

TURKS, TATARS AND RUSSIANS IN THE 13TH–16TH CENTURIES

István Vásáry

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Professor István Vásáry

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The articles in this volume, as in all others in the *Variorum Collected Studies Series*, have not been given a new, continuous pagination. In order to avoid confusion, and to facilitate their use where these same studies have been referred to elsewhere, the original pagination has been maintained wherever possible.

Each article has been given a Roman number in order of appearance, as listed in the Contents. This number is repeated on each page and is quoted in the index entries.

PREFACE

The West-Eurasian steppe region extends from present-day Kazakhstan through southern Russia, Ukraine and Moldavia to the Carpathian Basin. This vast territory has been the homeland of various nomadic peoples, mainly of Turkic and Mongolian stock, whose tribal confederacies often evolved into large empires impinging on the surrounding sedentary states. The largest empire in world history, founded by Chingis Khan, was that of the Mongols. Its western part, extending from the Aral Sea to the Lower Danube, later became known as the Golden Horde. The Mongol conquerors soon became absorbed by the local Turkic (mainly Cuman or Kipchak) population. The Golden Horde and its successor states, such as the Kazan and Crimean Khanates, whose Turco-Mongol overlords are often referred to as Tatars, played a decisive role in the history of Western Central Asia and Eastern Europe in the thirteenth-sixteenth centuries. They had a fundamental influence on the nascence and fate of the Russian state which for centuries was subjected and payed tribute to the Tatars of the Golden Horde and its successors.

The articles contained in this volume entitled *Turks, Tatars and Russians in the 13th–16th Centuries* were selected from the production of thirty years' study in Tatar and Russian history. They deal with different aspects of the medieval Tatar and Russian worlds, always with a keen eye on their mutual contacts.

Seventeen out of the total twenty-one articles published here were written in English, and two in German. They are left untouched in their original form, with only the correction of some evident typographical errors and a few additional remarks and bibliographical supplements. Two articles originally written and published in Russian (IX and XII) have been slightly supplemented, updated, translated and published in English here for the first time.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the memory of my dear colleagues and friends, Shamil Mukhamedyarov and Lajos Tardy, co-authors of articles XV and XVIII.

ISTVÁN VÁSÁRY

Loránd Eötvös University, Budapest
May 2007

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The Role of the Turkic Peoples in the Ethnic History of Eastern Europe

Ethnicity and nationalism are two separate notions. Ethnicity comprises the ethnic components of a people brought about in the course of a long historical process. It always reflects real ethnic processes and the interrelations of different ethnic components. Nationalism, on the other hand, is basically an ideology, which does not necessarily reflect those ethnic processes and moreover is often totally contradictory to the facts of ethnic history and events. Suffice it to mention two examples taken at random from two different regions of the world. The alleged Dako-Roman-Romanian continuity is as much an organic part of modern Romanian nationalism as the Assyrian-Iraqi Arab continuity is an indispensable component of modern Iraqi Arab nationalism. Neither of these theories has much to do with the real ethnic history of the Romanian or Iraqi Arab nations, but they are effective tools in the hands of modern Romanian and Iraqi policy-makers respectively.

In this essay, I will speak mainly of the first phenomenon, ethnicity, then I will touch on the problem of modern nationalisms, drawing on the ethnic history of Turkic peoples. In modern Eastern Europe, it is only Turkish nationalism that obviously leans on Turkish history and ethnicity. The facts of Ottoman conquest and rule of the Balkanic lands in the 14th to 19th centuries are too well known to overshadow the fact that the role of different Turkic peoples was very instrumental in forming the ethnic picture of pre-Ottoman Eastern Europe. Though almost none of these Turkic peoples survived as separate ethnic entities, they have become parts of different medieval nationalities and later modern nations.

The territory I am concerned with comprises three distinct historical regions, which can be designated as Eastern Europe – as opposed to Western Europe – only in a simplifying manner. Eastern Europe proper can be identified as the European part of the Soviet Union minus the Baltic region. Eastern Central Europe is the modern Baltic region, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia; while South Eastern Europe is more or less identical with the Balkan region. In the formation of the present-day ethnic picture of all three regions, Turkic peoples played an important role.

The common feature of these three regions is that they joined European historical development much later than the Western half of Europe. After a long preparatory period, feudal Europe was born in the fifth century on the ruins of the Western Roman Empire by merging the heritage of classical antiquity, the victorious Christian world-view, and the German tribal tradition. The eastern half of what was to become Europe was open to new nomadic waves from the east, and the turbulent Slavic migrations also constantly formed the ethnic picture of the region. One may say that the time of the migration of the peoples (the famous German

Völkerwanderungszeit) was accomplished in Western Europe by the middle or end of the fifth century, while in Eastern Europe it was a prolonged period reaching to the ninth and tenth centuries. Consequently, the ethnic consolidation of the eastern half of Europe and the formation of solid states took place only by the end of the first millennium. This historical belatedness of Eastern Europe runs like a red thread through its history, although the connection of the three areas to Western Europe was quite different. The Balkan lands and Russia joined Byzantine Christianity, while Eastern Central Europe has become part of the Western Christian universe. This divided character of Eastern Europe was further aggravated by the Ottoman rule in the Balkans and the Tatar yoke and the subsequent autocratic development in Russia.

If one disregards the Huns and the Avars in the fifth and sixth centuries whose ethnic components are too obscure to label them merely as Turkic peoples, the first ethnic element in the history of Eastern Europe whose ethnicity is surely Turkic is the Bulgars. The Bulgarian tribes first appeared north of the Caucasus in the 460s, and after that they played a significant role in all areas of the Eastern European region up to the 10th century. Several states were founded by the Bulgars between 600 and 900. Though most of them proved to be ephemeral, the Danubian Bulgarian State has survived all vicissitudes of history up till now. The first state founded by the Bulgars was situated on the Kuban river, and it endured no longer than two generations (ca. 600 to 650). This Kuban Bulgaria, or Magna Bulgaria as it was called by later sources, was merged into the mighty Khazar Empire in the middle of the seventh century, and several Bulgarian tribes were dispersed in western and northern directions.

