

# Ancient Russia as seen by contemporaries

## 1.

### ABUL-FEDA CLAIMED THE RUSSIANS TO BE “A PEOPLE OF TURKISH ORIGIN”

According to Abul-Feda, “the Russians are a people of the Turkish origin; their closest southern neighbours are the guzes [Guz = Kaz = Cossack – Auth.], also a related nation... in the XI century the guzes have conquered Persia and founded the Seljuk monarchy” ([175], page 391). The name of the Ottoman empire is most likely to be a slight variation of the word Ataman; therefore, we shall be using the formula Ottoman = Ataman henceforth.

The Turkish origins of the Russians might seem a preposterous concept at first – however, we advise the readers to refrain from becoming too surprised. The Russian dynasty is of a Mongolian origin, even according to the Scaligerian-Millerian history, since the princes often married the daughters of the Khans ([362]); many of the court customs are said to have been adopted from the Mongols by the Muscovites. The Turkish dynasty is of a Mongolian origin as well, since it was founded by “Tamerlane the Mongol” in the end of the XIV century. We shall discuss the real identity of the Mongolian Khans below; let us merely state that they were related to the Byzantine emperors so far, and were often married to Byzantine princesses. One should therefore refrain from think-

ing that the “Mongolian customs” in question were introduced by nomadic heathens, whose homeland was in the dusty deserts to the north from China.

The relations between Russia and Turkey must be a great deal deeper than it is assumed nowadays. The abovementioned Tartar names used in Russia may have simply been of an Ottoman = Ataman origin. Let us point out figs. 3.3-3.5 to the readers once again; we see Stepan Timofeyevich Razin wearing royal attire and an Ottoman turban on his head, just as the Ottoman = Ataman sultans used to wear! See also figs. 3.6-3.9.

One should also remember the famous janissaries from mediaeval Turkey, as well as the fact that many Grand Viziers and military commanders have often been Christians and even Slavs! Let us turn to the *Lectures on Mediaeval History* by the famous historian T. N. Granovskiy. He reports the following:

“The Sultan’s infantry is known to have been the best in Europe, yet the ranks of this infantry were very odd indeed [sic! – Auth.]. Around 1367... the Turks started to recruit Christian boys as potential soldiers... every village would be visited by the Turkish officials every five years; the healthiest and strongest were chosen, taken away and sent to the sultan... at the age of twenty... they became janissaries... with no hope of ever settling down with a family... The janissaries... won all the key battles – at Varna, Kosovo

and so on, and they were the ones who managed to take Constantinople. Thus, the Turkish Sultan's power was supported by the Christians" ([192], page 48).

Let us instantly point out that this kind of recruitment is the very *tagma*, or "tax of blood" already known to us from the history of the "Mongol and Tartar yoke" in Russia; recruits were children who would serve in the army for the rest of their life. These recruits were known as Cossacks. This custom had existed in Russia until Peter the Great, and, apparently, a somewhat later epoch in Turkey.

It turns out that the people who took Constantinople in the middle of the XV century were Christian! By the way, the Sultan was supported by a strong Christian political party that was active in the besieged Constantinople ([455], page 191).

It is spectacular that the surviving Russian report of Constantinople taken in 1453 was written by a certain Nestor Iskander – an eyewitness of the siege and one of its participants. The fact that the report in question was written in Russian really makes one wonder about how a "prisoner of the Turks, who had been taken captive at a very early age and remained distanced from his native culture for his entire life" managed to "follow the rules of the [Russian, as we shall see below – Auth.] literary etiquette, observing them meticulously... what we have in front of us is doubtlessly a masterpiece written by an outstanding Russian writer of the XV century" ([636], page 602). The conclusion is extremely simple – the army of Mehmet II that had stormed Constantinople partially consisted of educated Russians.

