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Kamenets-Podolsky in Armeno-Kipchak Texts

The present note is a small contribution to the wide subject of mutual contacts between the Poles, Ukrainians and Armenians throughout the ages. It provides a lot of threads to be examined by historians interested in political, social, military, economic and cultural events of the epoch. Since a historical picture is nothing else than a sum of objective facts and individual estimations, even insignificant facts belonging to such seemingly second range branches as history of art, study of religions, folklore or linguistics should be by no way neglected by a historian.

In last decades some attention has been given to the historical role played by Kamenets-Podolsky, a famous and beautiful town presenting from the historical point of view a common Polish-Ukrainian patrimony¹. At the same time, new studies on its architecture, the ethnic composition of its population, their religions, occupations and languages are still desired. This postulate is evident in the face of the fact that hundreds of unpublished documents containing more or less precious information still await their publication.

Generally known is the strategic location of this fortified city changing on too many war-time occasions its possessors, and the mixed character of its population as well. It is also general knowledge that the Armenian new-comers were a very significative part of

¹ The literature on Kamenets-Podolsky is abundant. As for some newer studies we will cite the following: Z. Abrahamowicz, *Die türkische Herrschaft in Podolien (1672–1699)*, in: *Actes du Premier Congrès International des Études Balkaniques et Sud-Est Européennes*, Sofia 1969, pp. 777–780; the same, *Die türkische Herrschaft in Podolien (1672–1699) II, Die administrative Einteilung des vilayet-i Kamanice. Die türkischen Militärlehen daselbst. Ein Vorbericht*, in: *Habsburgisch-osmanische Beziehungen* (ed. A. Tietze), Wien 1985, pp. 187–192; O.Ş. Gökyay, *Kamanice muhafızlarının çektiği*, “Tarih Dergisi” 32, 1979, pp. 281–300; A. Fisher, *Ottoman Kamenets-Podolsk*, “Journal of Turkish Studies” 8, 1984, *Turks, Hungarians and Kipchaks. A Festschrift in Honor of Tibor Halasi-Kun*, pp. 55–83; V.R. Grigorjan, *Istoriya armjanskih kolonij Ukrainy i Pol’si, Armjane v Podolii*, Erevan 1980. D. Kołodziejczyk, *Ottoman Podillja: The Eyalet of Kamjaneć 1672–1699*, “Harvard Ukrainian Studies” 1992, 1–2, pp. 87–101; the same, *Podole pod panowaniem tureckim. Ejalet Kamieniecki 1672–1699*, Warszawa 1994; T. Nowak, *Fortyfikacje i artyleria Kamieńca Podolskiego w XVIII w.*, in: *Studia i Materiały do Historii wojskowości* 19, 1973, pp. 139–186. A booklet by J. Przybył, *Kamieniec podolski albo Trylogia na nowo przeżyta*, Wrocław 1994 has a rather popular character.

its population. The present remarks are just devoted to a number of written texts left by themselves².

Running away from political persecutions and guided by economic reasons the Armenians had settled down in Kamenets-Podolsky and in a short time won quite exceptional, and to a certain degree, predominant position. The early settlers were speaking, and soon after also writing a Turkic language of the Kipchak group. Just their faction caused that Kamenets, apart from Lvov (*Ilov* in Armeno-Kipchak texts), became the most important centre of Armenians in Podolia, i.e. within the reach of the Ukrainian-Polish supremacy. There were many factors that ensured the homogeneity of Armenian immigrants but most important were the following: their national religion, received in their motherland and firmly standing in opposition to the pressure brought by the Union with the Catholic Church, and their Kipchak language.

It is not here a convenient place to discuss the history of Armenian colonies in Podolia and in Galitsia. As already mentioned, last decades have brought a considerable number of studies on this problem. Unfortunately, none of them was able to give a precise and conclusive answer to the question in which place, when and from which Turkic ethnic group the Armenians coming to Polish-Ukrainian territories had learnt their Kipchak idiom.

A special object of the present remarks is to indicate and, in some measure, to analyse various contexts in which the name of Kamenets (Arm.-Kipch. *Kamēnēç*) appears in main Armeno-Kipchak texts published so far. Such texts were published by J. Deny, T.I. Hrunin, M. Lewicki, R. Kohn, Ö. Schütz, I. Vásáry, A.N. Garkavets, J.R. Dashkevych and the undersigned but not all of them could serve our present purpose³. Our list makes possible to bring into relief special functions and important role of the fortress also the life of its inhabitants in two different periods.

