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**IDENTIFICATION AND SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF THE CRIMEAN  
GOTHS AND ALANS. GOTH OR GOTHALANI?**

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**IDENTIFICATION AND SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF THE  
CRIMEAN GOTHES AND ALANS. GOTHI OR GOTHALANI?**

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## INTRODUCTION

Goths held a leading position in the union of the different tribes which populated the area which is present-day Ukraine in the third century AD. An important role in this union was played by the Iranian tribe of the Alans. These two peoples appeared in the Crimea at the beginning of the third century, and became elements of the ethnic mosaic formed in the peninsula as a result of the Great Migration of Peoples and new waves of the nomads repeatedly coming from the east. They occupied the southeastern mountainous part of the Crimea and became *foederati* of Byzantium. During its history, Gothia, as a frontier region, oscillated between the Byzantine Empire and then the Empire of Trebizond on the one side, and the nomads of the steppe part of the peninsula on the other. The Gothic principality of Theodoro, with its centre in Mangup, carried out an independent policy and played an important role in the region until 1475, when the Ottoman Turks conquered it. However, some travellers mentioned Crimean Goths and their language as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The last serious work in this subject, *The Goths in the Crimea*, was written by the Russian Byzantinist Alexander Vasilev and published in 1936 in the United States.<sup>1</sup> It still remains an accurate and valuable work; however, it contains some serious shortcomings. For example, in his book Vasilev analyses the so-called *Fragments of Toparcha Gothicus*. In 1971, the Byzantinist Ihor Ševčenko proved that this source is a nineteenth-century forgery made by its editor Charles Benoît Hase. On these *Fragments* Vasilev based a hypothesis about the Rus' protectorate over the Crimean Gothia, which now appears to be ill-founded. After 1936, archaeological

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<sup>1</sup> A. A. Vasilev, *The Goths in the Crimea* (Cambridge, MA: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936).

excavations in the Crimea took place, but the results of these were not sufficiently analysed, for ideological reasons. New findings help to shed some light on the political situation of Gothia and its relations with Cherson, the Byzantine enclave in the Crimea. Recently some more works in this field have appeared;<sup>2</sup> however, their authors are mostly archaeologists, while a new approach to the written sources is still needed.

In the scholarly literature of the subject, the problem of the usage of names describing the southwestern Crimea and its inhabitants was not sufficiently researched. The scholars took the ethnonyms mentioned in the sources for granted when trying to answer the question: who is concealed behind the mask of the name?

The aim of my work is to research the ethnic structure of the Crimean Gothia, and as far as it is possible the ethnic self-identification of the Crimean Goths and Alans. In my work I want to raise the following questions:

- 1) Who were Crimean Goths mentioned in sources? Was it a traditional name (like the ethnonym of the Scythians, used by Greeks for all eastern barbarians) or did it describe a contemporary situation? Were Crimean Goths the Eastern Germans, or rather a mixture of Germanic and Alan ethnic elements (Gothalani are mentioned in some sources)?
- 2) How did this *ethnos* disappear, or how did Crimean Goths become Greeks and Tatars?
- 3) The role of the religion in the ethnic awareness.

In order to answer these questions, I am going to pay attention to the period of the migrations of peoples when the Crimean Goths (or Gothalani?) were formed as a

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<sup>2</sup> A. I. Aybabin, *Khronologia mogil'nikov Kryma pozdnerimskogo i ranniesrednevekovogo vremeni* (Chronology of graves in the Crimea of late Roman and early medieval times), in *Materialy po arkheologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii* (Materials on Archeology, History and Ethnography of Tauria), ed. Alexander Aibabin (Simferopol: Tavria, 1990), 58-76.

people. For that purposes the ideas of Reinhard Wenskus<sup>3</sup> and Herwig Wolfram<sup>4</sup> will be utilised. I will try to apply their theory about the formation of tribe and the tribe names for the situation in the Crimea. From that point of view the sources on the Crimean Goths and Alans will be analysed.

I am going to present in the chronological order a catalogue of mention of the Goths and the Alans in ecclesiastical sources as well as in the writings of contemporary historians, geographers and travellers. A general review of the political situation in the Crimea in the course of the centuries will also be needed. With the help of these data I will try to show how the citizens of Gothia identified themselves, and how they were identified by others. It will be noted in which cases name *Gothi* or *Gothalani* was used in a political sense to describe the people of Gothia, and when the Goths and the Alans were mentioned separately as different *ethnoi*.

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<sup>3</sup> Reinhard Wenskus. *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1961).

<sup>4</sup> H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

# I. CATALOGUE OF RELATIONS ABOUT THE CRIMEAN GOTHS AND ALANS

## 1. The Appearance of the Goths and Alans in the Crimea

In the period between the end of the second and the first part of the third century, the East Germanic tribe of the Gutones, later called the Goths, migrated from Gothiscandza, the land on the shore of the Baltic Sea and the lower Vistula. They appeared in the steppes of present-day Ukraine (the Scythia of the Roman sources) and met there the Iranian–Sarmatian peoples, who participated in the formation of the Gothic tribe on the shores of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.<sup>5</sup>

The Goths and their Sarmatian neighbours dwelling on the Sea of Azov gained control over Cimmerian Bosphorus, the Roman client kingdom in the Crimea. In the years 255-257, the Goths, together with the Germanic tribes of the Heruls and the Borads, undertook their first pirate expeditions to the Greek cities on the shores of the Black Sea. For this purpose, the “Scythians,” as these barbarians were often called in Roman sources, used the fleet of Cimmerian Bosphorus.<sup>6</sup> In that period, probably from the side of the Cimmerian Bosphorus (nowadays the Straits of Kerch)<sup>7</sup> started the penetration of the Goths and the Iranian tribe of the Alans in the Crimean Peninsula.

Constantine Porphyrogenitus, when recounting the epoch of Diocletian (from the end of the third to the beginning of the fourth century), refers to the Sarmatian

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<sup>5</sup> H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 42-44.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 48, 57.

<sup>7</sup> The term “Cimmerian Bosphorus” was used both for the present-day Straits of Kerch and for the Roman client kingdom on its shores. In the first case we shall use it with the article “the” as a geographical name, while in the second no article will be used since it is the proper name of a state.



ruler holding sway over Cimmerian Bosphorus.<sup>8</sup> Zosimos mentions the Sarmatians, who lived by the Maiotis Lake (or Maeotis, now the Sea of Azov), and who attacked the Roman Empire in 322.<sup>9</sup> Some scholars presumed that in both cases we are dealing with the tribes of the Gothic alliance.<sup>10</sup> However, recently this opinion has been doubted.<sup>11</sup> We do not know the exact date when the Cimmerian Bosphorus passed into the hands of the Goths. Vasilev supposes that it happened at the end of the fourth century, at any rate after 362.<sup>12</sup> From St. John Chrysostom we know that towards 400 it already belonged to them, as I shall present below. They forced the Romans to leave their fortifications on the capes of Ay-Todor<sup>13</sup> and Alma-Kermen.<sup>14</sup> Archaeological data testify that the Goths occupied mainly the Cimmerian Bosphorus and the southern part of the Crimea, while their Sarmato-Alanian allies settled in Bosphorus and the central part of the peninsula.<sup>15</sup>

The attack of the Huns in 375 caused the fall of the Gothic kingdom in what is now Ukraine, and provoked a great migration of people. In this period, some Goths and Alans may have been able to escape to the Crimea.

A group of the Huns, relatively small, crossed the Cimmerian Bosphorus and entered the Crimea, where they encountered the Goths. The Huns probably drove them into the mountainous southwestern part of the peninsula. Then this group of

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<sup>8</sup> Constantinos Porphyrogenitos, *De administrando imperio*, 53, in *Die Byzantiner und ihre Nachbarn*, ed. and tr. K. Belke, P. Soustal (Vienna: Verlag Fassbaender, 1995), 261.

<sup>9</sup> Zosimos, *Historia Nova*, ed. and tr. François Paschould, v. II, 21 (Paris: Les belles Lettres, 1979), 77.

<sup>10</sup> A. A. Vasilev, *The Goths in the Crimea* (Cambridge, MA: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936), 22-23.

<sup>11</sup> B. Nadel, "Literary Tradition and Epigraphical Evidence: Constantine Porphyrogenitus' Information on the Bosporan Kingdom in the Time of Emperor Diocletian Reconsidered," *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 25 (1977): 87-114.

<sup>12</sup> Vasilev, 22-23.

<sup>13</sup> M. Rostovtzeff, "Novye latinskie nadpisi iz Khersonesa" (New Latin Inscriptions from Cherson), *Izvestiya arkhologicheskoy komissii* 23 (1907): 4.

<sup>14</sup> T. Vysotskaya, *Pozdnie skify v Yugo-Zapadnom Krymu* (Late Scythians in the Southeastern Crimea) (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1972), 57-58.

<sup>15</sup> A. I. Aybabin, "Khronologia mogil'nikov Kryma pozdnerimskogo i ranniesrednevekovogo vremeni" (Chronology of graves in the Crimea of late Roman and early medieval times), in *Materialy po*

nomads proceeded to the Ukrainian steppes and joined the main body of their countrymen. Some of them may have stayed in the Crimean steppes.<sup>16</sup>

## 2. *Foederati* of the Roman Empire

In 376 the Goths, together with some Alanic and Hunnic deserters, crossed the Danube and entered the Roman Empire. Roman Emperor Theodosius (379-395) drew up a *foedeus* with the barbarian newcomers in 382. According to this treaty the Goths were allowed to settle in the north of Thrace and were obliged to serve in the Roman army. In a panegyric dedicated to Theodosius and delivered by Pacatus in 391 the Goths and the Alans recruited for the service to the Empire are mentioned.<sup>17</sup>

The same pattern was followed in the Crimea. From the fragment of a decree found in Cherson we know that first Theodosius and then in 408 Honorius (395-423) allowed the *foederati* of the Roman Empire to settle in this town and its suburbs. It was probably at that time that one of the groups of barbarians, consisting of the Goths and the Alans, took its place in the valley near modern Alushta. Their graves were found on the slopes of the mountain Chatyr-Dah as well as in the village of Luchyste.<sup>18</sup>

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*arkheologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii* (Materials on Archaeology, History and Ethnography of Tauria), ed. Alexander Aibabin (Simferopol: Tavria, 1990), 67.

<sup>16</sup> Vasilev, 24.

<sup>17</sup> Y. Kulakovskiy, *Alany po svedeniyam klassicheskikh i vizantiyskikh pisateley* (The Alans According to the Accounts of Classical and Medieval Writers) (Kiev: Institut Sviatogo Vladimira, 1899), 28.

<sup>18</sup> Aybabin, 67; V. Sydorenko, "K voprosu o etnicheskoy atribucii Ay-Todorskogo klada monet IV - nachala V v. s podrazhaniyami luchistogo tipa" (The Question of the Ethnic Attributes of Ay-Todor Treasure of Coins from the fourth to the beginning of the fifth century with the following of the "Luchiste" type), in *Materialy k etnicheskoy istorii Kryma* (Materials to the Ethnic History of the Crimea), ed. A. Aybabin (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1987), 133-144.

## 2. 1. *Acceptance of Christianity. John Chrysostom and the Crimean Goths*

Crimean Goths were in the orbit of Byzantine influence. Unlike the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths, they accepted Christianity in its Orthodox version, and not Arianism. The first information about it is given by St. John Chrysostom, who was deeply concerned with the affairs of the Gothic church in the Crimea.<sup>19</sup> In one of his letters, he writes about Unila, whom he appointed as a bishop of Gothia around 400 and who died in 404. A new bishop that had to be chosen was supposed “to sail to Bosphorus or to those general regions.”<sup>20</sup> After Unila’s death in 404, Gothic bishops and the Gothic eparchate in the Crimea are often mentioned in the ecclesiastical sources. Chrysostom’s evidence proves that around 400 Bosphorus was under Gothic control. Vasilev supposed that it could have been a residence of the Gothic bishop in the Crimea as well as a political centre of the Crimean Gothia.<sup>21</sup> Christianity spread in the western part of the peninsula probably from Bosphorus.

From John Chrysostom’s speech given in 398 or 399, we find out that in the Church of St. Paul, which belonged to the Gothic community in Constantinople, there was celebrated a Mass in Gothic and passages from the Holy Scripture written in their own language were read.<sup>22</sup> We know about the Gothic translation of the Bible made by Ulfila (d. 388). At that time, the Gothic language may well have been used in the liturgy also in the Crimea. There is some indirect evidence of it for a later period, which I shall present below.

<sup>19</sup> The Orthodox faith of the Crimean Goths mentions also Procopius of Caesaria: Prokopius, *De Bello Gothico*, ed. and tr. H. B. Dewing, VIII, v, 9-11 (London: Harvard University Press, 1950), 84-87.

<sup>20</sup> Joannes Chrysostomos, *Epistola XIV Olympiadi diaconissae*. *Patrologiae cursus completus, series graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, v. 52, col. 618 (Paris, 1841-1857).

<sup>21</sup> Vasilev, 35.

<sup>22</sup> Joannis Chrysostomi *VIII Homilia*, PG v. 63, col. 501.

John Chrysostom also mentions a ruler of the Goths (ῥήξ τῶν Γότθων), who asked in his letter for the appointment of a new bishop.<sup>23</sup> We know nothing about the character of the rulership in the Crimean Gothia. Probably the word ῥήξ does not describe it precisely. This term was used only by John; in later sources the ruler of the Crimean Goths is usually called a toparch (τόπαρχος).

## 2. 2. Dory. The Goths in the times of Justinian

We do not know much about the situation of the Crimean Goths in the fifth century. After the death of Attila the Hun in 453, his kingdom disintegrated. According to Jordanes, after the eldest son of Attila died in battle *reliqui vero germani eius eo occiso fugantur juxta litus Pontici maris, ubi prius Gothos sedisse descripsimus*; in other words the Huns appeared on the Black Sea again.<sup>24</sup>

The Hunnic invasion seriously changed the ethnic situation in the Crimea. As Procopius of Caesarea states, the Hunnic tribe of the Utugurs fought a battle with the Goths, probably on the modern Kerch Peninsula.<sup>25</sup> The Hunnic attack divided the Crimean Goths into two groups. One part of those Goths, who had previously dwelled on the plain of the eastern Crimea, went to the modern Taman Peninsula; the other part took refuge in the mountains of the southwestern Crimea. From the second part of the fifth century the Huns were the only rulers of the Crimean steppes.

Procopius of Caesarea, who lived in the sixth century, is considered to be a well-informed historian. In his work *De Aedificiis*, referring to the times of Emperor Justinian, he provides the first detailed data about the Crimean Goths:

And there is a certain region along the coast there called Dory, where Goths have lived from ancient times, those namely who had not followed Theodoric

<sup>23</sup> PG, v. 52, col. 618.

<sup>24</sup> Jordanes, *Getica*, ed. and tr. E. Skrzhinskaya (Moscow: Nauka, 1960), 263.