In 679, a strong branch of the Bulgarian tribes passed along the northern coastline of the Black Sea and, crossing the rivers in Moldavia and the Danube, entered the territory stretching to the right bank of the Lower Danube. These Bulgarian tribes, headed by their chief, Esperükh, conquered the South-Slavic population and founded their state on the northern frontier of Byzantium. The history of Danubian Bulgaria is well known; I would like to call attention only to a few facts of Bulgarian ethnic history. The Bulgarian conquerors were ethnically a minority in the subjected region and were totally absorbed by the indigenous (though not autochthonous) Slavic population in the course of two subsequent centuries. The Danubian Bulgarian State was a typical conquest state in which the conquerors preserved their ethnic distinctiveness only for a few generations, but they gave the name (*Bulgar*) and the military and administrative structure to the new state. The Bulgars as a Turkic *ethnos* disappeared, but their active participation in the Bulgarian Slavic ethnogenesis is undeniable. It may sound paradoxical, but without the advent of the Turkic Bulgars and their state-building, the ethnic survival of the southern Slavs in modern Bulgaria would have been problematic. The absorption of Slavic ethnic masses by the Greeks in Greece shows that the above supposition is not merely a baseless conjecture.

Another group of Bulgarian tribes moved northward to the middle Volga-Kama region, mainly to the territory of the present-day Kazan Tatar Republic. While the

exact date of the appearance of the Bulgars in this region is debated, most archaeologists think that it must have taken place not earlier than the end of the 8th century. The Volga Bulgars merged with the local Finno-Ugric tribes and established their state in the 9th and 10th centuries. The embracing of Islam at the beginning of the 10th century meant the end of this process. By the 10th century, a strong Muslim state ruled, inhabited mainly by Bulgar-Turks. In the 10th to 13th centuries, the Volga Bulgar state was a significant regional power in Eastern Europe, the strongest eastern partner and opponent of the Russian principalities. It played a key role in the east-west commercial contacts and can rightly be considered the farthest outpost of Islamic civilization in the North. The statehood of Volga Bulgaria was put to an end by the Mongol conquest in 1236/37. The territory of Volga Bulgaria became a part of the Western Mongol Empire for a long time, and it regained its independence as a separate Tatar Khanate only in the first decades of the 15th century. After the loss of Volga Bulgar independence, the Bulgar-Turkic ethnic elements were gradually absorbed by other Turkic tribes later known as Tatars. The question of the Volga Bulgarian ethnic survival is very entangled. Here it seems sufficient to mention that only a peripheral Bulgarian group on the right bank of the Volga could preserve its mother-tongue, called Chuvash since the 16th century. It seems probable, however, that the bulk of today's Chuvash people are not directly descended from the Volga Bulgars, rather they are successors of Finno-Ugric tribes that adapted the Volga Bulgarian tongue during the Volga Bulgarian rule.

A third major group of the Bulgarian tribes were scattered west of the river Don and north of the river Kuban. These were the Bulgars who remained under Khazar suzerainty after 650 for several centuries. These Bulgarian tribes living in Khazaria in the territory of one-time Bulgaria, totally disappeared from history after the centuries of the Khazar rule. But, in the 7th to 9th centuries, the Bulgar groups living under Khazar suzerainty, or within the Khazar sphere of interest, played a key role in the ethnogenesis of the Hungarian people, the details of which long have been shrouded in mystery even though the basic lines have been elucidated. The most conspicuous contradiction of early Hungarian history is the fact that when the Hungarian tribes conquered the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century, they conveyed the impression of being a well-organized nomadic confederation like the Huns and the Avars of the preceding centuries. So it was not by chance that contemporary Europe identified them as the successors of the Huns and the Avars. On the other hand, the Hungarian language, which, as has been well established since the 18th century, must have been the language of the majority of the land-conquering Hungarians, is a Finno-Ugric one both in its grammatical structure and in its basic vocabulary.

The key to the solution of this problem lies in the Turkic "loanwords" of the Hungarian language. The present day Hungarian language has approximately 300 pre-10th-century Turkic loanwords, most of which display linguistic peculiarities characteristic of the Bulgaro-Chuvash type. It is not only the high figure but also the basic character of these loanwords that is striking. Basic words of animal-husbandry, agriculture, everyday life, and dress or concepts of social, moral and

religious life are of Turkic origin in the Hungarian language. The quantity and quality of these Turkic loans clearly indicate that they are not the result of ordinary loan-contacts, but the linguistic imprint of a centuries-long, intensive symbiosis of Turkic peoples with the Hungarians. There must have been long periods prior to the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin in 896 when the Hungarians and Turks lived closely in bilingual societies.

But there are clear indications that Turco-Hungarian bilingualism was alive even at the end of the ninth century. Constantinus Porphyrogenitus, the learned Byzantine emperor, wrote in his work “De Administrando Imperio” (§39) that the Kabars were of Khazar origin and that once they had revolted against their Khazar overlords. Their rebellion having been put down, they fled to the Hungarians and mingled with them. The Kabars taught the Hungarians the Khazar language but they knew and used the other (i.e. their own) language as well. The three rebellious Kabar tribes had one common chief even in the 950s when the Byzantine emperor compiled his work. This is a very important account since one of the emperor’s informants, Bulchu, was himself the head of the Kabars, called *karkha*. This dignitary of the Khazars was third in rank within the hierarchy of the Hungarian confederacy in the middle of the 10th century.

Considering these facts, it becomes obvious why the contemporary Byzantine and Arabic sources describe the Hungarians as Turks. The Hungarians in the 9th and 10th centuries were Turkicized to a great extent in their social and military organizations, world-view, and language. And last but not least, Turkic ethnic elements were an organic part of this Hungarian tribal confederacy.

It is interesting to compare the Bulgaro-Slavic and the Hungarian ethnogenesis. In the former case, a small Bulgarian-Turkic confederation conquered Slavicized Thracian masses and soon melted into the Slavic-speaking majority. Only a few loanwords of the Bulgarian language testify to the ancient Bulgarian-Turkic effect. On the other hand, the Carpathian Basin was conquered by a Turkicized confederacy whose major spoken language was a Finno-Ugrian tongue – the Hungarian. The Slavic peoples living scattered in the central parts of the Carpathian Basin subsequently melted into the conquering Hungarian and Turkic elements. The latter must have exceeded the number of the Slavic population, otherwise the Slavic population would have survived in Central Hungary and Transylvania. The Slavs, however, were able to survive only in the mountainous region of Upper Hungary (today’s Slovakia).

The influx of nomadic waves did not cease with the advent of Hungarian conquerors in the Carpathian Basin, although the embracing of Western Christianity and the foundation of the Hungarian Kingdom by Saint Stephen I in 1000 A.D. was of pivotal importance for the further development of this region. A strong Christian and European state, as Hungary became in the 11th century, put a halt to further eastern migrational waves of nomadic peoples. From that time onward the nomadic waves were swallowed by Hungary and Byzantium.

