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# Warfare in Eastern Europe, 1500-1800

*Edited by*

Brian J. Davies



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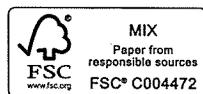
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CRIMEAN TATAR LONG-RANGE CAMPAIGNS:  
THE VIEW FROM REMMAL KHOJA'S *HISTORY OF SAHIB  
GEREY KHAN*<sup>1</sup>

Victor Ostapchuk

In terms of military prowess, longevity, and historical impact, the Crimean Khanate (1440s–1783) was the most successful of the Chinggisid successor states to the Mongol Empire in the West (the Ulus Juchi). One of the greatest claims to fame of the Chinggisid states in general was their manner of waging war. Thus in their initial advance through most of Europe Mongols and Tatars were able to inflict an uninterrupted sequence of crushing defeats upon every army or state that stood in their way. Even in the 14th–16th centuries, that is, roughly until the effective introduction of gunpowder weapons, the Tatars were overwhelming in their military prowess. Certainly until the 16th century they won many more battles than they lost. Even with the introduction of gunpowder weaponry—muskets and cannons—it would still be a long time before the Tatars were no longer a force to be reckoned with. Despite the clear achievements of the Mongols and Tatars in the art and science of war, there are many aspects that elude us. Aside from prowess in actual combat, they were masters at the technique of long-range campaigns. To give an extreme example, the western campaign of 1221–1223 led by the Mongol generals Jebe and Subedei in which a relatively minor force of about twenty, thirty thousand men on what was basically a reconnaissance mission, rode nearly fifteen thousand kilometers, winning more than a dozen major battles, usually against superior numbers. James Chambers, the author of a book on the Mongol conquests, has called this campaign “the most outstanding cavalry achievement in the history of war.”<sup>2</sup>

Of course the Crimean Khanate and its military were much different entities than the initial Mongol Empire and its war machine.

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<sup>1</sup> This chapter originally appeared in *Festschrift in Honor of Eleazar Birnbaum*, ed. Virginia Aksan (Cambridge: Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, 2005) = *Journal of Turkish Studies* 29 (2005): 271–287 and is reprinted here with the author's revisions and permission.

<sup>2</sup> James Chambers, *The Devil's Horsemen: The Mongol Invasion of Europe* (New York: Atheneum, 1979), 17.

Nonetheless, the Tatars of the Crimea too were masters of long-range military expeditions. And though their forte in mounting long-range expeditions were those that took them across the Black Sea steppes and into Muscovy or into the Ukrainian lands of Polish-Lithuania, they also carried out operations in less familiar territory—not only in the Caucasus but, at the behest of the Ottomans, in central Europe on the Hungarian and in Eastern Anatolia on the Iranian fronts. All such expeditions required skill in organization, some knowledge of paths and of hostile territory, ability to survive in difficult environments, and so forth. They were not always forays by nomads greedy for plunder and often seemingly well-planned and carefully executed military operations. Thus far we have only a superficial knowledge of how the Crimean Tatars mounted their long-range campaigns. Much of what we think we know is based on scant evidence—often one or two testimonies of contemporaries whose information was not necessarily gained firsthand.

Here we would like to bring to the fore data on Crimean Tatar military expeditions preserved in the sixteenth-century chronicle of Qaysuni-zade Mehmed Nidai, better known as Remmal (“the Geomancer, the Astrologer”) Khoja, *Tarih-i Sahib Gerey Khan*, or *The History of Khan Sahib Gerey*. Unfortunately, because most of the archives of the Crimean Khanate have perished, we have no chance to gain as good an understanding of the Crimean military as we, for example, do have for gaining an understanding of the Ottoman military concerning which tens of thousands of documents and registers survive.<sup>3</sup> Instead, we are for the most part forced to glean data from narrative sources relating to the khanate, of which also relatively few are extant. Fortunately, the chronicle on which we will be focusing here and which we consider as being one of the great works of sixteenth-century Ottoman historiography (we say “Ottoman” because the author was an Ottoman and the language of the chronicle is Ottoman Turkish), is a very rich source on the Crimean military and

<sup>3</sup> A noteworthy example of the possibilities that the Ottoman archives provide for study of the Ottoman military campaigns is Caroline Finkel, *The Administration of Warfare: The Ottoman Military Campaigns in Hungary, 1593–1606*, Vienna: VWGÖ, (1988) [=Beihefte zur Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, ed. Arne A. Ambros and Anton C. Schaendlinger, vol. 14/]. This work also contains a section based on Ottoman archival materials devoted to Khan Gazi Gerey’s expeditions in central Europe.

also other topics. Although the chronicle of Remmal Khoja has been known to scholars since the 19th century,<sup>4</sup> only in the past generation have scholars begun to more fully appreciate its value. It was published by Özalp Gökbilgin in 1973, a useful text and translation edition albeit with frequent misprints and mistakes and with only a rudimentary commentary.<sup>5</sup> In the same year Gökbilgin published a monograph on the political history of the Crimean Khanate during the reigns of Sahib Gerey and Devlet Gerey which for the reign of the former khan is largely based on Remmal Khoja and in which the value of his chronicle as source on the Crimean military becomes evident.<sup>6</sup> However it was Halil Inalcik who in a seminal article on the politics of the Crimean Khanate has given us the hitherto most complete presentation of the excellence of Remmal Khoja’s *Tarih* as a historical source.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, although Inalcik’s article is primarily devoted to Crimean politics, he also pays attention to military matters, particularly Sahib Gerey’s Ottoman-style musket-armed troops and field artillery (the Crimean army can be divided into two parts—the smaller one, a force of musket bearing infantry and begs (*ich oğlan*, *ichki begleri*) attached to the khan and the larger one, the nomadic tribal cavalry of the aristocratic *qarachı begs*). Here we will mostly concentrate on other aspects Crimean military operations, especially non-combative aspects of campaigns, such as organization, travel, protocol, and ritual. Of interest will be information on daily life. We will dwell less on those aspects already covered by Inalcik and instead refer the reader to his work. Although our knowledge of the Crimean Tatar military is still not very advanced, there have been some noteworthy contributions on it. Aside from the work

<sup>4</sup> For example, V. D. Smirnov knew it but used it somewhat superficially on Sahib Gerey and did not use it as a source on the structure and workings of the Crimean Khanate (V. D. Smirnov, *Krymskoe khanstvo pod verkhovenstvom Ottomanskoi Porty do nachala XVIII veka* [St.-Petersburg: s.n., 1887], XII, 422, 425).

<sup>5</sup> *Tarih-i Sahib Giray Han (Historie de Sahib Giray, Khan de Crimée de 1532 à 1551)*, ed. Özalp Gökbilgin (Ankara: Baylan Matbaası, 1973) (henceforth *Tarih*).

<sup>6</sup> Özalp Gökbilgin, *1532–1577 yılları arasında Kırım hanlığı'nın siyasi durumu* (Ankara: Servinç Matbaası, 1973). Being devoted primarily to politics and international relations, Gökbilgin does not devote much attention to analysis of military aspects, though his extensive direct citations from Remmal Khoja contain much information on the military.