Our opponents might start telling us that Russians and other Christians were used by the Turks as cannon fodder and nothing but – as privates at best. However, this is not so – Granovskiy proceeds to tell us that "they [Christian children – Auth.] didn't just become janissaries – some of them were reared in a separate seraglio... Those were the best... they constituted the Sultan's mounted guard... This is where the potential military commanders and Grand Viziers came from; all the Grand Viziers in the first half of the XVI century, who have brought glory to the Turkish army, were brought up in those elite seraglios" ([192], pages 48-49).

The fact that certain Russian princes had Turkic and Ottoman (Ataman) names and patronymics is

very persistently presumed to confirm the existence of the horrendous "Tartar and Mongol yoke" in Russia, whilst the presence of the Russians in the Turkish army and the "dominancy of the Christians and the Slavs" in the top ranks of the Russian army doesn't lead to any comments in re "the Slavic and Christian yoke in Turkey" from the part of the same historians. Our opponents may want to claim that the Ottoman subjects of Slavic origin were Muslims; we agree with that (insofar as the post-XVI century epoch is concerned, at least). However, Russian Tartars have often been Christian, as it is known to us from many documents (the "Epistle to the *Baskaks* and all the Orthodox Christians" et al; one should also remember the baptised Tartars from Kasim).

The yoke is most likely to have been a fantasy – all the historical evidence that we find testifies to a normal course of affairs in a multinational state.

A very interesting piece of evidence can be found in the notes of the Englishman Jerome Gorse, head of the Moscow office of the "Russian Society of English Traders" in the end of the XVI century. He wrote: "The Slavic language [Russian, that is, since the author of these words is referring to Russia explicitly – Auth.] can... also be of use in Turkey, Persia and even certain parts of India" ([314], page 97). That goes to say, some part of the Turkish, Persian and Indian populace spoke Russian as recently as in the end of the XVI century.

All such evidence completely fails to correspond with the picture of history that is usually drawn for us by historians. All the "uncomfortable" facts usually remain hidden from the sight of the general public, so as not to provoke any unwarranted questions. Yet it turns out that there is a lot of such "anti-historical" evidence in existence; some of it is cited in the present book.

## 2. RUSSIA AND TURKEY

Let us formulate the following hypothesis. It might not be new; however, this hypothesis is vital for the understanding of our general conception. There was an epoch when both Russia and Turkey had constituted part of the same Empire.

Before the XVII century, the Russia and Turkey

had been friendly nations, which is in perfect correspondence with our theory about their being part of the same Great = “Mongolian” Empire at some point. The estrangement between the two only began after this empire broke up in the XVII century.

Some Arabic chroniclers tell us directly that Russia was considered the Orthodox part of the Mongolian = Turkish empire ([547]). They noted that the Orthodox part of the Empire had possessed the greatest military potential, and expressed hope for future confessional unification. We consider these texts to have been written after the great religious schism of the XV-XVI century, when the formerly united Christianity divided into three parts – the Orthodox, the Latin and the Muslim. A political schism complemented the segregation.

It is known that the relations between Turkey and Russia were more than benevolent before the middle of the XVII century.

In 1613 “The Sultan signed a compact of ‘love and friendship’ with the Lord of the Muscovites, promising military assistance in the war with the King of Lithuania” ([183], Volume 2, page 161).

In 1619, “the Patriarch [Russian patriarch Filaret – Auth.] demanded that the Don Cossacks shouldn’t just maintain peaceful relations with Turkey, but must also join the Turkish army and obey the Turkish pashas” ([183], Volume 2, page 169).

In 1627 “the relations with Turkey were ratified in writing: ‘I hereby kiss the cross on behalf of Great Lord Murad, swearing friendship with Czar Mikhail Fyodorovich, and agreeing upon regular exchange of ambassadors, as well as promising military assistance against his enemies and the Polish king. The Crimean king, the Nogai and the Azov people are forbidden to wage war against the lands of the Muscovites” ([183], Volume 2, page 173).

