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Polish Slaves and Captives in the Crimea in the Seventeenth Century

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the history of the trade in Polish slaves and captives in the Tatar and Ottoman Crimea in the seventeenth century on the basis of hitherto unknown archival evidence and rare printed sources. After the capture an average Polish slave of simple origin was transported to the Crimea, where he had been sold on the local slave markets. Unless he had some special qualifications, a slave usually had to fulfil agricultural duties and do heavy manual work. The slaves usually had some limited free time and could attend Catholic services in the churches of the Crimea's large urban centres. Rich Polish captives were treated in accordance with their high social status and were ransomed for a considerable redemption fee. Important role in ransoming such rich captives was played by Jewish, Tatar and Armenian merchants.

KEYWORDS

Crimea, slaves, captives, Poles, Crimean Tatars, Ottomans, early modern history, sources

INTRODUCTION

The slaves were the main article of internal and international trade in *the* Ottoman Crimea (here I mean the so-called 'Kefe province' or *eyālet-i Kefê)* and Crimean Khanate *(Kırım Hanlığı*). The Russians, Ruthenians (Ukrainians), Poles, Hungarians, Georgians, Mingrels, Cherkessians, Armenians, and Greeks were among the most numerous ethnic groups that were brought to the Crimea as slaves. The history of the slave trade in the late medieval and early modern Crimea had been extensively studied both in the nineteenth / early twentieth century and in the last decades.[1] Nevertheless, the topic is still far from being exhausted: up to date there is no separate monograph analyzing this question. Practically every source and study dedicated to the Crimean slave trade mentions the fact that the Poles were one of the most numerous ethnic groups seized by the Crimean Tatars as their 'live booty'. In spite of this, the history of the role played by Polish captives in the development of the slave trade in the Crimea is yet to be written. The question of the everyday life of Polish slaves seems to be analyzed only in several recent publications, including those by Jacek Bazak (2005: 35–47), Leszek Podhorodecki (1987: 60–64), Janusz Mazur (2012: 125–148), Natalia Królikowska (2014: 545–563), and the author of these lines (Kizilov 2016: 124–131). My article will focus mostly on the slaves whose Polish ethnicity and origin had been clearly stated in the sources.

THE CRIMEAN SLAVERY AND THE POLES IN FACTS AND NUMBERS

The Crimean Tatars often carried out predatory raids into Polish territory together with their allies, Nogays. Sometimes they did this together with the Ottoman army or Zaporozhian Cossacks. The Polish government paid a high annual tribute to the Tatars to prevent their raids and the taking of captives. The whole sum paid as 'Tatar gifts' for the period from 1663–1667 was as large as 176,310 *złotys*; it was financed mostly by the Jewish poll-tax (Wójcik 1966: 100–101). According to Alan Fisher (1972: 588–589), in the seventeenth century the Polish government sent annual 'gifts' to the Khans which ranged between 10,000 to 30,000 *rubles*.

Despite these efforts, the early modern Crimea was full of slaves from Poland. Not all of these, however, were of Polish ethnicity: among the enslaved inhabitants of Poland were also the Ruthenians (Ukrainians), Lithuanians, Jews, and Armenians. According to the account of the Dominican friar Francesco Piscopo (the 1660s) Polish was second in importance language of the Crimea after Ottoman Turkish (*Turchesco*). He explained it by the abundance of Polish captives in the peninsula and also added that Polish was understood also by the Ruthenians and Muscovites. The third in importance was Latin which could be used for communication with the Germans, Hungarians and Saxons (Filamondo 1695: 231). Similar information about the fact that thanks to the abundance of Polish slaves the local inhabitants of the Crimea began to understand the Polish language, is also mentioned by a certain military employee from Gdańsk in the seventeenth century (Witsen 1705: 577).[2]

[1] The complete bibliography of the publications about the Crimean slave-trade in early modern times is too voluminous to be provided here. *Vide infra* references to the most important studies on the subject.

[2] For a detailed analysis of Witsen's description of the Crimea, see Kizilov 2012: 169–187.

The first predatory incursion of the Crimean Tatars into Red Ruthenia (then the part of Poland), which resulted in the seizure of 18,000 captives, took part in 1468; some scholars argue that the first raid took place in 1474 (Fisher 1972: 579–580).[3] The amount of the Polish slaves in the Crimea grew significantly after the Chmielnicki / Khmel'nyts'kyi's Cossacks' wars against Poland and numerous raids of the Tatars in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth (Filamondo 1695: 242). The Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi admiringly described that, in the 1640s and 1650s, the Crimean Khan Islam Giray III invaded Polish lands seventy-one times and captured 200,000 Jews, later selling each for the price of a full tobacco pipe (Çelebi 2003: 197–198). Despite the fact that such information was an obvious exaggeration, it gives the idea of the number of captives taken during such raids and the attitude towards them. The same caveat applies to the information of the Tatar chronicler Mehmed Senai Kırımlı, who mentioned that the Crimean Tatars returned from the raid to Poland of 1648 with such an amount of slaves that even an average insignificant soldier possessed about thirty to forty captives (Senai 1971: 116). This estimate has certainly many times exaggerated real numbers: average Tatar soldier could not bring more than 6–7 slaves. The last Tatar incursion into Poland, which was carried out by Kırım Giray Khan, dates back to 1769 (de Tott 1785: 189).