<sup>7</sup> Halil Inalcik, “The Khan and the Tribal Aristocracy: The Crimean Khanate under Sahib Giray I,” *Eucharisterion: Essays Presented to Omeljan Pritsak on His Sixtieth Birthday by His Colleagues and Students* (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1980) = *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3–4 (1979–1980): 445–66.

of Inalcık, we would like to mention two other studies that deal with the Crimean Tatar military: the work on Mehmed Gerey I by V. E. Syroechkovskij based on the published materials of the Muscovite *posol'skii prikaz* (foreign office)<sup>8</sup> and the study of Crimean Tatars raids on the northern countries—Poland-Lithuania (i.e., mainly Ukraine) and Muscovy—by Leslie Collins based on Polish, Russian, and other non-Ottoman sources.<sup>9</sup>

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to devote a few words to Crimean Khan Sahib Gerey (1532–1551) and to Remmal Khoja and his chronicle. Sahib Gerey was the third son of the great Mengli Gerey (reigned intermittently between 1466 and 1476 and then 1478–1514) to become khan of the Crimea. Between 1521 and 1524 Sahib Gerey ruled over the Khanate of Kazan. Sahib Gerey's long rule in the Crimean Khanate was characterized by an assertion of the authority of the khan and by an attempt to limit of the power of the four main Crimean tribes, the so-called *qarachı*, and of the Nogays who were based in the steppes outside the Crimean peninsula. Most of the years between his khanship in Kazan and the Crimea, Sahib Gerey spent at or near the Ottoman court—he went on the hajj and even participated in Süleyman's campaign against the Habsburgs in 1532. Thus he knew the Ottoman state and society quite well and it served as the model for his vision of the Crimean Khanate—a strong state centralized around the authority of the Khan in the manner of the Ottoman sultanate. Remmal Khoja, a well-educated Ottoman erudite, joined Sahib Gerey when he departed Istanbul for the Crimea in 1532 and served as his astrologer, physician, and close advisor throughout his reign.<sup>10</sup> His chronicle is based largely on what he witnessed himself; that which is not based on his own eyewitness testimony can be assumed to come from other participants in the events. In comparison with most other chronicles devoted to the Crimean Khanate, whether Ottoman or Tatar, the *Tarih* is outstanding for its author's preference to give a

<sup>8</sup> V. E. Syroechkovskii, "Mukhammed-Geraj i ego vassaly," *Uchenye zapiski Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* 61 (1940): 3–71.

<sup>9</sup> L. J. D. Collins, "The Military Organization and Tactics of the Crimean Tatars during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries," in *War, Technology and Society in the Middle East*, eds. V. J. Parry and M. E. Yapp (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press 1975), 257–76. This study also gives references to other authors who have dealt with the Tatar raids.

<sup>10</sup> The above comments on Sahib Gerey and Remmal Khoja are mostly based on Inalcık, "Khan and Tribal Aristocracy."

relatively clear narration of events and provide concrete details, rather than to encumber his work with a display of high-flown style and rhetoric. The *Tarih* is a veritable mine of information not only on Crimean politics, institutions, and military, but also on the daily life of the peoples of the khanate and even of its neighbors (particularly the peoples of the north Caucasus region) and on geographic conditions as well. As to Crimean military affairs we note here that to a great degree campaigns take center stage in the *Tarih*—approximately two thirds of the work is devoted to narrations of campaigns: preparation, organization, travel to and from a given theater of action, combat itself, and other activities related to the given campaigns, such as ceremonies and celebrations. In large part information on Crimean politics, institutions and even daily life in general is to be found within of Remmal Khoja's relations of military activities.

To gain an appreciation of the rich tapestry of Crimean Tatar military endeavors during the reign of Sahib Gerey as presented in the *Tarih* it would be useful to retell some of Remmal Khoja's accounts of Tatar campaigns. Lack of space precludes such an approach and, in any case, reference to Özalp Gökbilgin's text and translation edition can provide sufficient access to the chronicler's presentation of these endeavors. Here the goal is to give a more analytical survey of some of the features of the Crimean Tatar war machine, i.e., more of an outline of the "anatomy" of Crimean Tatar military campaigns with reference to their physical environment. We seek to cull concrete data on military affairs preserved in the *Tarih*. In a topic with such a thin data base every concrete and well-attested detail is important. Significant to us is not just information that gives a new picture of some aspect of Tatars at war, but also information that might be essentially the same as that given by other primary sources. This is so because often our sources of concrete information on the Crimean Khanate, for example, travelers such as M. Litvin, d'Ascoli, and Beauplan, while being contemporaries and to some extent observers, also collected data from other observers, data which may have been either common knowledge or untrue rumor. Moreover, these travelers were in any event outsiders to the khanate. Often their testimony on a given aspect of Tatar life is the only such and this testimony could just as easily be false, relate to a one-time or rare occurrence, or be concerned with a phenomena restricted to a certain time and/or place. Of course we tend to trust the veracity of these authors, given the lack of better alternatives and, relying on the traditional nature of Tatar society, we hope that their picture can be applied

to other periods. This potential problem can apply to information given in the diplomatic papers of the *posol'skii prikaz*, for example reports by Muscovite envoys.<sup>11</sup> When a completely original, independent source such as the *Tarih* that stems from within the khanate gives information that supports or is practically identical with that given by sources stemming from beyond the khanate, the result may at first seem not as interesting as data that is new and unprecedented. However, such repeated data is, in fact, more valuable as it allow us to begin to construct a historical edifice rather operate according to single facts. Hence to isolate concrete and, we hope, authentic details concerning events and daily life of the khanate is of prime importance. Meanwhile, at this still not very advanced stage in the study of the Crimean Tatar military we will avoid making generalizations on the nature of the Tatar military. Because of limitations of space, fuller comparison of the data in *Tarih* with that in the other sources will have to be made in another place. In other words, the main aim here is to probe the *Tarih* for concrete data and provide a sampling of the wealth of its information which can be a basis and stimulus for further work on this and other sources on the Crimean Tatar practice of war.

All in all nine campaigns are described in the *Tarih*. To give the reader a notion of the course of these events and to make later references to them below more intelligible we give the following synopses<sup>12</sup>:

1. Moldavia, 1538: This is the same campaign as the one personally headed by Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent to suppress and depose the disloyal Moldavian voyvoda, Petru Rareș. One of the results of this expedition was the detachment of southern Bessarabia, or the Bujaq, from Moldavia and occupation of Özi, or Ochakiv, by the Ottomans. Sahib Gerey is ordered to join the expedition and indeed he participates with the Crimean Tatar forces, but not before rebuilding the fortress at the Isthmus of Perekop (Or Agzi or simply Or, "the Ditch") so as to protect the Crimea from the threat of a Nogay invasion in his absence. Remmal Khoja's account gives few concrete details of Sahib Gerey's actual military contributions to

<sup>11</sup> For example, that which is the basis for Syroechkovskii, "Mukhammed-Geraj."

<sup>12</sup> We only include larger expeditions. The chronicle also covers smaller operations and skirmishes, for example, in the struggles of the khan with Islam Gerey and Baqi Beg.

this Ottoman campaign aside from telling us that he aided in the search for the rebellious voyvoda and giving the approximate route he following in this search. He provides much more information about the preparations and journey to and from Moldavia as well as of a meeting there between the Crimean khan and the Ottoman sultan.<sup>13</sup>

2. Circassia, 1539: In response to attacks by the Circassians against Muslims near Temrük, Sahib Gerey mobilized his forces, crossed the Straits of Kerch and set off to punish the Circassians. Along the way the khan encounters Qansavüq, chieftain of the Janey Circassian tribe. The khan intends to punish him severely for not controlling the offending Circassians responsible for the raids near Temrük (according to the chronicle, Qansavüq was an Ottoman vassal, and in exchange for stipends and symbols of investiture from the Porte, he was to keep the local Circassians in control). However, Qansavüq manages to save himself by offering to supply a significant number of slaves to the sultan, khan, and Ottoman beg of Kefe. Although an expedition into the high Caucasus is unsuccessful in reaching the offending Circassians (see below), on the return trip Sahib Gerey allows his forces to acquire captives from among the Circassian population.<sup>14</sup>
3. "Kürel/Körel"<sup>15</sup> (northwestern Ukraine—Galicia or Volhynia—or Belarus), winter 1539–1540: A campaign led by Sahib Gerey's son,

<sup>13</sup> *Tarih*, 25–31. See also Gökbilgin, *Kırım siyasi durumu*, 14–17.