In the 10th to 13th centuries, two nomadic confederations ruled the Pontic steppe region in the territory which is now Southern Russia and the Ukraine: the Pech-

enegs and the Cumans. The Pechenegs, whose early history leads us back to the Aral Sea region, became the dominant power of the Pontic region after the Hungarian conquest and the decline of the Khazar power in the 10th century. But the appearance of a new nomadic confederation, the Cumans or Kipchaks, put an end to Pecheneg rule, and in the middle of the 11th century they were pushed westward. Most of the Pechenegs settled in the Hungarian Kingdom and in the Balkan territories of Byzantium. Ethnically they were absorbed by the Hungarian and the South-Slavic population.

The appearance of the Cumans or Kipchaks was more important for the ethnic history of Eastern Europe. This Turkic confederation came into existence in Southwest Siberia and the Kazak Steppe by uniting the Kipchak tribes and the Cuman tribes whose origins went back to the Ordos region. The Cuman-Kipchak confederation appeared in the Pontic Steppe region in the 1050s and dominated the region until the time of the Mongol conquests in the 1220s and 1230s. The Cumans, whose name was translated into Russian as *Polovtsi* (“the Pale Ones”), played an important role in the history of the Russian principalities in the 11th to 13th centuries, sometimes as allies, sometimes as enemies of the Russian principalities in their internecine wars. Family contacts between Russian princes and Cuman princes are well attested in the Russian annals, but prior to the Mongol conquest the Cumans played no substantial role in the ethnic history of the Russian Lands. The same is also true for Hungary, although several Cuman raids into Hungary are registered in the sources. But at the end of the 12th century, the Cumans’ role was instrumental in the foundation or reestablishment of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom.

Byzantium had never acquiesced in the loss of Moesia, a former territory of the Empire, and after several attempts Emperor Basileios II Bulgaraktonos finally crushed the Bulgars’ resistance in 1018 and incorporated what was then Bulgaria into the Romaic Empire. After more than 150 years of Byzantine overlordship, a rebellion began in 1185 against the Byzantines under the leadership of two brothers called Peter and Asen. The first onslaughts of Peter and Asen’s revolt were beaten back by the Byzantine forces, and the defeated Bulgarians fled to the left bank of the Danube to seek refuge and ask help from the Cumans. In the following twenty years, Bulgarian independence was fully restored with the Cumans’ aid, and Asen’s successors, the Asenid dynasty, succeeded to the Bulgarian throne. The historical role of the Cumans in this fight is quite evident: without an active Cuman participation the Second Bulgarian Empire could never have been restored. In addition to the Cumans’ role as hired mercenaries, they played an active part in the ethnic history of the Balkans as well. Asen and his family were of Cuman origin, a reflection of the fact that some Cuman groups remained in the Balkans in the 12th century. Later they merged with the Vlaxhs, Romanized Balkan shepherds. So it was the Vlaxhs and their Cuman chiefs who initiated the liberation movement of Bulgaria.

After the Tatar invasion of Eastern Europe in 1241, the Cumans were compelled to flee to the West, and several groups settled in the Balkan Peninsula. Utilizing

their former intimate links with the Bulgarian upper layers, they twice appeared as founders of new dynasties, the Terterids and Shishmanids of Bulgaria. Besides, Cuman troops continued to be hired as auxiliaries both by Byzantium and Bulgaria throughout the 13th and 14th centuries.

The Cumans also played an important role in the formation of the Wallachian State at the end of the 14th century. Basarab, the first Wallachian ruler, and many of the first Romanian noblemen were of Cuman extraction. The whole territory of what was to become Wallachia and Moldavia was called *Cumania* in the 13th and 14th centuries; it was inhabited mainly by Cumans at that time. Just after the restoration of the Second Bulgarian Empire at the end of the 12th century, the Vlaxhs began intensively to migrate to the left bank of the Danube. The absorption of the Cumans by the Vlaxhs was one of the major events in the ethnic history of the Romanians in the 13th and 14th centuries.

In addition to the Cumans' role in the ethnic history of the Bulgarian and Romanian peoples, they have contributed to the ethnic history of the Hungarian people as well. After the Tatar campaign in Hungary in 1241, Cumans settled in Hungary in great numbers. There, in contrast to their presence in the Balkans, they settled in compact groups so they were able to preserve their language and customs well into the middle of the 16th century.

After the Mongol storm over all the Balkans and Hungary, the main bulk of the Kipchak tribes remained in their former habitats in the Pontic and Kazak Steppes. The conquering Mongol upper layer was soon assimilated by the masses of the Golden Horde, the westernmost Tatar state. In the course of ethnic processes of the 13th and 14th centuries, new Turkic ethnic entities emerged: the different Tatar groups (the Crimean, the Kazan, the Astrakhan, etc. Tatars) and the Nogays. These peoples came about by the mingling of different Turkic, mainly Kipchak, groups with the conquering Mongols. Of the Tatar groups only two major peoples have survived to our day: the Tatars of Kazan and the Crimea. The Tatars of Kazan were subjugated by the Muscovite State in 1552, and the Khanate of the Crimea was annexed to Russia in 1783. Since then, all Tatar groups have lived under Russian, and later Soviet, suzerainty. The question emerges whether the Tatars had any substantial role in the ethnic history of the Russian and other Slavic nationalities. Until the middle of the sixteenth century, religious, political, and cultural barriers prevented any substantial blood mixture between the Tatars and the Eastern Slavs, although the ever strengthening service class of Muscovy absorbed several Tatars who had entered Muscovite service. But, from the time of Kazan's capture a new and intensive phase of the Russian-Tatar contacts began. In that process numerous distinguished Tatar families became Russified as part of the Russian nobility.

The Tatar ethnic impact can best be observed with the ethnogenesis of the Kozaks. Several groups of the Kozaks were formed in the 15th and 16th centuries in the territory of present-day Southern Russia and the Ukraine, which was at that time the southern borderland of Muscovy. Though the ethnic basis of the Kozaks was Eastern Slavic, a considerable amount of Tatar blood was added to the Slavic layer.

In summary, in addition to the Turkish nationality in the Balkan lands, three Turkic ethnic units have survived in Eastern Europe: the Crimean Tatars, the Kazan Tatars, and the Chuvash. But the extension of Turkic peoples in Eastern Europe, as described in this essay, was once much more considerable than the present state would indicate. Bulgarian Turkic tribes actively participated in the ethnogenesis of the modern Bulgarian and Hungarian peoples, and the role of the Kipchak-Cuman tribes was instrumental in the formation of the Hungarian, Romanian, Russian and Ukrainian peoples. The Tatar ethnic impact on the Eastern Slavic peoples was less decisive, since it affected them at a later phase of their ethnic formation.