<sup>25</sup> Prokopius Caesariensis, *De bello gothico*, VII, v, 18-21 (London: Harvard University Press, 1950), 92-95.

when he went to Italy, but remained there of their own accord, and even up to my day they are on terms of alliance with the Romans. And they march with the Romans against their enemies whenever the Emperor so wishes. Their number comes to three thousand, and they are both excellent soldiers and skilful tillers of the soil, and the most hospitable people in the world. The land of Dory itself lies on high ground, yet it is neither rough nor hard, but good soil and productive of the best crops. However, the Emperor built no city or fortress in any part of this land, since the men of the country would not suffer themselves to be confined in any fortified places but always lived most happily in an open plain. But wherever the region seemed easily accessible to assailants, he shut off these approaches with long walls and thereby freed the Goths from fear of invasion. So much, then, for this.<sup>26</sup>

Important for us is a piece of information about the main town of the Crimean Goths, Dory. It existed already in the fifth century. It is mentioned in the handbook of Latin grammar *Institutiones Grammaticae* written by Priscian, who lived in Constantinople during the time of Anastasius I (491-518).<sup>27</sup>

This name appears also in the *Cosmographia*, written by an unknown author, the so-called Geograph of Ravenna, at the end of the seventh century. Originally written in Greek, it was translated into Latin only in the ninth century. In the Latin version, the only one preserved, there is the following fragment:

*in qua Bosforiana patria plurimas fuisse civitates legimus, ex quibus aliquantas designare volumus, id est...Boristenida, Olbiapolis, Capolis, Dori, Chersona, Theosiopolis, Careon, Trapezus.*<sup>28</sup>

As we can see, Procopius used the name of the town for the whole region of the Goths mentioned by John Chrysostom. In later sources, this part of the Crimea was usually called Gothia. About the borders of this region another fragment of the

<sup>26</sup> Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, ed. and tr. H. B. Dewing, III, vii, 13-17 (London: Harvard University Press, 1954), 214-217.

<sup>27</sup> Priscinus Gramaticus, *Caesariensis Institutionum Grammaticarum libri XVIII*, VI, 1, ed. M. Hertz (Leipzig: Teubner, 1855), 195: "Quattuordecim sunt literae terminales nominum, quibus latinus utitur sermo... in Graecis autem invenitur etiam y, ut 'Dory,' nomen oppidi Pontici..."

<sup>28</sup> Ravennas Anonymus, *Cosmographia*, IV, 3, ed. M. Pinder, G. Parthey (Berlin: Nicolaus, 1860), 172-174.

*Cosmographia* of Geograph of Ravenna informs us. They ran to the east from Balaclava and to the west from Sudak.<sup>29</sup>

Greek, Gothic, Caucasian and Celtic etymologies of the toponym Dory (τὸ Δόρυ, later *Doros*, τὸ Δόρος) have been proposed. This question remains open.

Very important for our research is the problem of localisation of Dory. On the plateau of Mangup, the later capital of the Gothic principality of Theodoro, in the basilica was found a fragmentary Greek inscription: “Of Justinian ... Emperor ... Augustus” (Ιουστινιάνου...Αυτόκράτορος...Σεβάστου).<sup>30</sup> This inscription indicates that the temple existed already at the time of Justinian, and the building corresponds very well to his epoch. Marcin Broniewski, Polish envoy to the Crimean Khan in 1578-1579, in his *Tartariae Descriptio*, calls the basilica the temple of St. Constantine.<sup>31</sup> Procopius says that the building of Justinian in Epenopolis started just because this town was connected with the names of Constantine and Helena.<sup>32</sup> *Per analogiam*, Vasilev concludes that the reverence for the founder of Constantinople prompted Justinian to build the temple of St. Constantine, also on Mangup.<sup>33</sup>

According to Procopius, Justinian shut out the points easily accessible for an enemy in the region of the Crimean Goths with the “long walls” and “liberated the Goths from any kind of danger of attack.”<sup>34</sup>

In 1984, during the examination of the ravine of Karalez (Storozheva) were found the remains of the solid defensive wall, which shut out the ravine. Lately, some

<sup>29</sup> Ravennas Anonymus, *Cosmographia*, IV, 3, 370.

<sup>30</sup> V. Latyšev, *Izvestiya Archeologicheskoy Komissii* 65 (1918), 18-19.

<sup>31</sup> Martinus Bronioivius, *Tartariae Descriptio* (Cologne, 1595), 7-8.

<sup>32</sup> Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, ed. and tr. H. B. Dewing, V, ii, 1-5 (London: Harvard University Press, 1954), 320-323.

<sup>33</sup> Vasilev, 71-72.

<sup>34</sup> Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, III, vii, 17 (London: Harvard University Press, 1954), 216-217.

Gothic-Alanian graves were excavated on the slopes of Mangup; these probably belong to the *foederati* of Byzantium. All this corroborates the account of Procopius.<sup>35</sup>

The inscription with the name of Justinian as well as the remains of the “long walls” is the main argument of the authors who identified Dory with Mangup.<sup>36</sup>

The reign of Justinian (527-565) was of great significance for the Crimea. The Emperor captured and then fortified Bosporus, renovated Cherson, and built the fortifications in Aluston and Gursubits (today Alushta and Gurzuf).<sup>37</sup> It is very probable that simultaneously with Dory in the southwestern Crimea were erected such fortresses as Kalmita in Inkerman, Eski-Kermen, Chufut-Kale, Tepe-Kermen, Syuren’ and Bakla. This complex of fortifications resembles those *limites* built by Justinian on different borders of the Empire.

The enlargement of the Gothic ethnic element in Bosporus was connected with the capture of the city by Byzantium. After the attack of the Huns, the troops of the Gothic *foederati* were put in the city under the command of the *comes Ponti Euxini* (count of the Black Sea) John as well as two Gothic commanders from Frakia, the *magister militum* Godilas and the *stratilatus* Badourios.<sup>38</sup>

### 2. 3. *The Gothic Climata*

As we can see, facing the danger of Hunnic attacks, the Crimean Goths in the sixth century remained the *foederati* of the Byzantine Empire. It was true also for the seventh century. In the Latin translation of Theophanes’ *Chronographia* made in the

<sup>35</sup> Ihor Pioro, “Kryms’ki Goty u svitl’i mynulych ta suchasnykh istoryko-arkheolohichnykh doslidzhen” (The Crimean Goths in the light of present-day historical and archaeological research), *Chronika* 33 (2000): 243-244.

<sup>36</sup> Ihor Pioro, *Krymskaya Gotia (Crimean Gothia)* (Kiev: Naukova Dumka, 1990), 57-111.

<sup>37</sup> Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, III, vii, 12 (London: Harvard University Press, 1954), 216-217.

<sup>38</sup> *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, ed. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 267, 269; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, in *Vizantijskie istoricheskie sochineniya: Chronografija Feofana i Breviariy Nikifora* (Byzantine historical writings: *Chronographia* of

ninth century by Anastasius Bibliothecarius, we read that in 654 Emperor Constantius exiled Pope Martin I to Cherson and “the other *Climata*” (*S. Martinum et Maximum apud Chersonam et alia climata exilio relegavit*).<sup>39</sup> The word *climata*<sup>40</sup> (in Greek κλίματα) which was often used in later sources referred to the Crimean Gothia (and may be also Alania, as I shall discuss below) as a vassal state of the Byzantine Empire. It is usually mentioned in one line with Cherson and sometimes Bosphorus.<sup>41</sup> Another important piece of information is contained in the *Vita* of Theodore and Euprepus preserved in the *Collectanea*, another work of Anastasius Bibliothecarius. We read that Theodore (d. ca. 655) and Euprepus (d. ca. 667), who were exiled to Cherson by the Emperor Heraclius, “were there often separated by force and sent to forts belonging to neighbouring peoples” (*Chersonem in exilium missis et illic vi saepius ab invicem separatis et in castris gentium ibidem adjacentium deputatis*).<sup>42</sup> “The neighbouring peoples” mentioned here are most likely the Goths and the Alans; about the complex of fortifications in the southwestern Crimea I have already written above. From this passage we can conclude that the forts mentioned were under the control of the Byzantine Empire.

It seems that not only political but also ecclesiastical ties connected Gothia with the Byzantine enclaves in the Crimea, at least until the end of the seventh century. In 692 at the Trullan Council in Constantinople there was present “George

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Theophanes and *Breviarium* of Nicephoros), ed. and tr. I. Chichurov (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), 27- 28, 51, 80, 81.

<sup>39</sup> Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Chronologia S. Nicephori*, PG, v. CXXIX, col. 425. The papal librarian Anastasius in 870s translated the *Chronographia* of Theophanes into Latin. This translation has survived in older copies than the Greek version. Therefore it is also important. In the Greek version of *Chronographia* the passage under discussion is formulated in a different way: “Cherson and the Klimata” (ἐν Χερσώνικοις κλίμασιν); see *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, ed. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, 462-463; Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. I. Chichurov, 36, 60, 106.

<sup>40</sup> In my work I shall use the Latin version *climata*. Translation of it as *regions* can be misleading.

<sup>41</sup> A. Kunik, “O zapiskie gotskago toparcha” (On the Report of the Gothic Toparch), *Zapiski imperatorskoj akademii nauk*, 24 (1874): 74-81. See also A. G. Gercen, Y. M. Mogarichev, *Krepost’ dragocennostey Kyrk-Or Chufut-Kale* (The fort of the treasures Kyrk-Or Chufut-Kale) (Simferopol: Tavria, 1993), 39-40.



the unworthy bishop of Cherson Doras” (Γεώργιος ἀνάξιος ἐπίσκοπος Χερσώνος τῆς Δόραντος).<sup>43</sup> On the list of metropolises from the seventh century, in the eparchate of Zykha there are mentioned three archbishops: those of Cherson, Bosporus and Nicopsis.<sup>44</sup> Neither Doros nor the eparchate of Gothia are named. Most probably, a bishop of Cherson was at the same time a bishop of Doros; in other words, Gothia belonged to the eparchate of Cherson.<sup>45</sup>

### 3. Gothia between Byzantium and the Khazars

At the end of the sixth century, the political situation in the Crimea had changed. In place of the Huns came the other nomads that encroached upon Gothia during the whole seventh century. In 576 the Khazars occupied Bosporus; in 581 they were already pitching a camp in the vicinity of Cherson. However, they did not occupy the city. Because of internal conflicts, the Eastern Turks, as the Khazars were often called in Byzantine sources, retreated from the Crimea. Before 698 the Khazars, who already had a huge and powerful country between the lower Volga and the Don rivers, crossed the Cimmerian Straits (now the Straits of Kerch) and occupied Bosporus again.<sup>46</sup>

There is some information about the Crimean Gothia at the period of the Khazar predominance in the peninsula. We find it in the *Chronography* by Theophanes (760-818) and the *Breviarium* by Nicephoros (758-826) the most important sources for a history of Byzantium and its relations with its neighbours in

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<sup>42</sup> Anastasius Bibliothecarius, *Collectanea*, PL, v. CXXIX, col. 684.

<sup>43</sup> *Sancrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, ed. Mansi, v. X, col. 992 (Florentia, 1764).

<sup>44</sup> Gelzer, “Ungedruckte und ungenügend veröffentlichte Texte der Notitiae episcopatum”, *Abhandlungen der Philosophische-philologische Classe der Bayerische Akademie* 21 (1901): 535.

<sup>45</sup> Vasilev, 80.

<sup>46</sup> Vasilev, 74-76.

the seventh and eighth centuries. The *Chronography* and the *Breviarium* often agree with each other, which means that their authors used the same sources.

Both sources say that the Emperor Justinian II, deposed in 695 and exiled to Cherson, fled to Doros in order to arrange a meeting with the khagan of the Khazars. Nicephoros is more precise: he writes about Justinian's flight to the "castle called Doros and situated in Gothic territory."<sup>47</sup> In another place Theophanes also mentions "Chersonits, Bosporits and *other Climata*" (τῶν λοιπῶ κλίματα).<sup>48</sup>

From the fact that Justinian fled from Cherson, which was a usual place of exile in Byzantium, to Doros we can conclude that at the turn of the seventh century the vassal relationship between Gothia and Byzantine Empire was rather loose. On the other hand, there is no information about the subordination of Gothic land to the Khazars, who already occupied the steppe part of the Crimea. Probably at that period Gothia, situated in the Crimean mountains, oscillated between these two powers.

### 3. 1. *John of Gothia*

One of the most important sources to shed some light on the history of the Crimean Gothia in the eighth century, is the *Vita* of the Bishop John of Gothia. It was written by an anonymous author during the second period of iconoclasm in Byzantium, in 815-843.

From the *Vita* we know that the Bishop of Gothia, John's predecessor, whose name is unknown, signed the decrees of the iconoclastic Council of 753-754. After it, he was promoted by Constantine V to the post of metropolitan in Heraclea in Thrace, near Constantinople. Crimean Gothia remained devoted to Orthodoxy, and did not

<sup>47</sup> *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, ed. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, 520. Nicephoros, *Breviarium*, ed. I. Chichurov, 163.

<sup>48</sup> *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, ed. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, 527; Theofanes, *Chronographia*, ed. I. Chichurov, 39-40, 62-63, 155, 163.

wish “to take part in the novelties of the lawless Council.” They elected John soon after the Council, around 755.

John originated from “the land of the Tauroscythians situated on the other side [of the Black Sea] which belongs to the country of the Goths, from the trading place of Parthenits<sup>49</sup>” (ὁρμώμενος ἐκ τῆς περατικῆς τῶν Ταυροσκυθῶν γῆς, τῆς ὑπὸ τὴν χώραν τῶν Γότθων τελούσης, ἐμπορίου λεγομένου Παρθενιτῶν).<sup>50</sup>

“The inhabitants of Gothia” sent John to Iberia (Georgia), to the archbishop (*Katholikos*), who ordained him bishop.<sup>51</sup> The inscription found in Cherson testifies that it happened in 758.<sup>52</sup> John kept up his correspondence with the Patriarch of Jerusalem and the Patriarch of Constantinople; then, after the death of the iconoclastic Emperors Constantine and Leo, during the reign of Irene and her son Constantine VI, the Bishop of Gothia visited the capital of the Empire and met the Empress. Afterwards, he returned to the Crimea.<sup>53</sup>

John was not present at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, where the veneration of icons was restored. His representative, the monk Cyril, signed the Acts of the Council.<sup>54</sup>

At that time, John actively participated in the political events of Gothia. In 786 or 787 the Khazar khagan captured Doros and installed a garrison there. John “along with the ruler of Gothia, his chief officers (τῷ Κυρῷ Γοτθίας καὶ τοῖς Ἀρχόνσι) and all the people, took part in the rebellion.” It is unclear why, but the Bishop of Gothia was at the head of the plot. John together with “his people” drove away the Khazar

<sup>49</sup> The village called Partenit still exists on the seashore in the southeastern part of the Crimea.

<sup>50</sup> A. Nikitskiy, “Zhytie Ioanna, episkopa Gotii” (Vita of Bishop John of Gothia), *Zapiski Odesskogo Obshchestva istorii i drevnstrej*, 13 (1883): 25.

<sup>51</sup> This information is confirmed in Georgian sources: M. Sabinin, *Polnoye zhyzneopisanie sviatykh gruzinskoy cerkvi* (A Complete Biography of the Saints of the Georgian Church), II (Petersburg, 1871), 190.