A propos, the Turkish ambassador in Moscow had been none other Thomas Cantacusen the Greek – possibly, a descendant of the famous Byzantine emperor John Cantacusen ([183], Volume 2, page 170). Apparently, Byzantine nobility regarded the conquest of Constantinople by Mehmet II as another palace revolution and not a foreign invasion (Ottoman conquest, the fall of Byzantium and so on). All these terms that we’re accustomed to nowadays have apparently been introduced after Mohammed’s victory

by the survivors from the defeated party that had fled to the West; they were the ones who had been persuading the European aristocracy to launch a crusade against Byzantium in order to liberate it from “Turkish tyranny”. The very concept of the “fall of Byzantium in 1453” is a brainchild of this propaganda campaign.

Traces of a former union between Turkey and Russia can be found in historical records telling us about the abovementioned siege of Constantinople that took place in 1453 – for instance, the mere fact that there were Russians taking part in the siege. Let us also dispute the suggestion that Nestor Iskander, the “outstanding Russian writer of the XV century”, had been a simple warrior in the army of Mehmet II – we are of the opinion that the character in question had been a prominent Ottoman warlord.

A propos, could the marriage between Ivan III and the Greek princess after the fall of Constantinople be his “war trophy”?

It is presumed that the ties between Russia and Byzantium were severed shortly before the fall of Constantinople, the motivations being religious. Russians are supposed to have started treating the Byzantine Church as heretical and allegedly leaning towards establishing a union with its Occidental counterpart. Modern historians are of the opinion that the Russians had refrained from taking part in the war between Byzantium and Turkey, considering both parties “unworthy of assistance”. However, let us consider the manner in which Nestor Iskander, an actual participant of the siege, describes the latter. His text was included in Russian chronicle compilations and served as the primary source of information about this event in Russia. As one should rightly expect, Nestor refers to Mehmet II, his master, in reverent tones.

Indeed, let us turn to the colour inset in [636]. This is a reproduction of a miniature from the *Litseyvoy Svod* of the XVI century, depicting the siege of Czar-Grad by the Ottoman Turks. The text under the miniature is as follows:

“He [Mehmet II – Auth.] had approached the royal city armed with wondrous weapons, and made terrifying masses of people and ships congregate before her walls; this happened in December. And so he had ordered for the cannons and the harquebuses to fire

at the walls of the city, and sent forth a host of battering-rams to crush her defences”.

As we can plainly see, the initial text is very benevolent towards Mehmet. Let us now consider the same fragment as rendered by a modern publication (see [636], page 222):

“This perfidious and wicked infidel had sent all the envoys away. And so he had ordered for the cannons and the harquebuses to fire at the walls of the city, and sent forth a host of battering-rams to crush her defences”.

This is obviously another edition of the same text – dating to the XVII century the earliest. We are of the opinion that the primary goal of this editing activity had been to introduce negative characteristics into the text that had initially treated the Ottomans benevolently (words like “perfidious”, “infidel” etc). Au contraire, positive characteristics (“wondrous” and so on) were removed. The author’s attitude towards the events he described was therefore inverted completely. This is how the Scaligerian-Millerian version of the Russian history had been created.

A propos, let us point out the obvious phonetic similarity between the words Ottoman (in another version – Osman, or Ross-Man?) and Ataman. The Turks used to call themselves Ottomans (and Osmans) in the 1453 century, when they stormed the walls of Constantinople – could it be Atamans and Ross-Men?

Let us conclude with an obvious question concerning the identity of this “prominent XV century writer” – could he be the same Nestor who is considered the author of the famous *Povest Vremennyh Let* nowadays? Bear in mind that this oeuvre is most likely to have been written in the XVIII century and then ascribed to an “ancient Russian author”. However, we have already seen that Nestor must have lived in the XV century.

