

Ethnic and Religious Composition of the Population of Venetian Tana in the 1430s

The population of Tana, an Italian trading station on the coast of the Azov Sea, was diverse in terms of ethnicity and religion and comprised groups of immigrants from various European and Asian countries and regions. Venetian and Genoese trading stations, Greek, Slavic, and Jewish settlements existed next to the “tent” town of nomadic Tatars. Different traditions coexisted and the individuals of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds interacted.¹ My objective is to calculate the numbers and the percentages of different ethnic groups as well as to clarify the features characteristic of each group in the context of the data known from other sources and the secondary literature. The notarial deeds composed by two Venetian notaries, Nicolo de Varsis and Benedetto de Smeritis, who worked in Tana in the 1430s provide the basis for the prosopographic tables.² These are the only preserved Venetian cartularies for Tana in this period.

It is often problematic to aggregate persons by ethnic groups according to the notarial deeds. Ethnic identity as noted in the deeds is misleading in two respects. First, for instance, if two people out of five indicated Venetian origin, it does not exclude that the majority of other residents of Venetian settlements also come from Venice simply because it was not specified.³ Secondly, the term ethnic often

1. Sergei P. Karpov, “Из Таны в Ургенч: эти трудные дороги средневековья” [From Tana to Urgench: These Hard Routes of the Middle Ages] *Srednie Veka* 61 (2000): p. 219.

2. 1194 extant deeds were drafted in Tana by the two Venetian notaries Nicolo de Varsis and Benedetto de Smeritis. These sources have not been published and have not been the subject of an intensive study, having been used only by a few scholars, cf. Angeliki Tzavara, “Εἰς τὸν Τάναν ἀποδημήσαντα: Esempi di immigrazione greca a Tana nei testamenti ivi rogati da notai veneziani (prima metà del XV sec.)”, in *Oltre la morte. Testamenti di Greci e Veneziani redatti a Venezia o in territorio greco-veneziano*, ed. Chrysa A. Maltezos and Gogo Varzelioti (Venice: Hellēnikon Instituton Byzantinōn kai Metabyzantinōn Spoudōn, 2008), pp. 59-81, see also her section on Tana in this volume. These notaries drew up *imbreviaturae* of deeds in Tana between 1430 and 1440 (with some exceptions). They are preserved in the State Archives in Venice in three registers: Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarili Testamenti*, b. 917 (Benedictus Smeritis), hereafter – ASVe. NT. b. 917; Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Cancellaria Inferiore, Notai*, b. 231 (Nicolaus de Varsis), hereafter - ASVe. CI. b. 231; Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Notarili Testamenti*, b. 750 (Nicolaus de Varsis), hereafter – ASVe. NT. b. 750.

3. It is difficult to build up any precise statistics based on citizenship. The obvious Genoese citizens are often not specified as such; the same is true for the Venetians, coming from

refers to a religious identifier. Moreover, the option of ethnic origin is often not specified whether or not the notary distinguished the person's racial or ethnic origin. Ethnic origin is indicated specifically almost exclusively for slaves or recent freedmen.⁴ The notary was not highly motivated to differentiate ethnic or other categories of the local population, since his main task was describing a certain person inasmuch as he could in order to inform the reader of the deed, who was the client.⁵ Thus, using all possible indicators was not a requirement – the notary used only the ones sufficient for such a description.⁶

When it is hard to find an ethnic identity, anthroponomic data can help the researcher.⁷ In addition, notaries and clerks always helpfully delimited people with names of the same origin, giving each of their names in its national form.⁸ However, this does not negate the fact that notaries often transcribed the name as they heard it, taking into account individual experience and a tradition of writing.⁹ Even so, mistakes sometimes happened.¹⁰

Anthroponomy and the notarial deeds alone fall short of providing a complete quantitative picture. Perhaps 10 per cent or even more of the “Latin”¹¹ contingent, attributed to this group by virtue of the Latin spelling of their names, were in fact Greeks or Armenians. For example, in the case of Constantinus de la Chustizza (see below) it was a minor source that revealed that this man was Greek, having put his signature in Greek, and in the Greek form of his name, and not the deeds of Varsis and Smeritis. This is just one example. Another example can be Antonius Curazarius (a Greek *Kir Azaria*). Thus perhaps people of non-Latin origin, having Latin names, are much more numerous, than it can appear

other cities but Venice; one cannot identify their fatherland unless a notary, who only did it occasionally, explicitly mentions it. Therefore, only a minimal amount of people coming from a certain area can be counted, rather than an exact percentage.

4. A possible exception is the Russian Mikhail; however, although he himself was a slave owner, this does not exclude the possibility that he was a recent freedman.

5. Карпов, Латинская Романия [*Latin Romania*] (St. Petersburg: Aletheia, 2000), p. 187.

6. It could be even a nickname, under which a certain person was known in that society.

7. Of course, it is almost impossible to distinguish by name a resident of Parma from a resident of Naples, but one can distinguish an Italian from an Armenian, Greek, or Russian. First, the name has a certain logic and frequency of use within a particular ethnic group. For example, Theodore is unlikely to be an Italian and Benedict to be a Greek. A woman named Achmelicha (Ak-Melek), even if she is a Catholic, is most likely to be of Tatar origin.

8. Thus, the name Iohannes equals the Italian Giovanni, the name Iane means the Greek John (Janis); Michael is the Italian Michele, and Michalli is the Greek Michael or Mikael; Nicolaus is the Italian Nicholas and Nicolla the Greek Nicola; Manuelis is the Italian Emanuele and Manoli is the Greek Manuel.

9. Surely, this does not pertain to most of the Western names familiar to a notary; however, there was a difference between the Latin and the vernacular form (mostly, the first one was used in deeds).

10. For instance, how should one consider the person named Iohannes Grechus – as an Italian, Giovanni Greco, or as a Greek by origin, Janis? I use the first version, though a definite answer in this case is not obvious.

11. I use the terms “Latin” and “Western” as mutually interchangeable.

from first sight.¹² One should add interethnic marriage to the other difficulties in establishing ethnic origin since mixed marriages were frequent, at least as far as the notarial deeds show.¹³

Another difficulty derives from the nature of the sources. Most of the documents I used are wills that cannot reflect equally the Latins, and, say, the Greeks. This is especially evident when comparing this data with a source much more inclusive by nature – the account book of Badoer covering the business community in Constantinople in 1436 to 1439.¹⁴ Even a superficial comparison of this source and the deeds included therein makes clear that the wills drawn up by an Italian notary reflected the ethnic composition of the society only partially. It is clear that the Italians tended to enter into trade deals with non-Italians more frequently than appointing them as *fideicommissari*¹⁵ or calling them as witnesses. However, calculations concerning non-Italians can be useful in establishing the ethnic distribution of slaves, or estimating the permanent population of the trading stations and geographical mobility. It is also possible to trace the frequency of contacts among the representatives of various ethnic groups, despite the limited scale of the evidence. In fact, such a thing as a testament implies considerable trust, which is why wills reflect the preferences of Italians for one or another ethnic group.