<sup>52</sup> Nikitskiy, 26.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>54</sup> *Sacrorum Conciliorum Collectio*, ed. Mansi, v. XIII, 137.

garrison from Doros and occupied the mountain passes which led to the town. Yet they met with a repulse. The Bishop of Gothia was delivered to the khagan and imprisoned in the city of Phullae, while the ruler of Gothia was pardoned. John managed to escape across the sea to Amastris, where he died four years later. The body of the bishop was transported to Parthenits, where it was buried in the monastery of the Holy Apostles, which owed its development to the deceased. By John's labours there were erected new buildings, and a library was founded.<sup>55</sup>

As we can see from the *Vita* of John of Gothia, the Khazars around 787 occupied the chief centre of Gothia, Doros. However, in the 790s we find in certain sources the information about the Gothic toparch. In the *Vita* of Theodore of Studion, written at the end of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century, there is a passage referring to Emperor Constantine VI, who in 795 put his wife away in the monastery and married Theodota, a relative of Theodore of Studion. In the *Vita* it is said that the evil from the capital spread to the other parts of the Empire. "The king of Lombardy, the toparch of Gothia, and the toparch of Bosporus" followed Constantine's example (οὕτω γὰρ ὁ τῆς Λογγιβαρδίας ῥῆξ, οὕτως ὁ τῆς Γοτθίας, οὕτως ὁ τῆς Βοσπόρου τόπαρχης).<sup>56</sup> Another fragment refers to the following of the bad example by the rulers "in Lombardy, Gothia and its *climata*" (ἐν τῇ Λογγοβαρδίᾳ, καὶ Γοτθίᾳ, καὶ τοῖς κλίμασιν αὐτῆς).<sup>57</sup>

The sources under discussion suggest that at this period the toparch of Gothia was a subject of the Byzantine Empire. However, this dependence was rather nominal, because of the Khazar domination. It is hard to say what the relations were

<sup>55</sup> In the basilica of Partenit an inscription was discovered from 1427 which confirms this information. It explains that the church of the Apostles Peter and Paul "was erected many years ago by the our holy father and Archbishop of the city Theodoro and all Gothia, John the Confessor, and restored now." Latyshev, *Sbornik grecheskch nadpisey khristianskikh vremen yuzhnoy Rossii* (A Collection of Greek Inscriptions of Christian Times from South Russia) (Petersburg, 1896), 78.

<sup>56</sup> *Vita S. Theodori Studitae a Michaele Monaco conscripta*, 14, PG, v. XCIX, col. 252.

between Gothia and Khazaria. We do not know for how long the Khazar garrison remained in Doros. Even if at the end of the eighth century the Khazar governor (*tudun*) still was in Doros, it does not exclude the presence of the Gothic toparch, since the Khazars usually preserved the self-government of the subject peoples. In the *Vita* of Theodore of Studion there is also some information about the toparch of Bosporus, the city which we know to have been subject to the Khazars.<sup>58</sup>

### 3. 2. *The ethnic situation in the Crimea in the eighth and ninth centuries*

Sources of the eighth and ninth centuries, which mention in passing the Goths and Gothia, give us some hints about the ethnic situation in the region under consideration. Epiphanius, who lived at the turn of the eighth century, when describing the travels of Saint Andrew writes the following: “The Apostle withdrew to the western extremity of the peninsula, to the city of the Goths, Chersonesus, where savage and pagan people dwelt.”<sup>59</sup>

In the Pannonian *Vita* of Constantine the Philosopher, later called Cyril (827-869) there is an account, which is believed by some scholars to be connected with the Crimean Goths. On his way to the Khazars, Constantine-Cyril visited Cherson, where he found a Gospel and a Psalter written in “*ruški* (роушки) characters” and met a man who “spoke this language.” Constantine-Cyril learned this language and soon was able to read and to interpret the text. Some scholars affirmed that we are dealing here with the Gospel written in the Gothic alphabet established by Ulfila.<sup>60</sup> This is of

<sup>57</sup> Theodores Studita, *Epistolae*, I, 31, PG, XCIX, col. 1013.

<sup>58</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia*, ed. Chichurov, 39-40, 62-63.

<sup>59</sup> Vasilev, 79.

<sup>60</sup> Ferdinand Liewehr, “Wie Konstantin-Kirill mit Wulfilas Bibelübersetzung bekannt wurde,” *Beiträge zur namenforschung* 3 (1952): 365-79. K. Tytarenko, “Perebuvannia Kostiantyna Filosofa u Krymu i problema rus’kykh pys’men” (Constantine the Philosopher in the Crimea and the Question of the “rus’ki writings”), *Khronika* 33 (2000): 277.

course only a hypothesis, but another fragment of *Vita* also suggests the usage of the Gothic language, written as well as spoken.

During his discussion on liturgical languages held in Venice, Constantine-Cyril said that there are many peoples who had books and praised God, each of them in his own language. There are the following: Armenians, Persians, Abasgians, Iberians, Sogdians, Goths, Avars, Turks, Khazars, Arabs, Egyptians, Syrians, and “many others.”<sup>61</sup> Constantine-Cyril, who visited the Crimea personally, could have known about the Gothic language from his own experience. There is evidence that Gothic was spoken in the Crimea also in the later period, but the *Vita* of Constantine-Cyril is the first source implying the usage of a written Gothic language in the Crimea. For the later period we have Hans Schiltberger’s account, which suggests that the divine service at the beginning of the fifteenth century was still performed in Gothic. However, all Crimean inscriptions were written either in Greek, or in Latin, or in Hebrew.

The previously mentioned Anastasius Bibliothecarius, during his stay in Constantinople in 869-870, collects information about the finding of the remains of Saint Clemens by Constantine the Philosopher, that is, Constantine-Cyril. The details of this event were told him by Metropolitan Mitrophan of Smirne, who at that time was in exile not far from Cherson. In the letter written between 875 and 879 Anastasius says that Cherson borders on the land of the Khazars, and that the pagans were coming from all sides, while in the city there remained a bishop with a few believers who were afraid to leave it. A part of the Cherson region was completely abandoned; the city was inhabited “not by the indigents but by the comers from the different barbarian peoples, very often the cruel robbers” (*omnes accolae loci illius*

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 290.

*utpote non indigenae, sed ex diversis barbaricis gentibus advenae, immo valde saevi latrunculi*).<sup>62</sup>

The sources quoted above speak for the changes in the ethnic composition of the Byzantine enclave in the Crimea. The “barbarian peoples” mentioned by Anastasius are probably the Alans and Goths. We know about the Alan settlements in the vicinity of Cherson from the archaeological data as well as from the *Epistle* of Theodore, on which I shall speak below. In later sources Cherson is sometimes considered to be a city belonging to the Goths.<sup>63</sup> However, this could also reflect the ignorance of their authors, who were writing about a remote land which they had never visited.

### 3. 3. Restoration of Byzantine control over Gothia

From Anastasius’ report we can conclude that in 875-879 Gothia still remained under the Khazar sway. We do not know when exactly the Byzantine power in Gothia was restored. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (913-959) in his treatise *De Administrando Imperio*, written around 950, mentions Cherson and the *Climata* together, as a region, which must be protected by Byzantium. He speaks also about the menace of the Pechenegs, who were “neighbours to the district of Cherson” and may have plundered “Cherson itself and the so-called *Climata*.”<sup>64</sup> He also considers a possibility of the attack of the north Caucasian Alans on the Khazars, which would make it impossible

<sup>62</sup> I. V Jagich, “Novoe svedetelstvo o dejatelnosti Konstantina Filosoфа” (A new account of the activity of Constantine the Philosopher), *Zapiski imperatorskoj akademii nauk* 72 (1893): 6-7.

<sup>63</sup> The *bull*a of Pope John XXII, published in Avignon in August 16. 1333, contains the following fragment concerning the appointment of Richard as a bishop of the Cherson: “Locum Cersone situm in terra Gothie consistente in partibus orientalis.” See A. Theiner, *Vetera monumenta Poloniae et Lithuaniae gentimque finitimarum historiam illustrantia* (Rome: Typis Vaticanis, 1860), 348.

<sup>64</sup> Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, ed. Gyula Moravcsik, tr. R. J. H. Jenkins (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1967), 49. In the quotation I have changed “the Regions” of Jenkins’ translation for *Climata*, which in my opinion is more correct and precise.

for the Khazars to wage war against the Crimean territories of the Empire.<sup>65</sup> It means that Gothia fell under the real control of the Byzantine Empire before 950. The growing power of the Pechenegs in the Crimea “meant a corresponding decline, and finally the collapse of the Khazar predominance in the peninsula.”<sup>66</sup>

Different evidence is provided by a letter of the Khazar Khagan Joseph to the vizier of the Caliph of Cordoba, Abdarrahan III Hasdaju ibn Shaprute, dated to 960. Here is mentioned for the first time Mangup (Man-k-t), the later capital of the Gothic Principality of Theodoro, as one of the towns under the Khazar power.<sup>67</sup> Maybe this letter reflects just a theoretical claim, or it could be the case that Mangup was one of the last posts under Khazar control in Gothia. We can assume that in the ninth and tenth centuries Gothia was a territory of Byzantine and Khazar interaction. When the Khazar power declined, Gothia passed (maybe gradually) under the control of Byzantium. From the second half of the tenth century comes the seal of the governor (*tourmarch*) of Gothia with the inscription τουρμάρχης Γοτθίας on it. It seems that Gothia was a *tourma* of the theme of Cherson.<sup>68</sup>

#### **4. The Cuman Predominance and split with Byzantium. Dependence on the Empire of Trebizond.**

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 63-64.

<sup>66</sup> Vasilev, 116.

<sup>67</sup> P. Kokovcov, *Yevreysko-khazarskaya perepiska v X v.* (Jewish – Khazarian correspondence in the tenth century) (Leningrad: Izdatelstvo AN SSSR, 1932), 135. It was one of the documents that passed through the hands of the Hebraist Firkovich, who was often accused of forgery. Yet the authenticity of the document under discussion nowadays is not questioned: M. Artamonov, *Istoria khazar* (The History of the Khazars) (Leningrad: Ermitage, 1962), 125.

<sup>68</sup> Nikita Khrapunov, *The Administration of the Byzantine Provincial City from the Sixth to the Eleventh Centuries on the Example of Cherson*. MA Thesis in Medieval Studies (Budapest: Central European University, 2001), 45-46. Probably there were two subdivisions of theme, namely Cherson and Klimata. Each of them minted coins of Byzantine type with its own indication of place ΠΧ (πολις Χερσών) for Cherson and ΚΑΜ (Κλίματα) for Gothia.



We have very poor information about the situation of the Crimean Gothia in the period between the eleventh and twelfth century. It is a dark period for the history of the Crimea in general. At the beginning of the second part of the eleventh century Cherson and Sugdeia (Sudak), and so probably also Gothia, remained under Byzantine control. This is attested by the inscription from 1059, with the name of Emperor Isaac Comnenos found in Cherson.<sup>69</sup> From the second half of the eleventh till the thirteenth century, the Cumans ruled over the steppes of what is nowadays Ukraine. The Arab geographer Idrisi, who wrote his work at the court of Sicilian King Roger II in the twelfth century, says that the way from Cherson to Galita (now Yalta) lies in the land of the Cumans.<sup>70</sup> From the relation of the thirteenth-century author William of Rubruk, to whom I shall return later, we know that the Crimea paid a tribute to them.<sup>71</sup>

The political status of Crimean Gothia in the eleventh century is not clear. The title of Emperor Manuel I Comnenos (1143-1180) contains the adjective “Gothic” in the list of peoples over whom he reigned; it is hard to say if it was a reflection of the tradition or of the real condition. Maybe the fact that Crimean territories paid a tribute to the Cumans did not mean for Byzantium the loss of its possessions in the peninsula.<sup>72</sup> From 1170 we do not meet the archbishops of Gothia<sup>73</sup> in the *Notitia* of the Councils in Constantinople. It may testify to the political split of Gothia with the Byzantine Empire.

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<sup>69</sup> B. Latyshev, “Etiudy po vizantiyskoy epigrafike” (Studies on the Byzantine Epigraphics) *Vizantiyskiy Vremennik* 2 (1895): 184-188.

<sup>70</sup> Idrisi, *Geographie*, ed. and tr. A. Jaubert, II (Paris, 1840), 395.

<sup>71</sup> *The Texts and Versions of John de Plano Carpini and William de Rubruquis*, ed. C. R. Beazley (Nendeln: Kraus, 1967), 146-147.

<sup>72</sup> Vasilev, 151.

<sup>73</sup> Title of Archbishop was given to the Bishop of Gothia during the reign of Leo the VI, the Philosopher (886-911) – Vasilev, 38.

After the occupation of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204, Gothia together with Cherson fell under the sway of the Empire of Trebizond. This state lasted till 1261 (after the Mongolian attack in 1242, the dependence on Trebizond was just nominal). Important information is given to us by the *Synopsis* of the miracles of Saint Eugenius, written by John Lazaropoulos, a high clergyman and then a Metropolitan of Trebizond living in the second half of the fourteenth century. We find out from the source that Cherson and the Gothic *Climata* paid a tribute to Trebizond.<sup>74</sup> Significant for our research is the term “Gothic *Climata*” used only in the *Synopsis*; it shows that the names Gothia and *Climata* (Τὰ Κλίματα) refer to the same territory.

## 5. Appearance of the Tatars and the Genoese on the Crimean scene

In 1223 the Mongols or Tatars appeared in the Crimea for the first time. They plundered its eastern part and occupied Soldaia (Sugdaia, Surozh, now Sudak). According to the Arab historian of the thirteenth century, Ibn-al-Athir, its inhabitants abandoned the city, and some of them climbed the mountains to flee.<sup>75</sup> This means that they escaped to the territory of Crimean Gothia, which was not reached by this first wave of the Tatars. During this campaign, the Mongols defeated the Cumans, who had a dominant position in the Crimea. In the same year the Mongols retreated from the peninsula.

In 1238 the Tatars attacked the Crimea again. During the great campaign of Mongolian Khan Batu (1227-1255), they also conquered Gothia, which is mentioned by the traveller Marco Polo (1254-1324).<sup>76</sup> It happened in 1242, as Sanudo Marino

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<sup>74</sup> Vasilev, 160-161.

<sup>75</sup> Vasilev, 162.

<sup>76</sup> Marco Polo, *The Description of the World*, ed. and tr. A. C. Moule and P. Pelliot (London: Routledge, 1938-1959), 477: “the first lord of the Tartars of the Sunsetting was one who was named

Senior (died in 1337) reports.<sup>77</sup> A fourteenth-century Byzantine scholar, Nicephorus Gregoras, also names Goths among the peoples living on Lake Maeotis (the Sea of Azov) and on the Black Sea, who were invaded by the Tatars in the thirteenth century.<sup>78</sup> Newly arriving nomads occupied the northern and southeastern parts of the peninsula. The dependence of the subject lands on the Tatars was manifested by the tribute. Their self-government and a certain autonomy were usually preserved. The appearance of the Tatars opened up a new period in the history of the Crimea. It changed the political as well as the ethnic situation in the peninsula. At that period, as the account of Ibn-al-Athir suggests, the Alan and Greek element probably increased in Gothia, which was more secure because of its geographical position.