Finally, it is worthwhile investigating whether – and if so to what extent – the history of these Turkic peoples was used in creating modern national ideologies in Eastern Europe. It is quite natural that the Crimean and Kazan Tatar national ideologies have drawn on their own past, the history of independent Crimean and Kazan Khanates, and the preceding Golden Horde period. On the other hand, for Russian and Ukrainian nationalisms, the Tatars are the archetype of evil, causes of all shortcomings of their national histories. The Tatars play the same role in these nationalisms as the Ottoman-Turks do in Balkan nationalisms.

Romanian nationalism has never made use of the Cuman component of Romanian history, having rather always been more fascinated, sometimes even obsessed, by the Latin origin of the language or by the alleged and improbable theory of Dacian continuity. The Slavic, Turkic, and Hungarian components of Romanian ethnic history have not become ideological parts of Romanian nationalism.

It is interesting to compare modern Bulgarian and Hungarian nationalisms in this respect. Bulgarian nationalism has always laid emphasis on the Slavic character of the Bulgarian nation. Cyril and Methodius, the inventors of Slavic alphabets and apostles of Slavic culture, the Byzantine ecclesiastical and cultural roots, and the help of big brother Russia – these are the favorite themes of Bulgarian nationalism. The historical role of the Bulgarian-Turkic founding fathers, though appreciated in the scholarly literature, has never become an organic part of the Bulgarian national consciousness. Moreover, never is it mentioned that the Bulgars of Es-perükh were part of the same Turkic nomadic world whence the predecessors of the hated Ottoman conquerors sprang forth.

In contrast to the Bulgarian national consciousness in which Slavic self-assuredness prevails, Hungarian nationalism has always been reluctant to accept the Finno-Ugrian origin of the Hungarian language. The fact that the isolation of Hungarian from other Finno-Ugrian languages took place at least two and a half thousand years ago, causes all historical reminiscences to fade away from the historical consciousness of the people. In the age of nationalism in the 19th century, the thought of Finno-Ugrian kinship was not accepted enthusiastically. Though later universally accepted, it has not become an essential component of Hungarian national thought. On the other hand, the centuries-long contact with the Turkic peoples has left a deep imprint in the Hungarian national consciousness. Hungarian nationalism handled the Turkic components and roots of early Hungarian history

with sympathy and emotion, while it was indifferent at best toward the Finno-Ugric roots.

In short, Bulgarian and Hungarian nationalisms have made use of the Turkic components of their early histories in opposite ways: Bulgarian nationalism minimized, while Hungarian nationalism magnified, the role of the Turks.

II

ORIGINS AND POSSIBLE CUMAN AFFILIATIONS OF THE ASEN DYNASTY

Tibor bácsi emlékének sok szeretettel

For more than a century Bulgarian and Romanian historians have debated the origins of the brothers Peter, Asen, and Kaloyan. Most Bulgarian historians have insisted on their Bulgarian origins, in accordance with the view that the term *Vlakh* refers to Bulgars, and the whole Bulgaro-Vlakh problem is a mere question of terminology. The other view, mainly that of the Romanian and some other historians, firmly holds that the brothers were Vlachs. Finally, there is a third view, according to which the three brothers were of Cuman descent. Let us see all three possibilities. The first supposition, namely that the brothers were Bulgars, can easily be excluded. F. Uspenskii, the noted Byzantinologist was the first who, in his book on the Second Bulgarian Empire, put forward the supposition that the Byzantine writers failed to mention the name *Bulgar* after the fall of the First Bulgarian Empire, and the name of the Bulgars was substituted by other ethnonyms such as that of the Vlachs.¹ Uspenskii's view cannot be maintained, Bănescu refuted it in detail,² I also tried to prove that the ethnonym *Vlakh* had real ethnical connotation in the 12th-13th centuries.³

But there is one more argument left in the arsenal of those who try to verify the brothers' Bulgarian descent. Pope Innocent III had an intensive correspondence with Kaloyan, third ruler of the new Bulgarian state, about the acceptance of the Pope's jurisdiction by the Bulgarian Church. Both parties were motivated by their own interests: the Pope wanted to extend his ju-

¹ Uspenskii 1879, p. 153.

² Bănescu 1943, pp. 13-21.

³ In my unpublished essay "Cumans and Tatars in the Balkans", hopefully to be published soon as a separate volume.

risdiction in the Balkans, and Kaloyan wanted to have the imperial crown and a Patriarch as head of the Bulgarian Church. There are two lines of statements in the Pope's correspondence, seemingly contradicting and excluding each other. One of them seems to support the Bulgarian descent of Asen's family, while the other speaks rather of Vlakh progeny. The "Bulgarian party" and the "Vlakh party" could equally find arguments in favour of their respective theories, and each party tried to conceal or minimize the significance of the contradicting data. First, let us see the data, then make an attempt at their interpretation. Innocent III wrote to the Hungarian King Imre, in his letter of 1204, that "Peter and Joannica who descended from the family of the former kings, began to regain rather than to occupy the land of their fathers".⁴ On the other hand, the Pope wrote to Kaloyan, in 1199, that he had heard of Kaloyan's Roman descent. In his reply, Kaloyan expressed his satisfaction that God "made us remember of our blood and fatherland we descended from". At another place: "the people of your land who assert that they descended of Roman blood".⁵ It is obvious that none can take these statements at face value, since logically they exclude each other. Yet this error was often committed in the past. Thus, e.g., K. Jireček accepted the first statement, namely that the Asenids were descendants of the former Bulgarian tsars. Moreover, he claimed that they were born in Tirnovo, capital of the old Shishmanid dynasty (there is no single reference in support of this assumption!).⁶ However, the second statement, namely that the brothers were of Roman descent, he had to refute. Jireček's explanation is clumsy and his argumentation is tortuous: the Roman descent was first mentioned by the Pope, and Kaloyan tacitly and cunningly accepted it since it was favourable to his purposes.⁷ Of course, most Romanian historians are very happy with the second statement, namely that the Bulgarian dynasty was of Roman progeny (i.e. Vlakh in their view), and tend to forget that there is also another statement in another letter of the same Pope which annuls the validity of the first one. The solution lies in the interpretation of the texts. Medieval texts cannot be interpreted with rigid logic, but must be placed in their contemporary context. As far as the first statement is concerned, it is the formulation of a typical medieval tenet: the ruling house is always considered the

⁴ "*Petrus videlicet et Johanniensis, de priorum regum prosapia descendentes, terram patrum suorum non tam occupare, quam recuperare coeperunt*" (Theiner 1863, p. 36).