<sup>14</sup> *Tarih*, 35–45. See also Gökbilgin, *Kırım siyasi durumu*, 18–19.

<sup>15</sup> At first, during the process of deciding where exactly the expedition is to go, Muscovy, or Moscow itself are named as one of the potential targets (*Mosqov memleketün chapub Rusun tahtgahına erüb*) and again once the expedition is underway, the operation is referred to as *Rus aqini* and it is said that the Tatars have reached a place near the *Rus* frontier (*Rus serhaddi*). However there is no clear indication that this frontier was crossed and that Muscovy was entered. Instead the Tatars seek information from captured informants (*dil*) so as to learn the location of a certain Kürel or Körel (Gürel according to Gökbilgin—in the original KWRL)—a person, a people, or a place. Gökbilgin does not attempt to identify this word and considers the raid as being mounted against Muscovy. However, Kürel/Körel most likely stems from the Ruthenian version of the common word for king, *korol'* (*kral*, originally from Karol [Charlemagne]). The late Iaroslav Dashkevych, has connected this to the Galician Kingdom (Galicia-Volhynia), whose rulers had the title of *korol'* (Iaroslav Dashkevych, *Monhol'ske / irans'ke / tiurks'ke "kerel": Etymolohiia ta semantyka etnotoponimu (XIII-XIV st.)*, V. *Skhodoznavchi chytannia A. Kryms'koho: Tezy dopovidei mizhnarodnoi naukovoï konferentsii: Kyïv, 10–12 zhovtnia 2001 r.* (Kiev: Instytut skhodoznavsta Akademii nauk Ukrainy, 2001), 85–86). Since Volhynia was then in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, perhaps Kürel/Körel came to designate the latter? We also note that the

Emin Gerey, but under the oversight of his tutor (*ataliq*), a certain İbrahim Pasha, aimed at raiding one of the northern countries for captives. The campaign is successful in capturing substantial booty, particularly captives, but there is a disastrous return trip because of extreme winter conditions and an attack by the Nogays (for details see below).<sup>16</sup>

4. Muscovy, 1541: On the urging of the renegade Muscovite prince Semeon Bel'skii, Sahib Gerey mounts an expedition hoping to cross the Oka and strike deep into Muscovy. The chance of success seems quite high, because Bel'skii promises to show the Tatars a shallow ford of the Oka River while the defending Muscovite forces, not knowing where the Tatars plan to cross, distribute their forces among the many possible fords. However, because of a well-founded mutual mistrust between Sahib Gerey and Baqi Beg, chieftain of the Mangit branch of the Nogays, neither of them dares to be the first one to cross the Oka for fear of betrayal and attack by the other. In the meantime the element of surprise is lost and the Muscovites, finding out the location of the Tatar army, bring sufficient musket-bearing and artillery forces to the intended fording site and thwart the Tatar incursion. On the return trip the Tatars obtain some captives for enslavement (*esir*, "captive, slave").<sup>17</sup>
5. Circassia (Janey tribe), 1542 (?)<sup>18</sup>: Janey chieftain Qansavuş's failure to deliver annual supplies of slaves and other violations leads Sahib Gerey to mount another Caucasian expedition. Attempts by Qansavuş to allay the anger and determination of the khan by sending messengers with a promise to definitely deliver plentiful captives is rejected by the khan. When Sahib Gerey proceeds into the mountains the Circassians launch a night raid against his force. However the Circassians are defeated and the Crimeans return with a great number of captives.<sup>19</sup>

Ottomans and Crimean Tatars frequently referred to Ruthenians (Ukrainians and Belorussians) also as *Rus*; in fact, it seems that to them *Rus* was more of a designation for East Slavs rather than just the Muscovites. In other words, a raid on *Rus* did not necessarily mean a raid on Muscovy.

<sup>16</sup> *Tarih*, 46–51. See also Gökbilgin, *Kırım siyasi durumu*, 19–20.

<sup>17</sup> *Tarih*, 56–66. See also Gökbilgin, *Kırım siyasi durumu*, 20–22.

<sup>18</sup> In general Remmal Khoja gives very few dates. Here we follow the dating established or assumed in Gökbilgin, *Kırım siyasi durumu*. More work with other sources is needed before the dates of some of the campaigns described the *Tarih* can be more firmly established.

<sup>19</sup> *Tarih*, 72–82. See also Gökbilgin, *Kırım siyasi durumu*, 24–26.

6. Qabarda (Qabartay), 1544 (?)<sup>20</sup>: Elbozadi, a Qabardinian chieftain, whose own tribe rose up against him, arrives at the court of Sahib Gerey with a plea for help in suppressing and punishing the rebels. Sahib Gerey consents and this time travels to the Caucasus by land (Perekop/Or—the Dnieper—Azaq at the mouth of the Don—across the Kuban steppes). The key tactic in this campaign is to arrive at the fields of the Qabarda (*Qabartay mezra'ları*) during the harvest time (*oraq zamanı*) when most of the Qabardinians would be out on the fields collecting the harvest and thus easier to capture. However, the Crimean forces arrive too early so this tactic is not fully successful. A night attack by the Qabardinians also proves unsuccessful (see below)—the Tatars prevail and return to the Crimea with a great number of captives.<sup>21</sup>
7. Astrakhan, 1545: Yagmurji, who seized the Astrakhan throne, attacks a caravan on its way from Kazan to the Crimea. The wronged merchants come to Sahib Gerey to complain. Outraged by this interference with trade between Kazan and the Crimea, Sahib Gerey mounts a full-scale campaign to Astrakhan. Astrakhan is seized thanks to Sahib Gerey's field artillery and musket-bearing troops. Yagmurji flees while part of his retinue and entourage is taken to the Crimea with the promise that they will not be harmed.<sup>22</sup>
8. Nogays, 1546: Basically a defensive expedition mounted into the steppes north of Perekop/Or to preempt a planned Nogay attack into the Crimean peninsula. In a great battle the Crimean Tatars prevail thanks to cannon and musket fire as well as a vicious man-to-man saber battle (see below). The result is a massacre of the Nogay forces (the so-called *Nogay Qirgini*).<sup>23</sup>
9. Circassia, 1551: The Ottoman Porte orders the khan to go against the Circassians again, but this time the true motive is to get him out of the Crimea and thereby more easily remove him from throne and install a new khan, Devlet Gerey (the official reason for the campaign is complaints from pilgrims returning from Mecca that they were attacked by the Circassians). As in some of the previous Circassian campaigns, Sahib Gerey enters the mountains in an attempt to capture the leaders of the Circassians responsible for these alleged

<sup>20</sup> See n. 17.

<sup>21</sup> *Tarih*, 83–96. See also Gökbilgin, *Kırım siyasi durumu*, 26–27.

<sup>22</sup> *Tarih*, 97–105. See also Gökbilgin, *Kırım siyasi durumu*, 27–28.