² E. Tryjarski, *O historii wojny chocimskiej i autorach ormiańskich kronik kamienieckich*, "Przegląd Orientalistyczny" 30, 1959, pp. 211–214. That note demands nowadays a few corrections and supplements.

³ J. Deny, *L'arméno-coman et les «Ephémérides» de Kamieniec (1604–1613)*, Wiesbaden 1957, T.I. Grunin, *Dokumenty na polovetskom jazyke XVI v. (Sudebnye akty kamenets-podol'skoj armjanskoj obščiny)*, *Transkriptsija, perevod, predislovie, vvedenie, grammatičeskij kommentarij, glossarij...*, Pod red. E.V. Sevortjana. Stat'ja Ja. R. Daškevič, Moskva 1967. E. Schütz, *An Armeno-Kipchak Chronicle on the Polish-Turkish Wars in 1620–1621*, Budapest 1968, I. Vásáry, *Armeno-Kipchak Parts from the Kamenets Chronicle*, "Acta Orientalia Hungarica" XXII, 2, 1969, pp. 138–189. Y.R. Dachkevych – E. Tryjarski, "La Chronique de Pologne" – *un monuments arméno-kipchak de la première moitié du XVI^e siècle*, RO XLII, 1, 1981, pp. 5–26. Y.R. Dashkevych – E. Tryjarski, *La Chronique de Venice*, RO XLVI, 1, 1988, pp. 5–62 + ill. E. Tryjarski, *A New Edition of the Armeno-Kipchak "Chronicle of Venice"*, in: *Proceedings of the XXVIII Permanent International Altaistic Conference, Venice 8–14 July 1985*. Ed. G. Stary, Wiesbaden 1989, pp. 233–239. Some additional studies can be referred to in Ja. R. Daškevič, *Armjano-kypčakskij jazyk. Bibliografija literatury 1802–1978*, RO XL, 2, 1979, pp. 79–86 and in A.N. Garkavets, *Tjurkskie jazyki na Ukraine (Razvitie struktury)*, Kiev 1988, pp. 168–175. A Kamenets Chronicle in Armenian has been published by V.R. Grigorjan. The citations in the present paper have been taken from the three above indicated works by J. Deny, T.I. Grunin and I. Vásáry. The legal acts of the Kamenets-Podol'sky Armenian Voyth Court are now accessible in transcription and in Russian translation in the lately published work: A. Garkavets, *Qypchaq Written Heritage, Volume I Catalogue and Texts of Monuments Written in Armenian Script. Russian Version*, Almaty 2002, pp. 872–954, Desht-i Qypchaq.

It has been known that some Armenian families living at Kamenets wrote down, in Armenian and in Armeno-Kipchak, important chronicles which present events related both to the local Armenian community and to the whole city, its environs and even far situated countries⁴. On the other hand, the records of the Armenian Court of Justice present another precious source of information on the everyday life of the city population. In the chronicles in question the town of Kamenets appears to be the arena of both important and quite insignificant events, a central point of observation for all happenings occurring in the very city, in the capital of the Polish State and abroad. This is easily comprehensible in view of the geographical position of Kamenets being a border city, a frontier bulwark, a crossing point of communication tracks, commercial and military routes endowed with defensible functions.

In the chronicles written in Armeno-Kipchak, as well as in their other parts written in Armenian, the everyday and the feast-day life of the Kaments inhabitants is mirrored in a remarkable way. Extraordinary events inspiring the feelings of dread or danger, various calamities like raids of enemies, fires, epidemics, onsets of the locust and some others come to the fore. The chroniclers give much attention also to personal matters of various kind to mention changing of the residence or function of the notables, their arrivals and departures, promotion of civil, military and ecclesiastical functionaries, births, marriages, deceases, etc. This kind of information concerns in particular priests and monks both of the Armenian Apostolic Church (Arm.-Kipch. *ěrměni*) and the Catholic Church (Arm.-Kipch. *frang, němič*).

Let us have a look at some people arriving at Kamenets and leaving it in the period between 1611 and 1623. We limit the list to those records in which the name of Kamenets is given *expressis verbis*.