⁵ "... *et reduxit nos ad memoriam sanguinis et patrie nostre, a qua descendimus*" and "... *populus terre tue, qui de sanguine Romanorum se asserit descendisse*" (Theiner 1863, pp. 15, 16).

⁶ Jireček 1876, p. 211.

⁷ Jireček 1876, p. 219.

legitimate successor of a former ruling house. By saying that Peter and Asen are descendants of the former Bulgarian kings, the Pope simply wanted to express that they are to be considered the legitimate rulers of Bulgaria. That is why they do not “occupy” the land, but “re-occupy” it as their heritage usurped by the Byzantines till then. It was the same medieval ideological tenet that made Attila, King of the Huns, the first Hungarian king. Hence, Árpád and his family, in 896 A.D., did not conquer the Carpathian Basin, but re-conquered it as their paternal heritage from Attila, a view represented also in the Kézai⁸ Chronicle. Or, to give another, similarly instructive example, on October 3, 1329, Pope John XXII addressed a letter to a certain Jeretamir (or Jeretanny, in another variation) who was the chief of the Christian Hungarians in the East. The curious letter mentions the Hungarians, Malkaites, and Alans together.⁹ Since the two latter were inhabitants of the Northern Caucasus, the Christian Hungarians mentioned in this letter could be only a splinter group of Hungarians living north of the Caucasus. This Hungarian group was either dragged away by or left with the Tatars retreating after their East-European campaign of 1241. It is very unlikely that they would have been descendants of Hungarian groups that did not take part in the conquest of Hungary at the end of the 9th century. The first possibility seems far more likely. In either way, the Pope expressed his satisfaction that “you, my son Jeretamir descended from the tribe of the Catholic princes and kings of Hungary”.¹⁰ It is evident that Jeretamir could be a progeny of the Hungarian kings, only in the “spiritual” sense. Even the wording of the two papal letters are very similar: “*de priorum regum prosapia descendentes*” (Peter and Asan) and “*Jeretamir, de stirpe Catholicorum Principum Regum Ungariae descendisti*”. Finally, if we take an example from another territory, the Kazan Tatar khans considered themselves legitimate successors of the former Volga Bulgarian sovereigns, though there was no direct connection between the Bulgars and the Tatars.¹¹

As for the second statement according to which the Asenid family was of Roman descent, there are several layers of interpretations. To begin with, it was really the Pope who first called Kaloyan’s attention to his family’s Roman descent. Kaloyan’s Vlach subjects must have really spoken a Neo-

⁸ SRH 1, 1937, p. 142 sqq.

⁹ “*Dilectis filiis Jeretanni et universis christianis Ungaris, Malchaytis ac Alanis salutem*” (Bendefy 1942, p. 445). Bendefy’s work is of a chaotic character containing much phantasy, but the edition of the text is based on the Vatican original and is reliable. For the *editio princeps* of this bull see, Raynaldus xv, No. 96.

¹⁰ “...*tu, filii Jeretamir, de stirpe Catholicorum Principum Regum Ungariae descendisti; ...*” (Bendefy 1942, p. 446; Raynaldus xv, No. 96).

¹¹ Pelenski 1974, pp. 139-173.

Latin language, the ancestor of modern Romanian, but it can almost be taken for granted that the Vlaxhs of the Balkans had no historical awareness of a “Roman” descent. The name Roman was true only in the sense that they were subjects of Byzantium and, as such, called Ῥωμαῖοι, i.e. Romans, since Byzantium regarded herself as the true heir of Rome. The Vlaxhs of the Balkans were permeated by South-Slavic folk-culture and Byzantine ecclesiastical high-culture, and it was only their language that linked them to Latin, the official language of the Roman Empire. The Pope, well aware of the Latin origin of the Vlaxhs’ language, identified them as descendants of the City of Rome. Since this supposition was really favourable and flattering to Kalyoyan, Jireček assumed that he must have agreed with it. So the two contradictory statements of the Pope must be understood in the following manner: 1. The Asenids’ descentance from the former Bulgarian kings was a contemporary means to express the legitimacy of their rule, and had nothing to do with their *de facto* provenance; 2. the Pope’s statement that the Asenids were of Roman descent merely refers to the fact that the Asenids were Vlaxhs, and had nothing to do with the Vlaxhs’ more recent “Roman” consciousness.

Indeed, one cannot neglect those statements in the works of Byzantine and Latin authors which outspokenly refer to the brothers’ Vlakh descent. E.g. Ansbert called Peter “*Kalopetrus Flachus*”¹² and Villehardouin asserted that “*Johanis si ere uns Blas*”.¹³ Furthermore, there is a detail in Nikétas Chóniatés’ *History* that makes the origin of Asen indisputable. Once a Greek priest, captured by the Vlaxhs, was dragged by them to the Haimos Mountains. He implored Asen to release him from captivity, addressing him in his language since “he knew the language of the Vlaxhs”.¹⁴ As both the Vlaxhs and the Bulgars are mentioned under separate names in Chóniatés, there is no possibility for a misunderstanding: Asen and his brothers were actually of Vlakh descent. But one must not exaggerate, as some Romanian scholars did, and see Vlakh traces even where none is to be found. E.g. Bănescu rejoices that even if the name *Asen* is of Cuman origin, the other two brothers’ names, Peter and Ioannica are “purely Romanian”, which, in reality, they are not.¹⁵

¹² Chroust 1964, p. 33, ll. 4-5.

¹³ Pauphilet 1952, p. 136.

¹⁴ “...ἴδρις τῆς τὴν Βλάχων διαλέκτου ...” (van Dieten 1975, i, p. 468, l. 26).

¹⁵ “... Pierre et Ioannice, noms purement roumains.” (Bănescu 1943, p. 43). *Peter* is “neutral” as to its origin, and *Ioannica* is a Slavic formation, disregarding the fact that the formant *-ica* later entered also into Romanian usage.