Modern scholars several times attempted to give estimates regarding the number of slaves and captives which were taken from Poland to the Crimea. Richard Hellie supposed that in the seventeenth century Russia lost an average of 4,000 souls a year while the Poles may have had losses even at a higher rate throughout the whole of the century (Hellie 1982: 23). According to Darjusz Kołodziejczyk, in the period between 1500 and 1700, the Crimean Tatars captured about two million people, most of whom were of Slavic origin (Kołodziejczyk 2006: 151–152). One may estimate that about a half of them were seized in the territories belonging to the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. This almost entirely corresponds to Bohdan Baranowski's hypothesis that between 1494 and 1694 Poland lost about a million of its population as a result of the Tatar raids (Baranowski 1952: 49–55; Baranowski 1947: 41).

We have at our disposal more precise data about the presence of the Polish slaves and captives in the Crimea on given chronological dates. Thus, for example, Andrzej Gliwa came to the conclusion that during the abovementioned raid of 1648 at least 8,794 people were enslaved only in the Land of Przemyśl. According to the scholar the total number of captives abducted from the Land of Przemyśl in 1648 exceeded 10,000 people (Gliwa 2012: 118). The letter of Polish prisoners from Bahçesaray mentioned that in 1660 there were approximately 40,000 Polish slaves the Crimea (Eszer 1971: 219). This number, however, should be taken with a grain of salt as it was based on a hearsay.

EVERYDAY LIFE OF POLISH SLAVES IN THE CRIMEA

Typically, the vicissitudes of an average Polish slave of simple origin (peasants, soldiers, artisans and suchlike) were divided into several stages: capture; transportation to the Crimea; sale on a slave market; life as a slave in the Crimea; death there – or redemption / release / escape and coming back home. It was usually only young and healthy persons capable of living through the

[3] For the overview of the fifteenth-seventeenth century Tatar raids and numbers of captives, see Fisher 1972: 580–582.

hard road to the Crimea that were taken captive. Children, both male and female, were often captured as well. Evliya Çelebi several times referred to the presence of young Polish *ghulam*s in the Crimean Khanate. He mentions that their age was between ten and fifteen years; they were used as bath attendants and for sexual purposes (Çelebi 2008: 108–109, 112, 190). A certain German gentleman mentioned that 'the beautiful Polish maids' (*de schoone Poolsche Jonkvrouwen*) were of special value for slave merchants who subsequently sold them to the Ottoman Empire, Persia and even India.[4] The old, weak and ill persons could hardly survive the transportation to the Crimea and therefore usually represented less interest for raiders and slavers.

After the capture, poorer Polish captives were driven to the Crimea partly on foot, partly being tied to horses' backs (each Tatar soldier usually had two-three horses at his disposal (Witsen 1705: 576)). In order to prevent their running away, captives were usually tied to each other by ropes (Bazak 2005: 44–45). In 1611 Father Franciszek Zgoda, together with certain Potocki and two other Jesuits, was tied by ropes made out of wet hides. Soon, however, the hides dried up and started bringing the captives insufferable pain. Although the captives cried for mercy, their captor, nevertheless, continued to peacefully sleep (Inglot 2004: 183, 201–202).

One may suppose that the road from Poland to the Crimea could take the raiders and their 'live booty' from two weeks to two-three months. Of course, the raiders inevitably had to face a problem of feeding not only themselves and their horses, but also their captives. Kasia Kolasa mentioned that they were forced to eat horse carcasses and drink fermented horse milk. Furthermore, in order to get more food, on their way back to the Crimea the Tatars robbed neighbouring villages (Bazak 2005: 45). Some sources inform that many captives could die of deprivations and hunger before they reached the Crimea (Witsen 1705: 576). While being followed by Polish forces, the Tatars sometimes had to leave part of their booty behind – or even kill some of them in order to alleviate their burden. Several reports record facts of the Tatars' leaving behind groups of children in fear of being pursued by Polish troops (Kołodziejczyk 2006: 150).

Sometimes the captives could use a lucky moment and run away on their own. Father Franciszek Zgoda, whose history had already been mentioned above, together with three other captives, untied the ropes when his slaver was asleep and ran away all the way to Valachia where he was captured and sold back to the Crimean Tatars. Nevertheless, even after this, he had two more opportunities of running away which he for various reasons preferred not to use (Inglot 2004: 183).