I have tried to classify about three hundred persons found in the notarial deeds of Nicolo de Varsis and Benedetto de Smeritis. The interrelation is as follows (see the diagram in the appendix). In general, the sources (ASVe, *NT*, bb. 750, 917; CI, b. 231) mention 303 people. Among them, there are 239 presumed Latins (78.87 per cent of the total, including 13 Genoese, 2 natives of Naples, 2 natives of Parma, 1 native of Milan, 1 native of Verona, 2 residents of Crete, 1 resident of Modon, 1 resident of Corona, 1 resident of Samastro, 2 Germans, including one from Nuremberg), 15 Greeks (4.95 per cent, including 2 from Trebizond, 1 from Thessalonica and 1 from Candia), 11 Tatars (3.63 per cent), 5 Russians (1.65 per cent), 1 Circassian (0.33 per cent), 1 Zikh (0.33 per cent), 1 undoubted Armenian (0.33 per cent). Jews were not found. For 30 persons (9.9 per cent) it is difficult to determine a particular ethnic group.¹⁶ In addition, some of the “presumed” Latins bearing Latin names might in fact be Greeks, Jews or Armenians; however, I decided to follow a formal criterion and identified them as Latins.¹⁷

12. On the other hand, a name that seems non-European (e.g. Menechina) may in reality be reduced from a European name, in this case Dominichina, the female equivalent of “Domenico”.

13. For example, to which ethnic group does the wife of a Greek Orthodox, but herself a Tatar by birth, belong? In the categories of that time, she may be listed as a Greek. Am I eligible to do the same?

14. *Il Libro dei conti di Giacomo Badoer*, ed. by U. Dorini (Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato-Libreria dello Stato, 1956).

15. Executors of the will.

16. For instance, a certain Sirin (ASVe, *NT*. 750. fol. 23v) could be a Tatar (Turkic “Shirin” means “sweet”), because apart from her presumably Turkic name, nothing can be said for sure. I also omit in my calculations a certain Gonsalvus de Sybillia, who could possibly be a Spaniard. ASVe, *NT*. 917. fols. 5-6.

17. Moreover, I put the persons of Greek, Tatar, Armenian, or Caucasian origin, who converted to Roman Catholicism, into the “Latin” group. Thus, presbyter Lorenzo Chatapan (ASVe, *NT*. 750. fol. 26r) clearly had a family name of Greek origin; however, he was an Italian, and even

1. *Italians*

First, one should say that it is a fruitless matter to calculate the number of Venetians among the Latins based on formal indicators. Undoubtedly, the Venetians were the majority among the clients of the notaries, witnesses and *fideicommissari*, but they did not always consider it necessary to specify their Venetian citizenship, taking for granted that it was assumed.¹⁸ Geographical mobility in Venice, as well as in Genoa, was exceptionally high. Rialto, Levant, Gazaria, Western Europe, Terraferma – this is far from being a complete list of the places where an average Italian reflected in various deeds could reside or visit during his life. It is not surprising that many of the Venetians define themselves not by belonging to a Venetian parish, but, for example, by the place of their permanent residence at that moment, e.g. Trebizond, Coron, Modon. At the same time, people from other Italian cities often lived and worked in the Venetian trading stations as well. I do not venture to assert that all those who call themselves, say, Florentines or Neapolitans were indeed such. If someone is named “Giacomo of Florence”, that, firstly, could have a wide range of meanings.¹⁹ Secondly, the fact that a person identified the place of his origin (e.g. “from Florence”) does not exclude that there could be large numbers of people who came from the same Florence or other cities but that are not designated by their place of origin since there were more suitable identifiers.

By the fifteenth century, the Venetians numerically prevailed over the Genoese in Tana.²⁰ In the 1430s, the Genoese often came into contact with Venetians, and even regularly used the services of Venetian notaries. Moreover, documents (e.g. wills) were often drawn up in the Genoese quarter.²¹ Apparently, in the fifteenth century the Genoese and Venetians were forced to show solidarity and mutual assistance against external threat in spite of economic competition.²² The line between partnership and hostility was often blurred.²³ These rivals were also

a Catholic priest. This means that he was most probably a descendant of converts. Another example is a fisherman Ussufi Chatolizi (ASVe, CI. 231. fol. 8v), who was obviously a more recent convert, and even retained his originally Muslim given name without changing its form.

18. Only six of them are labelled as Venetians, and several other people with Italian names are Venetians as well, since they come from the Venetian parishes or bear specific Venetian social identifiers (e.g. the Venetian Consul of Tana cannot be other than a citizen of Venice). A Venetian patrician family name can also provide evidence of Venetian origin. At the same time, it is impossible that only 6, but rather 20 to 30, or even 50 of the 303 are Venetians.

19. The man could have been born in this city, or lived there permanently, or had Florentine citizenship, but lived elsewhere.

20. Although the Genoese retained their quarter acquired as early as the fourteenth century; Elena Ch. Skrzhinskaja, “Венецианский посол в Золотой Орде (по надгробию Якопо Корнаро, 1362 г.)” [Venetian Ambassador to the Golden Horde; the Gravestone of Jacopo Cornaro, 1362], *Vizantijskij Vremennik* 35 (1973): p. 103.

21. Especially in the house of the testator, see ASVe, NT, 750. fol. 5.

22. Карпов, “Документы по истории венецианской фактории Тана во второй половине XIV в.” [Documents on the history of Venetian factories Tana in the second half of fourteenth century], *Prichernomorje v Srednje Veka* 1 (1991): p. 192.

23. See for instance: Svetlana V. Bliznyuk, “Кошелек и жизнь генуэзцев в Константинополе и Адрианополе в середине XV в”. [The purse and the life of the Genoese in Con-

in frequent contact with each other because the routes of transit trade of the Black and Azov Seas converged on Caffa. Therefore, it is clear that the Venetians and Genoese were in increasingly close contact in Tana, as evidenced by the numerous references to Genoese Caffa in the deeds. In the deeds of Donato a Mano (two decades earlier) seven people are marked as *ianuenses*;²⁴ in the deeds of Nicolo de Varsis and Benedetto de Smeritis there are at least thirteen. This demonstrates the increasing intensity of their relations with the Venetians.