"22/30 August 1612. There came to Kamenets Pan Żółkiewski, the Voivode of Kamenets, the Field-Hetman"; "12/22 September 1612, on Sunday. There came to Kamenets Pan Tomasz Zamoyski, the Starost of Knyszyn, the Chancellor's son"; "in September 1612. The confederates came to Kamenets. They had left Muscovy (Russia) together with the King"; "12/22 March 1613, on Friday. There came to the fortress of Kamenets functionaries of the King's court (Arm.-Kipch. *k'omornik'lar*), sent instead of the Starost"; "10/12 May 1613, on Monday. There came to Kamenets Alexander Walenty Kalinowski, Starost of Kamenets, Bratslav, Letychov. All inhabitants [lit. the whole city] went to meet him half-way with all due respect"; "3/13 November 1613, on Thursday. There came Pan Humiński to enter into possession of the castellany of Kamenets", etc. The Armenian chroniclers were registering with much care all details concerning the political trends and the control exercised by Polish dignitaries: "in July 1611. In the vicinity of Smolensk, the voivodeship of Bratslav and the starosty of Kamenets was given to Kuba [= Jakub] Potocki"; "in April 1612. Pan Gulski, Castellan of Halich, was transferred to Kamenets and the castellany of Halich was

⁴ A general picture of the life of Armenians living in Podolia was partially given by D.I. Myško, *Žizn' armjan v Podolii v XIV-XVII vv.*, in: *Istoričeskie svjazi i družba ukraïnskogo i armjanskogo narodov*, vyp. III, Erevan 1971, pp. 185-200.

given to Pan Humiński”; “on the eve of 12/22 October 1613. In the vicinity of Kamenets there took place a review organized by Chamberlain Borosławski”. In a similar way deceases of eminent persons were registered: “in June 1611. In the vicinity of Smolensk Pan Jan Potocki-Szpyrka, Starost of Kamenets, left this world for eternity”; “30 December 1612, on Monday. Pan January Potocki, the Castellan of Kamenets was buried in Kitajhorod”; “in April 1612 there died Cekliński, Vice-Starost of the fortress of Kamenets”; “8 August 1612, on Saturday. Pan Stanisław Golski, Voivode of Rus’ and Starost of Bar, gave back his soul to God in Kamenets where he had been encamped along with his ca. two thousand people; his corps has been transported to his family estate”; “in January 1613. There was announced the disease of Jakub Potocki, Starost of Kamenets, Voivode of Bratslav who died while returning from Smolensk to [attend] the Sejm (Diet)”.

Quite important for the inhabitants of Kamenets, and for the authors of the chronicles being mainly Armenian clergymen themselves, were visits of ecclesiastical functionaries as evidenced by numerous entries: “1/11 March 1611. On his way from Lvov there came to Kamenets the Legate (Arm.-Kipch. *novirag*), on mission; “in April 1611. Vartabed Der Mesrob was engaged in Lvov as a preacher. In the same year, he came also to Kamenets, after Feast, and during four weeks he was delivering his brilliant sermons. He was accompanied by a seminarist, Ovsep, his pupil”; “3 August/9 September 1613. Vartabed Der Mesrop had arrived at Kamenets from Lvov and then left for Jerusalem”.

All military events like raids of the enemies, passages of troops etc. showed, as a rule, their tragic consequences upon the city situated in a zone of animated military operations. Full of significance are short notices as the following ones: “in July 1611, on Thursday. *Te Deum* was celebrated in Kamenets on the occasion of the capture of Smolensk from Muscovy by Sigismund III”; “17/27 July 1612, on the feast-day of Transfiguration, on Friday. The infidel Tatars, allied with the Wallachians, attacked the suburbs of Kamenets and carried off the cattle. Some people were taken prisoners, the others were beheaded. Many people of our Armenian community who had come from Jazlovets were kidnapped. The Church of the Holy Cross was set on fire. All this was done by the Sultan Mehmet Girej, a brother of the Khan”; “in December 1611. There was a strong dissension in Wallachia (Moldavia) – the new Prince Stephan, son of Tomsha, came from Turkey. He drove away from Iasi (Jassy) Constantine (Movila), son of Jeremiah, together with his mother, Domna, and all his suite (Lords). All of them fled away and came to Kamenets”.

During the war-time, especially in front of the cruel Tatars or other enemies attacking the town, equally cruel laws and practices were in force. Thus we learn that “12/22 March 1621. Today two *lisowchyks* [Cossack horsemen] were killed near the town hall, and this was done because they were playing pranks in the town”; “2/12 October 1615. A hajduk and his wife were impaled on the Khotin road. Documents of spying were found with them, from the Wallachian Prince, Tomsha”; “in the month of July 1621. Four Turkish and Tatar heads were impaled by the peasants in Kamenets”.

As soon as the echoes of wars and battles were calming down, the city tried to make its wounds scarred over and return to normal life. On such occasions we can read in the chronicles that: “a new Voyth and aldermen have been elected”; “4/14 November 1614.