<sup>23</sup> *Tarih*, 106–13. See also Gökbilgin, *Kırım siyasi durumu*, 29.

violations. The expedition includes an incident in which the place where a Circassian leader is hiding is fully surrounded yet he manages to escape which causes the khan to vent his wrath on his commanders. Eventually the Tatars catch up their foes with and attack. The result is a great number of captives. However on the return trip Sahib Gerey is abandoned by his troops, put in a dungeon in the fortress of Taman, and killed there.<sup>24</sup>

Almost all of these military campaigns are portrayed by Remmal Khoja as being initiated or provoked by outside forces—by the order of the Ottoman sultan (or at the suggestion of the Ottoman beg of Kefe), aggression or potential aggression by neighbors or subjects of the khanate, complaints by parties in neighboring lands against their rivals there. Only one is presented as being mounted purely by the initiative of the khan—in the winter of 1539–1540 Sahib Gerey proclaimed to the Crimean begs “let us this year not be deprived from making raids (*aqin*) and from the meritorious act of holy war (*gaza*)” and then suggested either to cross the Straits of Kerch while it was still frozen or to make a raid to the north.<sup>25</sup> Indeed in our chronicle the discussion of the Crimean Tatar expeditions, *gaza* or holy war rhetoric is frequently used. In our opinion, references to *gaza* were not necessarily interpolations by our Ottoman author. Even if the degree of Tatar religiosity was not great, references to *gaza* can be connected with Tatar awareness of and receptivity to this powerful justification or excuse for waging war. In addition, judging by the frequent mentions of captives throughout the work and the receptiveness of the Tatars to the prospect of enslaving members of the population of areas targeted by their raids, it is not unreasonable to assume that often the greater motivation behind a campaign was not so much the given external reason, but the desire to acquire valuable slaves (for more on *esir* see below).

On several occasions statements made by Sahib Gerey provide some interesting information on optimal campaign times. While other sources stress winter being a favorite time for Tatar raiding expeditions,<sup>26</sup> surprisingly, in the *Tarih* winter is mentioned only once in this

<sup>24</sup> *Tarih*, 121–43.

<sup>25</sup> *Tarih*, 46.

<sup>26</sup> E.g., Guillaume Le Vasseur, Sieur de Beauplan, *Description d'Ukraine qui sont plusieurs provinces du Royaume de Pologne contenues depuis les confins de la Moscovie, jusques aux limites de la Transylvanie*, Rouen, 1660, 41–46 (Ukrainian translation: *Opys Ukraïny, kil'kokh provintsii Korolivstva Pol's'koho...* (Kiev: Vydavnystvo “Naukova

context. Mentioned more often as an optimal campaigning time is that of the harvest. Thus, during his proposal to the Crimean begs to mount a campaign in winter 1539–1540, Sahib Gerey says: “in this land (*vilayet*) there are two times for a raid: one of them is harvest time (*oraq zamani*) and the other is winter (*qish eyyamidur*).” Prior to the 1538 Moldavian campaign Sahib Gerey partly explains why the harvest was a good time for a campaign in his written reply to Sultan Süleyman's mobilization order: “in the second month (i.e., starting from a month's time from now—V.O.) [and] during the time of the harvest we too will cross the Dnieper River (Özi Suyi) and move towards Aqkerman... because if the harvest time does not yet arrive the army will suffer hardship.”<sup>27</sup>

For the actual mobilization of forces, typically the khan ordered that throughout the realm proclamations or calls to arms (*nida*) be made in which the time and place of assembly are specified. In most cases it was also stated that each warrior was to bring three months provisions (*aziq* or *zahire*). The time limit for mobilization to be completed varied from five, ten days to one month. In some cases a specific day of the month by when the troops were to report was mentioned (for example, “the fifteenth of the month”).<sup>28</sup> In campaigns directed at the northern countries as well as against the Nogays naturally the point of assembly was at the Isthmus of Perekop. However, though in the Moldavian campaign the initial rallying point was Or where Sahib Gerey first reconstructed the fortress, the ultimate rallying point was the left bank of the Dnieper River. One would assume that the site of assembly was

Dumka,” 1990), 58–62; English translation: *A Description of Ukraine*, tr., ed. Andrew B. Pernal, Dennis F. Essar (Cambridge: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1993), 48–53. Note that the Ukrainian edition has an excellent commentary, much superior to that in the English edition. However the latter has a more complete treatment of Beauplan's maps and includes a boxed set of reproductions of them.

<sup>27</sup> *Tarih*, 26, 46. Naturally the harvest is the time of most plentiful food supply in agricultural societies and this was a factor to be considered when campaigning over long distances with large forces (cf. Archer Jones, *The Art of War in the Western World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 46–48). This information provided by Remmal Khoja raises some questions: Taken literally it implies that in summer campaigns the Tatars were dependent or at least reliant on the produce of peasants. Or perhaps it is a reference to the time of optimal availability of fodder for horses? However, note that grass and grains mature at different times and by the harvest time steppe grasses have long since dried away. What are the implications of information on winter campaigns? Did the Tatars move faster because of the rivers being frozen? (And therefore need less food and fodder by virtue of the presumed short time of such expeditions?) Obviously this point needs further investigation.

<sup>28</sup> *Tarih*, 26, 36, 57, 72, 84, 98.

on the Qıl Burun peninsula (Kinburns'ka kosa), that is, opposite the fortress of Özi (Ochakiv)—this was a common place of crossing the Dnieper when traveling to Moldavia, though the *Tarih* does not specify the site as such. On the eastern campaigns there were two different routes. When the mainland was followed (the campaign to the Qabarda and to Astrakhan) Perekop/Or was the place of assembly. On the other Caucasian campaigns the Straits of Kerch were crossed, though in the proclamations as Remmal Khoja cites them, Kerch itself is not specified as the place of assembly.<sup>29</sup>

The mobilization proclamations applied to both the forces of the Crimean tribes located throughout the peninsula (often outside the peninsula as well) and to the khan's own troops the core of which were salaried musket-bearing Ottoman janissaries and local Crimean recruits. Regarding the tribal forces, only on two occasions was the scale of the mobilization indicated in the call to arms. In the 1542 Circassian campaign whose main goal was to obtain captives for enslavement, Sahib Geray warns the great begs (*ulu begler*), that is, the *qarachı begs* (chieftains of the four main Crimean tribes), to bring only select men (*yarar nökor ve erenlerden ihtiyar*, "suitable retainers and choice men") and not to allow the common subjects (*re'aya*) to be deceived into joining the campaign, for the Circassians are a paltry people (*garet edejegimüz Cherkes azdur*) and thus too large a force might end up short of booty.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, for the Astrakhan campaign a full mobilization was made and the *yarlıq* or order issued by the khan is quoted as saying, no doubt with some exaggeration, that "no one is to remain in the land (i.e., the Crimea—V.O.), the entire people (or army, *halq*) is to go on war footing (*sefer ayagın edüb*), and if there is anyone who is not at the khan's side after Or Agzi, his property is to be raided and his head struck down." Thereafter the khan's *divan* or council adjourned and proclamations were made in all corners of the land that if any male between age fifteen and seventy failed to join this campaign they would face severe capital punishment (*muhkem siyaset*).<sup>31</sup> As to the troop totals that went on

<sup>29</sup> On one occasion, the campaign against the Circassian Janey tribe in 1542, it seems that the Crimean forces assembled near Kefe (Caffa) at Sarı Göl ("Yellow Lake"), *Tarih*, 73. In the other cases it is only said that in so many days the forces are to set out for Kerch.