Based on notarial deeds, it is possible to identify, though only to a certain extent, the distribution of the inhabitants of Tana by origin from the other Italian cities. There are some residents of Naples, Parma, Milan, and Verona. A comparison with the deeds of Benedetto Bianco (in Tana in 1359 to 1360)²⁵ suggests that the number of such Italians was reduced by the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, certainly, in the 1430s visitors to Tana from different cities in Italy were more numerous than reflected in the deeds, and at least no less numerous than in the years of Bianco.²⁶ For instance, one can see in the deeds of Varsis a *ballistarius* Christoforo from Milan. If foreigners could be appointed to a position normally reserved for the Venetian nobility, the same must have been true for merchants and modest sailors.

Interestingly, the deeds show a high frequency of trade relations between the Venetians and the Greek settlements on the Black Sea coast away from Tana. One can find in Cart. 750 a Venetian, Antonio from the parish of St. Severus, who identified himself “from Chersonese” (*de Chersso* should be read *de Cherssone*). The settlement on the territory of the ancient and medieval Tauric Chersonese repeatedly appears in the medieval portolans in different spellings: *Crexona*,²⁷ *Zurzona*, *Zerzona*, *Cressona*, *Girisonda*, again *Zurzona*, *Gerezonda*, *Cherson*, *Jaburt flu*.²⁸

stantinople and Adrianople in the middle of the fifteenth century], *Prichernomorje v Srednije Veka* 3 (1998): p. 130.

24. Nina D. Prokofieva, “Акты венецианского нотариуса в Танае Донато а Мано (1413-1419)” [Acts of Venetian notaries in Tana Donato a Mano (1413-1419)], *Prichernomorje v Srednije Veka* 4 (2000): p. 162.

25. Only several persons are specified in the deeds of Varsis and Smeritis as natives of other Italian cities, and the distribution does not vary much, while in the deeds of Bianco the distribution is much more diverse: Abruzzi (1), Lombardy (4), Marche (2), Piedmont (2), Tuscany (29), Trentino (1), Umbria (1), Emilia-Romagna (14). See: Karpov, “Venetian Tana according to the acts of the Chancellor Benedetto Bianco (1359 - 1360)”, *Prichernomorje v Srednije Veka* 5 (2001): p. 19.

26. First, the material of Bianco is much more representative than that of Varsis and Smeritis, at least as far as the variety of types of documents is concerned. Secondly, the geographical mobility of Italians, rather strong during the hard period of the second half of the fourteenth century, could hardly have weakened in the years of the unquestioned rise of trade.

27. In an anonymous atlas, the so-called *Tammar Luxoro* (early fourteenth century), see: Adolf E. Nordenskjöld, *Periplus. An Essay on the Early History of Charts and Sailing Directions* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt, 1897); Konrad Kretschmer, *Die italienischen Portolane des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Mittler, 1909).

28. Igor Fomenko, *Образ мира на старинных портоланах. Причерноморье. Конец XIII-XVII в.* [The image of the world in the ancient portolans. The Black Sea region. Late thirteenth-seventeenth century] (Moscow: Indrik, 2007), pp. 266, 280, 286, 292.

While maps could show towns that did not exist at the time when the maps were drawn because cartographers relied on older maps rather than actual observation, the notarial deeds cannot deceive. They show that the settlement persisted during the whole fourteenth century and at least in the first half of the fifteenth century, which has often been denied, and had some commercial importance for the Latins. This fact also shows that the routes of the Venetian merchants were not confined to Tana, and though the Genoese were masters in the Crimea, this did not preclude the presence of Venetian merchants there.

2. Germans

Another matter of interest is the presence of Germans in Tana. Heinrich Stangelin from Nuremberg liberated his Russian slave in 1436,²⁹ and conducted commerce with the Venetian merchant Bartolomeo Rosso in 1436-1437, and probably before.³⁰ He was the son of Conrad Stangelin, mentioned in the Italian documents in 1413 as a member of two commercial expeditions.³¹ Constantine Soranzo gave the brother of Conrad Stangelin a commission to conduct trade affairs in the Black Sea.³² In the lists of German testators in Venetian wills³³ one finds two Stangelins: Iohanes Stangelin³⁴ and another Stangelin.³⁵ This surname was not a patrician one or at least it has not been recognised as such;³⁶ most likely they were middling merchants. The merchants from Nuremberg lived in Trebizond. They were numerous and highly respected by Venetian merchants and it is sure that Stangelin enjoyed special trust in the office of Sorranzo. Moreover, W. von Stromer believes that, contrary to expectations, the people of Nuremberg were the senior rather than the junior partners of Donato Soranzo and his brothers.³⁷ This fact would cast doubt on Fern-

29. ASVe, *CI*, 231, fol. 3r.

30. ASVe, *NT*, 750, fol. 44v-fol. 45r. His name is given there in its short form: *Rigo Stangelim*.

31. ASVe, *CI*, 231, fol. 3; Wolfgang von Stromer, "Landmacht gegen Seemacht", *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 22/2 (1995): 176; Id., "Wassernot und Wasserkünste im Bergbau des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit Montanwirtschaft Mitteleuropas vom 12. bis 17. Jahrhundert", *Der Anschnitt, Zeitschrift für Kunst und Kultur im Bergbau*, Beiheft 2 (Böschung: von W. Kroker E. Westermann, 1984): pp. 58, 71; Bernard Doumerc, "La Tana au XVe siècle: comptoir ou colonie?" In *Etat et colonisation au Moyen Age et à la Renaissance*, ed. by Michel Balard (Lyon: La Manufacture, 1989): p. 257.

32. ASVe, *CI*, 132, N 6, fol. IV, doc. 4.

33. Cecilie Hollberg, *Deutsche in Venedig im späten Mittelalter: eine Untersuchung von Testamenten aus dem 15. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2005), pp. 287-293.

34. *Ibid.* *addenda*, under number 1; his father - Robertus; his wife - Doratea; his origin - Alemania; his parish - S. Apostoli; mentioned by notary Bartolomeo (de fu) Tomaso. Ref. ASVe, *NT*, 1003; 7.05.1400.

35. Number 128; his father - Zuan, his origin - Vienna, notary - Paolo Benedetto. Ref. ASVe, *NT*, 1149, test. 175; 24.05.1457.

36. Jacob Meyer, "Die Entstehung des Patriziats in Nürnberg", *Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Nürnberg* 27 (1928): pp. 1-96.