Upon arrival in the Crimea the captives were usually sold on the slave markets of the Crimean Khanate (Gözleve, Bahçesaray, and Karasubazar) and Ottoman province of Kefe (in the port of Kefe). It seems that Kasia Kolasa was sold on a market somewhere in the Crimea's north, maybe in Perekop (Or Kapı / Ferahkerman). She recounted that buyers on a slave market 'come to everyone, look him in the mouth, [to see] what kind of teeth he has, look at hands and shoulders [to see] whether they are strong. They inspect the whole body for the work' (Bazak 2005: 45). Having been sold, the slaves could either remain in the Crimea, or be taken to other countries, in most cases to the Ottoman Empire. The worst lot expected those who were sold to work on Ottoman galleys. The slaves' new owners not necessarily were Muslims. To give an example, seventeenth-century kadiasker records *(sicil)* provide us names of five Polish slaves that were owned by the Armenian and Jewish (most likely Karaite) slavers. Their names were Yaske (a corruption of Yashka), Vasil (i.e. Vasyl or Vasilii), Martin (Marcin), Istefan (Stefan or Stepan), and Senayır (Yaşa 2017: 174).

[4] The summary of his description of the Crimea was published in Witsen 1705: 586.

Two of these names (Yashka and Vasyl) undoubtedly belonged to Orthodox slaves from Poland, two (Marcin and Stefan) – to Catholic ones; one remains unclear.

Some Poles ended up working for important figures of the Crimean Khanate and Kefe province. Thus, for example, one source mentions a Polish slave who had been working at the Khan's court in Bahçesaray; the other was a slave of vizier Sefer Gazi Ağa (Filamondo 1695: 89, 145). Unless he had some special qualifications of an artisan, artist, singer or translator, an average Polish slave usually had to fulfil agricultural duties as a shepherd, tiller of the soil or do some construction and other works. To give an example, Kasia Kolasa worked as a shepherd; she also had to grind millet to make *kasza* (kind of a porridge) and flour, bake rude pancakes, milk cows and mares, spin yarn from sheep and camel wool, make cloth and sheets from it, till the soil and sow millet and *tatarka* (buckwheat) (Bazak 2005: 46).

Much information about everyday life of slaves in the Crimea can be found in accounts and letters related to the fate of the group of Dominican missionaries who were taken captive by the Tatars upon their arrival in the Crimea in 1662. One of them, the Pole Ludwik Skicki, together with three Italian friars, was chained and taken away from the fortress of Mangup (located in the Ottoman part of the Crimea) to the village of Corat on 26 June 1663.[5] The friars, as especially 'dangerous and suspicious' captives, remained to be kept in chains, although other slaves did not wear them (Filamondo 1695: 115–120). Subsequently they had to work in fields fulfilling all sorts of heavy agricultural duties: gather hay and wheat, dig ditches, take care of cattle and suchlike (Eszer 1971: 236). Furthermore, for various reasons – and especially for their Catholic faith – they were hated and often maltreated by the slaves of Orthodox denomination. This is why the friars felt themselves 'slaves of slaves' (Filamondo 1695: 125; Eszer 1971: 237). Their daily ration normally consisted of one piece of bread, one piece of roasted dough and a pot of Airam (i.e. ayran); having returned from the work they usually received a bowl of millet (Filamondo 1695: 126; Eszer 1971: 236). The friars heavily suffered from thirst caused by insufficient amount of water that was given to them (Eszer 1971: 236). Their clothing was soon completely worn out; they were constantly burnt by the sun, covered by mud, suffered from heavy manual work, lack of food and sleep. In their accounts the friars mentioned that many Crimean slaves lived semi-nude, with rags or sheepskins covering their bodies. Although there apparently were no attempts to convert them to Islam, once the friars were forced to go to the adjacent mosque to take part in the celebration of Bairam (i.e. the Muslim holiday of *Eid el-Adha* known in Ottoman Turkish and Crimean Tatar as *Kurban Bayramı*). The friars, who obviously did not want to take part in the Muslim religious ceremony, refused; they were subsequently punished for doing so (Filamondo 1695: 127–130, 135, 152).

Kasia Kolasa, who apparently happened to live in a village far from the Crimea's urban centres, suffered a real lot from the absence of churches, priests and ability to fulfil religious duties (Bazak 2005: 46). However, it seems that the slaves who lived in larger towns where there were both clergymen, churches and chapels, were usually allowed to attend services on most important religious holidays. Thus, for example, the aforementioned group of Dominican friars (which in-

[5] It seems that this mysterious *Corat* can be identified with the village of *Kongrat* / *Qoñrat* which is mentioned in a seventeenth-century Crimean Tatar document (Ivanics 2007: 200, note 30). In the nineteenth century there were several Crimean villages with this name. The enslaved friars mentioned the fact that they had almost drowned while crossing two rivers located nearby (Filamondo 1695: 129). Thus, this *Corat* / *Kongrat* / *Qoñrat* is supposed to be located next to fairly large Crimean rivers. For a detailed analysis of seventeenth-century accounts published by Raffaele Filamondo, see Kizilov 2017: 103–116.