During the rule of Khan Tokta (1290-1312), the peninsula was devastated by them several times. An expedition by Nogay in 1299 had tragic consequences for such towns as Soldaia, Caffa and Kyrk-Yer (Chufut-Kale). The settlement of Eski-Kermen ceased to exist. Cherson suffered greatly. Nogay's raid also reached the centre of Gothia, Mangup, as is attested by the bodies of its defenders buried in the city under the walls of the basilica. The attacks of the Tatars did not stop in the times of Khan Uzbek (1312-1342). The population of the Crimea must have diminished as a result of the continuous raids of the Tatars.

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Sain [Tatar "good," a nickname of Khan Batu] who was a very great king and powerful. This king Sain conquered part of Rosie and Comanie and Alanie and Lac and Mengiar and Çic and Gutia and Gaçarie; the king Sain conquered all these many lands and many provinces. And before he conquered them they were all subject to the Coman, but they did not hold themselves all together nor were they in one unity..."

<sup>77</sup> Marinus Sanutus dictus Torsellus, *Liber Secretorum Fidelium Crucis super Terrae Sanctae recuperatione et conservatione*, III, 11 (Hanover: Typis Wechelianis apud heredes Joannis Aubrii, 1611), 16: "Sequenti vero anno [1242] in patribus Aquilonis, Tartari vastant Rusiam, Gasariam, Sugdaniam, Gotiam, Ziquiam, Alaniam, Poloniam, caeteraque regna usque triginta; et usque ad Theotoniae fines prosiliunt."

<sup>78</sup> Vasilev, 164.

### 5. 1. Accounts about the Goths and Alans in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries

A colossal territory of the Mongol Empire attracted the attention of the Holy See, which tried to convert its pagan inhabitants and to return the schismatics to the Catholic Church. A letter of Pope Innocent IV from March 22, 1245, mentions the Goths among the *alii infideles* of the East.<sup>79</sup> The missionaries who journeyed to the Mongol Empire left interesting accounts about the lands seen by them. One such account belongs to the Flemish Franciscan William of Rubruk (Wilhelm van Ruysbroeck), an ambassador of King Saint Louis IX of France to the Mongols in 1253-1255. On 21 May, 1253, he, together with his companions and interpreter, landed in the port of Soldaia (Sudak) and stayed in the Crimea for some time. This is what he wrote about the Goths:

There are forty castles between Kersona and Soldaia, almost every one of which has its proper language; among whom there are many Goths, who speak the teutonic tongue ... In the same plain [north of the described mountainous territory], before the Tatars came, the Comanians were wont to inhabit, who compelled the aforementioned cities and castles to pay tribute to them.<sup>80</sup>

And about the Alans:

On the Eve of Pentecost [June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1253] there came to us some Alans, who there are called Aas, Christians according to the Greek rite; but, although they have both Greek letters and Greek priests, they are not schismatic like the Greeks, but honour all Christians without respecting any person.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> *Les registres d'Innocent IV*, ed. Élie Berger, I (Paris: 1884), 208, No. 1362: "Dilectis filiis fratribus de ordine fratrum Minorum in terras Sarracenorum, paganorum, Grecorum, Bulgarorum, Cumanorum, Ethiopum, Syrorum, Iberorum, Alanorum, gazarorum, Gothorum, Zicorum, Ruthenorum, Jacobinorum, Nubianorum, Nestorinorum, Georgianorum, Armenorum, Indorum, Mesolitorum aliarumque infidelium nationum Orientis seu quarumcunque aliarum partium proficiscentibus."

<sup>80</sup> *The Texts and Versions of John de Plano Carpini and William de Rubruquis*, 146-147: "Sunt quadraginta castella inter Kersonam et Soldaiam, quorum quodlibet fere habebat proprium ydioma inter quos erant multi Goti, quorum ydioma est teutonicum."

<sup>81</sup> *Sources on the Alans. A Critical Compilation*, ed. and tr. Agustí Alemany (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 153-154: "In vigilia pentecostes venerunt ad nos quidam Alani qui ibi dicuntur Aas, christiani secundum ritum Grecorum et habentes litteras grecas at sacerdotes grecos, tamen non sunt scismatici sicut greci, sed sine acceptione persone venerantur omnem christianum."

Rubruk's relation reflects the ethnic mosaic in the Crimea; of great importance is the mention of the Germanic language still spoken by the Goths in the thirteenth century. Our informer visited the Crimea personally, which makes his relation more valuable.<sup>82</sup>

The information of Rubruk corresponds to that contained in another description of the Crimea. It is found in the geographical work written in 1321 by the Syrian prince, historian and geographer, Abu'l-fida' (1273-1331):

Kerker or Kerkri, the 55<sup>th</sup> degree and a half of longitude and the 50<sup>th</sup> degree of latitude. Kerker is situated at the extremity of the seventh climate, in the country of Asses [Alans]. Its name signifies in Turkish "forty places." This is a fortified castle, hard of access: indeed it leans against a mountain which cannot be scaled. On the mountain is a plateau where the inhabitants of the country take refuge. This castle is some distance from the sea; the inhabitants belong to the race called Ass. In the neighbourhood there is a mountain which rises high in the air and is called Djathir [Chatyr]-dagh. This mountain is visible to vessels sailing on the Crimean Sea. Kerker is located north of Sary-Kerman; between these two places is about a day's distance.<sup>83</sup>

In this detailed account, the country of the Crimean Alans with the centre in Kerker (Qyrq-ier, now Chufut-Kale) is mentioned for the first time. It is hard to say whether it was a part of Crimean Gothia or an independent land. In later sources it is also mentioned separately. Abu'l-fida' correctly explains the etymology of this toponym. Rubruk, who had not visited the southwestern part of the Crimea probably understood this as "forty castles," which makes his relation somewhat dubious.

Very interesting data is contained in the *Epistle* of Theodore, Bishop of Alania, written around 1240. Theodore was ordained as a Bishop of Caucasian Alania by the

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<sup>82</sup> According to Vasilev the account of Rubruk loses some of its authenticity, since he "himself failed to visit Gothia; he did not hear the Goths speak, and he received his information by hearsay, from some inhabitants of the Crimea, most probably at the Soldaia (Sudak)" - (Vasilev, 167). The first statement is true, but we do not know for sure whether Rubruk heard Goths speaking or not. He could meet some of them in Soldaia, which was close to the eastern border of Gothia.

<sup>83</sup> English translation according to Vasilev, 166. French translation: D'Aboulféda, *Géographie*, ed. and tr. M. Reinaud, II (Paris, 1848), 319.

Patriarch of Nicea, Germanus III (1222-1240). On his way to the Caucasus he visited Cherson, and in the vicinity of the city met the Crimean Alans:

The Alans also live near Cherson, not less because they are the only wall and guard around. I saw them and they, exceedingly glad, rushed to surround the pastor of their nation; and as they wanted to entertain us as guests, they took care of everything we needed. We in turn, addressed them words of advice, so that they should live in a way of the invocation to Christ. They really were (I would neither be ashamed to say so nor would I be able to suspect any meanness of spirit) a flock scattered over mountains, desert lands and ravines, with neither folds nor cabins, and exposed to be devoured by wild beasts; for there was no shepherd, although this was the ambition of many.<sup>84</sup>

Theodore's meeting with the Alans caused the enmity of the Bishop of Cherson towards him:

This old and antiquated bishop seemed to desire to die because the Alans were in our home or, even more so, because we were in Cherson. There was immediately an argument about the limits of my jurisdiction, because his bishopric was that of the country and my mission temporal and foreign. These well-known pretexts of the bishops of this day and age are fruit of their littleness of soul and envy, if not a sign of their foolishness. They neither know the enacted canons nor their regulations; for we did not preach in public, nor invaded his diocese, in such a way as to seem detrimental to him; but when some Alans asked us questions, we replied to them in private.<sup>85</sup>

Because of this confrontation Theodore was confined and taken to court before the local diocesan synod, which decided that he had to leave the city:

But when we were fugitives near to Cherson, in Alan territory – for this people are widely dispersed, extending from the Caucasus mountains as far as the Iberians, their former, ancestral borders, and like to send many colonies, so that they fill almost the whole of Scythia and Sarmatia -, then did [Tzamanes – probably Tatars] also pursue us with a host of knavish tricks and conspiracies, even trying to kill us, for there remained nothing else for him to do; and threatened the poor Alans with war, if they did not hand us over.<sup>86</sup>

Theodore was of Alan origin himself (probably from the northern Caucasus) and he visited his Crimean kindred personally, which makes his account more valuable for us. It is hard to identify exactly the place where he met the Alans. What does “near to Cherson” mean? On the one hand we know about the Alan settlements

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<sup>84</sup> *Sources on the Alans*, 236-237.

in the suburbs of Cherson in the early Middle Ages. On the other hand we have some information of Abu'l-fida' about the country of Asses [Alans] with its main city Kerker (Qyrq-Yer, now Chufut-Kale). It seems to me that here we are dealing rather with those Alans, who lived in the closest vicinity to Cherson and not in the region of Qyrq-ier, as some scholars claimed. Theodore found himself in conflict with the Bishop of Cherson because, as he says in the *Epistle*, "the Alans were in our home or, even more so, because we were in Cherson." In my opinion it implies a short distance of the "Alan territory" from Cherson. Maybe we are concerned with the part of the Gothic *Climata* which bordered on the region of Cherson. A homogenous population of Gothia was mentioned in the other sources. In *Vita* of Theodore and Euprepus it is told that they were sent from Cherson to "forts belonging to neighbouring peoples." William of Rubruk says "there are forty castles between Kersona and Soldaia, almost every one of which has its proper language."

According to Theodore, the Alans met by him were "a flock scattered over mountains desert lands and ravines, with neither folds nor cabins, and exposed to be devoured by wild beasts; for there was no shepherd, although this was the ambition of many." It is hard to say whether an attempt at taking ecclesiastical control or one at taking political control over them is meant. In any case, the *Epistle* of Theodore testifies to the certain independence of the Alans living in the Crimean Mountains, which was possible due to geographical features of the area.

In the account of a journey of an embassy of the Mamluk sultan of Egypt al-Malik al-Zahir to the Golden Horde in 662 (1263-64), written by a secretary, the

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 238.

Cairene Ibn ‘Abd al-Zahir, there is mentioned the presence of Cumans, Rus’ and Alans in the Crimea. There is nothing said about the Crimean Goths.<sup>87</sup>

In his “Historical Accounts,” George Pachymeres (1242-1310), when speaking about the period of the reign of Michael VIII Palaeologus (1261-1282), writes the following:

So, as soon as he appeared, [Nogay] attracted them to him and submitted them without effort. And, on seeing prosperous lands and peoples capable of forming an empire on their own, he revolted against those who had sent him and took over those peoples. And, as time went by and they became mixed together, the inhabitants of the interior, I mean, Alans, Circassians, Goths, Russians and the various neighbouring peoples, learned their customs and together with them they changed their language and way of dressing and became allies.<sup>88</sup>

The source above gives evidence of the assimilation of the Alans and Goths by the Tatars. In the Crimea it was a long process, which was connected not only with the political dominance of the Tatars but also with their gradual penetration in the southwestern mountainous part of the peninsula, which became massive after the Turkish conquest of the Crimea in 1475. At the very beginning this assimilation had an ambiguous character: on the one hand, the inhabitants of the Crimea accepted the Tatar language and traditions; on the other, the Tatars very often converted to Christianity. We have some examples of the Tatars who became Christians as well as of Christians of non-Tatar origin who bore Tatar names. The information of Pachymeres that the Crimean Goths, among the other conquered peoples were the allies of the Tatars is also confirmed by the later sources.

Marino Sanudo, in his letter to King Philip VI of France, written in 1334, refers to the Goths and the Alans under the Tatar sway:

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<sup>87</sup> *Sources on the Alans*, 255-256.

<sup>88</sup> *Sources on the Alans*, 214.



*Sunt etiam in Galgaria et in aliis locis subjectis Tartaris de septentrione aliqui populi, scilicet Gothi et aliqui Alani et aliquae aliae plures nationes, quae sequuntur Graecorum vestigia.*<sup>89</sup>

Galgaria here is a version of Gazaria (Khazaria), the name of the Crimea usually used in the Italian sources. The Alans are named after the Goths, so I think that we are dealing with those Alans who lived in the Crimea.

In the portolan of Angelino Dulcert from 1339 there is a note about Lviv (Lemberg, Leopold, Lwów) in which is found a name *mare gothalandie*.<sup>90</sup> This name must refer to the Black Sea; Gothia must have been well-known to the European merchants and cartographers if the Black Sea was named after it. The toponym *Gothalandia* either means “the land of the Goths” or is a combinatorial name of the Goths and Alans. The term *Gothalani*, reflecting the mixed population of the southwestern Crimea, is also documented in the source from the fifteenth century, which I discuss below.

The Dominican John III (fourteenth–fifteenth century), Archbishop of Sulthanyeh in the northwest of Persia, listed the Christian peoples under the power of the Tatars in the *Libellus de Notitia Orbis*.

There are many Christians in this country [Great Tartary], namely: the Greeks, many Armenians, the Ziks, the Goths, the Thats, the Vlachs, the Russians, the Circassians, the Leks, the Yass, the Alans, the Avars, the Kazikумыks, and almost all of them speak the Tartar language.<sup>91</sup>

The information about the knowledge of the Tatar language among the Crimean Goths is consistent with the relation of Pachymeres as well as with what we know about their political dependence on the Tatars. The order in which peoples

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<sup>89</sup> *Epistola Marini Sanudi ad Philippum Francorum regem*, in Friedrich Kunstmann, “Studien über Marino Sanudo den Aetern mit einem Anhang seiner ungedruckten Briefe,” *Abhandlungen der historischen Classe der K. Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* VII (1855): 801; Vasilev, 174.

<sup>90</sup> The portolan is reproduced in Marin Popescu Spineni, *România în istoria cartografiei până la 1600* (Romania in the history of cartography until 1600), vol. 2 (Bucharest: Imprimeria Nationala, 1938), map 27. The inscription in the legend of the map reads: “ad civitatem istam vadunt mercatores, et postea vadunt per mare gothalandie ad partes fiandres specialiter in bruges.”

subjected to Great Tatar are mentioned suggests that here rather the north Caucasian Alans are meant.

## *5. 2. Treaties between Genua and the Tatars. Maritime Gothia under the Genoese control*

Because of the decay of Tatar power in 1340s and especially at the beginning of the 1360s, the dependence of the Crimea on the Golden Horde became somewhat weaker. At that period the Genoese, whose colony in Caffa was founded around 1266, consolidated their position in the peninsula. They built fortresses in Soldaia (Sugdaia, Sudak) and Caffa. On November 28, 1380, and on February 23, 1381, they concluded two treaties with the Tatar Khan, almost identical in their content. As a result of this, the Tatars ceded to the Great Commune of Genoa the town of Soldaia (Sudak) with eighteen neighbouring settlements, as well as a part of Gothia. In the treaty from 1380 it is said: “Gothia with its settlements and people who are Christians, from Cembalo to Soldaia, shall belong to the Great Commune, and the settlements mentioned above, people as well as the territory and waters, shall be free [from the Tatar jurisdiction].”<sup>92</sup> The treaty from February 23, 1381, in general repeats the text of a previous one, with the only difference that the words “who are Christians” were omitted, which apparently means that at that time among the population of Gothia there were also some Muslims. From the Genoese documents of Caffa we know the names of the settlements in the ceded territory. There are as follows: Cembalo (Balaklava), Fori (Foros), Chichineo (Kikineis), Lupico (Alupka), Muzacori (Myshkor), Orianda, Jallita (Yalta), Sikita (Nikita), Gorzovium (Gurzuf), Partenite (Parthenit), Lambadie (Biyuk

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<sup>91</sup> *Sources on the Alans*, 158-159.