37. Wolfgang von Stromer, "Landmacht gegen Seemacht", p. 176.

and Braudel's thesis that Germans were strictly supervised and regulated in the Venetian *Casa dei Tedeschi* in order to guard long-distance trade, Venice's main source of wealth.³⁸ Apparently, the Venetians allowed the Germans to conduct their own trade in the East, perhaps even on equal footing. During the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Nuremberg was one of the centres of economic life in Europe³⁹ and enjoyed strong trade connections with Venice, Lyon, Medina del Campo, Lisbon, Antwerp, Cracow, and Warsaw.⁴⁰ Thus, although the Venetians made the route of their galleys circular (Venice – Levant and Venice – Flanders), it did not replace the overland trade between Venice and Antwerp, and trade was conducted through Nuremberg as well. The Germans in the East apparently preferred close contacts with their compatriots to anyone else. Henry Stangelin was appointed as one of the *fideicomissari* in the will of the German Albert de Crunut, son of the deceased Dirkh (*testamentum Alberti teutonici*, drawn up in Tana, June 1, 1436).⁴¹ It should be noted that while Stangelin was labeled as “from Nuremberg”, Albert, also a German, was a permanent resident of Venice, or possibly even a citizen, in the parish of St. Apollinarius.⁴²

3. Greeks

The sources confirm the presupposition that Greeks not only visited Tana, but that many of them lived there.⁴³ The Greeks had long worked closely with Latins in commercial matters.⁴⁴ In the documents of Benedetto Bianco, at least 5.5 per cent of the residents of the Venetian settlement were Greeks (27 people in 1359 -1360). It was the second largest ethnic group after the Italians.⁴⁵ In addition, it should be noted that Latin family names do not always belong only to the Italians or even the Latins.⁴⁶ A striking example is Constantinus de la Chustizza, who in reality was a Greek. He is mentioned twice in the deeds of Varsis, and he was a *stipediarius* in 1436.⁴⁷ Among

38. Fernand Braudel, *Material Civilization, Economy and Capitalism*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2007), p. 113.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

40. Johannes Müller, “Der Umfang und die Haupttrouten des nürnbergischen Handelsgebietes im Mittelalter”, *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (1908): pp. 1-38.

41. ASVe, NT, 750, fol. 21v.

42. ASVe, NT, 750, fol. 21r.

43. Карпов, “Из Таны в Ургенч” [From Tana to Urgench], *Srednie Veka* 61 (2000): p. 221.

44. Id., “Греки и латиняне в венецианской Тане (середина XIV-середина XV вв.)” [Greeks and Latins in Venetian Tana, mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth century] *Prichernomorje v Srednje Veka* 7 (2009): p. 167.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 166. It was the same in both the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, *but only on paper*. In reality, perhaps, the Greeks were even more numerous than the Italians since, as said above, all notarial deeds (even when they are more diverse in type than the sets of wills) do not reflect equally and similarly the Italians and non-Latin ethnic groups.

46. Mixed marriages took place, not to mention the emancipation of slaves, who took the cognomens of their former masters after manumission.

47. ASVe, CI, 231, fol. 12r; ASVe, NT, 750, fol. 20v.

the later deeds of Pietro Pellacan there is a unique one drafted in Latin, but with a Greek signature of the said Constantine (with its Latin duplicate): “Κωνσταντης ο δε λα Βοτζιστα” and “Constantinus de la Chustizza” (one can find similar cases in Crete or Cyprus, but not in the Black Sea region⁴⁸). Therefore, many bearers of the seemingly “Latin” names and family names could have had a different ethnic background, often a Greek one.⁴⁹ At the same time, the Greek family name is evidence always or almost always, of the fact that the individual belonged to the Greek ethnic group and was Orthodox.

Bianco referred to a separate *contrata Grecorum*,⁵⁰ a Greek settlement near the Venetian trading station. In the documents of Cristoforo Rizzo and Donato a Mano, seven of the Greek inhabitants of Tana appear to be 1 of Caffa, 8 of Candia, 4 of Rethymno on Crete, 3 of Coron, 5 of Modon, 2 of Negroponte, 1 of Kephallonia, 2 of Patras, 4 of Constantinople, 1 of Tenedos.⁵¹ In my sources the Greek group is relatively small, but if one takes into account how limited the available selection of documents is, the following conclusion will be apparent: the number of Greek merchants in the Black Sea region in particular and the trade routes as a whole was significant.⁵² The Greeks compensated for the lack of trade relations between the East and the West during the years of unrest and confrontation between Venice and Genoa, Venice and the Golden Horde, Venice and Byzantium.⁵³ Greeks never appear as slaves in Tana, one of the main centres of the slave trade.⁵⁴ The connections between the Greeks and the Italians and the frequency of their contacts were significant. One can also identify many cases of concubinage of the Venetians with their Greek maids and cases of so-called temporary marriage with Greek women “under contract”, a specific phenomenon in Latin Romània.⁵⁵ Trying to project the inter-ethnic relations of the Greeks and the Latins in Tana to the

48. Карпов, “Греки и латиняне” [Greeks and Latins], *Prichernomorje v Srednije Veka 7* (2009): p. 167.

49. Another example is *ruthenus sive russicus* Luca Civrano [*sic*], who made his will in 1450 (ASVe, NT, 826. Num. 48: 5/XII). See Карпов, “Mixed Marriages”, 214.

50. Charles Verlinden, “Le recrutement des esclaves à Venise aux XIVe et XVe siècles”, *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome* 39/33 (1968). Nikolaj Fomichev, “Некоторые данные о культовых сооружениях и религиозной жизни средневекового города Азака-Таны в XIV-XV вв”. [Some data on the places of worship and religious life of the medieval city Azak-Tana in fourteenth and fifteenth centuries], *Essays on the History of Azov 2* (1994): p. 13.

51. Карпов, “Греки и латиняне” [Greeks and Latins], *Prichernomorje v Srednije Veka 7* (2009): p. 169. Anna A. Talyzina, “Venetian notary in Tana, Cristoforo Rizzo (1411-1413)”, *Prichernomorje v Srednije Veka 4* (2000): 19-35; Prokofieva, “Акты” [The Acts]: pp. 36-179.

52. Карпов, Итальянские морские республики [The Italian maritime republics and the Southern Black Sea coast in thirteenth to fifteenth centuries: The problems of trade] (Moscow: Moscow State University Press, 1990), 277. This is an additional argument in favour of the fact that a sufficiently large group of Greek traders persisted and continued to grow on Byzantine territory and in the cities in Latin Romània in the fifteenth century.

53. Id., “Греки и латиняне” [Greeks and Latins], *Prichernomorje v Srednije Veka 7* (2009): 164.

54. *Ibid.*, 170.