cluded Ludwik Skicki), encountered numerous Catholic slaves immediately upon arriving in the Crimean port of Barclava (a corruption of Balaclava / Balıqlağu) in December 1662. The slaves came to see the friars in order to confess. On Christmas Eve the slaves gathered together in the house where the friars were temporarily lodged and took part in the Christmas mass (Filamondo 1695: 82). This demonstrates that, although slaves' freedom of movement within the Crimean Khanate and *Eyālet-i Kefê* was obviously limited, they could sometimes leave the place of their owners in order to attend religious ceremonies – of course, only in case if there were priests or churches located nearby. To give another example from our sources, while celebrating the Easter in the prison of Mangup in 1663, the friars were secretly visited by the local Christian slaves who wished to receive the Sacrament (Filamondo 1695: 106; Eszer 1971: 238). In Bahçesaray, the capital of the Crimean Khanate, the slaves could attend Catholic services in the local subterranean church that belonged to the local Armenians (Filamondo 1695: 200).[6] This ability of Polish slaves to visit churches and chapels located in various towns of the Crimean peninsula is corroborated by other sources as well.

Giovanni da Lucca mentioned that while passing through the town of Karasu (i.e. Karasubazar) he baptized four Polish children and arranged two marriages. Unfortunately, it is unclear from his report whether the persons involved in these ceremonies were slaves of freemen (Lucca 1834a: 63). Another Dominican, Ludovico Carrera, met in Karasu in 1636 a Polish female slave who had secretly baptized the child of her Tatar owners! She did this apparently in order to save the child from, as she thought, eternal damnation of the 'wrong' faith (Królikowska 2014: 561). As has been mentioned by da Lucca and other sources, the slaves were allowed to live together as partners in a kind of a 'civil marriage'. Furthermore, they were also often allowed to consummate official religious marriage. Emidio Portelli d'Ascoli met in the Crimea a Polish slave who had been taken into captivity as a married woman. The fact that she was officially still married to her husband, who remained in Poland, did not allow her to get religious marriage with her new partner who also lived in the Crimea as a slave. Portelli mentioned that a number of Catholic slaves experienced this problem (Królikowska 2014: 561).

Had the slaves been often tortured, punished and killed by their masters? Apparently not very often, at least not unless the latter misbehaved or did not fulfil their duties properly. Kasia Kolasa does describe cases of horrible tortures and executions of several Poles by the Crimean Tatars (Eszer 1971: 46). However, she does not mention why these people were killed, what were their names and other details that could add more credibility to her narration.

On the other hand, Italian sources in detail describe the case of one young Polish slave, Casimiro Cialdeski,[7] who was forcibly – as he claimed – circumcised and converted to Islam. Having decided to return to Catholicism, Cialdeski ran away from his owner and took refuge in the house of the Polish ambassador in Bahçesaray. Nevertheless, this became known to the Khan; as a result, the ambassador was forced to return the slave to be tried by the Khan's court. The court sentenced him to death; he was executed about 5 April 1665, during the time of the Easter

[6] There were two Armenian cave churches that functioned in Bahçesaray in the seventeenth century; both were located in the so-called *Ermeni mahalle* (i.e. 'Armenian quarter'; today the so-called *Russkaia sloboda*, i.e. 'the Russian quarter' of the town; for more information, see Dneprovskii 2010; Dneprovskii 2012: 18–41). The eighteenth-century sources inform that the Armenians allowed the Catholics performing religious services at an altar of one of these churches (Inglot 2004: 192).

[7] It is unclear what the surname of this person was: the name *Cialdeski* / *Czaldecki* / *Cialdecki* does not exist in Polish onomastics. Perhaps, the Italian sources considerably distorted the original form.

(Filamondo 1695: 197–202). The same Italian sources do mention that slaves were sometimes physically punished for not doing properly hard work imposed on them (e.g. father Ludwik Skicki was once beaten with a club by his slaver [Eszer 1971: 236; Filamondo 1695: 123]), but did not mention cases of aimless torturing of slaves out of sheer religious and ethnic hatred towards them that were described by Mikhail Litvin and Kolasa (Bazak 2005: 46; Lituanus 1994: 73).