The Jesuits performed a comedy during which another comedy arose. The nobles nearly killed one another, but (at last) they reached an agreement"; "in the western part of the sky some horrific columns of fire could be seen"; "a man fell down from the mountain to the river and was drown down noticed by nobody"; "the Armenian Court of Justice sentenced a prisoner who had broken away the iron bars and slipped away"; "a tax was laid by the Sejm (Diet) on the Armenian clergy", etc. Unnecessary to add that all natural calamities afflicting the city and its environs as the earthquake in September 1611 or another one in October 1613, which lasted for fifteen minutes, or a heavy onset of the locust in August 1612, were considered as God's punishment sent for the people's bad deeds.

Of special importance are short notes, unique of their kind, concerning the town architecture, its churches and secular buildings. There are mentioned at least five churches of Kamenets: those of St. Nicolas, of St. Axent, of the Holy Mother of God, of St. Gregory the Illuminator and that of the Holy Cross⁵. We learn some interesting details about them: "30 December/9 January 1612. In St. Nicolas' Church a new (stained-glass) window with frames and square (objects?) had been installed; "in February 1613 on the curtains serving to cover the icons of the whole altar some scenes representing the Passion of Christ have been painted"; "1/11 April 1615, on Saturday. The cylinder of the big bell, i.e. *igitar* [Arm.-Kipch. 'young men'] of St. Nicolas' Church was newly made (cast) for the glory of the Lord God; "18/28 April 1614, on Tuesday. The vault of the inner part of St. Nicola's church was whitewashed anew, and a rock, formerly given by God, was placed in front of the altar, at the place under the fire"; "in Summer 1616. Both Russian and Polish churches along with their bells and sacred objects inside [...] were burnt down. But God preserved our Armenian churches by his holy grace [...]"; "in the month of April 1621. The Kanzanak youths had a moat made round the church of St. Axent. It has not existed earlier, there was only a fence surrounding it"; "in 1621. The church of St. Gregory the Illuminator was demolished by fire, so that only its four stone walls have remained"; "16/26 May 1614. They began to wall up the stone gate on the side of the church of the Holy Virgin and also to construct on the road a long room [?] on both sides"; "the Church of the Holy Cross which had been burnt down by the Tatars, was restored".

There are also mentioned some objects belonging to the secular architecture⁶. We are namely informed that "21/31 March 1619. On the day of our "čubux uruškan" and on the day of the Poles' Bajram [=Easter] a great flood reached the outskirts of the town. It broke through and demolished the dike at the bottom of the drawbridge of the castle and it carried away two mills at the foot of the castle lock, stock and barrel so that there has even remained no trace of where they had been located. It caused a great damage carrying away the bridge of the Russian towngate, the hay stacks were all carried away, too, and a lot of people were drowned; "1621. A new mill was constructed for the drawbridge

⁵ J. Chrzęszczewski, *Kościół Ormian polskich*, Warszawa 2001. *Katalog zabytków ormiańskich*, t. I. The author presents four churches and two chapels from Kamenets.

⁶ M.Ju. Brajčevskij, *Arhitekturnye pamjatniki armjanskoj kolonii v gorode Kamence-Podolskom*, in: *Istoričeskie svjazi...*, ut supra, pp. 290–293.

of the castle instead of that which had been destroyed by water”; “17/27 March 1621, on Saturday. A great flood arrived today. Both the Russian gates of the town and the towers upon the gates were broken down, and it turned the walls upside down, and all mills in the surroundings of the town were carried away by it”.

Another important Armeno-Kipchak texts for the better knowledge of the Kamenets Armenians living in the second half of the sixteenth century, their occupations, juridical organization and their morals are official records of the local Armenian Court of Justice, especially well known for the period 1559–1567⁷. Those short minutes, sentences, provisions and registrations of the Court, consisting of a Voyth, or his substitute, as a president and twelve formen, concern both criminal and civil matters. They have been rendered accessible and, to a certain degree, examined by T.I. Hrunin and J.R. Dashkevych, the richness of the information contained in them gives occasion to some new observations.