<sup>92</sup> “Someieyoenti la Gotia, con li soy casay e cum lo so povo, li quay sum cristiani, da lo Cembalo fim in Soldaya, sea de lo grande comun, et sean franchi li sovrascriti casay, lo povo cum li soy terren cum

– Great-Lambat and Kutchuk – Little-Lambat), Lusta (Alushta), and Soldaia (Sudak).<sup>93</sup>

As we can see, only a maritime part of Gothia was ceded; its mountainous part north of the Yaila did not pass under the control of the “Great Commune.” In later official documents Genoese regarded the whole of Gothia as their vassal state, but it was just a propagandistic claim, which was never exercised in reality. The occupied territory first was called by them *riparia marina Gotia* and was governed by a *vicarius*; after 1387 it bore the name of *Capitaneatus Gotie* with the *capitaneus* (*capitanus*) *Gotie* at the head.<sup>94</sup>

From 1290 and during the whole fifteenth century the slave trade was practised in the Genoese and Venetian colonies in the area of the northern Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. The most important centre of it was Caffa in the Crimea. One of the deeds states that on September 23, 1277, a female slave by the name of Gota who came from Zichia was sold (“II 23 sett. Guglielmo de Monte di Asti vende a Giovanni da Vado una schiava olivastra per nome Gota que est ranga de patribus Zechie per L. 8”).<sup>95</sup> Maybe the name of the slave indicates her origin; however, she did not come from the Crimea, where the Goths lived, but from Zichia, the region east of the Sea of Azov. Notarial deeds indicate also a great number of the Alan slaves, but it is impossible to distinguish whether they came from the Crimea or from the main area of the Alans in the Northern Caucasus.<sup>96</sup>

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le sue aygae.” C. Desimoni, “Trattato dei Genovesi col Chan dei Tartari nel 1380-1381 scritto in lingua volgare,” *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Series 4, XX (1887), 163-164.

<sup>93</sup> *Cartolari della Masseria di Caffa del 1381-1382*, in C. Desimoni and L. T. Belgrano “Atlante idrografico del medio evo posseduto dal prof. Tammar Luxoro.” *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, V (Genova, 1867), 253-254.

<sup>94</sup> *Codice diplomatico delle colonie Tauro-Liguri II*, ed. P. Vigna, in *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* VII, ii (Genova, 1879), 981-987.

<sup>95</sup> Arturo Ferreto “Codice diplomatico delle relazioni fra la Liguria la Toscana e la Lunigiana ai tempi di Dante,” in *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* XXXI, ii (Rome, 1903), 167, n. 1.

<sup>96</sup> *Sources on the Alans*, 160.

We have evidence of the Alan ethnic element in Caffa, which was probably mostly composed of the Crimean Alans. For example the Mamluk general and historian Baybars (died 1325), who wrote the history of Islam entitled *The Cream of Thought on the Annals of the Higraph*, reports that in 698 A.H. (1298-99 AD) “the Muslim, Alan, and Frank merchants” were imprisoned in Caffa by the Tatar army sent by Nogay.<sup>97</sup> The Genoese document from 1290 informs us also about the Alan merchant in Caffa.<sup>98</sup> An inhabitant of Caffa who was a Goth by origin is mentioned only once. The Genoese document from the same year starts thus: *In nomine domini amen. Nos Constantinus grechus, gener Gozi, habitator de Caffa...*<sup>99</sup> Here we have interesting evidence of the self-identification of the Goth as a Greek, which corroborates the other sources.<sup>100</sup>

## 6. The Principality of Theodoro

The Constantinopolitan patrician Theodore Spandugino (born in 1453) in his book *De la origine deli imperatori Ottomani*<sup>101</sup> gives an account about Gothia as an independent actor of the political relations in the fourteenth century. He writes that Emperor Andronicus III Palaeologus (1328-1341) came into conflict with the prince of Gothia, the Bulgarians, and Stephen, King of Serbia.<sup>102</sup> In another passage he says that Murad, the Turkish Sultan, made league with the Bulgarians, Wallachians, Goths,

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<sup>97</sup> *Sources on the Alans*, 252.

<sup>98</sup> *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer, 1, Les Actes de Caffa du notaire Lamberto di Sambuceto 1289-1290*, ed. Michel Balard (Paris: Mouton & Co, 1973), 268, doc. 696.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 350, doc. 853.

<sup>100</sup> Compare page 43: Greek-Goth (гречанинъ готъѣинъ) who appeared in Novgorod according to the *Vita* (Житіе) of Antonius the Roman.

<sup>101</sup> Theodore Spandugino, patricio Constantinopolitano, *De la origine deli imperatori Ottomani, ordini de la corte, forma del guerregiare loro, religione, rito, et costumi de la natione*. In Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au moyen-âge*, IX (Paris: Maissonnauve, 1890), 143, 146-147.

<sup>102</sup> Sathas, IX, 143: “et havendo controversie il detto Andronico Paleologo con il principe di Gothia et con li Bulgari, con il re Stephano di Servia...”

and the Emperor of Constantinople against the kingdom of Hungary.<sup>103</sup> Spandugino asserts that at the end of the fourteenth century the Sultan Bayazid I (1387-1402) observed a serious disagreement among the Christian princes, especially the King of Serbia, the Goths, and the Wallachians, who were all contending with the Emperor of Constantinople, Manuel II Paleologus (1391-1425).<sup>104</sup>

An inscription found in Mangup and dated 1361-1362 mentions for the first time the toponym Theodoro<sup>105</sup> which is probably derived from the Greek name of the centre of Gothia τὸ Δόρυ, or τὸ Δόρος.<sup>106</sup> It was at the same time the name of the Gothic principality, often found in the sources of the fifteenth century, and the name of its centre Mangup. Inscription also mentions ἑκατοντάρχης, a ruler of Theodoro, who as a Christian bore the name Demetrius. It was supposed in the literature of our subject that he was one of three “Tatar princes” (Kadlubak, Kachibei and Demetrius) defeated by the Grand Prince of Lithuania at the Blue Water in 1396.<sup>107</sup> As a land subject to the Tatars, Gothia had to participate in their military expeditions. As we see, it was ruled by a Christian, either Tatar, or of local origin but with a Tatar name. The second case is very plausible since we know about the tatarisation of the Crimean Goths and Alans testified by Pachymeres.

The evidence of the existence of the Gothic language in the Crimea gives a Bavarian soldier, Hans Schiltberger, who participated in the battle of Nicopolis in 1396 and was taken by the Turks as a prisoner. After his wanderings in the East in

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<sup>103</sup> Sathas, 146: “[Amurath] fece poi una legha con li Bulgari, Valacchi et con li Gotti, et lo imperator di Constantinopoli, contra il regno di Ungaria...”

<sup>104</sup> Sathas, 146-147: “Ildrim Baiasit-vedendo le altercatione grande che erano tra principi Christiani et massimamente il re di Servia, li Gotti, et li Valachi che contendeano tutti con lo imperator di Constantinopoli Emanuel Paleologo.”

<sup>105</sup> The next evidence is given by the Genoese document from 20 December 1374, which mentions “Theodoro Mangop.” See N. Bănescu, “Contribution à l’histoire de la seigneurie de Theodoro-Mangoup en Crimée,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 35 (1935): 21.

<sup>106</sup> N. Bănescu, 35-36.

<sup>107</sup> Vasilev, 184-187; N. Malitski, “Zametki po epigrafike Mangupa” (Notes on the Epigraphy of Mangup), *Izvestiya Akademii istorii material’noy kul’tury* LXX (1933): 11-14.

1396-1427 he wrote a description of the visited countries. In the part concerning the Crimea he writes as follows:

There is a city called Karkery (Karckery, Kercueri) in a good country called Sudi (Sutti, Suti), but the Infidels call it That (Thatt, Than); there are Christians of the Greek faith in it, and there are good vineyards. It lies near the Black Sea, and in this country St. Clement was thrown into the sea. Close by is a city called in the infidel tongue Serucherman.<sup>108</sup>

In another fragment Schiltberger lists the languages in which divine service is performed among the Eastern Christians. In a seventh place he names “*Kuthia Sprauch*, which the infidels call *That*.”

In the city of Karkery we can easily recognise Kyrk-Yer (Kerker according to Abu'l-fida', now Chufut-Kale). In *Sudi* (Sutti, Suti) scholars saw a distorted form of *Guti* or Gothia.<sup>109</sup> The geographical description given by Schiltberger corroborates this supposition. *That* is a name given by Turkic tribes to a subject people.<sup>110</sup> *Kuthia Sprauch* was believed to mean a Gothic language. Schiltberger's evidence looks vague because of its spoiled names; it is also strange that he as a German did not notice any similarity (however slight it is) between the Gothic and German languages, which was mentioned by Rubruk as well as by some later authors. However, the information that the name *That*, which was used by the Tatars for the southwestern Crimea and its inhabitants, will be very helpful for the analysis of the sources from the period after the fall of the principality of Theodoro in 1475.

If *Sudi* (Sutti, Suti) means *Guti* or Gothia Schiltberger's account is inaccurate, because Kyrk-Yer was not a part of Gothia, at least at that period. Abu'l-fida' as early as in 1321 situates Kerker “in the country of Asses [Alans].” The other Arab geographer Al-Kalkashandi writing at the beginning of the fifteenth century, says that

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<sup>108</sup> Hans Schiltberger, *Reisbuch: nach der Nürnberger Handschrift*, ed V. Langmantel (Stuttgart: Litterarischer Verein, 1885), 140.

<sup>109</sup> Vasilev, 193.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid..

Kyrk-Yer was the centre of the country of the Asses depended on the Golden Horde.<sup>111</sup> Probably the town passed under the Tatar control between 1342 and 1363.<sup>112</sup>

An unknown Venetian merchant wrote an account of a journey from Venice to Tana made from 1404 to 1407. “The land of the Goths” is mentioned in it. It attests that Gothia was well known to European travellers and merchants.<sup>113</sup>

The history of the Principality of Theodoro is much better documented for the fifteenth century than for the earlier period. At the beginning of the fifteenth century Alexis became a prince of Theodoro. He descended from the Trebizond family of the Gabrades, who probably first were toparches of the Gothic *Climata* and then started to rule independently.<sup>114</sup> Theodoro is mentioned both in the Greek inscriptions from the territory of the Principality and in the Genoese documents; the latter sometimes use also the name “Gothia.” In Moldavian, Muscovite, Hungarian and Polish sources this country was called after the name of its capital, “the Principality of Mangup.”

Alexis as well as his successors tried to recapture the maritime Gothia occupied by the Genoese. In the inscriptions from 1425 and 1427 he call himself “a ruler of the city of Theodoro and the maritime region.”<sup>115</sup> In 1427 he took possession of Calamita (Inkerman) and built a port there,<sup>116</sup> which gave him access to the sea.

<sup>111</sup> A. Pol'ak, “Noviye arabskiye materialy pozdnego srednevekovya o Vostochnoy I Central'noy Yevrope” (New Arabic Materials of the Late Middle Ages on the Eastern and Central Europe), in *Vostochniye istochniki po istorii narodov Yugo-Vostochnoy i Central'noy Yevropi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1964), 36.

<sup>112</sup> A. G. Gercen, Y. M. Mogarichev, *Krepost' dragocennostey Kyrk-Or Chufut-Kale* (The fort of the treasures Kyrk-Or Chufut-Kale) (Simferopol: Tavria, 1993), 56.

<sup>113</sup> N. Iorga, “Un viaggio da Venezia alla Tana,” *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* XI, I (1896), 5-13: “Transfretamur pelagus et tandem nobis Gothorum apparent terre ... se nobis pendebitingens urbs Caffa ... huic dominantur Ianuenses. Relictis his a leva Gothorum terris, ab eadem parte se nobis Tartarorumpendant terre.”

<sup>114</sup> Alexis' ancestor Constantine Gabras was exiled to the Crimea around 1130. See A. Yakobson, “Srednevekovyy Khersones” (Medieval Chersonese) *Materialy i issledovaniya po arheologii SSSR* 17 (1950): 30-31. About the genealogy of Gabrases, see also Vasilev, 194-201.

<sup>115</sup> V. Latyshev, *Sbornik*, 51-53; N. Malitski, “Zametki...,” 27-28, 33-35.

<sup>116</sup> M. Tikhanova, “Doros-Feodoro v istorii Srednevekovogo Kryma” (Doros – Theodoro in the history of medieval Crimea). *Materialy i issledovaniya po arheologii* 34 (1953): 331.

However, his aim was Cembalo-Balaclava, a main port of the maritime Gothia.<sup>117</sup> With the support of the Tatar Khan Hadji-Girei, who wanted to extend his control over the whole Crimea, Alexis started a war with the Genoese. In February 1433, the Greek population of Cembalo-Balaclava revolted against the Genoese and drove out their garrison. After that, on June 16, 1433, the city was delivered to the Prince of Theodoro. A year later (June 7, 1434) however, Cembalo-Balaclava was re-conquered by the Genoese.

The Italian chronicles which give information about this event refer to Alexis as to “a certain noble of Greek descent who is commonly called Dominus de Lotodoro and whose own name is Alexis,” “a noble Greek called Alexis, prince of Theodoro” or just “Alexis, a certain Greek, prince of Theodoro.”<sup>118</sup> It is significant that the Italian sources when speaking about the rulers of Theodoro never used the ethnonym “Goth.”

It seems that the war which started in 1433 lasted till 1441, since a Genoese record from this year refers to the captives of Gothia “liberated on the occasion of the peace made with Alexis.”<sup>119</sup>

The account of the Italian traveller Iosafat Barbaro refers to the period when the prince of Theodoro Alexis ruled. In 1436-1437 he visited the Venetian colony Tana (nowadays Azov) and travelled in Tatary for sixteen years. in his *Lettere al Senato Veneto* he writes:

Behind the island of Capha, which stands on the Major Sea, is Gothia [la Gotthia], and after that Alania, which runs parallel with the island towards Moncastro, as I have said before. The Goths speak German [in Todesco], which I know by a German, my servant [fameglio tedesco], that was with me

<sup>117</sup> In one Genoese document Cembalo is called “the head of all Gothia.” Obviously it means a *Capitanatus Gotie* under the control of Caffa. N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l’histoire des Croisades au Xve siècle*, I (Paris: Leroux, 1899), 385.

<sup>118</sup> E. Marengo, C. Manfronti, G. Pessagno, *Il Banco di San Giorgio* (Genova, 1911), 486; Vasilev, 207.