REDEMPTION FROM SLAVERY

What kind of fate awaited a Polish slave after many years of the bondage?[8] Some slaves remained in the Crimea until their death; some were married and their posterity also remained in the Crimea – either as slaves or as freed people. Some – like Kasia Kolasa – were fortunate enough to be liberated as a part of political negotiations between Poland, Ottoman Empire, and the Crimean Khanate (Bazak 2005: 40–41). Giovanni da Lucca (1834b: 63) mentioned that in the seventeenth century Crimea (in Kefe, Bahçesaray and Karasu[bazar]) he had seen both free and enslaved Poles. Sometimes the Polish ambassadors could take certain Polish slaves with them when leaving the Crimea. The famous vizier of several Crimean Khans, Sefer Gazi Ağa, in his letter to the Chancellor Mikołaj Prażmowski of May 1661 complained that Polish ambassadors usually took with them free of charge several slaves each. He, however, had to pay the price of these slaves to the Tatar slave-owners whom these slaves belonged to. Sefer Gazi Ağa was quite unhappy about that and implied that either ambassadors should leave the Crimea without taking any additional captives or that a certain amount of money should be returned to him for doing this (AGAD AKW Dz. Tatarskie, k.61, t.135, no. 277: 2–3; cf. AGAD AKW Dz. Tatarskie, k.61, t. 170, no. 314: 2). This fact can be corroborated by further archival evidence. In 1661, during the battle of Chudnov (1660), a number of Polish soldiers were treacherously seized by the Tatar forces in spite of the fact that the Poles and the Crimean Tatars were at that moment allies fighting against Russia. Ambassador Władysław Szmeling managed to find some of them in the Crimea in 1661 and hoped to return them to Poland free of charge (AGAD AKW Dz. Tatarskie, k. 60, t. 110, no. 115: 6–7).

Muslim and some Christian sources demonstrate that slaves could be manumitted on the basis of the contract concluded between a slave and his or her owner (Zaitsev 2002: 231–233). Natalia Królikowska (2014: 556) cites cases regarding the liberation of slaves after five or even after two (!) years of servitude. Sharia court records testify that such contracts were practiced fairly often and, furthermore, a slave could even begin a case against his owner if the latter breached such a contract (Yaşa 2017: 186–191).[9] Italian sources of the 1660s enumerate and even provide names of several Polish individuals and families who lived as freemen in the Crimea.[10] One may suppose that these were slaves (or their descendants) who decided to remain in the Crimea – or were not allowed to leave the peninsula even after their liberation.

The conversion to Islam was apparently another possibility for a slave to get free. However, it was very seldom that slaves themselves wanted to convert; furthermore, in some cases even the converted captives remained to be slaves (Zaitsev 2002: 233–234). Thus, for example, abovemen-

[8] The issue of the redemption of rich captives will be analyzed below.
[9] More information on this practice can be found in Erdem 1996; Faroqhi 2000: 3–20.
[10] E.g. *Stanislao Schiauf Polacco* and *Andrea Bonicoschi* of Bahçesaray; *Paolo Soccolnischi* of Besteric (Beş Terek); *Anna Ostroschi* of Gözleve; *Simeon Suischi* and *Giovanni Karnoschi* of Kefe (Filamondo 1695: 233–235).

tioned Casimiro Cialdeski remained to be slave although he had become Muslim *(*Filamondo 1695: 197–202). It seems that the conversion to Islam did not automatically meant release from bondage: sources inform that Muslims apparently were allowed to possess Muslim slaves; it was only Jewish or Christian slave owners who were strictly forbidden to have them (Fisher 1972: 585).

Nevertheless, for some Polish slaves conversion to Islam indeed became not only the way to freedom, but also the beginning of a successful career in the Muslim society. Such converts, who usually knew Polish as their native language and learned Tatar and Ottoman Turkish during the years of servitude, were often employed as interpreters. In 1662–1663 the imprisoned Dominican friars were often accompanied by the interpreters who usually were Polish or Italian apostates (Filamondo 1695: 92). One Polish renegade (un Rinegato Polacco) even reached a higher social status and – being himself a former slave – had been working as supervisor of slaves in the village of Kongrat (Filamondo 1695: 123). The converted Pole, Islam Bej Cegielski, worked at the court of Mehmed Giray IV in the 1660s (Królikowska 2014: 554).

Such renegades were sometimes even more aggressive towards their former Christian brethren-in-faith than the Muslims. Thus, for example, one Polish convert to Islam not only denounced the Dominican friars to vizier Sefer Gazi Ağa upon their arrival in Balıqlağu on 20 December 1662, but also informed him that the friars were, in fact, spies of European rulers and Roman Pope Alexander VII. In this renegade's opinion, the alleged task of their stay in the Crimea was to gather information necessary for the conquest of the peninsula. As a result, already in the morning, 25 December 1662, the friars were arrested by a group of Tatar soldiers and taken to Bahçesaray, the capital of the Crimean Khanate (Filamondo 1695: 85).

IMPORTANT CAPTIVES

It was often the case that during their raids and military campaigns the Crimean Tatars managed to seize men of importance and considerable wealth. According to Bohdan Baranowski, already on their way back to the Crimea from Poland, the captives were divided into two groups: poor ones and those who could pay big ransom (Baranowski 1947: 42).[11] According to the story of Maria Dubniewiczowa, *jasyr* captured by the Turks and Tatars in Eastern Poland in 1672 was first divided into two parts after arrival in Kamieniec Podolski which was by that time in the possession of the Ottomans. There one part of the live booty was given to the Tatars while the other – apparently consisting of more valuable captives – was sent to Istanbul with the Turks (Mazur 2012: 136).