The assertion of the pure Bulgarian descent of the brothers was so evidently nonsensical that the best Bulgarian scholars, such as Zlatarski and Mutafchiev, have tried to find solutions more compatible than the Bulgarian descent of the Asenids. Zlatarski proposed that the Asenids were of Cuman extraction who became Bulgars.¹⁶ He says that the brothers were the offsprings of a distinguished Cuman-Bulgarian clan (“Кумано-български знатен род”),¹⁷ the members of which played a leading political role in Byzantium. In addition to their distinguished descent and outstanding personal qualities, their Cuman origins must also have been instrumental in the liberation movement, since only with the military force of the Cumans could one imagine a fight against Byzantium. While the latter argument is right, the weighty political role of the brothers in Byzantium cannot be proved. Indeed, contrary to Zlatarski’s contention, the fact that Asen’s request to get a *pronoia* in the Haimos was categorically refuted by the Byzantine authorities speaks rather of lack of political influence. Besides, the term Cuman-Bulgarian is rather obscure. Zlatarski’s underlying thought was that the brothers were Bulgars with Cuman ancestors. Mutafchiev has chosen another way to arrive at approximately the same conclusions as Zlatarski did. In a long article he tried to prove that Kievan Rus’ had very close connections with 11th-12th centuries Bulgaria, and the presence of a massive layer of Russian frontier guards in Danube Bulgaria cannot be denied.¹⁸ Though Asen had a Turkic (Mutafchiev: Turanian) name, actually he must have been of Russian origin. As far as the Cuman affiliations of the brothers are concerned, Mutafchiev finds it a fact easy to explain: Russian aristocracy often intermingled with “Turanian” peoples. In a cautious form he even suggested that the Asenids were descendants of Prince Vladimir Monomakh. Later, in his monograph on Bulgarian history, Mutafchiev formulated his opinion in a very clear way: “The name of the younger [brother] of them is Cuman. They were of Russo-Cuman (“руско-кумански”) descent, progeny of some of those prominent emigrants from the South-Russian Steppes who, in the first half of the 12th century, found their second homeland in Danube Bulgaria and soon melted into the local Bulgarian medium”.¹⁹ Mutafchiev applied a very sophisticated way to minimize the significance of Asen’s Turkic name: first, Asen’s family was basically Russian with a very distant Cuman relationship, and secondly, even this Russian family soon became assimilated in the Bulgarian environment. Mutafchiev could claim, thus, a real success for

¹⁶ Zlatarski 1933, ii, pp. 426-427.

¹⁷ *Idem*, ii, p. 427.

¹⁸ Mutafchiev 1928.

¹⁹ *Idem*, ii, p. 33.

himself: he eliminated the Vlaxhs, minimized the role of the Cumans, made Asen and his brothers Russian princes who were practically Bulgars. A very remarkable conjuring trick, only pity that the assumptions lack scholarly basis and, by it, lose great part of their validity. It is all too obvious that he wanted to eliminate the Vlaxhs and Cumans from Bulgarian history, aiming to serve thereby the interests of a preconceived Bulgarian nationalism. There is, however, one common element in the Zlatarski and Mutafchiev theories, namely both of them felt compelled to take the Cuman descent into consideration. Herewith we arrived to the third, the main stream of opinions concerning the Asenids' descent.

It is interesting that F. Uspenskii, fervent defender of the anti-Vlakh theory was the first to suggest that Asen and his brothers were of Cuman extraction.²⁰ Later, Jireček corroborated Uspenskii's supposition by calling attention to Cuman princes in the 11th-12th centuries who bore the same name.²¹ Since then, most researchers accepted the supposition that Asen had a Cuman name (Zlatarski and Mutafchiev too), but the historical conclusions that could be drawn from this fact were very different. As can be seen, Zlatarski made the Asenids Bulgars or at best Cumano-Bulgars, while Mutafchiev succeeded in making them Russians or Russo-Cumans who were practically Bulgars. For those of the Turkish-Turkic school, the fact that Asen had a Turkic name, was obviously sufficient to make him and his descendants Cumans.²²

Before proceeding to judge the question more in a historical light, we must ascertain whether this Turkic etymology of Asen's name holds true, and if so, what are the further consequences of this fact. In doing so we must not forget that Asen and his family were Vlaxhs! The basic fact that gave rise to the idea of the Cuman origin of Asen's name was that there were two Cuman princes with the same name who had lived in the second half of the 11th century. One of the Cuman princes, Osen' (Осень), died in 1082.²³ He must have been the grandfather of the daughter of a certain Ayapa (Аепа) who (i.e., the daughter) became the wife of Iurii, son of Prince Vladimir, in 1107.²⁴ Ayapa was either the son or the son-in-law of the above Osen'.

²⁰ Uspenskii 1879, p. 108.

²¹ Jireček i, p. 269, n. 4.

²² Rásonyi 1970, p. 15; *idem*, 1971, p. 153.

²³ Lavrent'evskaia letopis', under 6590 (= 1082): "Осень умре Половечьскыи князь" (*PSRL* i, p. 205).

²⁴ Ipat'evskaia letopis', under 6615 (= 1107): "иде Володимер и Давид и Олег к Аепе и [ко] другому Аепе и створиша мир, и поя Володимер за Юргя Аепину дщерь Осеневу внуку, а Олег поя за сына Аепину дщерь Гиреневу [вар. Гиргеневу"] внуку." (*PSRL* ii, pp. 282-283).

There was another Cuman prince, *Asin'*, who, together with Prince Sakz', was captured by the Russian Prince Vladimir Monomakh, in 1096.²⁵ In 1112, mention is made in the Russian Annals of the "town of Osen".²⁶ The name of these Cuman princes, and that of Asen and other Bulgarian rulers in his wake, are obviously the same. As the name is not Slavic, everybody thought that it was a Turkic name, but no satisfactory etymology was given. Mutafchiev's haphazard ideas (e.g., the comparison of *Asen* with *A-shih-na*, Chinese transcription of the ruling clan of the Turks in the 6th-8th centuries) cannot be taken seriously.²⁷ It was L. Rásonyi who gave a more acceptable etymology to the name.²⁸ He pointed out that the name *Esen* (with an open *ä*) was widely common with the Turkic peoples; it is particularly important that it was also well-known to the Mameluks in Egypt, who were undoubtedly of Cuman origin. The Turkic name *Esen* goes back to the Common Turkic word *esen* 'sound, safe, healthy'.²⁹ Moreover, all the Russian forms of the name Осень (Осѣнь, Асѣнь, Асинь),³⁰ as well as the Greek forms Ἀσάν, Ἀσάνης,³¹ can be well explained from a Turkic *Esen*.³² Some members of the Bulgarian Asen family entered into Byzantine service in the 13th-14th centuries,³³ and the late descendants of these Byzantine Asenids formed the Romanian boyar's *Asan* clan.³⁴ The family name in New-Greek³⁵ probably goes back to the same origin. On the other hand, one has to remember

²⁵ In the *Pouchenie Vladimira Monomakha*, under 6604 (= 1096): "... и завтра на Госпожин день идохом к Беле Вежи и Бог ны поможе и святая Богородица избиша 900 Половецъ и два князя яща Багубарсова брата Асиня и Сакзя, и два мужа толко утекоста, и потом на Святославль гонихом по Половцих." (*PSRL* ii, pp. 248-249).