<sup>119</sup> N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits*, I, 37.



there: for they understood one another well enough, as we understand a Furlane and Florentine. From this neighbourhood of the Goths and Alani, I suppose the name of Gothalani to be derived, for the Alani were first in this place. But then came Goths and conquered these countries, mingling their name with the Alani.<sup>120</sup>

The relation of Barbaro is based on his personal observation; although he probably did not know German he could estimate the similarity between German and Gothic “from aside.” Taking into consideration what we know now about the Gothic language, such communication would not be easy; however some basic words could be comprehensible for a German (see a list of Gothic words given by Busbecq in Appendix). The very existence of the Gothic language in the fifteenth century at least in some parts of Gothia seems to me plausible. We cannot ignore the evidences of it periodically appearing in sources. Important for our studies is a mention of the ethnonym *Gothalani*, which reflects the mixed nature of the population of the southwestern Crimea. Barbaro’s account suggests that this name was currently used in his times. The term *Gothalani* can be compared to the toponym *Gothalandia*, found in the portolan of Angelino Dulcert from 1339.

Alexis died between 1444 and 1447; his son and successor bore the Tatar name Olobei which shows how great were the political and cultural influences of the Tatars in Theodoro. Conversely, in the Genoese report he is defined as a Greek.<sup>121</sup>

Olobei continued the policy of his father: he was on good terms with the Tatar Khan Hadji-Girei, and in conflict with Caffa. His port in Calamita-Inkerman made a

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<sup>120</sup> *Travels to Tana and Persia by Iosafa Barbaro and Ambrogio Contarini*, tr. William Thomas and S. A. Roy, ed. Lord Stanley of Alderley (London: Harkluyt Society, 1873; reprint 1964), 30; *Barbaro i Kontrarini o Rossii*. (Barbaro and Contarini about Russia), ed. and tr. E. Skrzhinskaya (Leningrad: Izdatelstvo AN SSSR, 1971), 157.

<sup>121</sup> *Massaria Caffè*, doc 25, June 1455, in N. Bănescu, “Vechi legături ale țărilor moastre cu Genovezii,” *Inchinare lui N. Iorga cu prilejul împlinirii vârstei de 60 de ani* (Cluj: Universitatea din Cluj, 1931), 35: “Novene datte Agutaree [Hadji-Girei], Imperatori Tartarorum, de acordio in Tedoro Olobei Greci.”

serious concurrence for the economic interests of the latter.<sup>122</sup> However after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, in the face of the Turkish menace Caffa tried to improve its relations with the Principality of Theodoro. In that new situation Olobei tried to oscillate between the Tatars, who were allies of the Turks, and the Genoese.

A document of November 7, 1465, informs us that a certain Michael Bals defined as a Hungarian bought two slaves, a man and a woman, who were Goths (*Michael Balsi Ungarus debet pro consteo unius sclavi et sclave Goticorum emptis per ipsum – asperos 700*).<sup>123</sup> It is important evidence of the usage of ethnonym “Goths” in the fifteenth century. I think that this could be a case of self-identification on the part of these slaves, since notarial deeds were usually documenting the oral information.

In 1465 in documents there appears Isaac (Italian - Saichus, Russian - Isaiko) as a prince of Theodoro. He was probably one of the sons of Olobei. In 1471 Isaak drew up a treaty with the Genoese, who initiated it in order to oppose the aggressive plans of the Ottoman Turks.<sup>124</sup>

The principality of Theodoro an important role in the region. In September 1472 a sister of Isaac Maria “from Mangup” married Moldavian *voevode* Stephen the Great (1457-1504).<sup>125</sup> His daughter (in Muscovite sources манкупская дѣвка) was supposed to marry a son of Ivan III of Moscow; latter had friendly relations with the Tatar Khan Mengli-Girei.<sup>126</sup> These plans did not come true, probably because of their

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<sup>122</sup> *Codice diplomatico delle colonie Tauro-Liguri II*, ed. P. Vigna, in *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* VII, ii (Genova, 1879), XXXIII, 111; CLI, 366.

<sup>123</sup> N. Bănescu, “Vechi legături...,” 34.

<sup>124</sup> *Codice DCCCCLXVII*, 769.

<sup>125</sup> *Slaviano-moldavskie l'etopisi XV-XVI v.* (Slavic Moldavian Chronicles of the fifteenth-fourteenth centuries), ed. F. Grekul (Moskva: Nauka, 1976), 39, 70, 65; *Biblioteka starożytna pisarzy polskich* (Old Library of the Polish Writers), ed. K. Wójcicki (Warsaw, 1844), 56.

<sup>126</sup> A. Malinovski, “Sobraniye istoricheskikh i diplomaticheskikh snosheniy Velikikh Kniazey Moskovskikh s tatarskimi khanami Kryma v 1462-1533,” (Collection of the Historical and Diplomatic Relations between the Grand Princes of Moscow and the Tatar Khans in the Crimea in 1462-1533), *Zapiski Odesskogo Obshchestva istorii i drevnstrey* 5 (1863), 184-187.

political connotations. Isaac died in odd circumstances in 1475; his brother, with the support of Stephen the Great, took possession of Mangup. It happened in the spring of the same year, shortly before the Turkish capture of Caffa on 6 June 1475.<sup>127</sup>

After the occupation of Caffa, Soldaia and maritime Gothia the Turks started the siege of the city of Theodoro-Mangup. It lasted from August till December 1475, and was one of the hardest Turkish military operations after the fall of Constantinople. That is how it is described in the letter of Laudivius da Vezzano *eques Hierosolimitanus*:

[After the capture of Caffa the Turk] fought the Goths, who dwell beyond the Danube, [*hinc ad Getas qui trans Danubium incolunt arma convertit*] in order to take their fortified stronghold; and he brought an army near it. the inhabitants of the city however resisted every day more and more vigorously, so that it was uncertain who would be victorious. Now you know the result of the unlucky war that recently took place in the Tauric Peninsula.<sup>128</sup>

Here the name “Goths” is used of course as a traditional political term, and not the ethnic one: it means the inhabitants of Gothia. The description of Laudivius da Vezzano, who never visited the Crimea, shows his Italian geographical perspective.

After the capture of Theodoro Alexander and his family were brought to Constantinople, where the last prince of Theodoro was killed, and his wife and daughters taken to the harem of the Sultan.<sup>129</sup>

Matthias of Miechow, a Polish *canonicus* from Krakow in his *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis, Asiana et Europiana et de contentis in eis* written in 1517 also refers to these recent events:

[Sultan Mehmed] smote with the sword two dukes and brothers of Mankup, the only survivors of the Gothic race and language, the hope of the continuation of the family of the Goths, and took possession of the fortress of

<sup>127</sup> In June 1475 Hungarian ambassadors at the court of Stephen the Great wrote to their king Matthew Corvinus: “Quomodo preteritis diebus ipse Vajvoda Stefanus misisset Alexandrum fratrem carnalem consortis sue in Regnum, quod dicitur Mango.” *Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, Acta externa VI, in *Magyar diplomáciai emlékek Mátyás király korából (1458-1490)* (Budapest, 1878), 306.

<sup>128</sup> Vasilev, 249.

<sup>129</sup> *Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, Acta externa V, 345.

Mankup. Thus the Goths have been completely exterminated, and nor does their genealogy appear any longer.<sup>130</sup>

Matthias himself failed to visit the Crimea; the ethnic terms used in his work suggest his erudition in the historical writing of Late Antiquity rather than familiarity with the current ethnic situation. However his account shows again that the presence of some Goths in the Crimea at that time was a well-known fact in Europe.

## 7. The Goths and the Alans under the Turkish sway

After the fall of Principality of Theodoro the Goths were still present in the sources. In most cases however it is just a display of the literary tradition. I shall present only those sources which seem for me reliable, or at least worthy of attention, because their authors either visited the Crimea personally or met its inhabitants.

The most important information about the Crimean Goths left a Flemish diplomat and erudite Ogier-Ghiselin de Busbecq, an ambassador of the Emperor Ferdinand I in Constantinople in 1554-1562. This is what he says:

I cannot here omit what I learnt about a tribe which still dwells in the Crimea, which I had often heard showed traces of a German origin in their language, customs, and lastly in their face and habit of body. Hence I had long been eager to see one of that tribe, and if possible, to procure from them something written in that language; but in this I was unsuccessful. However, at last an accident in some measure satisfied my wishes, as two men had been sent to Constantinople from those parts, to lay before the Sultan some complains or other in the name of that tribe. My dragomans fell in with them, and recollecting my orders on the subject, they brought them to me to dinner.

One of them was about middle height, and had an air or superior breeding – you might have taken him for a Fleming of Batavian; the other was shorter, more strongly built, and of a dark complexion, being by birth and language a Greek, but by having traded there for some time he had acquired a fair acquaintance with their tongue; while the other man had lived and associated

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<sup>130</sup> “Binos quoque duces et fratres de Mankup, unicos Gothici generis ac linguagii superstites, ad spem gregis Gothorum prolificandorum, gladio percussit et castrum Mankup possedit. Sicque Gothi penitus tam circa Sarmatias quam in Italia, Hispania et Gallia extincti sunt hes euorum genealogia amplius comparet.” *Historiarum Poloniae et Magni Ducat Lithuaniae Scriptorum collectio magna*, ed. Laur Mizlerus de Kolof. I (Warsaw, 1761), 191, 192.

so much with the Greeks that he had picked up their language and forgotten his own. When questioned about the nature and customs of these people he answered my inquiries in a straightforward manner. He said the tribe was warlike, and even now inhabited numerous villages, from which the chief of the Tartars raised, when expedient 800 infantry, armed with fire-arms, the mainstay of his army. Their chief towns are called Mancup and Scivarin.<sup>131</sup>

Then Busbecq gives a list of the Germanic words heard from one of his interlocutors (see Appendix). The Flemish diplomat noticed the similarities with the words of his own language. However, as he says “the form of quite as many was totally different from ours, whether because this is due to the genius of that language, or because his memory failed him, and he substituted foreign for the native words.” From the words of the Crimean envoy Busbecq wrote down also an enigmatic poem which caused a lot of problems to the linguists who researched this relation.

It is very unlikely that Busbecq forged the list of the Gothic words, since it contains some words that have no parallels in the Germanic languages contemporary to him. The Flemish diplomat gives many originally Gothic words found in the Bible of Wulfila and some other Gothic sources, which he could not have known in his times. The other words are of foreign origin: Alan, Turkic and so on.<sup>132</sup>

Busbecq's account suggests that in the sixteenth century Gothic was on the verge of extinction, since only one of the Crimean envoys met by him spoke this language or at least, which is more probable, just knew some of it. An unclear poem recorded by him seems to attest this.

Strangely enough, Marcin Broniewski, a Polish envoy to the Crimean Khan in 1578 and 1579, in his *Tartariae Descriptio* gives no evidence of the Crimean Goths and Alans. He visited the Crimea just a few years after Busbecq's mission in

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<sup>131</sup> Busbecquius, Augerius Gislenius. *De legationis turcicae Epistolae quatuor* (Frankfurt 1595), 258. English edition: *The Life and Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Seigneur of Bousbecque Knight, Imperial Ambassador*, ed. and tr. Charles Th. Farster and F. H. Blackburne Daniell, v. I (London: C. Kegan Paul, 1881), 355-358.

Constantinople. He defines the inhabitants of the southwestern Crimea as well as the Princes of Mangup as Greeks. In the chapter dedicated to Mangup (Mancopia) he says that this town in his times was in ruins, and was inhabited by Turks and Jews.<sup>133</sup>

In the *Vita* (Житіє) of Antonius the Roman, who according to the legend appeared in Novgorod in 1105, is said that this holy man met there a Greek-Goth (гречанинъ готъѡинъ) merchant. His knowledge of Roman, Greek, and Rus' languages is mentioned.<sup>134</sup>

There is a problem with the dating of this event. The source is written in the first person as a relation of the hegumen Andrew living in the twelve century, who was a disciple and follower of Antonius. However the *Vita* is dated to the time between the 1570s and 1580s, when the efforts to canonise the local saints were undertaken. It was written probably by Nifont, a monk of the Monastery of Saint Antonius. He could have used some text written by Andrew, which is not preserved now, or could just have made a forgery.<sup>135</sup> In the first case a Greek-Goth mentioned in the source could have really visited Novgorod in 1106. In the second case he could have visited Novgorod in the times of Nifont or simply have been the product of his fantasy. I am rather inclined to believe that Vita is a sixteenth-century forgery.<sup>136</sup>

The visit of a merchant from Gothia in Novgorod is very possible; Crimea layd on the crossroads of the important trade routes, and its inhabitants could participate in the trade activity.

<sup>132</sup> On the linguistic features of the Gothic words recorded by Busbecq, see M. D. Stearns, *Crimean Gothic. Analysis and Ethymology of the Corpus* (Saratoga: Anma Libri, 1978).

<sup>133</sup> Martini Bronioivii Tartariae Descriptio, Coloniae Agrippinae 1595, p. 7-8.

<sup>134</sup> *Zhytiye Antonia Rimlianina*, in *Pamiatniki drevnerusskoy literatury* (Monuments of the Old Russian Literature), ed. Kushelev-Bezborod'ko, I (St Petersburg, 1860), 265.

<sup>135</sup> *Slovar' knizhnikov i knizhnostey Drevnej Rusi* (The dictionary of writers and writings), ed. D. Likhachev, v. 2 (Leningrad: Izdatelstvo "Nauka", 1988), 245-247.

<sup>136</sup> Vasilev believed that the events described in the Vita refer to 1106, - Vasilev, 137-138.

However it is not important for us whether the Greek-Goth visited Novgorod or not; more important is the fact that Niphont knew about some hellenised Goths living in the Crimea in second half of the sixteenth century. It very well corresponds with the other sources of that period.<sup>137</sup>

The ethnonym Greek-Goth indicates his Gothic origin and his belonging to the Greek culture. As we know, Gothia was for a long time in the orbit of Byzantine influences, political as well as religious. Greek was an official and liturgical language in the Gothic *Climata* and then in the Principality of Theodoro.

It seems to me that another source, which has not been taken under consideration before, can be relevant to our subject. I mean the account of Evliya Chelebi, the Turkish traveller who visited the Crimea in 1666. In his detailed and interesting descriptions he mentions several times a land of That “in the southern region of the Crimea, beyond Chatyr-Dah, which lies on the sea coast in the eylet of Caffa.” We find out that “In the land of Thats, in the name of Khan rules an aga who is called the aga of the Thats.”<sup>138</sup>

According to Chelebi this land is inhabited by the Greeks and Laz. “Altogether there are about fifteen thousand of the That people, who are known as good marksmen. They speak with each other in Greek, but they have also some other language and expressions.” At the beginning of the chapter entitled *About the special tongue and expressions of Thats*, the author probably wanted to give some examples of this language, because he left here a free space. He characterises it as follows: “it is

<sup>137</sup> Compare also “Constantinus grechus, gener Gozi, habitator de Caffa...,” - *Gênes et l'Outre-Mer, I, Les Actes de Caffa du notaire Lamberto di Sambuceto 1289-1290*, ed. Michel Balard (Paris: Mouton&Co, 1973), 268, doc. 696.