Upon arrival in the Crimea, rich captives could enjoy a comparative freedom of movement, visit each other, drink wine, play dice and cards, use money etc. (Baranowski 1947: 41, with reference to the manuscript nr. 1807 from Zamojski library). Perhaps the largest amount of important captives was seized by the Tatars in 1648, after the famous Korsuń battle, when the joint Tatar-Cossack army defeated that of the Poles. According to some estimates, about 80 noble Polish dignitaries, 127 officers and 8,520 soldiers were taken prisoners after the battle (Evarnitskii / Yavornyts'kyi 1990: 184; Dzira 1971: 51). The chronicler Grigorii Grabianka (Hrab'ianka) mentioned that in addition to two hetmans, the Tatars and Cossacks also captured the following Polish dignitaries: Kazanowski, Ordynowski, Bałaban, Bogdanowski, Chmielecki, Komarowski,

[11] Unfortunately, here the scholar did not mention the source of his information.

Jaskolski, Kowalski, Chomentowski, Kgdeszyński (?), Bedziński, Tymydski, Orogowski, Kuczkowski and others (this is how these surnames are reproduced in Dzira 1971: 51, note 2). Two most important of them, hetmans Mikołaj Potocki and Marcin Kalinowski were later transferred to the fortress of Çufut Kale near Bahçesaray (Schütz 1975: 159; Senai Kırımlı 1998: 26–27).

According to the Jewish chronicler Natan Hannover, both hetmans were tortured while their legs were chained with iron fetters (Borovoi 1997: 93). This, however, seems to be rather unlikely since Hannover himself was not an eyewitness of the battle. Such harsh treatment of the hetmans is not corroborated by any other source. On the contrary, the letters sent by Tatar dignitaries inform that they were treated with respect and according to their status and wealth. Selihan bint Kaplan, the wife of Sefer Gazi Ağa, complained in her letters to Poland in 1661 that she had provided Potocki and Kalinowski with 300 thalers, sable coat, bedclothes and many other things. Furthermore, she requested that they return back the money she gave to them: this money was not her own, but borrowed for them from her servants. Kalinowski was due 140 thalers, while Potocki – as much as 500 thalers (AGAD AKW Dz. Tatarskie, k.60, t.106, no.111: 2). A letter of the Crimean Khan Islam Giray III to Chancellor Prażmowski also mentions the fact that Potocki was treated in the Crimea not as a captive, but with all sorts of honours pertaining to his high social status (AGAD AKW Dz. Tatarskie, k.62, t.117, no.451: 3).

The ways of redemption of important persons from captivity and slavery were varied. Somewhat surprisingly, sometimes raiders could sell their important captive right on a spot. For example, E. Morawiec, captured by the Tatars near Lwów in 1648, was immediately ransomed by an Armenian merchant for thirty florins (Dashkevych 1979–1980: 176). In most cases, however, negotiations regarding the redemption fee could take months if not years. It was very often the case that they were carried through the mediation of the Crimean or Polish merchants (usually of Jewish, Armenian or Tatar origin). The merchants took their own fee for the transaction, but still could arrange the matters in the way that was profitable for both sides. This process was in detail described by the Polish legate Martinus Broniovius (or Marcin Broniewski; see Broniovius 1595: 21–22; Broniovius 1867: 363–364).

Sometimes captives had problems with transferring money: very often messengers bringing redemption fee were robbed or killed on their way from Poland to the Crimea.[12] On the other hand, sometimes there were opposite cases when the mediators could not receive back the money they lent to captives as a redemption fee. Mehmed Giray IV sent a complaint to the King Jan Kazimierz in 1663. There the Khan supported the request of his subject, the Armenian Sefer Bihasowicz, to get back the moneys that were borrowed from him by several Polish dignitaries at the beginning of the 1650s. The total sum of the debt amounted to 1,250 thalers (AGAD AKW Dz.Tatarskie, k. 61, t. 69, no. 211: 2).

Sometimes mediators for that or other reason could not fulfill their promises. In 1679 a Polish noble, Aleksander Tatomir, sued an Armenian woman, Anna Szahinowa, whose husband promised to deliver Tatomir's wife from the Crimean captivity. The ransom was paid by Tatomir, the money was taken by Szahinowa, but Tatomir's wife was not returned. At some point Tatomir lost his patience and demanded that either money or his wife should be returned (Kołodziejczyk 2006: 157).

[12] This was the case of Jerzy Bałaban who was ransomed only in 1650, i.e. about two years after his capture at Korsuń (Baranowski 1947: 45 with reference to the manuscript no. 309 from Krasiński library).

