the Friday noon prayer was inserted only during the reign of Khan Islam Giray I in 1584.[5]

The New Ottoman Role in the Crimea

There can be no doubt, however, that in 1478 some agreement was made that set the pattern for future relations. Although the Ottomans played a role in the choice of khan, they usually accepted the selection made by the Crimean aristocracy in their traditional *kurultay* fashion. According to the contemporary documents, such choices were made *ittifak-i cumu'i tatar ile* ("by the Tatar notables assembled together").[6] This procedure would become an occasional source of dispute since the clan leaders viewed Ottoman participation as limited to confirmation (*tasdik*) of their selection, while the Ottomans maintained their claim to the right of appointment (*tayin*). Kefe and the whole of the Crimean shore did pass into the hands of the Ottomans and came to form a special Ottoman province, the *eyalet* of Kefe, which in time included not only the Crimean shore but also the forts and trading centers of Taman and Azov. The Crimean khans, from Mengli Giray until the end of the khanate in the late eighteenth century, had political prerogatives over the rest of the peninsula and over most of the territories that had been claimed by Haci Giray in 1454.

The relationships between the Crimean Tatars and the Ottoman sultans were built on two main foundations: (1) political ideology based on historical and legendary traditions, and (2) geopolitical necessity. By the time of Sultan

Suleiman I in the sixteenth century, the Ottoman rulers based their claims to power on three historical traditions: (1) Islamic—they controlled the holy places in Arabia and Palestine, and their empire had been formed in the process of *gazi* ("religious") warfare against the Christian world; (2) Byzantine-Roman—they possessed the capital of Byzantium with its imperial prerogatives, and they had conquered almost all of the lands that had been within the Byzantine Empire; and (3) Turkic—they included in their imperial title the terms *khan*, and *Padişah-i Deşt-i Kipçak* ("Sovereign of the Kipçak Steppe").[7] It was this last element in Ottoman political ideology that was important for their relations with the Crimean Tatars, for political connections with Jengiz Khan was the one way to prove legitimate political authority over the Turkic-Tatar steppe that reached into central Asia.

While the Ottoman chroniclers tried to show that the Ottoman sultans inherited the political prerogatives of the Jingizids (descendants of Jengiz Khan), the Giray dynasty in the Crimea claimed to be able to prove physical as well as political descent from the first khan of the Golden Horde. The Ottomans in their correspondence with the Girays used the term *cingiziye* for the Crimean khans, thus admitting this distinction. Even Suleiman I, in a letter to Khan Mehmet Giray I, called him "descendant of Crimean sultans and of Jingizid *hakhans*."[8] Of all of the subjects of the Ottoman sultans, the Crimean khans held a special position because of the importance of their genealogy.

In the realm of geopolitics, the relationship between the khans and the sultans was also important. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the steppe was an area contested increasingly by Muscovy and Poland-Lithuania. Muscovy claimed that it had inherited the Golden Horde traditions; therefore it challenged Crimean and Ottoman monopoly over the steppe. The presence on this frontier of an effective military force under Crimean leadership permitted the Ottomans to concentrate their attention on their major western and eastern rivals—the Habsburgs and the Iranian Safavids.

Ottoman-Crimean Finances

As a result of both their Jingizid heritage and their military service to the Ottomans, the khans received large financial and social rewards.[9] They received annual pensions, grants when they ascended the Crimean throne, landholdings in both Rumelia and Anatolia, a subsidized personal elite guard called *sekbans*, and large grants for participation in each Ottoman campaign. The Ottomans also allowed the Girays to collect an annual tribute from Muscovy and Poland. Although the origins of this tribute had been the customary payments to the khans of the Golden Horde and the Girays had merely inherited this right, the collection of tribute from foreign states