<sup>138</sup> Unfortunately the work of Chelebi is neither translated completely into English nor into any other modern language. However, there are translations of some parts of his book concerning some particular regions. In the work I used the Polish translation: *Księga podróży Ewliji Czelebiego. Wybór* (The Book of the travels of Evliya Chelebi. Selection), ed. Z. Abrahamowicz (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1969), 298.

neither Greek, nor Jewish, nor Alan, but a different tongue. When they speak with each other one can be very much astonished.”<sup>139</sup>

Unfortunately Chelebi did not give any example of this enigmatic language. I think that by Laz the Turkish traveller means the Alans, he probably confused the Caucasian people of the Laz with the Alans because they also live in the Caucasus. But who are the Thats? I think we should compare it with the account of Hans Schiltberger, already discussed. It mentions “a good country called Sudi (Sutti, Suti),” but the Infidels call it That (Thatt, Than)” and “Kuthia Sprach, which the infidels call That.” Probably in both cases we are dealing with the Crimean Goths, or in the case of Chelebi’s account it is better to say with their descendants. The location of the land of the Thats given by Chelebi is identical with the geographical position of the Crimean Gothia. Chelebi’s relation also has some similarities with the one given by Busbecq. On the one hand an ambassador of the Emperor speaks about the “chief of the Tatars,” while on the other a Turkish traveller mentions the Tatar officer “called the *aga* of the Thats;” Busbecq describes the Goths who still “inhabited numerous villages” as a warlike people who can raise “800 infantry, armed with fire-arms,” yet Chelebi says that “there are about fifteen thousand of the That people, who are known as good marksmen.”

The Turkish traveller had a problem with the identification of the “special tongue” of the Thats, but definitely distinguished it from the other languages spoken in the Crimea. Beside the Goths we do not know any other non-Tatar people in the peninsula who would be considerably numerous and would speak some other language than Greek, Jewish or Alan.<sup>140</sup> I think that in Chelebi’s times there could

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 316.

<sup>140</sup> Thats are also mentioned in the account of Ivan Bykhovec, the Cossack envoy to the Crimea in 1704. He says: “I have been in the village of Mangushyts where live those Christians, who left after the Frenks and are called the Thats,” - Ivan Bychovec, *Diariush* (The Diary) *Chronika* 34 (2000), 100.



have been some Goths in the Crimea who still remembered Gothic, but the language was probably not in use any more. The Alan language, also mentioned by Chelebi, was probably in the same situation.

## II. GOTHI OR GOTHALANI? THE QUESTION OF THE ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION AND SELF-IDENTIFICATION

If we compare the archaeological evidence<sup>141</sup> with the written material, one fact strikes us: the objects which are considered to be Alanic outnumber the Gothic ones, but in the written sources it is the other way around. The Alans are often mentioned among peoples that inhabited the basin of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov; but the order in which these peoples are named rather shows that we are concerned with those Alans who lived north of the Caucasus Mountains. We have only a few mentions of the Crimean Alans as a particular ethnic group. On the other hand, the Crimean Goths prevail in the written sources. This contrast between the archaeological and written material seems to be very strange.

The argument that starting from the seventh century the Goths changed the cremation for the Alanic burial rite, which fitted the Christian religion much better,<sup>142</sup> does not solve the problem. The predominance of the Alanic graves over the Gothic ones is true also for the earlier period, especially in the Crimean Mountains and in the centre of Gothia Dory (usually identified with Mangup), mentioned by Procopius of Caesarea as early as the sixth century. Neither does the argument that the graves of the mountainous Crimea, and among them those belonging to the Goths, were robbed, seem sufficient. Thus, who populated Crimean Gothia? Perhaps it is better to ask: who were the Crimean Goths mentioned in written sources?

In my opinion, we should look for the answer to this question in the period of the migration of peoples in the period between the third and the fifth centuries AD.

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<sup>141</sup> A. I. Aybabin, "Khronologia mogil'nikov Kryma pozdnerimskogo i ranniesrednevekovogo vremeni" (Chronology of graves in the Crimea of late Roman and early medieval times), in *Materialy po arkheologii, istorii i etnografii Tavrii* (Materials on Archaeology, History and Ethnography of Tauria), ed. Alexander Aibabin (Simferopol: Tavria, 1990), 67.

The theory of Reinhard Wenskus about the formation of a tribe, established in his book *Stammesbildung und Verfassung*, and followed by such scholars as Herwig Wolfram, will be very helpful for our reflections: “not entire peoples but small successful clans, the bearers of prestigious traditions, emigrated and became the founders of new *gentes*.”<sup>143</sup>

The strength of the Goths lay in the kingship whose authority noticeably surpassed that usually found among Germanic peoples. As the central authority of the wandering tribe, the king could employ the resources of his smaller tribe more effectively than the leading stratum of large, kingless tribal groups could use theirs. The Goths developed a great attraction for non-Goths... because the Gothic king decided questions of tribal membership quickly and on occasion against tradition. Finally, the Gothic kingship had the ability not only to form the *exercitus Gothorum* as a polyethnic group but also to structure it on the basis of retainership.<sup>144</sup>

The ethnogenesis of the Goths at the shores of the Black Sea was very much connected with their acculturation to the Pontic area. It is not accidental that in Greek sources they were called “Scythians” - the “scythisation” of the eastern Goths took place. They accepted the lifestyle of the Iranian-Turkish peoples of the steppe with such features as fighting on horseback, hunting with falcons, shamanism and Sassanian royal vestments, used by the Gothic royal family of Amali.<sup>145</sup> According to Herwig Wolfram, we should speak of the Goths only after the Gutonic immigrants had become “Scythians” at the area of the Black Sea.

On one hand, in the late Roman sources, the Goths were called Scythians, while on the other hand the Iranian Alans were defined as a “Gothic people.”<sup>146</sup> These words of Procopius attest the gothicisation of the Alans. “The nomads with their herds

<sup>142</sup> A. Aybabin, 64; I. Pioro, *Krymskaya Gotia (Crimean Gothia)* (Kiev: Naukova Dumka, 1990), 244.

<sup>143</sup> Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1961).

<sup>144</sup> H. Wolfram, *History of the Goths* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 41.

<sup>145</sup> Wenskus, 469; Joachim Werner, “Die archäologische Zeugnisse der Gothen in Südrussland, Ungarn, Italien und Spanien,” *Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* 3 (1956): 127.

<sup>146</sup> Procopius, *De Bello Vandalico* ed. and tr. H. B. Dewing III, iii, 1 (London: Harvard University Press, 1953), 22-23; *De Bello Gothico* ed. and tr. H. B. Dewing, V, I, 3 (London: Harvard University Press, 1950), 3.

could quickly join first one and then the other tribe-group.”<sup>147</sup> After leaving the steppes of what is now Ukraine, where the Alans were a part of the Goths, they joined the Vandals and took part in their ethnogenesis. When talking about the Vandal Kingdom in the northern Africa, Procopius says “the name of the Alani and of all the other barbarians, except the Moors, were all united in the name of Vandals” (τά δὲ τῶν Ἀλανῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων βαρβάρων ὀνόματα, πλὴν Μαυρουσίων, ἔς τὸ τῶν Βανδύλων ἅπαντα ἀπεκρίθη).<sup>148</sup>

“Very often the names given in sources are not the real tribe-names.” It is so especially in case of the politically active unites. “A tribe, which politically comes under the rule of the other tribe, preserves its ethnic awareness, although it is not mentioned by the historians.”<sup>149</sup> I suppose that this is also true for the Crimean Alans.

We do not have much information about the self-identification of the Goths and Alans living in the Crimea. All of the sources we presented were written by foreigners: Byzantines, Rus’, Arabs and Turks, and Western Europeans, among them Italians, mostly the Genoese. When describing the inhabitants of the Crimean Gothia, the authors of our sources first of all notice what was important in their understanding: either the political or cultural self-identification and allegiance of the mentioned people, or their religion, or, very seldom, their ethnic identity and the language which they spoke.

I think that first of all we should focus on the character of our sources and purposes for which they were written as well as on the origin of their authors. The Byzantine sources which mentioned the Crimean Goths and Gothia were mostly historical writings, in which the traditional ethnonyms and toponyms were usually used instead of the current ones. In the Byzantine tradition, all the inhabitants of the

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<sup>147</sup> Wenskus, 442.

southwestern part of the Crimea were Goths in terms of their political organisation. This tradition has its origin in the period of the migration of peoples.<sup>150</sup> Conversely, Constantine Porphyrogenitus in his work *De Administrando Imperio*, which is not a work of history, does not use the names “Gothia” or the “Goths” at all. When speaking about the southwestern part of the Crimea, which was dependent on the Empire, he uses the official Byzantine term of that times the *Climata* (Τὰ Κλίματα). His treatise is a kind of instruction for his son, about the way in which the neighbouring peoples of the Empire should be treated. Such a work should be precise and clear.

It seems not to be accidental that the authors who wrote about the Crimean Alans (when we can be sure that they are not dealing with their kin from the northern Caucasus) are not of Byzantine origin. The first concrete account of the Crimean Alans was left by Theodore, Bishop of Alania, who wrote his *Epistle* around 1240 in Greek, but was originally an Alan. He could not omit to mention the meeting with his Crimean kin on his way to the North Caucasian Alania. Then the Flemish Franciscan William of Rubruk, who visited the Crimea in 1253, speaks about the Alans again. His work is a kind of *itinerium*, which could be used by the future missionaries; that is why the actual names of the peoples and their languages are mentioned. The next detailed information about the Crimean Alans is found in the book written in 1321 by the Syrian prince Abu’l-fida‘. His work is a precise geographical description, which gives the original ethnic names. Afterwards, the Alans are often mentioned in the Genoese notarial deeds as the citizens of Caffa, as well as slaves.<sup>151</sup> There are only a

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<sup>148</sup> Procopius, *De Bello Vandalico*, III, v, 21 (London: Harvard University Press, 1953), 52-53.

<sup>149</sup> Wenskus, 61-62.

<sup>150</sup> Compare: Gyula Moravcsik, “Die archaisierenden Namen der Ungarn in Byzanz,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 30 (1929-30): 247-253.

<sup>151</sup> In that second case, we cannot be sure about their origin, but most probably among the slaves sold in the Genoese colony in the Crimea, there were also Alans originating from the peninsula.

few mentions of the Goths, once as a citizen of Caffa and twice as slaves. Notarial deeds are especially important for our subject; they called persons in the same way that the persons identified themselves.

Our sources for the period before the thirteenth century are mostly of Byzantine origin, or such which use the Byzantine terminology. In my opinion, that is how we can explain the silence of the sources about the Crimean Alans before the thirteenth century. We do not know exactly what the political status of the Alans living in the southwestern part of the peninsula was, but it seems that they belonged to Crimean Gothia, at least till the beginning of the fourteenth century. We do not have any concrete information about their land as an independent political organism before the account of Abu'l-fida' from 1321, where the town of Kerker (Kyrk-Yer, now Chufut-Kale) situated "in the country of Asses [Alans]" is mentioned. On the contrary, we often find in the sources the mentions of the ruler of Gothia and its ecclesiastical organisation. On the basis of our sources, we can assume that Gothia and the Goths were political rather than ethnic terms. By this definition were described both Germanic and Alanic ethnic components.

Both archaeological evidence and written sources testify that the population of the Crimea was mixed, although it is hard to say to what extent. Iosafat Barbaro, who visited Tana (now Azov) in 1436-1437, in his *Lettere al Senato Veneto* mentions the ethnonym *Gothalani*, which very well reflects a homogenous complement of the southwestern part of the peninsula. His account suggests that *Gothalani* was an original name used in his times. The term *Gothalandia*, found in the portolan of Angelino Dulcert from 1339 could be a distorted form of *Gothalanía* reflecting a mixture of the Goths and Alans. The surname *Halangot*, used among the Mariupol Greeks, corroborates this evidence.

Maybe the complex political and ethnic composition of this country was described by the plural form *Climata* (Τὰ Κλίματα), which was used in the Byzantine sources more often than Gothia. The name of the Gothic Principality in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was Theodoro, which was at the same time the name of its capital. It is probably derived from the Greek name of the centre of Gothia τὸ Δόρυ mentioned by Procopius as early as the sixth century. The toponym Theodoro appears for the first time in the Greek inscription from 1361-1362 found in Mangup, and is often used up to the Turkish conquest in 1475. It is mentioned both in the Greek inscriptions from the territory of the Principality and in the Genoese documents, in which the old name Gothia is seldom used.<sup>152</sup> In Moldavian, Muscovite, Hungarian and Polish sources<sup>153</sup> this country was called after the name of its capital, the Principality of Mangup. I think that the usage of a new name meant the cessation of the tradition.<sup>154</sup> The name Gothia did not correspond to the current ethnic situation in the southwestern Crimea, where Goths never formed a majority and in the fourteenth century were not influential any more. Theodoro was governed by a dynasty which took its origin from Trebizond: it was culturally and linguistically hellenised;<sup>155</sup> politically dependent on the Tatars, it was open for their influences, which were

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<sup>152</sup> In the Greek inscription of 1427 found in Parthenit is written that the church of the Apostles Peter and Paul “was erected many years ago by the our holy father and Archbishop of the city Theodoro and all Gothia, John the Confessor, and restored now.” As we can see, the name Gothia refers to the eighth century, when John of Gothia lived.

<sup>153</sup> See page 39.

<sup>154</sup> Gothia as an ecclesiastical term was still in use up to 1786, when the last Metropolitan of Gothia and Caffa died. Of cause, at that time it was a merely traditional name.

<sup>155</sup> Interesting evidence of the identification and self-identification of the Goths as the Greeks is given in two various sources from the different periods. One of them is given in the Genoese document from 1290, which starts with these words: “In nomine domini amen. Nos Constantinus grechus, gener Gozi, habitator de Caffa...” (see page 36). The other evidence is the *Vita* (Житіє) of Antonius the Roman, written in Rus’. It mentions a Greek-Goth (гречанинъ готъвинъ) who appeared in Novgorod and, according to the source, knew “Roman, Greek, and Russian” (see page 44).

becoming stronger and stronger with the latter's gradual penetration in the mountainous part of the peninsula.<sup>156</sup>

However mixed the population of the southwestern Crimea was, the Gothic and Alan languages were preserved for a long time. This fact is mentioned in the sources up to the seventeenth century. However in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or probably even earlier, these languages were replaced gradually by Greek and then Tatar. Gothic and Alan could be preserved for a longer time in some isolated villages in the mountains. All the inscriptions from the territory of Gothia with which we have dealt were written in Greek; Greek was an official and liturgical language of Gothia. It seems that the Goths and Alans of the maritime Gothia, which after 1380 fell under Genoese control, were hellenised earlier. The trade in the maritime Gothia was evidently better developed than in the Principality of Theodoro; it had more marketplaces and ports; the population in such a region must have been mixed to a larger extent. Greek was used there for purposes of international communication.<sup>157</sup>

The inhabitants of Gothia were bilingual or in some parts even trilingual. In the account of Evliya Chelebi it is said that the inhabitants of the land *That* (as the Tatars called the southwestern Crimea) spoke with each other in Greek. That is why in some sources, as for example in *Tartariae Descriptio* by the Polish envoy to the Crimea in 1578-1579, Marcin Broniewski, the inhabitants of the southwestern Crimea are defined as Greeks.