### 3.

#### WHAT ONE SEES ON THE FAMOUS ARAB MAP BY AL-IDRISI FROM MEDIAEVAL SPAIN

Let us quote from the *Book of Ways and Kingdoms* by Abul Kasim Mohammed known as Ibn-Khaukal, dated to 967 nowadays. He wrote:

“There are three tribe of Russians, one of them is closer to the Bulgars than the other two. The king of

this tribe lives in Quayaba [presumably Kiev – Auth.]... Another tribe is found further north and known as the Tribe of Slavia... The third tribe is called Arthania [The Horde – Auth.], and its king lives in Artha [also the Horde – Auth.].” Quotation from [156] as cited in [547].

It is therefore perfectly obvious that the Arabs used to consider the Horde, or Artha, a Russian state, which is in perfect concurrence with our reconstruction.

The Arabs wrote about the Horde rather often – however, according to the historian B. A. Rybakov, “precious information about the Slavs and the Kiev Russia, collected by the Oriental geographers of the IX-XII century... is still in need of a meticulous study” ([753], page 174). In the description of the Arabs, Russia consists of three states populated by the Russians. We also learn of the three centres of the state, or the three Sarays. There is a “vast amount of literature” written about these three centres ([753], page 174). The Arabs have compiled very detailed maps of Russia, with each one of the three indicated explicitly. Different researchers would identify the three Sarays as different modern towns:

“The three Russian cities located on the same river, according to an early Persian geographer... can be identified as follows: Quayaba = Kiev... Slavia = Novgorod, and Arthania = Byeloozero and Rostov... this is the geographical framework developed by the Russian specialists in the field of Oriental studies in the 1960’s – 1970’s” ([753], pages 176-177). However, we learn that other opinions had also existed.

One mustn’t forget about the famous mediaeval map by Abu Abdallah Mohammed Ibn-Mohammed Al-Idrisi, compiled in the alleged year 1154 A.D. in Palermo for King Roger II ([378]). In figs. 4.1-4.4 you can see the general view of the small map and some fragments of the large map compiled by Al-Idrisi. There are some 2500 names on the map in total. Al-Idrisi had studied in Spanish Cordoba – one of the most illustrious cultural centres in the Western Europe; his book was written in Sicily ([753], page 178). What else could historians possibly need? Plenty of material that could be used for reconstructing the ancient history of Russia. However, oddly enough, “the specialists in Oriental studies that write about Kiev Russia, hardly ever refer to the *Delights for The Traveller around the World* of Abu Abdallah Moham-