<sup>30</sup> *Tarih*, 72.

<sup>31</sup> *Tarih*, 98–99.

campaign, the khan's troops varied between 200 and 1,000 for the musket-bearing infantry and 10,000 for all the khan's forces including *begs* attached in service to him, while the tribal forces, if Remmal Khoja's figures are to be believed, numbered between several tens of thousands and 250,000.<sup>32</sup>

As to the actual preparations, being a close aid of the khan, Remmal Khoja focuses more attention on the preparations of the khan's forces rather than those of the tribal cavalry. Inalcik has already focused on the khan's Ottoman style units and their effectiveness in battle—janissaries and local Crimean musket-bearers (*tüfengchi*), field artillery (*zarbuzan*), and wagons carrying various necessities for a campaign (*zarbuzan 'arabalari* or *top 'arabalari*, "field-artillery wagons" or simply "artillery wagons"; *jebahane 'arabalari*, "munitions wagons"; *matbah 'arabalari*, "kitchen wagons"; *zahire 'arabalari*, "provisions wagons").<sup>33</sup> Like the Hussites, Hungarians, Ottomans, Cossacks and others, so too the forces directly under the command of the Crimean khans (as opposed to the tribal forces) adopted the powerful defensive field-tactic of the wagon-camp or *Wagenburg*, which allowed a force armed with gunpowder weapons to withstand an attacking cavalry force many times its size.<sup>34</sup>

The *Tarih* has a wealth of information on various aspects of Crimean Tatar military operations both combative and non-combative beyond the initial stage of preparations—travel and camping, intelligence gathering, search and destroy missions, plundering expeditions, battles, and even fortress construction. Enhancing the value of Remmal Khoja's accounts is his frequent attention to geographic environments in which these operations occurred. Aside from aspects of human geography—in this context movement and survival in faraway and often hostile environments—as will be seen below, our chronicle often gives apparently authentic and rare details of physical geography and it also reveals a subjective aspect—the perception and conceptualization of geography and environments.

Here we can only give a sampling of such data. Remmal Khoja provides ample information on river crossings by the khanate's forces.

<sup>32</sup> Inalcik, "Khan and Tribal Aristocracy," 459; *Tarih*, 49, 61, 73, 100.

<sup>33</sup> *Tarih*, 26, 36, 74, 92.

<sup>34</sup> Inalcik, "Khan and Tribal Aristocracy," 459–461. On its effective use by the Zaporozhian Cossacks see Beauplan, *Description d'Ukraine...*, 47–51 (Ukrainian translation, 63–65; English translation, 56–57).

We must remember that the East European steppe zone, that is, the *Desht-i Qipchaq*, was not simply a monotone expanse of flat and rolling plains in which one roamed with ease to and fro; to a significant degree it was a patchwork of great fields divided by gullies and, above all, rivers, some of which are large and not easy to cross. Thus fording such great rivers as the Dniester, Dnieper, Don, and Kuban by a significant force meant mounting a careful operation usually lasting a day and a night or longer. In addition, to reach the Caucasus region usually meant crossing the Straits of Kerch. In various degrees of detail, the *Tarih* describes a total of eleven different crossings of rivers or straits by Crimean forces—one at the Dnieper, Dniester, and an unnamed river in the Caucasus, two across the Kuban River, and five across the Straits of Kerch. There is also a description of an unsuccessful attempt to cross the Oka River in Muscovy. In the case of the Straits of Kerch, boats or ships supplied by the beg of Kefe were used. In the other cases, even at such a wide river as the lower Dnieper, rafts were constructed (*sal bagla-*). The exact utilization of the rafts is not specified, but it is assumed that, as other sources indicate, the Tatars placed their equipment and supplies on the rafts while the horses swam alongside, possibly with their owners on them or only holding onto their manes.<sup>35</sup> Each unit of the army would cross together. The khan is depicted as being in charge of the crossing operation, actively directing it—deciding when to cross and the order in which the units were to cross; when the time came to begin the operation he gave the permission (the term used is *ijazet*—“permission, permit”) to begin the crossing. The forces of the four main tribes, the *qarachı*, crossed first, one after another. Often the Shirin or the Barın tribe were the first to go across. In all cases the khan went after all the main forces had crossed. For some of the crossings it is said that the khan had his tent pitched on high ground from which he could observe the operation.<sup>36</sup> The length of the operations could last a day and into the night (Straits of Kerch in the 1539 Circassian expedition), a day and a night (the Don in the Astrakhan expedition, Straits of Kerch in the 1551 Circassian expedition), a day and a half (Straits of Kerch in the 1542 Circassian expedition), and on one occasion three days (the Dnieper in the 1538 Moldavian expedition). On a crossing of the Kuban River near Temrük

<sup>35</sup> Beauplan, *Description d'Ukraine...*, 50–54 (Ukrainian translation, 67–68; English translation, 60–61). See also Collins, “Military organization,” 267.

<sup>36</sup> *Tarih*, 37, 124.

an interesting detail is given: the khan had scribes placed at each end of the crossing and they counted the number of men in each unit (*ta'ife*) as it crossed. Altogether 40,000 men “were written down” (*qaleme aldi'lar*), which suggest that registers or *defters* with the names of the men were compiled.<sup>37</sup> During a forced march in the Caucasus mountains in pursuit of the enemy, the khan decided to ford a large river in the night. He ordered a large fire to be made to illuminate the crossing. As his force crossed the river he spread out his prayer rug and sat observing the operation.<sup>38</sup>

Remmal Khoja provides very detailed descriptions of how the Crimean army camped while on campaign—where various forces were arranged in relation to the khan, how the *Wagenburg* was formed with the *'arabas* chained to one another, and how the musket-bearing troops guarded the khan's station and patrolled around it all night, serving in shifts (*nöbetle*).<sup>39</sup> As Inalcik has already discussed this point we do not further elaborate on it here and refer the reader to his study.<sup>40</sup> But we would like to point out another example of Remmal Khoja's ability for providing realistic scenes from the daily life of campaigns. Describing how a special force (see below) during the 1539 Circassian expedition settled in for the night in a deserted Circassian village the author gives us the following very human picture: “here and there [the men] have lighted fires. Some of the *gazis* are busy telling stories, others chant the Koran (*telavet*), yet others occupy themselves in prayer (*'ibadet*).”<sup>41</sup>

As to actual combat, in comparison with the information that he provides on other aspects of campaigns, Remmal Khoja is not very forthcoming. In general in his work there is a bias in favor of the Crimean side—serious defeats of the Crimean army in battle are not reported and one wonders if indeed it was always so victorious.<sup>42</sup> At most there is a tough fight, but in Remmal Khoja's rendition, the Tatars

<sup>37</sup> *Tarih*, 38.

<sup>38</sup> *Tarih*, 126.

<sup>39</sup> *Tarih*, 26, 74, 92.

<sup>40</sup> Inalcik, “Khan and Tribal Aristocracy,” 460–461.

<sup>41</sup> *Tarih*, 39–40. Cf. a similar scene in the 1542 Circassian campaign, *Tarih*, 77.