²⁶ Lavrent'evskaia letopis', under 6621 (= 1112): the Russian princes "... доидоша до града Осенева" in their campaign against the Cumans (*PSRL* i, p. 275). This *Osenev grad* must have been somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Don (*cf.*, Aristov 1877, pp. 9-10; Mutafchiev 1928, p. 15).

²⁷ Mutafchiev 1928, pp. 11-12.

²⁸ Rásonyi 1969, pp. 82-83.

²⁹ For the data *see*, Rásonyi 1969, p. 83 and Clauson 1972, p. 248.

³⁰ For the Russian and Slavic forms *see* above and Mutafchiev 1928, p. 15, nn. 2-6.

³¹ For the Greek forms *see*, *Byz.-turc.* ii, pp. 73-75.

³² The rendering of an initial open *e* (*ä*) by the letter *a* in Slavic and Greek transcriptions of names of foreign origin was quite common. The letter *o* is regularly used in Russian texts to represent an unstressed *a*. The palatal *n'* and the use of the *iat'* in the Slavic transcriptions indicate that the second syllable must have been palatal in the original Turkic word.

³³ *See*, Uspenskii 1908.

³⁴ Mutafchiev 1928, p. 12, n. 4.

³⁵ Buturas 1912, p. 102.

that another Asen is referred to in a Slavic source³⁶ as *Бѣлгунъ* which also seems to be of Turkic origin. According to Mladenov, it comes from a Turkic *bilgün* 'one who knows, wise'.³⁷

While the Turkic origin of the name *Asen/Asan* can be taken for granted, the historical conclusions drawn from this fact by former researchers cannot be accepted. No serious argument can be put forward in support of the Asenids' Bulgarian or Russian origin. On the other hand, a Cuman name by itself cannot prove that its bearer was undoubtedly Cuman. Asen's Turkic (probably Cuman) name must be confronted with the fact that the sources unanimously refer to his being Vlach. This must be made an essential point in any further deductions: Asen was a Vlach and bore a Cuman name. In addition to the pure Romanian names, Romanians of the 13th-14th centuries in Transylvania also bore Slavic, Hungarian, and Turkic names.³⁸ All these layers of the Romanian personal names display various ethno-cultural influences that had affected the Romanians during their history. Since the Vlachs (predecessors of the later Romanians) lived in the Balkans before 1185, and only sporadically, if at all, settled on the left bank of the Danube, only Turkic peoples of the Balkans can be considered lenders of Turkic names to the Vlachs. As the Cumans were the most frequent guests (whether invited or not) in the Balkans and a number of Cuman princes of the 11th-12th centuries bore the name Asen, the most probable explanation for Asen's Turkic name is that it came from the Cumans. But the Pechenegs cannot be excluded either, because their language must have been very similar to that of the Cumans, and Pecheneg settlements must have come about in the Balkans in the 12th century after their final defeat by the Byzantines, in 1041. Moreover, in the 12th century a certain symbiosis of the Vlach and Cuman population must be reckoned with. As with most nomadic peoples coming to Europe from the east, the Cumans too were marauding raiders, warriors who, after their victories or defeats, mostly withdrew from the territory of their inroads. As is also common with nomadic peoples, contingents of Cumans, having separated from the bulk of the confederacy, remained in the Balkans and merged with the Vlachs. The numerous common features in both peoples, may have facilitated their fusion. Taking into consideration all the

³⁶ *Sinodik Borila* in Popruzhenko 1928, p. 77, § 91.

³⁷ Mladenov 1933.

³⁸ E.g. in a diploma of 1383 the following Vlach persons (*Walachi*) occur in the neighbourhood of Szeben (Romanian *Sibiu*, German *Hermanstadt*) in Transylvania: *Fladmer/Fladmir* and *Dragmer* (Slavic names), *Neg* and *Radul* (Romanian names), *Oldamar* (Turkic name) (*DHV*, pp. 301-302). Cf., also the index of the above work. — For Romanian names of Turkic origin see Rásonyi 1927.

above, the most plausible answer seems to be that Asen and his family were of Cuman origin. As such, they stood at the head of the liberation movement in Bulgaria, and their chief supporters were their people, the Vlaxhs. They must have spoken their Vlach subjects' language, but preserved the legacy, the nomadic warring technics of their Cuman predecessors. Moreover, they must have been in close contact with their not too distant relatives in Cumania. That is why they turned to their one-time kinsfolk to help them fight against the Byzantine Empire. D. Rasovskii called the Asenids half-Cumans ("Полуполовцы"),³⁹ and he was right. And, since the other half of them was Vlach, they may rightly be called Cumano-Vlaxhs.

In sum, the Asenids were a Cuman dynasty with mainly Vlach subjects in the 12th, and Bulgars in the 13th century. Thus, both Bulgarian and Romanian history may claim this Cuman dynasty part of their common past and heritage.

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III

CUMAN WARRIORS IN THE FIGHT OF BYZANTIUM WITH THE LATIN

From the very moment of its existence until its final fall in 1453, Byzantium had to face the imminent danger of barbaric attacks and inroads. The most frequent and dangerous route of these attacks reached the Empire from north of the Danube, notwithstanding that the deadly blow was given to Constantinople by the Ottomans arriving from the the East through Anatolia. Beginning with the Huns in the second half of the 4th century A.D. and ending with the Tatars in the 13th century, the barbaric hordes had frequently crossed the Danube, ravaged and pillaged the towns of the Balkan Peninsula, turning them into ruins. Not once they made their incursions in the very vicinity of the Golden Horn, thereby endangering the imperial capital itself. From the second half of the 11th century a new nomadic confederacy entered into Byzantium's sphere of interest, that of the Cumans. From 1091 the Cumans gained the upper hand in the Balkans, and their role in the reestablishment of the Bulgarian Empire in 1185–1186 and in its further historical fate was fundamental. Furthermore, they played an eminent historical role in the history of the Fourth Crusade, the Latin Kingdom of Constantinople and the Nikaian Empire. The present paper will

investigate the Cuman participation in the fight of Byzantium with the Latins, during and after the Fourth Crusade in 1204.