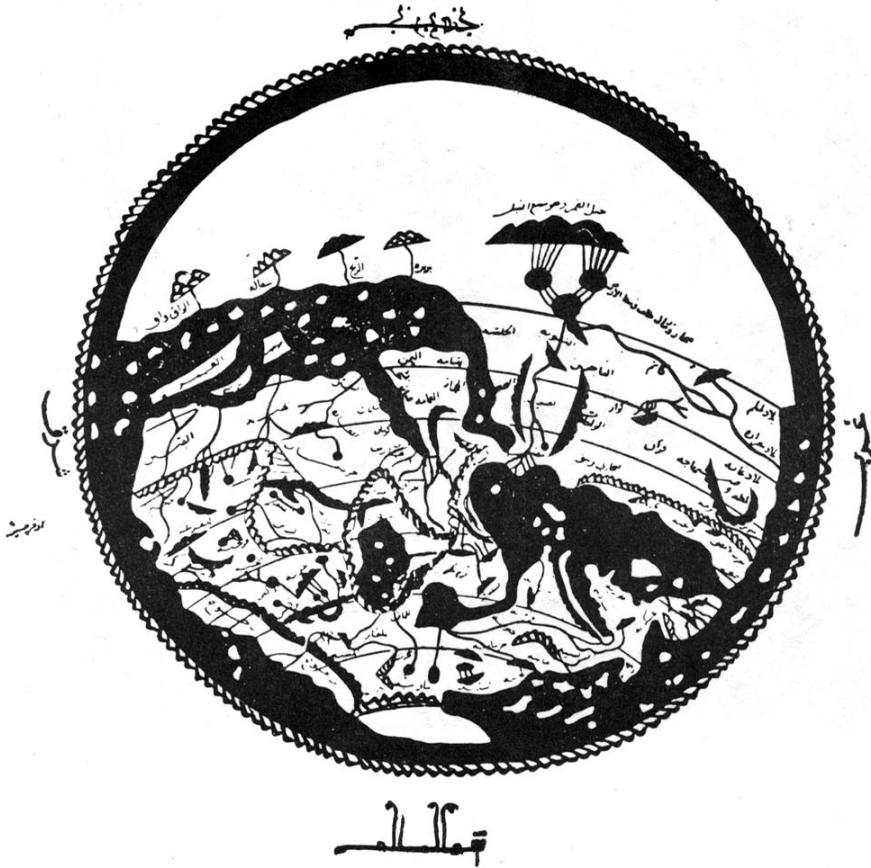


Fig. 4.1. A brief version of Al-Idrisi's Arabic map. Taken from [378], inset between pages 32 and 33, Appendix 2.

med Ibn-Mohammed Al-Idrisi and his famous map, two most reliable and respectable sources" ([753], page 178).

Moreover, "Novoseltsev calls the passage in Al-Idrisi's oeuvre that mentions the three Russian capital very convoluted, and recommends to treat Al-Idrisi's version with the utmost caution" ([752], page 178). What is the matter here? Why do modern historians prefer to keep silent about the work of Al-Idrisi or to treat it with caution? The matter is that the ancient geography reported by this author is at odds with the modern concepts of the Kiev Russia. Various scientists have used Al-Idrisi's map and book in their research and come to conclusions that their colleagues declared "absurd without a single doubt".

P. P. Smirnov, for instance, "has used Al-Idrisi's

map for his perfectly unrealistic localization of the 'three Russian capitals' – Quayaba as Balakhna [a large town a little further up the Volga from Nizhnyi Novgorod – Auth.], Slavia as Yaroslavl and Arthania as Ardatov [a town in the Nizhnyi Novgorod region – Auth.]" ([753], page 178).

It goes without saying that modern readers shall find the Volga localization of Kiev quite preposterous. Moreover, the consensual identification of Slavia is Novgorod; however, we learn that Slavia might also refer to Yaroslavl. This leads us back to our hypothesis about Yaroslavl being the historical Novgorod the Great, concurring perfectly with our reconstruction.

Another "wild fancy" is that we see a similarity between the names Arthania and Ardatov; this brings us to the names Artha and Horde, implying once