55. Карпов, “Mixed Marriages in a Polyethnic Society; Case Study of Tana, 14th-15th Centuries”, in *Tolerance and Repression in the Middle Ages, In Memory of Lenos Mavrommatis*.

region as a whole, one can obtain new evidence of the intensity of contacts and cultural influence in the absence of Latinisation. Thus, in Soldaya, one finds Greek graffiti beside the Latin graffiti, which prevailed numerically.⁵⁶ This means that close contacts took place and that there was no complete and conscious separation in terms of religion; on the other hand, most likely, there was no Latinisation of local Greeks. Lev V. Firsov even argues that on the entire South coast of the Crimea, in contrast to Theodosia and Sudak, one cannot find any Latin epigraphic monuments, and that the presence of the Latins in general is not reflected in Crimean toponymy.⁵⁷ This idea is questionable: e.g. a place-name Katsiveli (*chastello vecchio*) is Italian in origin, but this exception does not change the rule. Although the contacts between the Italians and the Greeks were intensive, it seems that there was no Latinisation of the local Orthodox population in the Crimea, and it was hardly significant on the Sea of Azov if it did take place.

The data relating to the Orthodox diocese in Azov is scarce. In Tana, in contrast to Caffa,⁵⁸ there were no Orthodox monasteries, nor are there any traces of any missionary activity. However, after the fourteenth century the sources mention a Greek *contrata* – a community and a church.⁵⁹ The Greek sources (e.g. Acts of the Patriarchate of Constantinople) indicate that, in respect of canon law, the Greek parish in Tana was subject to the metropolitan of Alania (residing from the 1400s in Trebizond) at the latest since the 1340s.⁶⁰ In the first half of the fifteenth century there was a Greek church of St. Nicholas in Tana and a Greek cemetery.⁶¹ The deeds of the 1430s do not mention this church, *but* they mention another Greek church of St. John in the Genoese quarter⁶² and a Greek priest Papa Tatuli.⁶³ In 1451, Papa Tatuli was again mentioned as a priest who served in the parish of St. Nicholas.⁶⁴ It should be noted that the schism between the East and the West did not prevent the Latins

International Symposium 10, Athens, Nov. 1998 (Athens: National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2002): pp. 207-214.

56. А. Еманов, “Граффити солдайского храма” [Graffiti in the church of Soldaya], In *Black Sea, Crimea, Russia in History and Culture*. Sudak Materials of the 2nd international conference (12 - 16 September 2004). Part II (Kiev-Sudak: Academperiodika, 2004), p. 86.

57. Meaning not the mere absence of the Latin names, but the fact that they did not become entrenched in the local community and did not become part of history after the Italians left. Lev Firsov, *Isar: Essays on the History of Medieval Castles of the Southern Coast of the Crimea* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1990), p. 68.

58. Archimandrite Antonin, [Review of]: “Acta et diplomata Graeca medii aevi; sacra et profana, ed. by F. Miclosicz. Vol. I. Acta patriarchatus Constantinopolitani. 1315 - 1372. Vol. II. 1379-1402. Vienna, 1862”, *Zapiski Odesskogo Obschestva Istorii i Drevnostej* (hereafter *ZOOID*) 5 (1863): p. 965.

59. ASVe. CI. 19, reg. I. 92, 153.

60. Карпов, *История Трапезундской империи* [The history of the Trebizond Empire] (St. Petersburg: Aletheia, 2007), pp. 218-221.

61. Id., “Греки и латиняне” [Greeks and Latins], *Prichernomorje v Srednije Veka 7* (2009): pp. 170-171.

62. ASVe, NT, 750, fol. 21r-21v.

63. ASVe, NT, 750, fol. 21r-21v.

64. Карпов, *Латинская Романия* [Latin Romania] (St. Petersburg: Aletheia, 2000), p. 194.

from giving money to the Greek parish; neither did it restrict the Greeks from donating some of their belongings to the Latin churches of Tana.⁶⁵ Thus, in the will of the Greek Manoli di Candia (November 9, 1430) 4 Latin churches (probably located on Crete, none of them mentioned in connection with Tana) were to receive 1/2, 20, 1/2 and 1/2 ducats and the priest Nicholas de Varsis, 2 ducats for his prayers.⁶⁶ In the wills of both Greeks and Latins, there are frequent donations to churches outside Tana (in Romània, in Italy).⁶⁷ The denominational barrier between the Greeks and the Latins was, apparently, quite insignificant for both parties. However, as I will show below, this was also true with respect to the Armenians.

Thus, formally the Greeks made up less than 4 per cent of those in the documents of Varsis and Smeritis. Nevertheless, this figure is likely misleading. In contrast to the dynamic flows of the Italian population at the trading stations, the Greeks and perhaps the Orthodox Tatars probably constituted the *majority* of the population permanently resident in Tana. As far as I can judge their percentage in the structure of the population which lived in Tana permanently *for decades* was much higher than their percentage in a *synchronous sample* over a short period. In addition, they were active, affluent, and involved in trade. For example, the deeds of Donato a Mano reported an Orthodox married couple – Yolmelikh and Mihali Mitrioti – purchasing land.⁶⁸ More than ten years later the same Yolmelikh, by then a widow, ordered the drawing up of her testament and, incidentally, mentions the Greek parish of St. John and Papa Tatuli.

The significance of the Greek community in Tana can be confirmed by the fact that, among all other ethnic groups the Latins preferred contact with the Greeks. Against this background, the fact that, say, a Tatar, Edelmug, became the *kunak*⁶⁹ of Josaphat Barbaro⁷⁰ looks more like an exception than the rule. Even if this was a frequent phenomenon, then it is poorly reflected in the wills. Apparently, the Greeks tended to enter mixed marriages with Latins more frequently than others did. It is interesting that the above-mentioned Yolmelikh knew neither Latin nor Italian, although she most likely spoke both Tatar and Greek, and had to use the services of an interpreter of the curia of Tana, Boran Taiapetra, while drawing up her will. It is not surprising that the wife (or, rather, in the 1430s the widow) of a Greek merchant, Tatar herself, did not know European languages. It also seems that it did not prevent her from being fully integrated into the social environment of Tana, including the Italians.⁷¹ This case raises the question of whether Greek or Italian was the *lingua franca* of the inhabitants of Tana.

65. And this happened before the Florentine union!

66. ASVe, NT, 750. fol. 4.

67. E.g., to the monastery of St. Michael in Murano, see: ASVe, NT, 750. fol. 19v (4)-fol. 20r.

68. Prokofieva, “Акты” [The Acts], pp. 54-55; see also Tzavara, “Εἰς τὸν Τάναϊν ἀποδημήσαντα.”

69. In the lexicon of the mountaineers of the Caucasus this word means a person connected to another one by the ties of friendship, hospitality, and mutual help.

70. *I viaggi in Persia degli ambasciatori veneti Barbaro e Contarini*, ed. by L. Lockhart, R. Morozzo della Rocca, and M. F. Tiepolo, Il Nuovo Ramusio, VII. (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1973), pp. 78-79.