From the viewpoint of the public security and the state of delinquency in the given period quite interesting are cases of transgression of the criminal law. The list of crimes and offenses is here rather long and differentiated but, at the same time, the heaviest crimes, like intentional killing or killing a human creature by means of an instrument are exceptional if any. It is possible, however, that just that type of crime might have been exempt from the competence of the court in question. Among the offenses against life and health of other people we find a single case of accusation of killing a man by means of a knife or dagger. We hear also about attacking with a sabre, beating and wounding on the public road, beating of a woman, beating of one's own mother, and in particular, of threatening combined with beating, and some others. Serious are violations of the children's rights: accusation against a certain “Kirkor Yol-bey oylu who had taken Gur Avak's grandson and tried to kidnap him to Kamenets”, another one against “Sultan and Ovanes Lewon-oylu who in Kamenets had sold a boy to Yakub from Tokat for sixty thalers”. A cruel fate was that of another boy who “was taken to be educated but died or was killed”. On the other hand, the cases of rapes are not mentioned at all. A drastic case of a similar character is the following declaration made by Ata[ni] oylu and directed against

⁷ Many studies have been written on the law of the Polish Armenians, to list a couple of them: *Prawa y artykuły Ormian lwowskich łacińskiego oryginału pilnie na polski język przetłumaczone roku 1601. Przepisane przez zacnie sławetne[go] Pana Jakoba Wartanowicza starsze[go] praw Orm[ia]n lwowskich. Roku Panskie[go] 1658 Die 20 Mai A.M.D.G.*; S. Kutrzeba, *Datastanagirk Mechitara Gosza i statut ormiański z roku 1519*, Lwów 1910; O. Balzer, *Statut ormiański w zatwierdzeniu Zygmunta I z roku 1519*, Lwów 1910; the same, *Porządek sądów i spraw prawa ormiańskiego w średniowiecznym Lwowie*, Lwów 1933; M. Lewicki – R. Kohnowa. *La version turque-kiptchak du Code des lois des Arméniens polonais d'après le ms. N° 1916 de la Bibliothèque Ossolineum*, “Rocznik Orientalistyczny” XXI, 1957, pp. 153–300; V.R. Grigorjan, *K voprosu o pravnom položenii ženščin v armjanskich poselenijah Ukrainy*, in: *Istoričeskie svjazi...*, ut supra, pp. 261–270; the same, *Akty armjanskogo suda goroda Kamenets Podol'skogo XVI v.* [title also in Armenian], Erevan 1913; O. Oleś, *The Armenian Law in the Polish Kingdom (1356–1519). A juridical and historical study*, Roma 1966. The legal acts of the Kamenets-Podolsky Armenian Voyth Court are easily accessible in transcription and in Russian translation in a lately published work [title also in Russian] Alexander Garkavets, *Qypchaq Written Heritage Volume I Catalogue and Texts of Monuments Written in Armenian Script Russian Version [...]*, Almaty 2002, pp. 872–954, Desht-i Qypchaq.

Ohanes Ris oylu: "In Orhijov I gave him a concubine (paramour)" – a statement which, however, was vehemently denied by the accused. Among other offences one can notice a flight of a man under arrest, or a blamable deed of a hooligan of the epoch who – as declared by a certain women – "entered my house and demolished many objects". Various, but rather of a small calibre, were transgressions against the privat property: a robbery of a bag and money, a theft of a horse, of an ox, of a cow, of sheep, of hay, of skins or pelts, of a silver spoon, which was molten by the thief, of a golden florin. Besides we learn about a deceitful interchange of a fox pelt, a failure to pay a fee, and some others.

The Armenians of Kamenets in the second half of the sixteenth century, and no doubt also later on, had a lot of juridical civil matters to be settled by the same Court. Most frequently they demanded their cash or precious objects to be paid or returned by the borrower, their own obligations to be transferred to a later date or instalments arranged for their payment, a guarantor to be instituted, an oath of the borrower who refuses to pay his debt to be administered, an inventory of the personal property left by a dead person to be drawn up, a pre-emption to be legally confirmed, a claim relating to the property to be prosecuted, insolvent tenants to be evicted, etc. Besides, the Armenians used to ask the Court a permission to build a second house, to institute a child's legal curator, to deposit valuable objects. The newcomers to Kamenets used to enter in the Court registers the declarations of their loyalty towards the local authorities.

From the court records in question some conclusions relating to the occupations of the Armenian population can be drawn. The first place belongs to the far-distance trade specialized in importation of goods from Anatolia, Armenia, Crimea and other regions. In fact, they were dealing in horses, cattle, cloth, arms, jewellery, spices and others. The second place belongs to the handicraft like working of skins, fells or pelts, precious stones. The Court minutes give also occasion for our better knowledge of various contacts which the Armenians of Kamenets had with other lands as Moldavia, Muscovy, Hungary, Ottoman Turkey, the Caucasus states and others. We can also examine their social differentiation, their knowledge of foreign languages and the origin of their personal names.