I think that the fall of the Principality of Theodoro in 1475 was the turning point after which the Gothic and Alan languages started to die out. The detailed account of Busbecq, written in Constantinople in 1554-1562, and the relation of

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<sup>156</sup> Some princes of Mangup-Theodoro bore the Tartar names as Khuytani-Demetrius, whose name is found in the inscription from Mangup dated 1361-1362 and Olobei, mentioned in the Genoese sources.



Evliya Chelebi, who visited the Crimea in 1666, suggest that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Gothic was on the verge of extinction. After the Turkish conquest of Theodoro in 1475 the southwestern part of the Crimea was overwhelmed by the Tatar ethnic element, and the influences of Islam increased. At that time the differences between the Goths and the Alans started to disappear. The confession played a decisive role; religion was more important than ethnicity. That was how one part of the Crimean Goths and Alans became the Greeks, and the other the Tatars.

In 1778 the Christians of the Crimea was deported by the Russian Empress Catherine the Great to the northern coast of the Sea of Azov where they founded a town, Mariupol. Among the so-called “Mariupol Greeks” there were two ethnic groups: Thats or Rumeys who came from the coastal area of the Crimea and spoke a dialect of Greek (*koine*), and the Tatar-speaking Urums or Bazarians originating from the mountainous part of the peninsula.<sup>158</sup> The Mariupol Greeks are probably the descendants of the Crimean Goths and Alans. Even now, among the population of the village of Constantinople (formerly Funy, not far from Mariupol) inhabited by the emigrants from the Crimean village Phunae-Demerdzhi (now Luchyste) the surname “Halangot” is in use. The ethnonyms of the Goths and Alans can be easily recognised in it.<sup>159</sup>

On the seashore, which was under Genoese jurisdiction before 1475, the Greek element was stronger, and the contacts with the Greeks living at the southern

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<sup>157</sup> In the Italian sources the population of Cembalo-Balaclava, the main city of maritime Gothia, was defined as a Greek. See E. Marengo, C. Manfronti, G. Pessagno, *Il Banco di San Giorgio* (Genova, 1911), 486.

<sup>158</sup> M. Arandzhioli, “K voprosu o nekotorykh koncepciyakh etnogeneza tiurkoyazychnogo pozdnesrednevekovogo khristianskogo naseleniya Yugo-Zapadnogo Kryma” (On the Question of the Different Conceptions of the Ethnogenesis of the Turkic-speaking Late Medieval Christian Population of the Southwestern Crimea) in *Istoria i arkheologia Yugo-Zapadnogo Kryma* (The History and Archaeology of the Southwestern Crimea), ed. Y. Mogarichev (Simferopol: Tavria, 1993), 143-156.

<sup>159</sup> Ihor Pioro, “Kryms’ki Goty u svitl’i mynulykh ta suchasnykh istoriko-arkheolohichnykh doslidzhen” (The Crimean Goths in the light of present-day historical and archaeological research), *Khronika* 33 (2000): 246.

coast of the Black Sea were much more active. They appeared here *en masse* at the half of the seventeenth century. Conversely, the Goths and Alans who lived in the mountains or, in other words, in the former territory of the Principality of Theodoro, most probably preserved their ethnic identity for a longer time. They were not as hellenised as the population of the maritime Gothia. After 1475, or maybe even earlier, the inhabitants of the mountainous Crimea accepted the Tatar language and way of life, while remaining Christian. That is how, in my opinion, the difference between the two ethnic groups of the Mariupol Greeks the Rumeys and the Urums, can be explained.

A considerable number of the descendants of the Crimean Goths and Alans remained in the peninsula, converted to Islam and assimilated with the Crimean Tatars. A variety of the anthropological types and diversity of the customs among the Crimean Tatars living in the mountains was noticed by the scholars.<sup>160</sup> However, after the deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 such observations cannot be verified.

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<sup>160</sup> Among the Tatar mountain people were observed Christian burial traditions, one of them being the western orientation of the body. The other interesting fact is that a certain construction of the house found in the Crimean mountains is called by the Tatars *razan* (*razna*). This word has no equivalents in any Turkish language, hence it is very similar to the Gothic *razn*, which means “house.” These massive wooden buildings seem to come from the lands that are rich in forests. There were also the other types of the constructions in the mountainous Crimea but the wooden ones were considered by the Tartars to be the oldest. On this, see the following: I. Pioro, Kryms’ki Goty, 246; I. Pioro, *Krymskaya Gotia* (*Crimean Gothia*) (Kiev: Naukova Dumka, 1990), 110; Kuftin B., “Zhylishcha krymskikh tatar v svyazi s istoriyey zaseleniya poluostrova. Materialy i voprosy” (The building of the Crimean Tatars in connection with the History of their Settling in the Peninsula. Materials and Questions), *Memuary etnograficheskogo otdeleniya Obshchestva Lyubiteley Yestestvoznaniya, Antropologii i Etnografii* 1 (1925): 20, 23, 51; V. Toporov, “Drevniye germancy v Prichernomor’ye: rezultaty i perspektivy” (The ancient Germans in the Region of the Black Sea: Results and Perspectives) in *Balto-slovianskiye issledovaniya* (Moskwa: Nauka, 1983), 239-240; A. Bernshtam, “O dereviannykh postroykakh Kryma” (On the Wooden Building in the Crimea), *Izvestiya Gosudarstvennoy Akademii istorii materialnoy kultury*, 117 (1935): 135-144.

## CONCLUSION

On the basis of our sources on the ethnic structure of the southwestern Crimea we can assume that there is a dichotomy between the archaeological evidence and the written material. The archaeological evidence seems to attest the predominance of the Alans, although in the written sources the Goths are mentioned much more often than the Alans. In my work I tried to explain this dichotomy.

In most cases we are dealing with the identification by the others, and not the self-identification, of the inhabitants of the southwestern Crimea. Their identification depended on the nature of the written sources: their origin and the purposes for which they were written, as well the religion, ethnicity and the language of their authors, should be taken into consideration. After the analysis of the Byzantine Greek, Latin, Italian, Old Church Slavonic and Arabic written material I came to the conclusion that the names “Gothia” and the “Goths” in most cases are used as political terms, and refer to both Germanic and Alanic ethnic components. It is especially true for the Byzantine sources, which followed a tradition of Late Antique historical writings. The Crimean Alans as such are usually mentioned in non-Byzantine sources.

The population of Gothia was mixed, and it is hard to say to what extent. But as archaeological material and some Genoese and Arabic written sources attest, the Alan ethnic element prevailed. The ethnonym *Gothalani* mentioned by Iosafat Barbaro in the first half of the fifteenth century seems to reflect more precisely the current ethnic situation in the Crimean Gothia.

Due to the gradual hellenisation of the Crimean Goths and Alans in the sources of the period between the thirteenth and sixteenth century, they often appear under the name “Greek.” Some sources of that period attest their tatarisation. Tatar

names, which some Christian inhabitants of the southwestern Crimea bore, illustrate this process very well. However in sources from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Gothic and Alan languages are still mentioned. At that period they seem to have been on the verge of extinction, although they could still have been preserved in some isolated villages in the mountains.

The process of the assimilation of the Crimean Goths and Alans with the Greeks and Tatars became more active after the fall of the Principality of Theodoro in 1475. After that date ethnic awareness became identical with the confession. The differences between the Goths and Alans were no longer important; some of them became Greeks by remaining Christian, while those who exchanged Christianity for Islam assimilated with the Tatars. Among the Crimean Christians, who in 1788 were deported to the northern coast of the Sea of Azov and now are called Mariupol Greeks, are probably some descendants of the Crimean Goths and Alans.

## APPENDIX

**The List of the Gothic words with the Latin translation given by  
Busbecq<sup>161</sup>**

1) Nostratia aut parum differentia haec erant:

<i>Broe.</i> Panis.	<i>Tag.</i> Dies.
<i>Plut.</i> Sanguis.	<i>Oeghene.</i> Oculi.
<i>Stul.</i> Sedes.	<i>Bars.</i> Barba.
<i>Hus.</i> Domus.	<i>Handa.</i> Manus.
<i>Wingart.</i> Vitis.	<i>Boga.</i> Arcus.
<i>Reghen.</i> Pluvia	<i>Miera.</i> Formica.
<i>Bruder.</i> Frater.	<i>Ring s. Ringo.</i> Annulus.
<i>Schwester.</i> Soror.	<i>Brunna.</i> Fons.
<i>Alt.</i> Senex.	<i>Apel.</i> Pomum.
<i>Wintch.</i> Ventus.	<i>Schieten.</i> Mitttere sagittam.
<i>Silvir.</i> Argentum.	<i>Schlipen.</i> Dormire.
<i>Goltz.</i> Aurum.	<i>Kommen.</i> Venire.
<i>Kor.</i> Triticum.	<i>Singhen.</i> Canere.
<i>Salt.</i> Sal.	<i>Lachen.</i> Ridere.
<i>Fisct.</i> Piscis.	<i>Criten.</i> Flere.
<i>Hoef.</i> Caput.	<i>Geen.</i> Ire.
<i>Thurn.</i> Porta.	<i>Breen.</i> Assare.
<i>Stern.</i> Stella.	<i>Schwalth.</i> Mors.
<i>Sune.</i> Sol.	<i>Knauen tag erat illi</i> Bonus dies
<i>Mine.</i> Luna.	<i>Knauen bonum</i> dicebat.

<sup>161</sup> Busbecquius, Augerius Gislenius. *De legationis turcicae Epistolae quatuor* (Frankfurt 1595), 258.

2) Et pleraque alia cum nostra lingua non satis congruentia usurpabat, ut

<i>Iel.</i> Vita sive sanitas.	<i>Telich.</i> Stultus.
<i>Ieltsch.</i> Vivus s. Sanus.	<i>Stap.</i> Capra.
<i>Iel uburt.</i> Sit sanum.	<i>Gadeltha.</i> Pulchrum.
<i>Marzus.</i> Nuptiae.	<i>Atochta.</i> Malum.
<i>Schuos.</i> Sponsa.	<i>Wichtgata.</i> Album.
<i>Baar.</i> Puer.	<i>Mycha.</i> Ensis.
<i>Ael.</i> Lapis.	<i>Lista.</i> Parum..
<i>Menus.</i> Caro.	<i>Schedit.</i> Lux.
<i>Rintsch.</i> Mons.	<i>Borrotsch.</i> Voluntas.
<i>Fers.</i> Vir.	<i>Cadariou.</i> Miles.
<i>Statz.</i> Terra.	<i>Kilemschkop.</i> Ebibe calicem.
<i>Ada.</i> Ovum.	<i>Tzo Warthata.</i> Tu fecisti.
<i>Ano.</i> Gallina.	<i>Jes Varthata.</i> Ille fecit.
<i>Ich malthata.</i> Ego dico.	

3) Iussus ita numerabat:

Ita, tua, tria, fyder, fyuf, seis, sevene, ahte, nyne, thiine, thiin-ita, thiine-tua, thiine-tria  
etc. Viginti dicebat stega, triginta threithyen, quadraginta furdeithien, centum sada,  
hazer mille.

4) Quin etiam cantilenam ejus linguae recitabat, cujus initium erat huiusmodi:

Wara wara ingdolou:

Scu te gira Galizu

Hoemisclep dorbiza ea.

## MAPS

Fig. 1. Graves of the Alans, Goths and Huns between the third and seventh centuries in the Crimea



● The Alans

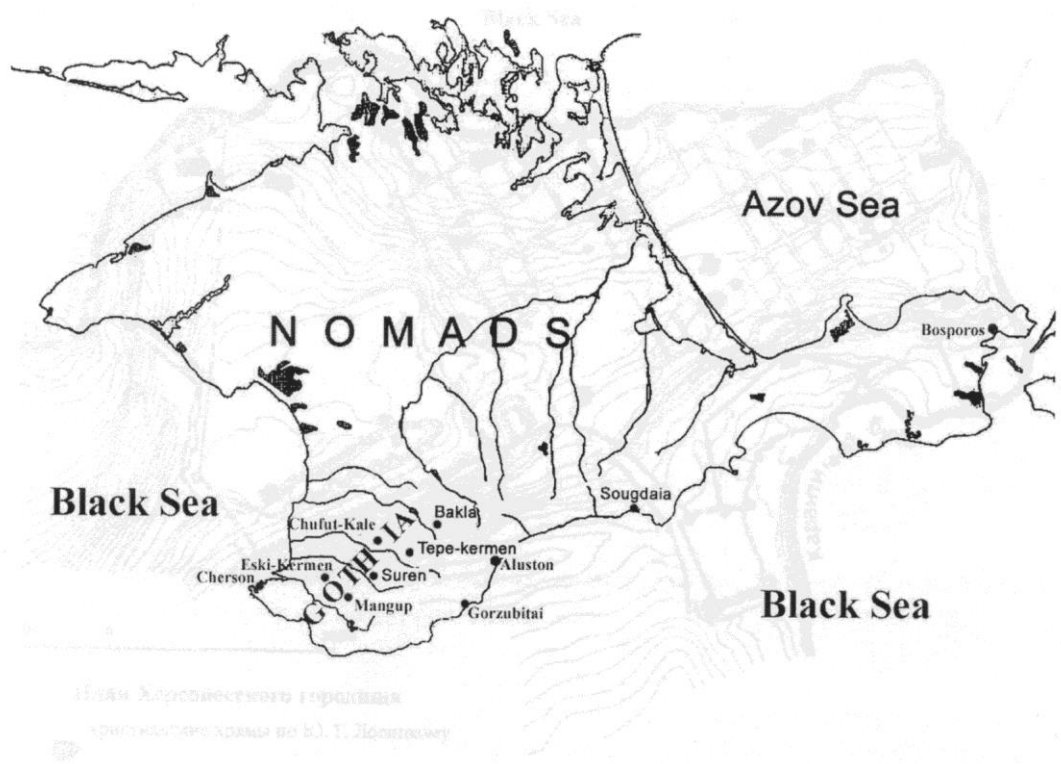
▲ The Goths

■ The Huns

### Names of the places

- |                      |                     |                |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1. Rysove            | 11. Sakharna        | 20. Skalyste   |
| 2. Bohachevka        | Holovka             | 21. Bakla      |
| 3. Sovkhoz Kalinin   | 12. Chornorechenske | 22. Chatyr-Dah |
| 4. Portove           | 13. Sovkhoz nr 10   | 23. Luchyste   |
| 5. Bel'yau           | 14. Eski-Kermen     | 24. Neapolis   |
| 6. Izobilne          | 15. Krasniy Mak     | 25. Pereval'ne |
| 7. Chykarenko        | 16. Aromat          | 26. Druzhne    |
| 8. Chersones         | 17. Charaks         | 27. Neyzac     |
| 9. Bel-bek           | 18. Ozerne III      | 28. Kokliuk    |
| 10. Inkerman         | 19. Chufut-Kale     | 29. Marfovka   |
| 30. Bosforo-Kimmerio |                     |                |

Fig. 2. Medieval Crimea





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