<sup>42</sup> Reluctance to report defeats suffered by one's own side can be seen in many Ottoman chronicles. For example, in their accounts of battles between Ottoman naval forces and the Cossacks in the Black Sea only those in which the Cossacks were supposedly defeated are reported, which leads the reader to believe that the reverse situation did not occur, which from other sources we know was not so. See Victor Ostapchuk, “The Human Landscape of the Ottoman Black Sea in the Face of the Cossack Naval Raids,” *Oriente Moderno*, n.s., 20 (2001): 23–95, esp. 89–94.

always come out on top. Nonetheless in the few accounts of battles that he gives, one-sided though they may be, there are apparently authentic details that reveal the art and method of combat as well as its vagaries and fickle nature. In the 1544 expedition against the Qabarda, the Qabardinians decided to make a night attack against the Tatar camp. The khan and his forces was well-defended by a wagon-camp, which included constant sentry patrols armed with muskets—here we have a clear example of the effectiveness of gunpowder weapons and wagon-camp tactics, for the Qabardinians realized that to attack the khan's camp would be futile. And so they decided to mount a surprise cavalry attack on the camp of the Tatar tribal forces. However the battle as described by Remmal Khoja was decided as much by accidental factors as by weapons and tactics: in the fury of their attack the first waves of Qabardinians attackers was trampled under the hooves of the horses of the succeeding waves. As to weapons, it was the Tatar arrow-fire that is mentioned as killing or repelling the remaining Qabardinians attackers.<sup>43</sup> In a battle with the Nogays in 1546 we can see the advantages over cavalry that fire by field-cannons and muskets gave. A charge by two units of Nogay cavalry, totaling seven thousand men (each Nogay with two horses to combine speed and endurance), at first brings confusion and near panic to the Crimean force. However, in the last moment Sahib Gerey manages to arrange his own forces in a row facing the approaching enemy and fire a blast with forty field-cannons (*darbuzan / zarbuzan*) and follow up with a volley by his musket-bearing troops. This combination brought great disorder and damage to the enemy. However here gunpowder weapons are not presented as necessarily being decisive in the outcome of this battle: at this point from several directions the Crimean cavalry swept down upon the Nogays. Remmal Khoja informs that the battle was too close for arrow fire, and had to be decided by saber (*qilich*) fighting.<sup>44</sup> Here we stress that in the 1544 and the 1546 examples mentioned here, while the great importance of gunpowder weapons is evident, in neither case is the battle won only by virtue of their utilization—at least in the eyes of Remmal Khoja disorganization or ill-fortune of the enemy and traditional arrow fire and saber fighting also played an important role in the outcome.

<sup>43</sup> In typical fashion our chronicler informs us that not even single Tatar's nose was bloodied, *Tarih*, 91–92.

<sup>44</sup> *Tarih*, 112.

However Remmal Khoja is much more forthcoming about special missions, particularly in the Caucasus Mountains where it was usually necessary to seek out an enemy that knew well how to use the terrain as a sanctuary. Perhaps because mountain warfare posed a greater challenge to the Tatars who where for the most part folk of the steppe, when relating the Caucasian campaigns Remmal Khoja takes less for granted and instead goes to greater lengths to describe the unfamiliar and awe-inspiring alpine environment and the difficulties of operating in it. This is in contrast to operating in the steppe, which presumably was more familiar to the author and/or the reader and so did not require as much explication. Thus, in Sahib Gerey's first Circassian campaign (1539), we are presented with a graphic description of the hardships encountered by a Crimean force that entered the zone of the Caucasian peaks in the vicinity of Mt. Elbrus (Elbruz), which Remmal Khoja informs the reader, is the greatest mountain in the world after the mythical Mt. Qaf. He adds that the snows on and around Mt. Elbrus have never melted since the origin of the world and its snowfields stretch half way to the province of Shirvan in the Transcaucasus. Below the snow is a zone where the trees will not grow and below that a forest so thick that not even a bird can fly or wild ass move through it. Below that, as one descends towards the open country (*sahra*) one must pass for three days through mountains and valleys which can be traveled only by one road. Having made their way into this mountain region the Tatar forces captured an informant and sought to learn where their Circassian foes had gone. This captive promised to lead them to a place near the source of the Kuban River where he claimed the fully armed and fully equipped Circassians were in their stronghold (which according to the informant included a ditch implanted with sharp pointed stakes). After some hesitation Sahib Gerey decided to make an ascent to this stronghold and to this end he selected a special force—from every unit (*qosh*) two men with one horse per man—while the rest of the army was to remain encamped where it was. With this special force, which in the words of Remmal Khoja, amounted to eleven thousand men, the khan entered the high mountains. The terrain was so steep and narrow that the Tatars could only proceed in single file. Below them were precipices. Remmal Khoja notes that “if a man slipped and fell he would break into a thousand pieces”; Sahib Gerey's entourage informed the khan that since the time of Timur no one has been able to pass through this area (here we might add, no one aside from the local mountain folk). The force proceeded for several more days until

it was utterly exhausted, its food supplies dwindled, and doubt set in as to the correctness of the route laid out by the informant. Several hundred horses and several scores of men had fallen into the abysses. With the force and its commanders demoralized and confused, the khan finally announced that those who wished to return may, but that he would remain in the mountains through the winter. However, his advisors talked him out of this folly. The argument that they presented to the khan puts in a nutshell why throughout history lesser mountain folk have been able to endure in the face of the superior might of neighboring states and empires: "Oh, our padishah! These [Circassians] are a tribe [that amounts to only] a handful and they have no chance to oppose you. What worth is it to pay attention to them?... Right now time is tight and it is correct to turn around and with good fortune set off for your country...for this Circassian people (*Cherkes ta'ifesi*) are a naked people (i.e., impoverished—V.O.)."<sup>45</sup> Deciding that such an enemy was not worth the risk and suffering that this expedition had brought and that such exertion was even beneath his dignity, Sahib Gerey found comfort in these words and after a two-day rest on the third day with his special force began the descent from the mountains to return to the Crimea. To compensate for the lack of military success of his special mission in the mountains, on the return trip the khan allowed his men to console themselves with an all-out foray for captives amongst the Circassian civilian populations, which resulted in the capture of droves of slaves.<sup>46</sup>

Although in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries raids into the northern countries—Muscovy and the Ukrainian lands of Poland-Lithuania were probably the most common Crimean Tatar military operations (usually with the purpose of obtaining captives, also to enforce payment of "tribute" or "gifts," and sometimes also with political aims in mind), the *Tarih* provides relatively little material on such undertakings. The only example of an expedition mounted purely with aim of seizing captives in the north was the campaign of the winter of 1539–1540 headed by Emin Gerey, son of the khan, into northwestern Ukraine.<sup>47</sup> The picture presented by Remmal Khoja is similar to that

<sup>45</sup> *Tarih*, 43.

<sup>46</sup> *Tarih*, 44. The accounts of the other three expeditions to the Caucasus region also contain excellent material on the nature of military operations there.