Sometimes important captives were exchanged against important Tatars kept in Poland. In this way, for example, Jesuit father Miroszewicz was exchanged in 1612 (Inglot 2004: 183). We know at least one case when an important Polish captive had to leave his relative in the Crimea as a guarantee that his redemption fee would be paid. This was Stanisław (or according to other sources, Mikołaj) Potocki, son of Hetman Potocki, who arrived in the Crimea as a hostage in 1650; the son was not ransomed by the hetman even as late as 1651 (AGAD AKW Dz. Tatarskie, k.62, t.117, no.451: 3; AGAD AKW Dz. Tatarskie, k.62, t.58, no.390: 2).

Not only the Polish dignitaries were considered important captives worthy of being redeemed. It was very often the case that Polish clergymen and missionaries were captured either during the raid or after their arrival in the Crimea with missionary aim. In contrast to nobility and high-ranking Polish military officers, who for obvious reasons did not want to describe their stay in the Crimea, missionaries and clergymen often left descriptions of their adventures and vicissitudes there. For example, Father Franciszek Zgoda, a Jesuit missionary, was seized by the Tatars in the battle upon Prut in 1612; having escaped, he was caught by the Valachians who sold him back to the Tatars. Then he was ransomed by Giovanni Antonio Spinola, who set him free (Inglot 2004: 184).

Sometimes missionaries were set free as a part of political negotiations. In March 1663 the group of Dominican friars (which included the Pole Ludwik Skicki) was tried by the court of justice in Bahçesaray. The friars were found to be guilty of espionage and sentenced to remain slaves until the redemption from the bondage. The price of their redemption was estimated at 5,000 scudi – the enormous sum which the friars obviously could not possess (Filamondo 1695: 99–100). Furthermore, the local Catholic priest, Father Benedetto Missionario Polacco (i.e. Benedykt Stefanowicz[13]), warned them against trying to gather necessary money: in his opinion, slavers, upon getting the redemption fee, were accustomed to take money and treat their slaves much worse than before in order to get a new ransom for the same slave (Filamondo 1695: 130–131).[14] The price of another important captive, the Calmuck prince, was even higher – 10,000 piasters (Filamondo 1695: 137). The sources also mention that the average price for an ordinary slave was much lower – 5 scudi; the ransom for the wife of the Polish noble, Aleksander Tatomir, was 400 lion thalers (Filamondo 1695: 152; Kołodziejczyk 2006: 157).[15] Several attempts of the friars to inform Polish or Italian authorities about their plight and ask for assistance did not work out. Finally, Francesco Piscopo, who stayed in Bahçesaray, managed to secretly visit the local Polish ambassador and asked the latter to inform the Polish King about their miserable situation.

Soon after this political and military events began influencing the situation in the Crimea. At the same time the Khan Mehmed Giray IV received the letter from the Polish King John II Casimir (Jan Kazimierz) asking to release the enslaved Dominicans. The Khan together with his councilors decided to confiscate the friars from their former owner and subsequently freed them. Because of the fact that their fate was still not entirely clear, the conditions of the friars' everyday life remained terrible. Four of them still wore chains; their daily food consisted of a piece of black bread and a plate of grinded cabbage with salt (Filamondo 1695: 146). Soon, however,

[13] This figure is mentioned in many other documents pertaining to the history of the Second Dominican Mission in the Crimea.

[14] One cannot be sure, however, that it had always been the case. In many instances slaves were successfully redeemed from slavery without paying any additional fees.

[15] For more details regarding the prices on slaves in the Crimea in the seventeenth century, see Ivanics 2007: 215–217.

they were given freedom and on 7 November 1663 they left Bahçesaray together with the Polish ambassador (Filamondo 1695: 150–151).

The fate of many important captives, however, was not that successful. A number of Polish Jesuit missionaries were seized by the Tatars and died – or were killed – in the captivity.[16]

A very unpleasant fate sometimes awaited members of foreign embassies. Florian Oleszko, an ambassador, spent about two years in the Crimea as a prisoner. Krzysztof Dzierżek was imprisoned in Çufut Kale in 1639 (Baranowski 1947: 41, 46–47). There is no information in the sources that imprisoned Polish ambassadors had ever been used as slaves or forced to do physical or agricultural works for the Crimean Tatars. It is known, however, that their freedom of movement was limited, they were denied the privilege of eating free of charge at the Khans' table and had to buy food at their own expense. As a consequence, they often had to borrow money from the local inhabitants, experience hunger and suffer from many other limitations (Baranowski 1947: 47). Thus, paradoxical it may seem, but their position was often worse than that of important prisoners.