Even after the restoration of the Second Bulgarian Empire in 1187, the Cuman inroads to Byzantium did not cease. Sometimes together with their Bulgarian and Vlach allies, sometimes on their own, they regularly plundered the settlements and the countryside in Thrace. Between 1202 and 1204 the fights between the young Bulgarian state and Byzantium were at a temporary standstill, because Byzantium increasingly slipped into anarchy, and finally the capture of Constantinople by the crusaders on April 12, 1204 put an end to the Byzantine state for more than fifty years. In the years preceding the catastrophe of 1204 Byzantium had no power to pay attention to and deal with the Bulgarian affairs. The Empire fell into pieces, and a Latin Empire was founded in its place the emperor of which became Baldouin, head of the crusading knights. The Byzantine political emigrants withdrew to Asia Minor, but the Greek cause seemed to decay everywhere: the crusaders prepared themselves to subjugate also the territory of Asia Minor. In this moment of total loss an uprising of the Greek population of Thrace compelled the Latins to march back to the unsettled country. The Greek rebels held the town of Adrianople and Didymotoichon, and turned to the Bulgarian ruler Kaloyan for help against the Latins. Kaloyan ran to help the rebels and marched with his troops near Adrianople. According to Villehardouin, his army consisted of Vlaks, Bulgars and approximately fourteen thousand pagan Cuman warriors.¹ Nikéatas Chóniátés also stressed that the Cuman (Scythian) auxiliaries were innumerable.² At this decisive moment the customary Byzantine–Bulgarian enmity turned to the opposite. Both Kaloyan and the defeated Greeks realised that the new danger for both of them was the Latin Empire.

As far as Baldouin learnt of the Thracian uprise, he sent his army there. The Latins recaptured Bizyé and Tzurulon from the Byzantine forces, and Arkadioupolis also fell to the crusaders. In March, 1205 Baldouin, Louis de Blois and Enrico Dandolo, Doge of Venice, surrounded Adrianople, which was defended by the Greeks. They tried to take the town by besieging and undermining the walls, but they failed. On April 12, on a Wednesday following Easter, Kaloyan sent a troop of Cumans against the Latins to test the strength of the enemy. The crusaders vehemently chased them, and when the crusaders wanted to return, a storm of Cuman arrows reached them.³ The decisive battle at Adrianople took place on April 14, 1205. Kaloyan sent his Cuman warriors to battle under the commandership of a certain Qoja (Κοτζῶς)⁴ and ordered them to follow the same nomadic tactics of feigned retreat. The Cumans ensnared the Latins by fleeing and turning back against them. The Latins were killed

¹ Villehardouin, ch. LXXIX: "Johannis li rois de Blaqueie venoit secoure ceus d'Andrinople à mult grant ost; que il amenoit Blas et Bogres, et bien quatorze mil Comains, qui n'estoient mie baptiziés." (Villehardouin/Pauphilet, p. 169).

² "... τὸ ἐκ Σκυθῶν ἐπίκουρον ..., μηδ' ἀριθμῶ σχεδὸν ὑποπίπτον, ..." (Nik. Chón. *Hist./van Dieten* I, p. 61380–81).

³ Nik. Chón. *Hist./van Dieten*, pp. 61483–61535 (ed. Bonn, pp. 810–812) = Grabler 1958, pp. 192–194.

⁴ Nik. Chón. *Hist./van Dieten*, p. 61639. For the name Κοτζῶς, see Rásonyi 1966–1969, p. 113.

in great number, the Cumans stabbed daggers in them or threw rope around their necks. Louis, Earl of Blois found his death on the battlefield, and the commander-in-chief of the knights' army Baldouin, Emperor of the Latin Empire was captured and carried to the Bulgarian capital Tárnovo. The third leader of the Crusaders, Enrico Dandolo, Doge of Venice succeeded in escaping.⁵ In a year after Constantinople's capture by the crusaders, they were severely defeated by Kaloyan's Cumans. The historical significance of this battle cannot be overestimated: it made possible the foundation of the Nikaian Empire in Asia Minor which preserved the Byzantine heritage until the recapture of Constantinople in 1261.

After the battle of Adrianople Kaloyan awarded the Cumans with those towns (κωμοπόλεις) near Byzantium that had payed tribute to the Latins. Terrible days and weeks ensued for the Byzantine population. Chóniatés bitterly laments over the calamities that inflicted the Greeks from two sides: "two peoples devastated the same land and the same people, once they fell on us separately, once with joint forces".⁶ In less than two months Kaloyan and his Cumans pillaged and plundered the Thracian countryside, but in June he could not withhold the Cuman warriors from returning home to their summer pastures, north of the Danube.⁷

After the destruction of Thrace Kaloyan and his army went over to Thessaloniké and wanted to grasp the Thessalian towns from the Latins. First, he took the town of Serrai. Then Henry, brother of Baldouin took over the leadership of the crusaders and marched to besiege Adrianople. First, he punished the inhabitants of Apros who went over to Kaloyan's side, then marched to Adrianople. After a long and unsuccessful siege Henry left Adrianople and marched to Didymotoichon, but the heavy rainings caused a flood of the Hebros (Marica) river which left its bed and inundated the camp of the Latins. Both the knights and their Greek opponents considered the flood as a divine sign to stop the campaign. Henry returned to Constantinople, only a small garrison was left in castles and towns held by the Latins.⁸ At the beginning of Summer, 1205 Kaloyan captured and ruined Philippoupolis.⁹ In the second half of 1205 we have no account of war events, but in January 1206 Kaloyan sent large troops of Vlakh and Cuman warriors to help the defenders of Adrianople and Didymotoichon. The following events were recounted by Villehardouin in a detailed way. Four days before Candlemas (*la feste sainte Marie Chandelor*) Thierry de Dendermonde (*Tierris Tendremonde*) set out to a night incursion accompanied by 120 knights, and in Rousion (*Rousse*) he left only a small garrison. At daybreak the troop

⁵ Nik. Chón. *Hist./van Dieten*, pp. 61638–61776 (ed. Bonn, pp. 812–814) = Grabler 1958, pp. 194–196. – Cf. also in Nik. Grég. *Hist.* I, pp. 1424–1635.

⁶ "τὴν γὰρ αὐτὴν γῆν καὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἔθνος ἐδήρουν γένη διττά, πῆ μὲν ἐκάτερα, πῆ δὲ θάτερον παρὰ θάτερον ἐπεσιπίπτοντα." (Nik. Chón. *Hist./van Dieten*, p. 6183–5).

⁷ Villehardouin, ch. LXXXVIII: "... si ne pot plus ses Comainz tenir en la terre, que il ne porent plus souffrir l'ostioier por l'esté, ainz repairièrent en lor país." (Villehardouin/Pauphilet, p. 177).

⁸ Nik. Chón. *Hist./van Dieten*, pp. 6216–62418 (ed. Bonn, pp. 820–826) = Grabler 1958, pp. 201–206.

⁹ Nik. Chón. *Hist./van Dieten*, p. 62776–86 (ed. Bonn, pp. 829–830) = Grabler 1958, pp. 208–209.