71. ASVe, NT, 750. f. 21r-f. 21v; see also for an edition of the document Tzavara, “Εἰς τὸν Τάναϊν ἀποδημήσαντα”, pp. 75-76.

This provides another reason for revising the old opinion about the indolence of Greek merchants in the fifteenth century. Tana was one of the preferred areas of trade for Byzantine merchants; their cooperation with the Venetians was permanent and mutually beneficial.⁷² The notarial data confirms the thesis of S. P. Karpov that the Greek population of the Italian trading stations was always significant and relations between the authorities of Tana and the Latin population of the trading stations were strong and stable. Like elsewhere in Latin Romània, the Greeks felt themselves in Tana as junior, maybe less wealthy, but still important partners of the Italians and their allies before the constant threat of Tatar and other attacks.

4. Jews

Despite repeated references to Giudecca (a Jewish quarter)⁷³ in notarial acts of Varsis and Smeritis and in the “Journey to Tana” by Barbaro, as well as the fact that Badoer registered 29 Jewish merchants (6 per cent or even more of the total) in Constantinople, I failed to identify any of the people mentioned in the deeds as a Jew, while in the acts of notaries in the early fifteenth century Jews occur frequently. Why? It is apparent that in personal affairs Europeans preferred not to deal with the “infidels”. One can face this phenomenon as far as other non-Christian groups are concerned, which I would call a moderate xenophobia. However, there could be another reason. A Venetian, Giacomo Salono,⁷⁴ was a successful usurer as I will show further. Perhaps there was no room for Jews in this type of activity since he had occupied this niche?

5. Armenians

Only one undoubted Armenian is mentioned in the deeds;⁷⁵ another one is Armenian only presumably.⁷⁶ However, some interesting data on interethnic and interfaith relations of the Greeks and Armenians in the earlier period is available. Benedetto Bianco mentions an Armenian judicial curia in Tana in 1359.⁷⁷ From 1347/49 up to 1356 there was a lasting conflict of three Greek priests of Tana

72. Карпов, “Греки и латиняне” [Greeks and Latins], *Prichernomorje v Srednije Veka 7* (2009): p. 171.

73. This, however, most likely means the respective *Giudecca* in Venice. At the same time, Tana had its own *Giudecca*, which was situated next to the Venetian quarter but separated from it by a ditch, *Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum, sive Acta et Diplomata res venetas atque levantis illustrantia*, ed. R. Predelli (Venice: 1899), Part 2, p. 262.

74. ASVe, *CI*. 231. fols. 4r, 4v, 7v, 8r, 10r, 11v; ASVe, *NT*, 750. fols. 2, 4r; 6, 20r, 21v, 22v; ASVe, *NT*, 917. fol. 4.

75. ASVe, *NT*, 750, fol. 24v. “Casadorus” can be a Latin nickname, but most likely understood as an Armenian “Khachatur”. Probably his wife was a Tatar.

76. The case of Borano Taiapetra, an interpreter in the Venetian Curia, still needs further research and a separate case study, but provisionally I think that his case demonstrates the continuation of the Armenian expansion into Eastern Europe.

77. ASVe, *CI*. b. 19, reg. 1, after fol. 12v.

with their metropolitan. Protopresbyter Michael, and two presbyters, Nicholas and Theodore, submitted a petition to the Patriarch of Constantinople concerning the infringement of their rights. The Tana clerics claimed that, having received a khan's *paydza*, Metropolitan Simeon pursued them, apparently trying to get extra money. When he failed to do so, the metropolitan imposed an interdict on the church of Tana and prohibited it from holding funerals and baptisms. Eventually, the excommunicated local Greeks, without any embarrassment, began to turn to the Armenian churches for these purposes.⁷⁸ Mention of the Armenian *contrata* occurs in the notarial deeds of the earlier period.⁷⁹ Usually the Armenians can be easily identified by their names, so, Hovhannes, in contrast to the Italian Giovanni, would have been Ivanixius, and not Iohanes, etc. As said above, in the deeds I researched, only one person bears the name Chazadori, which can be identified as Armenian "Khachatur". Yet, despite the situation that most Armenians lived in Caffa and the Eastern Crimea, of course, they were also involved in trade in Tana in the first half of the fifteenth century.⁸⁰

6. Russians

The Russian population of Tana, of which little was known before, is well reflected in the notarial sources. Connections with the Russian lands were traditional in the Black Sea region.⁸¹ In the middle of the thirteenth century, a permanent Russian population appeared there, fleeing from the cities near the Dnepr, probably under the threat of Tatar devastation.⁸² The presence of a Slavic population in the Don region since the thirteenth century has become a commonplace in historiography.⁸³ According to Rubruk, Russian moneychangers were involved in trade (silk and spices from the East) in Soldaya, selling their furs and other goods in exchange.⁸⁴ At the same time, the chronicles report that the Italian merchants conducted trade in the Russian lands. The Italian merchants from the trading stations of the Northern Black Sea

78. Карпов, "Греки и латиняне" [Greeks and Latins], *Prichernomorje v Srednije Veka 7* (2009): pp. 170-171.

79. ASVe, *CI*, b. 19, reg. I. 209.

80. Michel Balard, *La Romanie Génoise (XIIe – début du XVe siècle)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1978), 284-285. Fomichev, "Некоторые данные" [Some data], *Essays on the History of Azov 2* (1994): p. 13.

81. Prokofieva, "Акты" [The Acts], 55-56.

82. Anatolij Jacobson, "К изучению позднесредневекового Херсона", [On the research into late mediaeval Cherson], *Херсонесский сборник* [Chersonese Collection] 5 (1959): p. 244.

83. For instance: V. Korolev, "К вопросу о славяно-русском населении на Дону в XIII-XVI вв." [On the Problem of the Slavo-Russian Population on the Don in the Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries], in *Северное Причерноморье и Северное Поволжье во взаимоотношениях Востока и Запада в XII-XVI веках* [The Northern Black Sea Coast and the Northern Volga Region in the Relationship between the East and the West in Twelfth to Sixteenth Century], (Rostov-na-Donu: Izdatel'stvo RGU = Rostov State University Publisher, 1989), pp. 122-128.

84. Filip K. Brun, *Материалы к истории Сугдеи* [Materials for the History of Sugdea] (Odessa: 1871), p. 18.

(*fryagi, surozchane*) lived and operated as a corporation in Moscow in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁸⁵ Italian merchants and artisans often settled and remained there permanently. As early as the times of Dmitry Donskoy a certain Andrew Fryazin resided in Moscow permanently; he was granted a part of the Pechora region.⁸⁶ I believe that since there were no considerable political contacts between Moscow and Italian states during the period in question (they were established only when Ivan III contacted the papal court and Venice; at the same time a long-lived Italian factory appeared in Moscow⁸⁷), Italians stayed in Russia only for economic motives. Naturally, there was also a reverse process. The Don connected the Moscow Rus with the Black Sea, and Russian merchants used it widely, mostly selling furs. The translator of the Venetian council of Tana (*curia*) Boran Taiapetra knew Russian.