Important role in ransoming the Polish captives was played by the Armenian merchants, both the Crimean ones and those of Poland. The Polish Armenians could speak colloquial Kypchak and knew Crimean, Turkish and Iranian customs (Dashkevych 1979–1980: 177). While having connections with their brethren living in the Crimea and Ottoman Empire, they indeed managed to arrange a great number of transactions of this type. In 1652 the Polish Armenian diplomat Romaszkiewicz (first name is not known) organized the escape of a group of Polish magnates from the Crimea. Walerian Kalinowski, the son of hetman Kalinowski, was among those who escaped. Although the escape was successful, as a result both Romaszkiewicz and another Lwów Armenian, Warteresiewicz, were subsequently imprisoned and spent quite a long time in the Khans' prison.[17]

It was very often that the Crimean Armenian merchants helped the Polish Armenians to bail out of the Tatar slavery. In the early 1660s the Crimean merchant Manok (Manuk) lent 500 thalers to the Lwów Armenian Siekier to pay his redemption fee; in 1663 the latter still did not give this money back.[18] On the other hand, the Polish Armenians themselves could become victims of the Tatar raids. In 1650, during Chmielnicki's uprising, the Tatars captured 300 Polish Armenians and carried them away to the Crimea. There most of them were ransomed by local Christians (Schütz 1975: 159).

CONCLUSION

As has been demonstrated, the trade in Polish slaves was a highly important part of the economy of the Tatar and Ottoman Crimea. Although the Polish government paid a high annual tribute to the Tatars to prevent raids and the taking of captives, they happened almost every year, sometimes

[16] E.g. Andrzej Biezunensis (captured in 1618, d. 1619); Szymon Wybierek (captured and died in 1620); Jan Turowski (captured in 1620, killed in 1621); Bartłomiej Wolborius (captured in 1620, killed in 1621); Eustachy Piotrowicz (captured in 1620, killed in 1621); Marcin Miroszewicz (captured in 1620, d. 1621) (Inglot 2004: 187–188). One can suppose that the list of the Polish missionaries and clergymen who died in the Crimean captivity can be continued.

[17] Romaszkiewicz borrowed and did not return 150 thalers to Hadziader Bohasewicz, the Crimean Armenian merchant (AGAD AKW Dz. Tatarskie, k.61, t.137, no. 279: 2).

[18] AGAD AKW Dz.Tatarskie, k.61, t.62, no. 204: 4.

even 2-3 times a year. The number of captives seized during one raid could oscillate between several hundred and several thousand souls, depending largely on a number of the Tatars that took part in a raid: each Tatar soldier could take with him up to 6-7 slaves. The raids were often carried out together with the Nogays; less often the Tatars were accompanied by the Ottoman army or Zaporozhian Cossacks.

After the capture an average Polish slave of simple origin (peasants, soldiers, artisans and such-like) was transported to the Crimea, where he or she had been sold on the slave markets of the Crimean Khanate (Gözleve, Bahçesaray, and Karasubazar) and Ottoman province of Kefe (in the port of Kefe). Unless he had some special qualifications, a slave usually had to fulfil agricultural duties and do heavy manual work. Condition of a slave's everyday life depended largely on the good (or bad) will of his owner. Although the social position of a slave was usually extremely inferior, it seems that slave owners very seldom tortured or beat their 'live property' without a good cause. Furthermore, the slaves usually had some limited free time and could even attend Christian services in the churches of the Crimea's large urban centres. Poor slaves usually remained in the Crimea until their death; some were married and their posterity also remained in the Crimea – either as slaves or as freed people. Sometimes large groups of Polish slaves were liberated as part of political negotiations between Poland, the Ottoman Empire, and the Crimean Khanate. The conversion to Islam was apparently another possibility for a slave to get free. However, in some cases even the converted captives remained to be slaves.

Rich Polish captives were usually treated in accordance with their high social status and wealth. Normally, they did not have to do any manual work and were ransomed for a considerable redemption fee. Important role in ransoming such rich captives was played by the Jewish, Tatar, and, especially, Armenian merchants, both the Crimean ones and those of Poland.

Was there anything specific in the status, position and everyday life of a Polish slave in the early modern Crimea? Usually they were treated on the same footing as most other Christian slaves from European countries and Russia, suffered from the same limitations and enjoyed the same tiny freedoms and privileges. Some sources claim that Polish was the second in importance language of the area after the local Turkic languages and dialects. This, however, did not bring any particular alleviation in the status of Polish slaves in the Crimea. On the contrary, we know that sometimes Polish Catholics were maltreated by other slaves of Russian Orthodox denomination. The presence of Polish converts to Islam on fairly high positions in the Crimean Khanate did not bring any alleviation either: the latter were sometimes even more hostile to their former brethren-in-faith than the Muslims.

The last Tatar slave raid into Poland took part in 1769. According to Küçük Kaynarca peace treaty of 1774 all prisoners of war, slaves, and captives of all nations and countries (including the Poles) present in the Crimea were supposed be freed and returned to their native lands 'without having to be redeemed for money' (Brown 2016: 360; Akhiezer 2015: 85–86, note 18). However, the process of liberation of the enormous amount of slaves was not immediate: archival data also demonstrate that even at the beginning of the nineteenth century there were inhabitants of the Crimea whose origin was indicated as "from the slaves" ("iz nevol'nikov"). There is no doubt that many of them were of Polish origin.

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