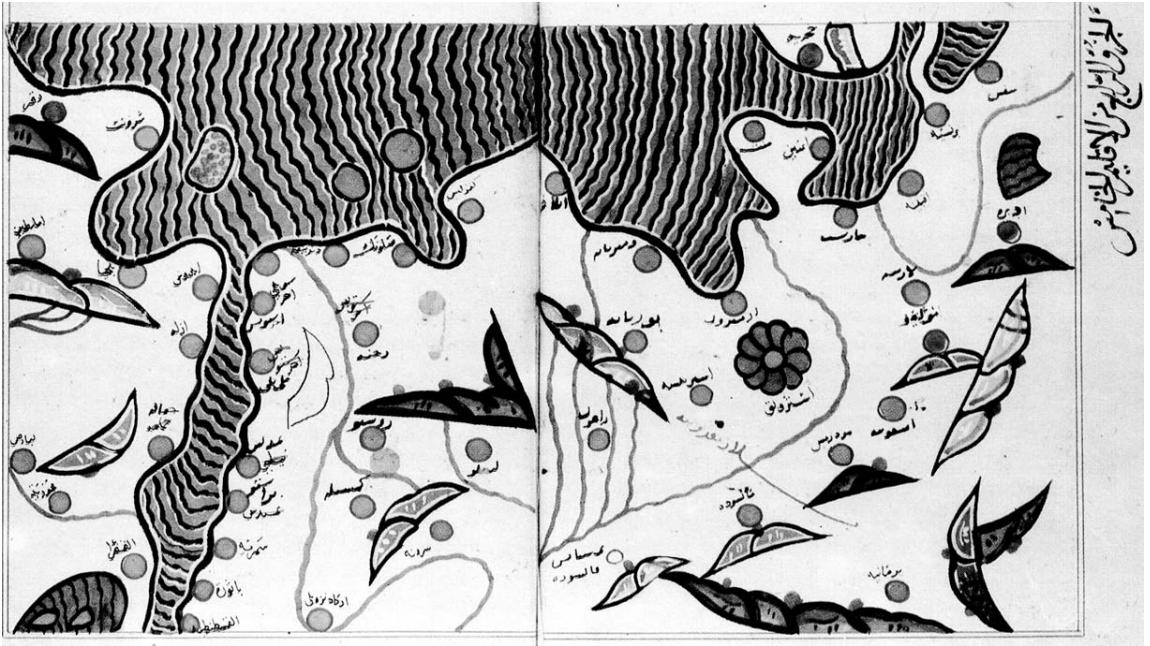


Fig. 4.2. A fragment of Al-Idrisi's large Arabic map. Taken from [378], inset between pages 36 and 37, Appendix 8.

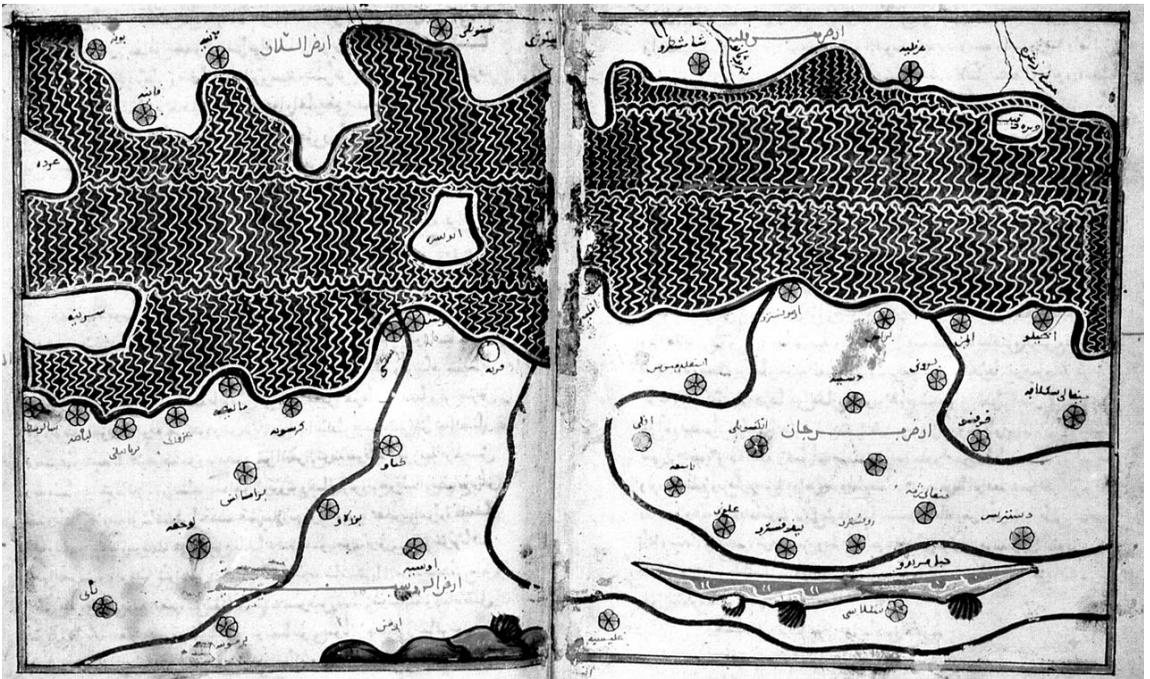


Fig. 4.3. Another fragment of Al-Idrisi's large Arabic map. Taken from [378], inset between pages 90 and 91, Appendix 16.