In the deeds, there are four Russians (three of them slaves). One of them (Michael) was a freeman (probably a freedman) and even owned slaves himself. Russians not only from the Southern regions, but also from the Northern lands, visited Tana. A number of Russian hierarchs travelled through Tana to Constantinople (Metropolitan Pimen, and others).⁸⁸ Russians (both merchants and freedmen) often intermarried with the Latins. S. P. Karpov has studied these mixed marriages (though for a later period, the mid-fifteenth century) in detail in the material of the Venetian notary and chancellor of Tana, Pietro Pellakan.⁸⁹

The terminology of the documents (*russius, zichus, tartarus*) was quite vague and did not always correlate with the reality. The deeds of Donato a Mano mention a “Russian” female slave *Tovalat [sic]*⁹⁰ and a “Russian” slave, Khotulub [*sic*],⁹¹ both with clearly Turkic names. Had the Russians converted to Islam in Tatar captivity,⁹² would they have received names of Turkic origin? No, because such converts would normally adopt Muslim-Arabic names (e.g. Abdallah, etc.). I would suggest that these alleged Russians were camouflaged Tatars, since the khans tried their best to ban selling their compatriots, while the demand for Tatar slaves on the Egyptian market was very high because of their military abilities. Traders always find loopholes when there are demand and supply.

85. V. Syroechkovsky, *Гостю-суроужане* [Merchants of Surozh] (Moscow: State Socio-Economic Press, 1935); Y. Uzlov, “К вопросу об итальянской колонизации Северо-Западного Кавказа в XIII-XV вв.” (On the Italian colonisation of the North-Western Caucasus from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century), In *Black Sea, Crimea, Russia in History and Culture. Sudak Materials of the 2nd international conference* (12 - 16 September 2004) (Kiev-Sudak: Academperiodika, 2004): Part 2: 217.

86. Mikhail Tikhomirov, *Древняя Москва XII-XV вв.; Средневековая Россия на международных путях. XIV-XV вв.* [Ancient Moscow of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. Medieval Russia on international routes, fourteenth to fifteenth centuries] (Moscow: Moscow Worker, 1992), pp. 82-116.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

88. Карпов, *История Трапезундской империи* [The history of the Trebizond Empire] (St. Petersburg: Aletheia, 2007), p. 421.

89. Id., *Латинская Романия (Latin Romania)* (St. Petersburg: Aletheia, 2000), pp. 191-193; Id., “Mixed Marriages”, pp. 207-214.

90. Prokofieva, “Акты” [The Acts]: p. 173.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

92. Note that nomadic Tatars virtually remained pagan, see below.

7. *Zikhs and Circassians*

Slaves from the Caucasus (Zikhs and Circassians) were probably bought from poor families while the role of raiding was negligible in my opinion. In the higher social strata, Zikhs cannot be traced. They often operated as minor burglars and bandits. For instance, the Tatars and Zikhs robbed a Genoese, Oberoto Garrono, in Tana.⁹³ Matrega was the cultural and religious centre of Zikhia and a residence of the Greek metropolitan of the Zikhian diocese. Italian travellers in the fifteenth century who visited Zikhia noted that the residents professed Orthodoxy and that Islam was not yet known at all; attempts of the Catholic Church to convert the Zikhs were unsuccessful.⁹⁴ The Circassians were in a similar position. Italian trade with the Circassians was based on bartering due to the underdevelopment of market relations. The Circassians lacked merchants and the Greeks and the Armenians played this role; sometimes Circassians raided Tana.⁹⁵ Barbaro tells the story of one such occasion, but these raids were a kind of petty robbery: Circassians, although twice as numerous as the Tatars and the Italians (about one hundred equestrians against forty-five Italians and Tatars),⁹⁶ were easily defeated in that “battle” (*cercassi non sonno homini ma femine*⁹⁷). In the deeds, Circassians appear only as slaves or freedmen (for the most part they were probably bought from their parents, as above) and most often as Christians. Antonello of Parma, son of Simone de Chostula from Skurano, bequeathed 54 bezants to the daughter of a Circassian, Indzhibey,⁹⁸ and Christos (or Kostas) Catolizi.⁹⁹

8. *Tatars*

Tatars were the third largest group based on notarial deeds. The Cuman language was so prevalent in the steppe that it was in use throughout Northern Asia up to the borders of the Gobi.¹⁰⁰ Most of the Tatars followed a nomadic lifestyle, sometimes pitching camp under the walls of Tana. At least eight Tatars are mentioned in the deeds of the 1430s; no doubt in reality there were significantly more,

93. Archivio di Stato di Genova. *Archivio Segreto*. 3024 Diversorum, Filze 4. № 342 (old), 163 (new). Publication of the sources: Карпов, “Регесты документов фонда Diversorum Filze секретного архива Генуи, относящиеся к истории Причерноморья” [Regests of the deeds from the Secret Archives of Genoa (*Diversorum, Filze*), relating to the history of the Black Sea], *Причерноморье в Средние Века* 3 (1998): p. 17.

94. Y. Uzlov, “К вопросу об итальянской колонизации” [On the Italian colonisation]: pp. 215 - 216.

95. Archivio di Stato di Genova. *Archivio Segreto*. 3024 Diversorum, Filze 4. no. 342 (old), 163 (new).

96. *I viaggi in Persia*, pp. 81-82.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

98. Mentioned by Donato a Mano as Clara Zanelli (*alio nomine Enzibei*), Prokofieva, [The Acts]: p. 134.

99. ASVe, NT, 750. fol. 20r-fol. 20v.

100. Wilhelm Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au Moyen âge* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1885), pp. 241-242.

since Tatar slaves who converted to Latin Christianity received Latin names (often the adoption of Christianity was a condition of manumission). Giorgio de Damiano said in his will that if his slave, Khaymet, paid his debts and converted to Christianity she would be free.¹⁰¹