<sup>47</sup> At least officially, the campaign against Muscovy in 1541 did not seem to be primarily aimed at gaining *esir*, though on the way north a proposal is made that *esir* be

given in other sources: First of all, to save energy for the actual operation at the destination, the Tatar army moved slowly on its journey to enemy territory—in this expedition the frontier was reached in twenty five days.<sup>48</sup> Once the border of the target territory was reached, Emin Gerey designated a raiding party (*chapgul*) of unspecified size, with two horses for each man.<sup>49</sup> The raiding party was to return to the main force within a set number of days (here ten days). Meanwhile the commander, Emin Gerey together with his milk brothers (*emeldesh*) and retinue (*hass nökörleri*)—two thousand men total—stayed behind, though they too mounted their own operations locally raiding villages in the vicinity.<sup>50</sup>

This same northern campaign of the winter of 1539–1540 provides a good example of the dangers of the steppe. On the return from successful raids, laden with booty, Emin Gerey's force was caught in heavy snows and extreme cold. The conditions were so bad that, in the words of Remmal Khoja, "from morning until night they could [only] proceed the distance of three arrow shots." After a said forty days of travel they managed to emerge from the border zone, but were completely exhausted and unable to move any further. It was necessary for Emin Gerey to choose one hundred men and push ahead with them to the Crimea to obtain a rescue mission, leaving the main force (and its booty) behind. In the meantime another danger of the steppe took its toll: as the hapless main force reached the Dnieper River, the Mangit Nogays led by the khan's great enemy, Baqi Beg, took advantage of its weakened condition and attacked and plundered it. Though the party was eventually relieved by fresh forces from the Crimea, according to Remmal Khoja four to five thousand men perished from the cold alone.<sup>51</sup>

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captured before crossing the Oka, which Sahib Gerey rejects. A reason why few raids against the northern countries are recorded in the *Tarih* may be that such operations were mainly the prerogative of the Crimean tribal forces and of the steppe Nogays, rather than of the forces of the khan to which the *Tarih* allots the most attention.

<sup>48</sup> *Tarih*, 49. Cf. Beauplan, *Description d'Ukraine...*, 42 (Ukrainian translation, 59; English translation, 48–49); Collins, "Military organization," 266.

<sup>49</sup> Remmal Khoja does not articulate the reason there were two horses per man, but as is known from other sources, the extra horse was so that there would be a fresher mount for greater speed, which could also act as a pack-horse on the return trip, that is, for carrying booty. Cf. Collins, "Military organization," 267–68.

<sup>50</sup> *Tarih*, 50.

<sup>51</sup> *Tarih*, 50–51. While such cavalry raids are commonly known by the term *chapgul* (from *chap-*, "to gallop; to raid"), in the *Tarih* the term does not only apply to raiding expeditions by horsemen, but also to special missions of the khan's infantry and wagon

We have already made several references to the Tatars' capture of booty in general and especially humans as chattel, which is referred to as *esir* in the Islamic sources (from this the Slavic word *iasyr*). The importance of the slavery institution in pre-modern Islamic societies, especially in the Ottoman Empire and for the Crimean Khanate, is beyond a doubt. The Ottomans were to a great degree dependent on slaves as laborers in craft production and agriculture, agents in commerce and domestic servants, and of course as soldiers. The Tatars also relied on slave labor, but it seems that their main interest was in the veritable business of capturing slaves for the vast Ottoman slave market.<sup>52</sup> We now know that there were significant sectors of the khanate's economy besides that connected with the capture and selling of slaves and that the old view that the khanate was a purely parasitical plunder-based entity is not true. However, this does not mean that we should try to minimize the importance of slavery for the khanate. For some time historians have been aware that slavery in Muslim societies was not always an abject condition, that the status of slaves was regulated by law, that slaves had a chance to obtain their freedom, and that the status of a slave of the sultan or of a wealthy master could entail substantial or even great privilege and social status. This being said, it is hoped that today we can be even more open-minded about slavery in the Ottoman Empire as well as in the Crimean Khanate. That is, being ever conscious of the fact that societies of the past had their rules and moral systems that could be quite different from that of our societies in this century, we need not conceal from ourselves and our readers aspects which were clearly unpleasant. Yes, it is undeniable that the capture and transport of humans by Tatars was frightening and cruel, though after a captive was sold into slavery his or her fate could vary. Hopefully the days when historians could condemn and distort the entire historical existence of the Crimean Tatars on account of their

forces. Thus in the Astrakhan expedition an advance expeditionary force with wagons, field cannons (*zarbuzan*), and janissaries was sent ahead to Astrakhan—its mission is called a *chapgul*, *Tarih*, 102. In the 1551 Cherkes campaign, a special force sent on a mission that consisted of 1000 musket-bearing men and 20 *zarbuzans* is called a "wagon *chapgul*" (*araba chapguli*), *Tarih*, 125–26.

<sup>52</sup> On slavery in the Ottoman Empire, including the Crimea see Halil Inalcik, "Servile Labor in the Ottoman Empire," in *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern*, eds. Abraham Ascher, Tibor Halasi-Kun, Béla K. Király (Brooklyn, NY: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), 26–52.

raiding activity are gone forever and we can present the realities of the past not with ill intent but simply with the aim of understanding.

Being the product of his age and its ethos, Remmal Khoja is an excellent source on the Ottoman and Tatar attitudes towards enslavement. He makes no attempts to conceal the keen interest of the Tatars in capturing humans—unabashedly he speaks of the great numbers captured and after each successful operation he conveys the great satisfaction that acquiring slaves gave to the Tatars—"the heart of the people (or troops—V.O.) was joyous and happy" is a typical refrain.<sup>53</sup> Before claiming his share the khan tried to make sure that the troops and their commanders received sufficient portions of captives and other booty. Often officials and notables in the Crimea who did not attend were given a share of the bounty as well.<sup>54</sup> Clearly the khan took measures to see that his subjects were satisfied in this regard, even if his own gain might be diminished. If an expedition was a military failure, it seems that in the minds of the Tatar warriors this could be offset by the capture of sufficient slaves; conversely, without enough captives a military victory could seem hollow.<sup>55</sup> Without a doubt the basis for the positive emotions connected with acquirement of captives was that each captive represented a substantial material reward; to gain several captives could mean rising from poverty to solvency or from solvency to wealth.

Despite the great enthusiasm for slaving expeditions, the *Tarih* relates situations that show that this activity was bound by regulations imposed by the khan. In general, operations to capture slaves could not be commenced without the permission of the khan (*ijazet*).<sup>56</sup> On the return from Moldavia Sahib Gerey forbade his forces from taking captives, presumably because the Moldavians were subjects of the Ottoman sultan. This was in spite of protests and claims by the Tatars that the poor who had gone into debt in order to be able to join the campaign

<sup>53</sup> *Halqun gönli shen ve shadman*, *Tarih*, 80, see also 44, 128–29.

<sup>54</sup> *Tarih*, 44, 80, 128–29. Nor does he have any inhibitions relating to cruelty by the Tatars toward their enemies: on occasion torture or execution of captured warriors, wrongdoers, or even simple captives are mentioned or even described. In practically all cases the cruelty is not necessarily wanton, but rather serves a purpose—either to set an example, to punish, or for reasons of revenge etc., *Tarih*, 78, 93, 127.

<sup>55</sup> A clear case of the former situation is the 1539 Circassian expedition; the successful Moldavian expedition of 1538 might have been considered a failure had Sahib Gerey not allowed the Tatars to raid for cattle on the way back (see below).