Tatars who settled in the Black Sea region converted to the Greek Orthodoxy in great numbers starting in the thirteenth century, long before Islam arrived. This is evidenced in the Synaxarion of Sugdea, and it was not necessarily accompanied by a change of name (Christian and Turkic names were both in use).¹⁰² This means that the number of Christian Tatars was at least greater than the number of Tatars designated as Christians and/or bearing Christian names.¹⁰³ Probably the best example of the initial spread of Orthodox Christianity among the Tatars is the case of Yolmelikh a Candelis, the wife of a Greek, Mihali Mitrioti. This woman is known from the deeds of Donato a Mano, Nicolas de Varsis, Benedetto de Smeritis and Pietro Pellakan; she lived in Tana for at least half a century. Her family name either indicates a long tradition of family engagement in trade, or is rooted in toponymy.¹⁰⁴ In her will, she bequeathed money to several Greeks and fifty bezants to a Greek priest, Papa Tatuli, in the parish of St. John. Clearly, all of her relatives were also Orthodox Christians (her sister Natchaton or Marnatchaton and her husband Karauzikh: *in quibus manibus commendo animam meam*).¹⁰⁵

The same is true for the majority of Tatars. A Tatar named Culmelicha had a daughter Lucia, and Culmelicha herself was the adopted daughter of Antonina, the wife of the Venetian Domenico Balloto;¹⁰⁶ this family is likely to have been Catholic. A Tatar, Antonio, slave of Michele de Mateo,¹⁰⁷ cannot but be a Christian. Yusuf Chatolizi¹⁰⁸ had a cognomen or nickname, which explicitly defines him as a Christian, and was apparently not of the first generation of converts. Most of the settled Tatars (traders, craftsmen) seem to have been Christians, and their cooperation and interethnic marriages with Greeks were considerable. If

101. ASVe, NT, 750, fol. 30r-fol. 30v.

102. Archimandrite Antonin, “Заметки XII-XV века, относящиеся к Крымскому г. Сугдее (Судаку), приписанные на греческом Синаксаре” [Notes on the twelfth to fifteenth century relating to the Crimean city of Sugdea (Sudak), attributed to the Greek Synaxarion]”, *ZOOID* 5 (1863): pp. 595 - 628.

103. No cases are known when a Tatar named Benedetto or Manoli professed Islam. At the same time, the number of Orthodox Tatars with ethnic names was huge. In other words, seeing a Tatar with a Christian name (e.g., Theodore and Michele) in the deeds I am sure that he was a Christian, while, seeing a Tatar with an ethnic name (for example, Iolmelicha or Karauzikh), I can suggest that since he or she was no longer a nomad, most likely they had become Christians as well.

104. *Scandellium* – urban scales for heavy loads. Andrej L. Ponomarev, “Территория и население генуэзской Каффы по данным бухгалтерской книги – массарии казначейства за 1381-1382 гг.” [The territory and population of Genoese Caffa according to account books – Massarias of the Treasury for the years 1381 to 1382]. *Prichernomorje v Srednije Veka* 4 (2000): p. 427.

105. ASVe, NT, 750, fol. 21r-v.

106. ASVe, NT, 750, fol. 8.

107. ASVe, NT, 750, fol. 23r.

108. ASVe, CI, 231, fol. 8v.

one researches the deeds and comes across a person with a Turkic name, but not marked as *sarazenus* or *turcus*, it should be taken as a default that most likely this person was a Christian rather than a Muslim.¹⁰⁹

On the other hand, the nomadic Tatars, despite the superficial adoption of Islam in the Golden Horde after the bloody coup of Nowruz (1360), probably remained pagans in practice. Barbaro wrote that the Tatars had been largely Muslim for a long period (*la fede de Machometo principio ne i Tartari ordinariamente, mo 'sonno anni circa 110*¹¹⁰), but he also notes their latent paganism and ritual offerings to the gods (boiled millet covered with a wooden bowl¹¹¹). Pagan Tatars (*idolatri*), and they were numerous, called this offering *hibuth peres* (translation unknown). The deeds are full of references to Latin, Greek, and Armenian churches, but the only mention of “the old mosque”, is in the book of Barbaro. Nevertheless, since it was where Khan Kichik Mehmed and his entourage¹¹² were housed, one can assume that it was not active. No signs of Muslim Tatars’ religious activity can be traced based on the sources. The only certain Muslim found in the sources was Kassym Safir;¹¹³ however, the word *sarazenus* designating him may well be an indication of social status.

I have tried to calculate the degree of intensity of personal contacts among the ethnic groups. The Latins tended to be in contact more frequently with other Christians (their compatriots, Greeks, Orthodox Tatars). As for the Venetians and Genoese, the hostility between the republics destroyed neither commercial nor personal relations (reflected in the wills). The Westerners tended to be in contact with their compatriots or Greeks more intensively than with the others, different from the situation in the 1410s to 1420s. This can be explained by the fact that the deeds of the 1430s are mainly testaments, where personal trust is required more than in commercial affairs. Thus, there was some distance between the Christians and non-Christians (although the case of Edelmugh, who became a kunack of Barbaro,¹¹⁴ seems to be an exception).

9. Conclusion

In summary, one can state that the trading diasporas in the Tana trading stations constituted a money-oriented, prosperous society that was diverse in terms

109. At least, most of the Tatars with ethnic names directly or indirectly demonstrate indicators of Christianity, either Greek Orthodox or Roman Catholic.

110. *I viaggi in Persia*, p. 73.

111. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

112. *Ibid.*, pp. 74-75.

113. This person conducted his business with a formidable sum of 4080 *librae* though in fact it was under a pledge. The nomadic Tatars on the coast of the Azov Sea controlled the cattle trade with Europe and Persia, the magnitude of which, according to Barbaro, was enormous. Besides the money Kassym Safir operated, it can be suggested that the notary took as a family name “Safir” his title of designation of the social standing. However, there is no evidence that he was a Tatar.

114. *I viaggi in Persia*, pp. 78-79.

of ethnicity. The variety of ethnic groups in the fifteenth century remained as broad as it was in the previous one. Notwithstanding the tension between Venice and Genoa, the relations between their citizens were far better than one would expect. Their contacts were fairly intensive: the Genoese often used the services of a Venetian notary, while Venetians were, surprisingly, interested in the Genoese churches and clergy. For some unknown reason, the Genoese quarters seem to have been more “attractive” in the aspect of religion. The Germans were present and involved in the Levantine trade much more than they were thought to be in the previous scholarship. The Greeks of Tana were numerous, prosperous, and socially active. The presence of Russians not only as slaves, but as merchants and even slave traders lead me to the conclusion that the commercial connections of the region with the North were quite intensive. The number of slaves changed, and Caucasians ceased to play a major role in favour of Russians and Tatars. Tatars, if domiciled in Tana and alien to the nomadic lifestyle, were largely Christians, while the nomadic Tatars, having formally embraced Islam, continued professing pagan cults. The society of the trading station was quite tolerant in terms of religion, and the borders among Christian denominations (Orthodox, Catholic, and Armenian) seem to have been somewhat vague.