<sup>56</sup> *Tarih*, 63, 89.

would not have a chance to repay their debts if they were barred from the opportunity to plunder and seize humans.<sup>57</sup> On the way to Muscovy in 1541 the khan ruled out any capture of humans before the military objective was achieved.<sup>58</sup> In the 1544 Qabardinian expedition there is a different situation connected with captive-taking: When a *nökör* of Emin Giray robbed a lowly man (referred to as a *faqir*) of his slave, Sahib Gerey was supposedly so outraged that he did not rest until the guilty *nökör* was located and the slave returned. The offending party was then subjected to a humiliating public punishment—he was chained by his neck to an artillery wagon and whipped at every stop along the way back to the Crimea. The khan made it a point that all the army saw this spectacle and what would happen to anyone who dared to steal someone else's slave.<sup>59</sup>

In his presentations of Crimean Tatar military endeavors Remmal Khoja pays no less attention to protocol, ritual, ceremony, and festivities than he does to concrete military actions. His frequent and lengthy descriptions of solemnities and festivities—public prayer, troop displays, parades, celebrations—are an indication of their importance to the Ottoman and Tatar mentality (in this respect probably they were no different than other peoples of the age) and these activities can be considered integral components of a campaign. Thus when in 1539 Sahib Gerey set out from his capital Bakhchesaray against the Circassians, we are given a description of a splendid spectacle: The royal grooms saddled the khan's horses with jewel-encrusted saddles and dressed them in gold-plated harnesses. The horse-tail standards (*tug*) were planted and the flags (*sanjaq*) unfurled. Meanwhile the streets were lined with spectators as Sahib Gerey, having bid farewell to his harem, emerged from the main gate of his palace in ceremonious dress and girded with a saber. He turned in the direction of Mecca and prayers were said and then for a final time before setting out he turned in the direction of the palace gate. Throngs of people chanted prayers as he and his entourage and escort—service begs (*ichki begleri*) and janissaries—with the flags above them and their extra horses following behind rode away on their *gaza*-bound journey.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Here a compromise was effected—Sahib Gerey permitted limited capture of cattle—one head from each flock, *Tarih*, 31.

<sup>58</sup> *Tarih*, p. 63.

<sup>59</sup> *Tarih*, 93–94.

<sup>60</sup> *Tarih*, 36–37.

Similarly, before Sahib Gerey's son Emin Gerey set out on the campaign of the winter of 1539–1540 to the Ukraine, Remmal Khoja describes a series of solemn ceremonies and festive events. First, upon granting his son permission (*ijazet*) to lead the campaign, the khan dressed him in a rich ceremonious robe (the *khil'at* ceremony), girded him with a gilded sword, and proceeded to give him advice (*nasihat*) on how to act during the coming expedition (maintain discipline, inspect the army well—both its vanguard and its rear, and of course, always be courageous). Thereupon a gathering (*mejlis*) was called. Pitchers of mead “that gives pleasure to the heart” were brought out. No doubt with intended humor, Remmal Khoja tells us that at this point those who did not drink withdrew from the convivial gathering (*sohbet*). Then the musicians took up their *sazes* (lute-like instruments) and playing and dancing commenced. People of delight and amusement rushed into the gathering. Amidst the merriment, the khan ceremoniously presented to the gathering his three sons, from the youngest aged seven, 'Adil Gerey, to the oldest, aged twenty-two, Emin Gerey. Gifts were distributed to all as the gathering lasted the entire day and into the evening. The next day a similar gathering (*sohbet*) was organized with further spectacles of sumptuous merry-making and intoxication. As this was the eve of his departure, at one point Emin Gerey asked the khan for permission to retire for the night. Upon his departure the party continued through the night until the morning.<sup>61</sup>

In the case of Sahib Gerey's own campaign against Muscovy in 1541 Remmal Khoja gives a different picture of the eve before departure: after seeing to all the necessary preparations the khan retired to his special room for solitary prayer and meditation (*halvet hanesi*) and bowing spent the entire night there. With the arrival of morning he performed the morning prayer (*sabah namazi*) and emerged from his prayer chamber to bid farewell to the palace women. Thereupon he made a festive departure with a fanfare parade similar to that of the 1539 campaign.<sup>62</sup>

There are scenes of celebration and ceremony on other types of occasions. Arrival of the army at friendly fortresses along the way was occasioned by a display of public rejoicing, so-called *shenlik*, which usually included a demonstration of cannon and musket fire by the

<sup>61</sup> *Tarih*, 47–48.

<sup>62</sup> *Tarih*, 59–61. On the eve of the departure for the 1539 Circassian campaign Sahib Gerey likewise spent the entire night in his prayer chamber, *Ibid.*, 36.

fortress garrison.<sup>63</sup> Victory in battle was, of course, another occasion for great celebration. Thus, on repelling the night attack of the Qabardinians mentioned above the Crimean army spent the rest of the night in celebration (*shenlikler etdiler*).<sup>64</sup> Finally, the return from campaign was also occasioned by great celebrations, often lasting several days, which included banquets, readings of a celebratory work devoted to the triumphant course of the campaign (*gazaname, zafername*), gift-giving, *khil'at* ceremonies, and distribution of captives amongst the elite of the khanate.<sup>65</sup> In describing the celebrations after the Astrakhan campaign, Remmal Khoja makes the social and psychological utility of such events evident: "...the meals were prepared and a general spectacle (*görüniş-i amm*) was made. The *ulema* and the pious and the rich and the poor (*bay u geda*) and the townsfolk and the strangers (*garib*) and the prayer-leaders (*imam*) and the preachers (*hatib*) all came, and the spectacle was filled with people. All the people offered prayers and eulogies (*sena*')." Remmal Khoja goes on to mention Koran readings and attendance of the convocation mosque (*jami'-i sherif*) and how when the spectacle began to disperse each person was in his own world of tranquility, happiness, and delight.<sup>66</sup> Here Remmal Khoja, idealizations and exaggerations aside, conveys the consolidating and integrating role for the society of such celebrations involving its high, middle, and lower orders.<sup>67</sup> The importance in Crimean Tatar society of the khan's personal participation in public occasions is also evident in a comment by the Habsburg ambassador to Muscovy, Sigismund Herberstein, on Sahib Gerey's predecessor, Sa'adet Gerey: "Being beholden to the Turkish (i.e., Ottoman—V.O.) custom, Sadakh Gerey, contrary to the mores of the Tatars, very rarely appeared in public and would not show himself to his subjects. For this reason he was expelled by the Tatars."<sup>68</sup>

In this survey of *Tarih-i Sahib Giray Khan* as a source on Crimean Tatar campaigns we have restricted ourselves to giving a sampling of the relevant information contained in this chronicle. There are other military activities on which the chronicle has information as well as

<sup>63</sup> *Tarih*, 85, 88.

<sup>64</sup> *Tarih*, 92.

<sup>65</sup> *Tarih*, 30–31, 44–45, 81–82, 95–96.

<sup>66</sup> *Tarih*, 105.

<sup>67</sup> On the importance of spectacles (*görüniş*) see also *Tarih*, 32.

<sup>68</sup> Sigismund Gerbershtein [Herberstein], *Zapiski o Moskovii*, tr. A. I. Malenina and A. V. Nazarenko (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1988), 184.

subtleties and problematic points of Remmal Khoja's work which we have not discussed because of the lack of space. To gain a full appreciation of the data in this chronicle would require a larger study that would also provide a comparative perspective from the point of view of other sources and other areas. We would like to add an observation on the relative usefulness of chronicles and archival documents. It is regrettable that so few documents or registers (*defters*) exist for our topic, materials that would give us a multitude of names, dates, numbers, organizational units, and so forth. However it is also the case that bureaucratic documents or registers rarely allow an individual of the caliber of Remmal Khoja to convey the information that his curious and perspicacious mind and eye for detail have gathered. With the help of chronicles such as *Tarih-i Sahib Gerey Khan* we have, despite inevitable distortions and blind spots, the opportunity to gain an authentic and fascinating view of the workings of a society that has largely remained concealed, a view that no amount of archival documentation can provide us with. Despite the scarcity of documents, as is evident from the *Tarih*, thanks to narrative sources we have the possibility to gain a rather precise picture of various aspects of the successor khanates of the Ulus Djuchi.

# GEOGRAPHIC SETTING OF REMMAL KHOJA'S HISTORY OF SAHIB GEREY KHAN



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